

## James Casebere

26 November – 15 January 2016  
Via Zenale 3, Milan, 20123

James Casebere's first solo exhibition in Milan presents recent bodies of work that take the natural world as their subject matter and iconic works of art as their starting points. The American artist's staged photographs – shot in the studio from models that have been intricately assembled and cinematically lit – present a pastoral that is permeated with culture.

For over forty years Casebere has explored the fictional possibilities of photography, testing his medium's supposed truth-telling properties to document fabrications of reality. His pictures are both poetic and political, creating simulacra that usurp reality to expose what art historian Hal Foster considers "a psychopathology of everyday life". Casebere's works have progressively depicted a wider perspective: the surrealist domestic scenes and claustrophobic vistas of his early pieces gave way to hauntingly evocative architectural interiors and exteriors of building typologies found both in the United States and the Middle East, while his *Duchess County* series (begun in 2009 and still ongoing) takes an aerial perspective of an entirely made-up, though acutely plausible community.

He has also depicted urban areas blighted by mortgage foreclosures, hurricane Sandy and even destroyed by fire, although he is often attracted as much by the architecture, as in a series of wooden beach houses, one of which was originally built as a local life-boat station, again positing a site of potential catastrophe or rescue. In all these un-peopled environments, Casebere produces a deep ambiguity, pulling the viewer in as a participant through distortions that seem psychologically wrought and convey an uncanny sense of foreboding.

For his exhibition in Milan, Casebere once again executes a shift in perspective, this time immersing the viewer in the midst of landscapes that directly reference the art of the past to critically address man's uneasy relationship with nature today. A major new piece from last year, *Sea of Ice*, and related works *Trees and Bushes in the Snow* (all 2014) revisit the work of the German Romantic landscape painter Caspar David Friedrich (1774 – 1840) to comment subtly on climate crisis. In *Sea of Ice*, Friedrich's famous scene of frozen desolation currently housed at Kunsthalle Hamburg in Germany, has been exquisitely recreated by Casebere in his studio out of simple materials, suggesting the terrible sublime of nature has been entirely requisitioned by man, its spirituality no longer tenable. Taking inspiration from Friedrich's painting of the same name, Casebere's *Trees and Bushes in the Snow* series, meanwhile, employ found materials — real vegetation from the artist's garden and kitchen ingredients such as bicarbonate of soda whose pristine whiteness is a chemical stand-in for the unadulterated purity of snow.

### About the artist

James Casebere's pioneering work has established him at the forefront of artists working with constructed photography. Since the mid-'70s Casebere has devised increasingly complex models and photographed them in his studio, creating photographic tableaux that subtly lay bare their own devices to inhabit the gap between abstraction and image, painting and photography.

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# LISSON GALLERY

Casebere was born in 1953 in Lansing, Michigan and currently lives and works in New York. His work has been associated with the Pictures Generation of postmodern artists who emerged in the 1980s, which included Barbara Kruger, Robert Longo, Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman, Laurie Simmons, and featured in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 2009 landmark exhibition of that name. His art has been collected by museums worldwide, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, the Los Angeles County Museum, the Victoria and Albert and Tate Museums in London, among many others. Casebere's work can currently be viewed in 'Model Behaviour' at The Holden Gallery, Manchester, until 11 December 2015; and a major retrospective, *James Casebere: Fugitive*, curated by Okwui Enwezor will open at Haus der Kunst in Munich, Germany from 12 February – 12 June 2016.

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## About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, it pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Sol LeWitt and Richard Long, as well as those of significant British sculptors from Anish Kapoor and Tony Cragg to a younger generation, led by Ryan Gander and Haroon Mirza. In addition to its two exhibition spaces in London, one in Milan and a fourth gallery to open under the High Line in New York in 2015, the *Lisson Presents* programme also extends a legacy of curatorial innovation beyond the galleries, working with institutions and artists to present new initiatives around the world.

## Opening Hours

Monday-Friday, 10am-6pm.

Closed between 1 – 3pm.

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