

**JOHN STEZAKER**

January 7 – February 12, 2011

Opening reception: Friday, January 7<sup>th</sup> from 6 - 8 PM

Friedrich Petzel Gallery is pleased to announce the second solo exhibition of work by the London-based artist John Stezaker.

John Stezaker has been highly influential in the key artistic developments of the last three decades from Conceptual art and Appropriation to the re-emergence of collage. For his second solo show in New York, Stezaker will be showing a selection of silkscreens that were made between 1979 and 1992 and a selection of collages from his 'Dark Star' series from 1979 to 1983.

Both the silkscreens and the 'Dark Star' collages come from a period of time in which Stezaker was a frequent visitor to New York, and both bodies of work bear the imprint of the city. Stezaker's encounter with New York and its culture in the late 70's and early 80's proved to be momentous and inspiring. It not only represented his first comprehensive encounter with American Modernism (especially Warhol and Newman) but was also his first encounter with his American counterparts in Appropriation (Goldstein, Prince, Longo, Kruger, and Levine).

In 1979 Stezaker described New York as 'a city of voyeurs' and his 'Dark Star' works are testimony to his observation. The absented (cut-out) figures of the 'Dark Stars' convert the object of spectacle - the star - into a voyeuristic shadow figure. The remaining photographic aura or spotlight, separated from its figure, cuts the image off from its function in portraiture to become an object of independent, autonomous fascination: they echo what Stezaker has described as 'the dark aura of fascination.' It was Stezaker's contact with New York during this period that confirmed his desire to follow the image: to put aside conceptual ideas about the image, to yield to its pure fascination and to work within the horizons of the found image. Color appeared in his work for the first time, both in the small-scale collages and in the silkscreens, and in both, it was the color of the city at night – of neon and technicolor.

The silkscreens are the only period in his career in which he has worked primarily on a large scale and in color. By 1983-4, the disembodied heads of cinematic voyeurs and kissing couples were replaced by the

multiple headless torsos on silkscreen prints, using images from nudist magazines and soft-porn 'art studies.' Following these, it was the baby heads and then the abstract spheres that went on to punctuate his multiple image silkscreens. But whatever the image that dominates each development of the silkscreens, there is a continual return to a dialogue with modernist painting and geometric abstraction, culminating in the final shaped monochrome canvases, shown here for the first time.

John Stezaker has had numerous solo exhibitions, most recently at The Approach, London; Galerie Gisela Capitain, Köln; and Capitain Petzel, Berlin. An overview of his work will be presented at the Whitechapel Gallery, London, in 2011, and will travel to Musée d'Art Moderne- Grand Duc Jean (Mudam), Luxembourg, and the Kemper Museum, Washington University St. Louis, St. Louis. His works are included in the public collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Tate Collection, London, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Ellipse Foundation, Cacaïs, and the Rubell Family Collection, Miami. He lives and works in London.

Friedrich Petzel Gallery is located at 537 West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street (between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenues) New York, NY 10011. The gallery is open to the public from Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM. For further information, please call (212) 680 – 9467 or email [info@petzel.com](mailto:info@petzel.com).