

# The approach

## John Stezaker

### *Love*

15<sup>th</sup> February – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Preview: Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018, 6 – 9pm

The Approach is pleased to announce the forthcoming exhibition of British artist John Stezaker; presenting collages and found images concerned with themes of love, desire and betrayal that have been central to Stezaker's practice over four decades.

*Love* will include, for the first time at The Approach, a selection of early *Photoroman* collages dating from the 1970s. Made from romantic picture stories printed in magazines of the time, these significant works show the early emergence of concerns with human relationships within the staged cinematic settings of the *Photoroman*. Through repetition, fragmentation and superimposition, Stezaker disrupts the existing narratives by inventing disjointed, dreamlike scenarios; a preoccupation that has continued throughout his work up to the most recent collages in this exhibition. The recurring motif of a couple and a third person in the background—entering through a door, or as a lingering shadow—suggests moments of tension, secrecy or deception creeping into the romantic narratives.

Included alongside the *Photoroman* are more recent collages using a format Stezaker has employed since the 1980s. In these later works, Stezaker takes old postcards of landscapes and inserts them within found black and white film stills, creating more ambiguous imaginary narratives rather than the raw encounter of the earlier *Photoroman* collages. The landscapes become suggestive of the psyches of the embracing lovers that are partly obscured beneath the postcards. Images of dark caves, flowing streams, or the abyss between two cliffs, allude to underworlds and the unconscious and suggesting a complex 'emotional landscape' underlying the stereotypical image.

While the early work often highlights communication (via speech bubbles, the telephone and facial expressions), the more recent work often focuses the viewer's attention on touch through the embrace and reaching hands. The figure of the voyeur recurs across different series and the power of the gaze is highlighted in some collages through cone-shaped cut-outs that emerge from the eye of one looking at and often annihilating another.

#### The approach

1st Floor, 47 Approach Road  
Bethnal Green, London E2 9LY  
Telephone: +44 (0)20 8983 3878  
Email: [info@theapproach.co.uk](mailto:info@theapproach.co.uk)  
[www.theapproach.co.uk](http://www.theapproach.co.uk)

*Love* includes a single work from the *Unassisted Readymade* series, an ongoing collection of found photographs that the artist has not altered, but rather presents in their original state and often bearing the traces of their history of damage, deterioration and the violations of their use.

The exhibition continues over both spaces at The Approach, whilst the main gallery exhibits the *Photoroman*, *Film Still*, *Pair* and *Unassisted Readymade* series; works from the *Love* series are shown in The Annexe. In the *Love* works, Stezaker deploys his recurring use of unknown actors from a bygone era's publicity shots; the minimal intervention on these collages multiplies the subjects' eyes to suggest both a sense of unfocused, illogical and uncontrollable love and of something disturbing and uncanny. This is an ambiguity that runs through all the work in "Love". Though the images are derived from romantic sources, they seem to expose a hidden underlying violence and dread.

John Stezaker (b. 1949, Worcester) lives and works in London and St. Leonards on Sea. Stezaker won the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize in 2012. Recent solo exhibitions at museums and institutions: *John Stezaker*, Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, UK; *Aftermath*, York Art Gallery, UK; *Lost World*, City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand (touring show), (2017); *Film Works*, De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill On Sea, UK; *Collages*, Fotomuseum Nederlands, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2015); *John Stezaker*, Centre de la Photographie Genève, Switzerland; *John Stezaker: Working from the Collection*, Les Rencontres Arles Photographie, Arles, France; *John Stezaker: One on One*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel (2013); *Marriage*, Haggerty Museum of Art, Milwaukee, USA; *John Stezaker*, The Whitechapel Gallery, London, touring to MUDAM, Luxembourg and Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, USA (2011-2012); *Lost Images*, Kunstverein Freiburg, Germany (2010).

For further information or images please contact Antonio de la Hera at [antonio@theapproach.co.uk](mailto:antonio@theapproach.co.uk)

**The approach**

1st Floor, 47 Approach Road  
Bethnal Green, London E2 9LY  
Telephone: +44 (0)20 8983 3878  
Email: [info@theapproach.co.uk](mailto:info@theapproach.co.uk)  
[www.theapproach.co.uk](http://www.theapproach.co.uk)

