

John Stezaker *Mask CCXI*, 2016

City Gallery Wellington
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John Stezaker: Lost World

About the Exhibition

John Stezaker is a British artist famous for his distinctive, often deceptively simple collages.

Stezaker says collage is about 'stuff that has lost its immediate relationship with the world' and involves 'a yearning for a lost world'. He is a collector. He works from an archive of out-of-date images—mostly old film stills, actor head shots, and postcards.

Collage involves taking existing images and materials, decontextualising them, reorienting them, cutting them, and pasting them. But Stezaker's collages often only do a few of these things. Sometimes he cuts and pastes, sometimes just cuts or just pastes. Indeed, sometimes he just selects, presenting a found image more or less as is. (He calls these ones readymades, as a nod to Marcel Duchamp.)

In this time of Photoshop, which makes melding images a breeze, Stezaker prefers to make collages the old way, working with his source materials as is, exploiting the ways they fit and don't fit together.

About Your Visit

Our education programme will examine collage techniques exploring the effects of making unlikely connections between found images. We will play surrealist-art games involving chance to explore different approaches for generating ideas.

Pre-Visit Discussion

What type of things does the exhibition title *Lost World* conjure in your imagination? Discuss what you might expect to see at the gallery.

Stezaker uses collage techniques. Discuss which collage techniques are you already familiar with and what you enjoy about making collages.

Stezaker often uses old found postcards in his collages. Postcards are declining in popularity, being outmoded by digital communications. Discuss if you have you ever sent or received a postcard. And if so, describe where it was from and what picture it included. Would you prefer to send or receive a postcard rather than some form of digital message? Share your reasons why.

Post-Visit Activities

Reflect on your visit. What did you learn about Stezaker and his approach to creativity? What stories do his images bring to mind? Which Stezaker work do you find most memorable and why?

Write a poem inspired by one of Stezaker's collages. Begin by writing a list of five adjectives you associate with the image, then five verbs, and finally five nouns. Randomly select a word from each list and place them together to form each line of your poem.

Devise a short story inspired by two of Stezaker's collages. Form a link between the characters and places featured in the collages via a dramatic event that unfolds during your story.

Compare Stezaker's work with other artists who have used collage techniques. Look at these ten international collage artists: www.anothermag.com/art-photography/3318/top-10-collage-artists-hannah-hoch-to-man-ray or New Zealand artist Peter Madden: www.ivananthony.com/peter-madden/
What similarities and differences can you identify?

Experiment with a collage (cut and paste) technique you haven't tried before. Choose from: decoupage (on the surface of a 3D object), photomontage (with photographs), digital collage (using a computer), mosaic collage (with small fragments of images or found items), 3D collage (using 3D objects). Or combine one of these collage techniques with another medium such as drawing, printmaking or painting to create a multi-media artwork.

Research dada or surrealist artists. Like Stezaker, their work often featured unlikely connections between seemingly random elements or involved found images and objects. Select a technique used by dada or surrealist artists to try yourself.
Dada techniques: www.nga.gov/exhibitions/2006/dada/techniques/index.shtm
Surrealist techniques: www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrealist_techniques
What did you enjoy about the technique? Did you find it challenging?