

*Blackout* centers on the works of Richard Hamilton, Carlo Mollino, and John Stezaker and their use of collage, appropriated image materials, posters, wrappings, and other ready-made image sources. In broadcasting, the term ‘blackout’ is a regulatory ban that prevents the transmission of an event or the full telling of a story. A ‘blackout’ can also refer to the notion of lost time, an aberration of dissociative amnesia. By collaging different materials, images, sources and time epochs, Hamilton, Mollino and Stezaker’s work echoes the optical and chronological anomalies and consequences found in these two notions of blackout.

The works featured in *Blackout* reflect, in part, on how mass consumer imagery, particularly those using the human figure as model in advertising for products, films, or a service, can attain the status of ‘cultural icon’ in collective memory. When landscape becomes body in the case of Stezaker’s compositions, advertising and found imagery coalesce in surreal juxtapositions in the collages of Richard Hamilton, and idealized beauty becomes a lifestyle in Mollino’s erotic polaroids, the context of these cultural icons and their stories become disrupted.

The iconography and architecture surrounding each artist are enmeshed in their work. The visual landscapes of Los Angeles and of northern Italy serve as important reference points and links between the works in *Blackout*. Hamilton (1922-2011), an English painter, collage artist and the founder of Pop Art, frequently incorporated signs, symbols and interiors specific to the city of Los Angeles in his work. Stezaker (b. 1948) unites images from a wide range of sources including old Hollywood movie cards and vintage postcards from Italy that feature townscapes and promenades interposed with human figures and faces, to create an altogether new composition where the urban landscape is integrated with the human form. An all around Renaissance man, Italian architect, engineer, designer and photographer, Mollino (1905-1973) is a fixture in Italian culture. His native city of Turin served as both a backdrop and housed his luxurious villa, *Casa Mollino*, which he referred to as the “warrior’s house of rest.” From there, Mollino painstakingly designed backdrops for his late-night photo sessions. The architectural spaces and landscapes within these works, combined with the interspersed cultural media and the human form, create a blackout and disruption of recognition, as the familiar is spliced in and out of context.

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