

# GAGOSIAN

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## JEFF WALL

Opening reception: Tuesday, April 30, 6–8pm

April 30–June 22, 2019

522 West 21st Street, New York

Jeff Wall, *Parent child*, 2018, inkjet print, 86 5/8 × 108 1/4 inches (220 × 275 cm) © Jeff Wall

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April 8, 2019

Gagosian is pleased to announce Jeff Wall's first exhibition with the gallery. The majority of the works included are on view for the first time.

From his pioneering use in the 1970s of backlit color transparencies—a medium then synonymous with advertising—to his intricately constructed scenes of enigmatic incidents from daily life, literature, and film, Wall has expanded the definition of the photograph, both as object and illusion.

The triptych *I giardini/The Gardens* (2017) was photographed in the gardens of the Villa Silvio Pellico in Moncalieri, outside of Turin, Italy. Though Wall has made several works that combine two or more images, this is the first in which the order, read from left to right, represents a passage of time. It therefore has a narrative aspect absent from any previous picture group. The three images—individually titled *Appunto/Complaint*, *Disappunto/Denial*, and *Diffida/Expulsion order*—trace the relations between either two or four characters through three depicted moments. A doubling effect

occurs again in *Pair of interiors* (2018), a diptych showing either one or two couples in a lamplit living room, and in *Summer Afternoons* (2013), which shows what appears to be another equally introverted, younger couple in a sunny apartment. Each person appears in his or her own picture, creating uncertainty about whether the diptych depicts one or more “summer afternoons.”

Landscapes are the subject of three more works. *Hillside, Sicily, November 2007* (2007), one of two black-and-white images in the exhibition, shows the dry, rocky landscape of the eastern part of the Italian island; and an olive orchard has risen out of the dry desert in *Daybreak (on an olive farm/Negev Desert/Israel)* (2011), where we see Bedouin harvest workers about to awake and begin their workday. The only human structure on the Sicilian hillside is the remnant of a small stone shelter; on the horizon behind the olive orchard stands one of the largest prisons in Israel. With its flat, vibrant colors resembling a painting more than a photograph, *Recovery* (2017–18) is set in a seaside park on another summer afternoon. One figure separates himself from the fantasy: a young man sitting on the grass, looking out of the composition, up and away. Is the image a blissful momentary vision occasioned by his recovery from some temporary misfortune? *Recovery* recalls Wall’s previous experiments with hallucinatory moments in works such as *Dead Troops Talk* (1992) or *The Flooded Grave* (2000).

*Parent child* (2018) also shows a blissful moment on a summer day—at least for the dreamy little girl who has decided to recline on the sidewalk; less so for the adult responsible for her. Another child appears in *Mother of pearl* (2016), this time in a room filled with antique furniture and keepsakes. Fascinated by a set of iridescent old game counters—made of mother of pearl—she is transported by her imagination as perhaps only children can be.

*Weightlifter* (2015), Wall’s most recent black-and-white picture, is an example of what the artist calls his “near documentary” direction. The lifting of heavy objects recalls the most archaic forms of labor and the permanent subjection of life to the force of gravity. The sport of weightlifting enacts that archaism, detached from any practical purpose and absorbed in private ambition.

A fully illustrated catalogue with a text by Russell Ferguson will accompany the exhibition.

**Jeff Wall** was born in 1946 in Vancouver, Canada, where he lives and works. Collections include the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Broad, Los Angeles; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Art Institute of Chicago; Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain, Paris; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, Germany; and Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada. Exhibitions include Museum of Modern Art, New York (2007, traveled to Art Institute of Chicago, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art); *In light, black, colour, white, and dark*, PinchukArtCentre, Kiev (2012); *Jeff Wall Photographs*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth (2012, traveled to National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney, through 2013); Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel (2013); *Tableaux, Pictures, Photographs 1996–2013*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2014, traveled to Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark, through 2015); Kunsthau Bregenz, Austria (2014); Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris (2015); *Appearance*, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Germany (2018); and Mudam Luxembourg (2018).

#JeffWall

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## Press

### Polskin Arts

Meagan Jones | meagan.jones@finnpartners.com | +1 212 593 6485

Gregory Gestner | gregory.gestner@finnpartners.com | +1 212 593 5815

### Gagosian

pressny@gagosian.com | +1 212 744 2313