

GAGOSIAN

28 September 2016

JOSEPHINE MECKSEPER

October 19–December 21, 2016

Opening reception:
Wednesday, October 19, 6–8 PM

Gagosian
4 rue de Ponthieu
www.gagosian.com



My work looks at our post-industrial age: found materials, pasted-over street advertisements, window displays, ephemera from social interactions—together they create a record of a temporal environment or situation.
—Josephine Meckseper

Gagosian is pleased to present Josephine Meckseper's first solo exhibition in Paris.

Meckseper has devised an installation for the gallery's street-level vitrine, informed in part by Walter Benjamin's paradigmatic *The Arcades Project*. Looking into shop windows as he strolled through the typical arcades of his city, Benjamin compiled sensations and quotations of mid-nineteenth century Paris that effectively blurred the historical distinctions between high and low culture. In her window installation, Meckseper continues in this spirit, conflating items of art history and consumer history, and underscoring the enduring mechanics of what Benjamin termed "exhibition value."

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The mirrored interior walls of Meckseper's vitrine reflect the objects contained as well as the outside street. Immanuel Kant's question of whether the mirror image is a thing in itself or a representation of individual perception pervades the enclosed yet infinite space, which includes painted wooden sculptures and a silvered canvas of a torn and layered street poster in the resistant spirit of *affichage*. Shoes, hung like ornaments on a chrome display tree, and a shiny hubcap rest upon modern sculpture pedestals. Meckseper utilizes banal materials, from denim jeans to car parts, confronting the "readymade" with the refinement of "high art," though unlike her postwar predecessors, they maintain a pristine quality. Even a lurid purple toilet mat feels sumptuous and dignified when framed with plumbing pipe and hung like a painting.

Behind glass, commodities exist in an untouchable utopic state, magically becoming equal in social value. *The Dawn* (2013), a display case lit by fluorescent light, offers a view of familiar fragments in unfamiliar combinations: a cast concrete mannequin's leg is placed with an "expressionist" abstract painting. In *Shelf No. 32* (2005), Meckseper explores the way in which this same phenomenon relates to the desecration of windows and storefronts in protest culture. In the shattered mirror, the viewer confronts his or her own identity among the shards of political unrest.

Large-scale canvas works, digitally manipulated to take on a paint-like texture, function as both abstract compositions and contemporary readymades. Meckseper's paintings recall the lacerated surfaces of *affichage* poster works by Jacques Villeglé and Mimmo Rotella, but here the multilayered images are of fragmented street billboards that echo Benjamin's influential essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." By both material and conceptual means, Meckseper provokes the unsuspecting flâneur to look more closely at the mechanisms of capitalism and the paradoxes that reside in the ruins of today's consumer culture.

Josephine Meckseper was born in Lilienthal, Germany and lives and works in New York City. Institutional collections in which her work features include the Brooklyn Museum; FRAC Nord - Pas-de-Calais, Dunkerque, France; Kunsthalle Bremen, Germany; Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Germany; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich, Switzerland; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum on the Seam, Jerusalem; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Recent institutional exhibitions include Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Stuttgart (2007); GAK, Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen (2008); "New Photography 2008: Josephine Meckseper and Mikhail Subotzky," Museum of Modern Art, New York (2008); "Josephine Meckseper: Recent Films," Indianapolis Museum of Art (2009); Blaffer Gallery, The Art Museum of the University of Houston (2009); "American Apparel," Nottingham Contemporary, UK (2009); Migros Museum Für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich, Switzerland (2009); Parrish Art Museum, New York (2013); and "2X (I) ST," Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Germany (2014). In 2012, Manhattan Oil Project, Meckseper's first public project in New York, was commissioned by Art Production Fund and installed adjacent to Times Square. She participated in the Whitney Biennial (2006, 2010); 2nd International Biennial of Contemporary Art of Seville, Seville (2006); Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2007); Sharjah Biennial (2011); and Taipei Biennial (2014).

For further inquiries please contact the gallery at paris@gagosian.com or at +33.1.75.00.05.92. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

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