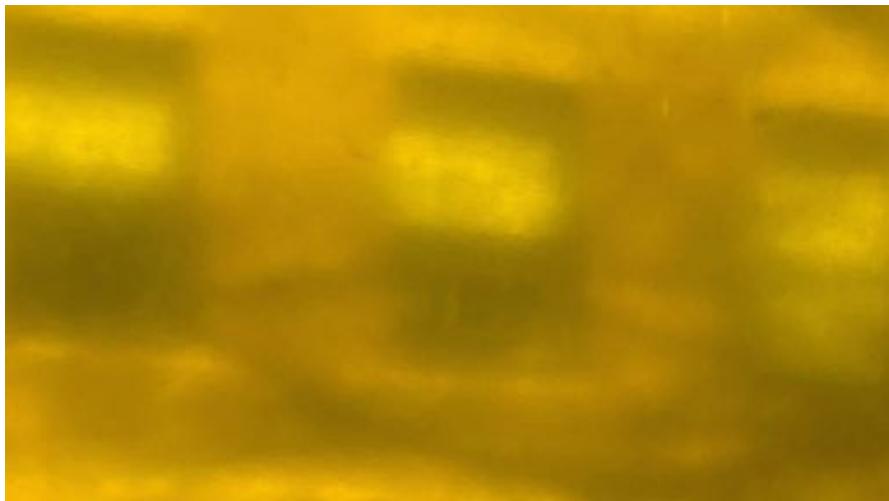


P. Staff *Possessive*

September 18–October 25, 2025
34 East 69th Street, New York



Courtesy the artist

David Zwirner is pleased to present *Possessive*, an exhibition of work by the London- and Los Angeles-based artist P. Staff on view at the gallery's East 69th Street location in New York. Responding subtly to the space's architectural cues, Staff's installation—which includes a central video work projected across the gallery's three stories, and a new series of sculptures—simulates the sensation of a body as it is infiltrated and surveilled. This is the artist's first solo exhibition in New York.

Staff's expansive practice—which includes sculpture, video installation, and writing—explores how language, desire, and institutions define and regulate embodied experience. Considering the biopolitical—the state's regulation of living populations—and the necropolitical—how life and death are entwined with structures of domination—the artist's work encapsulates, in the words of writer Maxi Wallenhorst, a “poetic of metabolic disorder” that interrogates how marginalized subjects come into being in the precarious and violent contexts of our contemporary moment. Employing varied cinematographic and photographic techniques, poetry and language, and materials such as congealed blood and electric nets used to fence in animals, Staff expresses the affective conditions of dissociation and dysphoria while revealing the ungovernable nature of bodies.

The exhibition title *Possessive* alludes to the embodied sense of possession and control. By harnessing the grammatical essence of the term as well as its pejorative tang, Staff contrasts the multiple connotations of “possessive” to think about the ambivalent ways in which we conceive of ownership and the body. As in the artist's other recent presentations, *Possessive* revisits ideas that merge the body with architecture, somatically and psychically perverting our integration with the built environment. The installation takes as its departure point the gallery space at East 69th Street, a former residence located in the Upper East Side neighborhood. At the core of the townhome, a looped film casting a silhouette

of a shirtless, tattooed figure is projected across three stories onto the central column. Standing still, he inhales and exhales, his chest rising and falling with each breath. A bright green laser beam penetrates the figure's gut, ambiguously signaling an act of insertion or extraction—also perhaps delineating a body under surveillance or siege. The ambient soundscape likewise transmits an uneasy yet intimate confluence of inside and outside: uneven breathing, the pulse of a beating heart, muffled conversation, and the dampened atonal clang of broken piano keys.

Complementing the cool dark-blue image of the video projection, the interiors of the gallery are suffused with Staff's signature yellow luminescence—here, a light meant to evoke the somber, high-intensity glow of sodium-vapor streetlamps. The surfaces within are saturated with this monochromatic layer, which suggests processes or infirmities particular to animal bodies—the bilic, the urinary, the jaundiced—as well as rays of sunshine, the toxic glow of nuclear fallout, or the poisonous hue of arsenic. Unique sculptures are installed within each discrete gallery space, translucent gray latex stretched and folded over spiky armatures. Their slick, tensile surfaces suggest bodies clothed in tight-fitting fetish gear or BDSM scenes of vacuum-sealing immobilization. For the framework of each sculpture, Staff joins the aggregate dimensions of the townhome's architectural elements—bookcases, stairwells, and doorways, among others. Anthropomorphizing and metastasizing the orderly measurements of the building, these objects visualize the sensation of an aberrant anatomical structure trying to escape its own bones, of unruly limbs attempting to burst through skin, of gasping and halted breath.

P. Staff was born in 1987 in the United Kingdom. They received a BA from Goldsmiths College at the University of London in 2009 and participated in the Associate Artists Program at LUX, London, in 2011.

Staff has presented solo exhibitions and performances globally for over a decade. In 2012, to inaugurate the Tate Modern's dedicated live art space, The Tanks, the artist was invited to give a performance, marking their first presentation at a major institution. In 2015, Staff's film installation, *The Foundation*, was commissioned by Chisenhale Gallery, London; Spike Island, Bristol; Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane; and Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, and subsequently traveled to each venue through spring 2016. The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, commissioned and exhibited the video installation *Weed Killer* in 2017, and LUMA Westbau, Zurich, presented *The Foundation* in 2019. Also in 2019, Staff's solo exhibition *On Venus* was presented at Serpentine Galleries, London, and *The Prince of Homburg* was held at Dundee Contemporary Arts, Scotland, after which it traveled to the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin.

In 2023, the solo exhibition *Impact Play* was presented at the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, and the solo show *In Ekstase* was held at Kunsthalle Basel. *P. Staff: La Nuit Américaine* was co-published by Kunsthalle Basel and Saint Laurent in conjunction with *In Ekstase*. Bonner Kunstverein in Bonn, Germany, will present *Durchdringung*, a solo exhibition of Staff's work, in October 2025.

In addition to solo exhibitions, Staff has also been invited to participate in a number of notable biennials and recurring exhibitions including *Made in L.A. 2018*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2018); *The Milk of Dreams*, 59th International Biennale di Venezia, Venice (2022); Whitney Biennial: *Even Better than the Real Thing*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2024); and Taipei Biennial: *Whispers on the Horizon*, Taipei Fine Arts Museum (2025).

The artist is the recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award (2019) and Paul Hamlyn Award for Visual Artists (2015). They have participated in numerous residencies at institutions such as the Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, New York (2025); Irish Museum of Art, Dublin (2019); FD13, Minneapolis (2018); The Showroom, London (2014); LUX, London (2014); Fogo Island Arts, Canada (2012); and Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Alberta (2010).

Work by Staff is held in institutional collections worldwide including Arts Council Collection, London; FRAC Bretagne, Rennes; Julia Stoschek Foundation, Düsseldorf; LUMA Arles, France; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Saastamoinen Foundation, Helsinki; Tate, United Kingdom; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Staff is represented by Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles, and Sultana, Paris. They live and work in Los Angeles and London.

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