



UK // VISUAL ARTS
AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

JOHN STEZAKER

Lost World

The art of collage is deceptively simple, yet in the hands of a great artist the juxtaposition of images can give rise to illuminating new meanings.

British artist **John Stezaker** is renowned as one of the world's leading exponents of the form, and since the 1970s has produced a distinctive body of work. This exhibition curated by City Gallery Wellington's Robert Leonard features dozens of striking collages, as well as found-object sculptures and a major collage film work. *Crowd*, presents thousands of populous film stills, twenty-four images per second, in a bewildering blur.

For more than 40 years the self-confessed 'vandal and thief' has been collecting photographs and subjecting them to all kinds of treatment - cutting and slicing, grafting them in uncanny or provocative ways - and along the way has reinvented the art of collage.

The Guardian called Stezaker the 'master of slicing and splicing'. He explores a repertoire of collage techniques. He places postcards on head shots, creating surreal fusions of landscape and face. He grafts head shots to create new gender-and-genre-blending characters. He crops or cuts holes in images to reorient their dramas and reroute their meanings.

Stezaker's work has toured extensively. In his most famous collection, the *Marriage* series, the artist focuses on the

concept of portraiture, both as art historical genre and public identity.

Using publicity shots of classic film stars, Stezaker splices and overlaps famous faces, creating hybrid 'icons' that dissociate the familiar to create sensations of the uncanny.

Re-examining various relationships to the photographic image, Stezaker's collages can be seen as documentation of truth, purveyor of memory, and symbols of modern culture. The artist appropriates images found in books, magazines and postcards and uses them as 'ready mades'. Through his elegant juxtapositions, Stezaker adopts the content and contexts of the original images to convey his own witty and poignant meanings.

Melbourne Festival Artistic Director Jonathan Holloway said: 'I admire the way Stezaker takes existing artworks and breaks them apart and then recreates them, bringing the work back to life and reforming a story.'

'There is something very odd, even unnerving about cutting through a photograph,' Stezaker says, 'It sometimes feels like I am cutting through flesh.'

'An overwhelming onrush of images.' – *The Guardian*

John Stezaker. *Pair XXVII*, 2015.
Collage, 20.3 x 24.2 cm.
Courtesy The Approach, London

Presented with Centre for Contemporary Photography.

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Fri 21 Sep – Sun 11 Nov
Wed – Fri 11am – 5pm
Sat – Sun 12pm – 5pm
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