

# G A L E R I E G I S E L A C A P I T A I N

J O H N S T E Z A K E R

September 05 – November 07, 2009

---

John Stezaker (born 1949, lives and works in London) has been working with found materials since the 1970s, creating collages from film-stills, pages from books, encyclopedias, catalogues, postcards and autograph cards.

Stezaker's work is instantly engaging, but draws us in only to disturb our initial perceptions. The familiarity of the material and its subject matters gives us tools with which to understand the work, but its arrangement and juxtaposition challenges the very nature of our viewing habits. By playing with the protocols and conventions of visual language, our curiosity and identification is transformed into astonishment, bewilderment and fascination.

The richness of the works material allows potential narratives to unfold and interweave; lines and contours that seem unresolved, merge into each other, continuing into the next image plane, creating new and uncanny meanings. The narratives become imaginary, formal and conceptual – but are mutually conflicting and overlapping. It is this exaggerated ambivalence between competing and overlapping narratives that makes Stezaker's collages an intellectual and optical challenge.

In his first exhibition at Galerie Gisela Capitain John Stezaker shows his early screen-printed canvasses for the first time in 20 years. Made between 1975 and 1990 these striking silk-screens show Stezaker employing the formal devices of high modernism.

Two canvasses from this period, showing a white plane on black ground, provide a formal link between the silk-screens and the collages, the blank space appears as a site of projection, desire and the imagination.