

Jack Pierson

Folded Photographs

7 February – 8 March 2014

Press Release

Xavier Hufkens is pleased to present the first European showing of Jack Pierson's folded photographs in the new gallery space at 107 St-Jorisstraat.

Folded in eight as if to fit in an envelope, and attached directly to the wall using pins, there is an enigmatic quality to Pierson's large-scale pigment prints: on the one hand, they resemble posters, with all the bittersweet qualities associated with disposable, ephemeral objects. Yet, in reality, the works are exquisitely printed fine art photographs produced in tiny editions.

The 'poster' format resonates with Pierson, who has always seen the beauty of pinning or taping images – even pages torn out of a magazine – to the wall. Pierson: 'A frame on a large colour photograph always seems to me, even in cases when I have succumbed to them, too much.' Having built up a considerable body of high-profile advertising work, Pierson is naturally drawn to printed media and considers books, magazines and posters to be the perfect vehicles for contemporary photography. They are also very portable, and in much the same vein, Pierson's 'posters' also democratise the image and provide a counterpoint to static, venerated works of art protected by glass.

Pierson's subjects are often relatively commonplace or travel-related – a sparkling sea, a book, a wooded path, pyramid or gravestone, for example – but, in their folded, large-scale format, and with their deeply saturated colours, the images acquire a poetic, evocative quality suffused with nostalgia, longing or, in some of the most classically beautiful shots, a sense of euphoria. Nostalgia is a recurrent theme in Pierson's work, and is reflected in both his found object sculptures (as seen in *Jesus and Nazimova*, Xavier Hufkens, 2012) and the images drawn from postcards, scrapbooks, magazines and other sorts of ephemera that appear in his recent photographs. Pierson has said that, in some senses, the subject is missing from his photographs: although taken in the present, they are not necessarily about the present, just as they are not necessarily about the image we see before us. Pierson is interested in photography as experience: in making images that allude to an unknowable past (that which has happened) or a possible future (that which might happen). In the gallery space, he arranges his images on the wall like a collage, playing with composition, colour, scale and height to create a carefully curated compendium of experiences and memories, colours and feelings.

Jack Pierson (b. 1960, Plymouth, Massachusetts) has exhibited widely in both Europe and America. He has had important solo exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami (2002) and at the Centre d'Art Santa Monica, Barcelona (2007). A retrospective exhibition of his work was held at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, in 2008. His work is in the collections of CAPC (Bordeaux), the Whitney Museum of American Art (NY), the Metropolitan Museum (NY) and the Guggenheim (NY).