

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

509 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

**John Houck: *Tenth Mountain*
July 27 - October 1, 2017**

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Los Angeles-based artist John Houck at its recently opened Aspen, CO location, Boesky West. The exhibition marks an important shift for the artist as he more deeply embraces painting as part of his photography practice, furthering the compositional complexity of his work. Titled *Tenth Mountain*, a reference to the Tenth Mountain Division of the United States Army of which his grandfather was a part, the show also emphasizes the ongoing importance of personal narratives to Houck's creative process. The exhibition will be on view from July 27 through October 1, 2017.

Many of Houck's prior works have depicted mementos from his past, dug up from his childhood and given—or re-given—to him by his parents. Houck's interest in representing elements of his personal history stem from his intimate engagement with psychoanalysis—one school of which relates childhood experience to adult identity. For *Tenth Mountain*, Houck explores the images, objects, and narratives that engage his memories of growing up in the awe-inspiring environs of Colorado and his family's broader connections to the rugged landscape. The Tenth Mountain division was trained specifically for combat in extreme mountainous and arctic conditions, including specialized training on skis. Many members were trained in the Colorado Rockies and returned to start ski resorts such as Vail. Houck's grandfather's belongings related to this period of his life have long captivated the artist, and the featured works, most of which were created especially for the show, feel particularly resonant at Boesky West.

Houck creates his photographs through a layered and systematic approach, capturing a set of objects and then re-photographing them atop of their own images. He repeats this process—sometimes just a few times and in other instances over and over—augmenting and building up the relationships between the objects and visual plane until the picture feels complete. The resultant work is a kind of photograph of itself, seen through multiple perspectives at once. The unfixed nature of these compositions merges the real and imagined, confounding the viewer's expectation of the photograph as a medium of true-to-life representation. Houck's practice is distinguished by this type of deconstruction of accepted binaries, undulating between structure and play, rationality and emotion, and personal reference and invented moment.

These dichotomies are further accentuated by the introduction of painting and mark-making. Fascinated by the medium since graduate school, in recent years it has become an increasingly critical aspect of the Houck's process, disrupting the methodical cycle of re-photographing with free form gesture. The painterly marks appear in a diversity of contexts within Houck's pictures: running under, over, and through the photographed objects; as painted representations of those objects; and on the physical objects themselves. These different actions heighten the sense of shifting perspective in Houck's work, and transform the photograph into a compositional screen through which figure and ground are examined, altered, and remade.

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John Houck has shown extensively in the United States and abroad. His recent solo exhibitions include *The Anthologist* at Dallas Contemporary in Dallas, TX (2017), *Playing and Reality* at On Stellar Rays in New York, NY (2016), *New Weather* at Johan Berggren Gallery in Malmo, Sweden (2015), and *ij* Max Wigram Gallery in London, UK (2013), among others. He has also participated in a range of group shows, including those at COMA Gallery, Sydney, Australia (2017), the International Center of Photography, New York, NY (2016), the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2015), and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA (2014). His works are in several prominent museums and private collections, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles. He received his MFA from UCLA, Los Angeles, CA in 2007 and a BA in Architecture from Colorado University, Boulder, CO in 2000. He also completed the Whitney Independent Study (2010) and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2008) programs.

For general information about John Houck, please contact Gallery Director Kelly Woods at kelly@boeskygallery.com or 212.680.9889. For press inquiries, please contact Alina Sumajin, PAVE Communications and Consulting, at alina@paveconsult.com or 646-369-2050.

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