

Petzel

LOUCHE: Sleeping Through the Apocalypse

June 11 – July 17, 2026
520 W 25th Street

Nearly a decade ago, Petzel presented *We Need to Talk: Artists and the Public Respond to the Present Conditions in America*, an exhibition shaped by political rupture and the uneasy sense that what followed might still be reversible. Opening in January 2017, it captured a moment of collective alarm – when a shifting national and global order still felt reversible.

LOUCHE: Sleeping Through the Apocalypse emerges from the long shadow of that moment. What once registered as fear has hardened into lived reality. The years since – marked by political upheaval, ecological crisis, pandemic, and a violent challenge to democratic continuity – have not only confirmed earlier anxieties but exceeded them. If the earlier exhibition was driven by urgency, this one settles into exhausted lucidity.

This exhibition is not about resistance, nor critique in any familiar sense, but staged indifference: a farce in which cultural production continues unabated as the conditions that sustain it erode. The exhibition performs a deliberate slackening of critical posture — a surrender to spectacle, excess, and dissonance that mirrors a broader social anesthesia. We feared too for our little ivory towers, built over a decade of global expansion in a relatively stable art world. How foolish we were.

To be “louche” is to drift in moral ambiguity, at the edge of clarity and propriety. Humor curdles into menace and seduction gives way to fatigue. The exhibition does not try to awaken its viewers, but implicates them. We recognize the stakes, yet persist in forms of attention increasingly inadequate to them.

Louche offers no exit. It lingers around the limits of imagination—what we failed to foresee, what we have come to accept, and what it might mean to remain awake, if waking is still possible.

Artist include:

Amy Sillman
Carroll Dunham
Cosima von Bonin
Dana Schutz
Ella Kruglyanskaya
Harold Stevenson
Joyce Pensato
Keith Edmier
Keith Haring
Malcolm Morely
Martin Kippenberger
Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg
Nicola Tyson
Nikita Gale
Peter Saul
Philippe Parreno and Pierre Huyghe
Pieter Schoolwerth
Raphaela Vogel
Sean Landers
Seth Price
Simon Denny
Yael Bartana

Petzel is located at 520 West 25th Street New York, NY 10001. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10am–6pm.
For press inquiries, please contact Karolina Chojnowska at karolina@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.