

Petzel

For Immediate Release

JOHN STEZAKER
Nude and Landscape

May 8 – June 13, 2013
Opening reception: Friday, May 10th, from 6:00 – 8:00 PM



Petzel Gallery is pleased to present the exhibition John Stezaker: *Nude and Landscape* from May 8 – June 13, 2013. This is the artist's third exhibition with the gallery. There is an accompanying catalogue published by Ridinghouse that highlights the work. The book contains an essay by the curator Sid Sachs, who first presented *Nude and Landscape* at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia in 2012.

Born in Worcester, United Kingdom in 1949, Stezaker was educated at the Slade School in London where his teachers included William Coldstream, Ewan Uglow and Richard Wollheim.

As one of the youngest members of the first British Conceptual Art group in the 1960s, Stezaker was also conceptualism's earliest defector - to an image, rather than concept-based practice, and as such, became a key bridge-figure between the conceptual art generation and the Pictures generation in America. Stezaker's media-image appropriations, however, tended to be more intimate in scale than spectacular, as was also the case with his American contemporaries like Richard Prince and Cindy Sherman. For the most part, this decision was based on the artist's intention and desire to retain the formal image in its original state and scale. Influenced by the thinking on the media image by the French Situationists of the 1960s, Stezaker focused on cinematic imagery, although through the 1970s his attachment moved from current media images to earlier images (predominantly 1940s film stills, publicity portraits, and old postcards). The artist has stated that Joseph Cornell gave him the confidence for this regression or 'time travel,' as he has referred to it, as a means of evading the imperative of contemporaneity in modern art. He also found intellectual support for his decision in the thinking of Walther Benjamin and Maurice Blanchot, who he stated freed him to yield purely to image fascination and to image obsolescence.

Stezaker's work with cinematic imagery remains his best known. He has, however, worked with a number of other found image sources over the past 30 years. Most notably, the topographic images that make up his 'Bridge' collages and the anatomical nude images that make up his 'Fall' and 'Expulsion' series. This show is dedicated to these series of collages. In the early 1980s, when Stezaker first switched from the cinematic imagery of the 1970s to the nude, he declared it to be a part of a desire to move from an engagement with the culture of the image to the nature of the image. Over the years since then, his work on film still collages tends to alternate between works based on the nude or on land/cityscapes, depending on his interest in aspects of the nature or culture of images.

Whether from landscape sources or artist anatomy books, the material sources of Stezaker's images tend to be vintage. Thus, these oddly harmonious yet disquieting landscapes take on an aura of the remembered past, and the "truth" of photographic reality collapses into a recombinant modernist hybrid.

Stezaker lives and works in London. Exhibiting since 1969, the artist has become much more prominent in the last decade with extensive solo exhibits in Europe, Asia and the United States. He has had over forty one-person exhibitions and has exhibited in Adelaide and Sydney, Australia; Graz, Austria; Brussels, Belgium; Hong Kong, China; Copenhagen, Denmark; Paris and Avignon, France; Berlin, Bremen, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Freiburg and München, Germany; London,

Petzel

Edinburgh, Birmingham, Cambridge, Liverpool, Norwich, Oxford, and Southampton, Great Britain; Rotterdam, Holland; Tel Aviv, Israel; Kyoto and Tokyo, Japan; Brescia, Milan, Rome, and Venice, Italy; Lisbon, Portugal; Lucerne, Switzerland; and Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, New York, and Saint Louis in the United States.