# The approach

1. *Untitled (Film Portrait Collage) XL*, 2017  
Collage  
25.7 x 20.5 cm | 10 x 8 in.
2. *Voyeur's Incisions (Photoroman)*, c. 1976-77  
Collage  
15.5 x 20.1 cm | 6 x 7 7/8 in.
3. *Kiss IX (Photoroman)*, 1977  
Collage  
15 x 11.1 cm | 5 7/8 x 4 1/4 in.
4. *Kiss V (Photoroman)*, 1977  
Collage  
15.3 x 10.3 cm | 6 x 4 in.
5. *High Rocks X*, 2015  
Collage  
25.7 x 20.5 cm | 10 1/16 x 8 1/16 in.
6. *Kiss VIII (Photoroman)*, 1977  
Collage  
14.6 x 21.2 cm | 5 5/8 x 8 1/4 in.
7. *Untitled (Photoroman)*, 1977  
Collage  
18.8 x 17.8 cm | 7 3/8 x 7 in.
8. *Enter...(Exit)... the Third Person II (Photoroman)*, 1977  
Collage  
17 x 27.2 cm | 6 3/4 x 10 3/4 in.
9. *Enter...(Exit)... the Third Person III (Photoroman)*, 1977  
Collage  
15.7 x 21.1 cm | 6 1/8 x 8 1/4 in.
10. *Untitled*, 2010  
Collage  
25.8 x 19.8 cm | 10 1/8 x 7 3/4 in.
11. *Untitled*, 2016  
Collage  
19 x 25.2 cm | 7 3/8 x 9 7/8 in.
12. *Dance*, 2017  
Collage  
20 x 25.7 cm | 7 3/4 x 10 in.
13. *Untitled (Film Portrait Collage) XLI*, 2017  
Collage  
25.6 x 20.3 cm | 10 x 8 in.
14. *Cinema I IX*, 2006  
Collage  
17.5 x 23 cm | 6 7/8 x 9 in.
15. *Untitled*, 1976  
Collage  
20.8 x 24.5 cm | 8 1/8 x 9 5/8 in.
16. *Untitled (Photoroman)*, 1977  
Collage  
11.5 x 18 cm | 4 1/2 x 7 in.
17. *Untitled (Photoroman)*, 1977-78  
Collage  
8.6 x 11 cm | 3 3/8 x 4 1/4 in.
18. *The Word Made Flesh VII (Photoroman)*, 1977-78  
Collage  
16.1 x 13.8 cm | 6 1/4 x 5 3/8 in.
19. *Touch III (Photoroman)*, 1978  
Collage  
8 x 10 cm | 3 1/8 x 3 7/8 in.
20. *Kiss VI (Photoroman)*, c. 1976-77  
Collage  
12 x 9.5 cm | 4 5/8 x 3 5/8 in.
21. *The Voyeur VI (Photoroman)*, 1977  
Collage  
11 x 20.8 cm | 4 1/4 x 8 1/8 in.
22. *Untitled (Photoroman)*, 1977  
Collage  
13.3 x 22 cm | 5 1/8 x 8 5/8 in.
23. *Frieze (Photoroman)*, c. 1976-8  
Collage  
6.3 x 43 cm | 2 3/8 x 16 7/8 in.
24. *Double Mask II (Film Portrait Collage)*, 2017  
Collage  
25.8 x 20.3 cm | 10 1/8 x 8 in.
25. *Untitled*, 2013  
Collage  
18.8 x 25.1 cm | 7 3/8 x 9 7/8 in.
26. *Enter... (Exit)... the Third Person IV (Photoroman)*, 1976  
Collage  
19 x 17.5 cm | 7 3/8 x 6 7/8 in.
27. *Damage IX*, 2014  
Unassisted readymade  
25.4 x 19.9 cm | 10 x 7 3/4 in.
28. *Kiss IV (Photoroman)*, 1978  
Collage  
5.3 x 12.6 cm | 2 x 5 in.
29. *Kiss XI (Photoroman)*, 1978  
Collage  
9.6 x 12.7 cm | 3 3/4 x 5 in.

In **The annexe**, clockwise from door:

30. *Love XX*, 2016  
Collage  
25.9 x 20.8 cm | 10 1/8 x 8 1/8 in.
31. *Lost Love I*, 2017  
Collage  
23.7 x 17.3 cm | 9 1/4 x 6 3/4 in.
32. *Love XVIII*, 2016  
Collage  
25.7 x 20.3 cm | 10 x 8 in.
33. *Love XXII*, 2012  
Collage  
26.3 x 19.9 cm | 10 1/4 x 7 3/4 in.
34. *Love XXI*, 2016  
Collage  
26 x 20.3 cm | 10 1/8 x 8 in.
35. *Love XXIV*, 2017  
Collage  
25.8 x 19.5 cm | 10 1/8 x 7 5/8 in.

# The approach

John Stezaker

*Love*

15 February – 25 March 2018

