

KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

JOHN LEHR
THE ISLAND POSITION
MARCH 22 – MAY 11, 2019

Opening Friday, March 22, from 6-8 PM

PRESS RELEASE

John Lehr's *The Island Position* marks a sea change in our cultural and economic landscape, brought about by the accelerated rise of e-commerce. Comprised of 24 photographic works, Lehr's exhibition addresses the commercial facades that line the main streets and thoroughfares of the United States. Its title borrows from an advertising term for a privileged space surrounded only by editorial content, unimpeded in its command of the consumer's attention.

The surfaces in *The Island Position* masquerade as a typology of storefronts and embody something unseen - the people who construct them. The signage is not simply an appeal to consumption, but a typography of emotion using the language of capitalism as a form of public address.

Lehr's subject matter extends a formal tradition exemplified by Eugène Atget, Walker Evans, Lewis Baltz, and Moyra Davey. Shot with a view camera and altered further digitally, his work transcends the documentary by overriding the hierarchy of light typical to the photograph, and altering perspective. In this way Lehr relocates his storefronts to a graphic hyperreal space more akin to advertising than to the city street.

While *The Island Position* bears a continued investment in the physical and intimate, the work shirks romanticism or nostalgia. In the time of Amazon and the digital showroom, Lehr's images locate themselves in the thinly stretched divide between real and virtual space, scarcity and abundance, settling somewhere near their breaking point.

Coinciding with this exhibition MACK Books will publish Lehr's first monograph, *The Island Position*. The book features a large selection of works from the series and is accompanied by a short story by George Saunders.

John Lehr (USA, b. 1975 in Baltimore, MD) graduated from Maryland Institute College of Art and received his MFA from Yale University. Lehr's work has been exhibited at venues including The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, NY; The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; The Museum of Modern Art, NY; Center for Creative Photography in Tucson, AZ; and The Yale Art and Architecture Gallery, New Haven, CT. He lives and works between Brooklyn, NY and Philadelphia, PA.