

Liz Deschenes

in dialogue with Lucia Moholy

26.5.–15.7.23

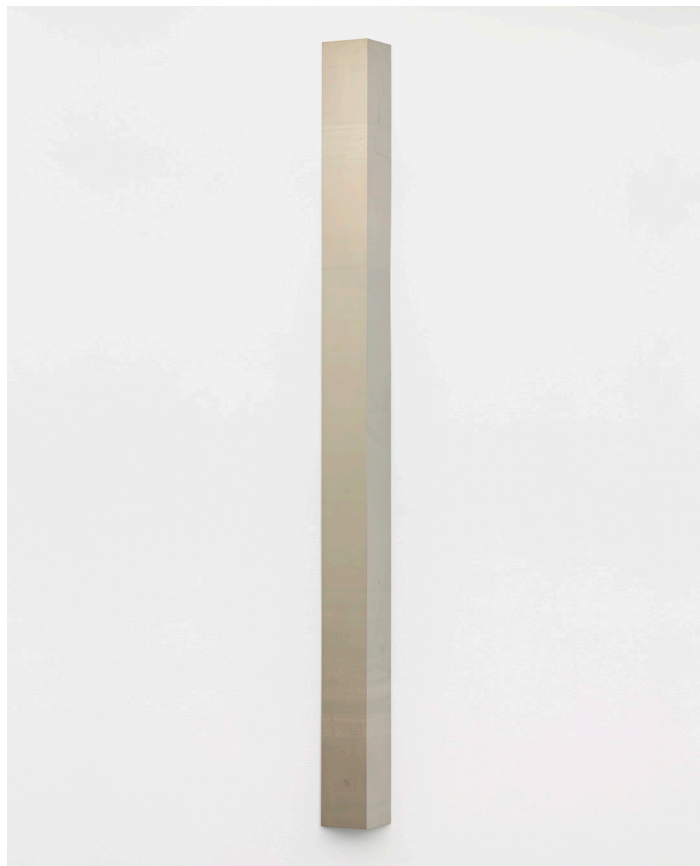
We are delighted to present an exhibition of American artist Liz Deschenes (US 1966), who has initiated a dialogue with the often-overlooked Bauhaus artist Lucia Moholy (HUN/AT1894-1989). What unites both artists, is their approach to photography, which is guided by experimentation with the technical conditions of the medium, the construction of new perspectives on reality, and a deep interest in architecture as well as its influence on our perception.

Described as the “quiet giant of post-conceptual photography” in the New York Times in 2014, Liz Deschenes liberates her photographic-sculptural works from any representational task historically assigned to photography. Her minimalist works focus on the conditions of perception and the technical coordinates of “image making”: material, place, time, and architecture. The “how we see our reality” thus is always intertwined with a political component in Liz Deschenes’ work. According to Eva Respini,

“At the core, Deschenes’s work embodies resistance: the resistance to one definition of photography, the resistance to time, and the resistance to representation, a deeply personal and political act. The resistance to representation in many forms also includes the representation of identity, gender, and the body. The closer we look, the more the work reveals its numerous layers. Depending on the day, the weather, the architecture, and if somebody else is in the gallery with a viewer, each encounter with Deschenes’s work is a profoundly unique experience that speaks to our fundamental desire for art to transform us.”

Lucia Moholy’s works are known throughout the world. However, more often than not, without the public attributing these images to her. As a photographer and publicist of the Bauhaus in Dessau, her perspective on its architecture and the objects produced there significantly shaped the school’s image. The main focus of her work is architecture and object photography. Lucia Moholy’s use of the camera and photographic techniques has proven her out-standing approach to photography. As Liz Deschenes points out

“How she managed to capture the buildings, interiors, objects, and what could not be easily recorded - the atmosphere and translation of space to the photographic planes, that she accomplished through a deft rendition of tones and forms, that solidified complex formal relationships. These renditions could only have been arrived at by her understanding of photography’s vast potential.”



Stereograph #35, 2019

Silver toned photogram mounted on Dibond
213,4 x 17,8 x 12,4 cm

The original vintage photographs in the exhibition Staircase, Children’s Chairs, Master Houses Dessau Haus Gropius, Dining Room Corner, Master Houses Dessau, Northwest Side and Bauhaus from the Northeast show both, Lucia Moholy’s subjective-artistic view of “her” reality and at the same time the new conception of architecture and design in the 1930s, which was aiming to make life “better”. This particular point of view, oscillating between outside and inside perspectives, connects Lucia Moholy and Liz Deschenes, who was born over 70 years later.

The title of Liz Deschenes’ 30-part work “FPS (45)” refers to the film term “frames per second” and is directly related to the artist’s interest in the experiments of the scientist and chronophotographer Étienne-Jules Marey (1830-1904), who developed a method of capturing sequences of movement on a single elongated photographic print by rattling a photosensitive film through the lens at 60 frames per second. Deschene’s sequentially installed photograms “FPS (45)” translates the capture of space and time into an “embodied form” of time in the midst of real architecture.

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The 2-part work "Stereograph 36" is part of the series, which she started on the occasion of her solo exhibition at the Vienna Secession in 2012. The title refers to the photographic technique of the same name. Stereography is used to create images that appear to be three-dimensional when viewed through a specific apparatus. To create such an image a motif is photographed from two slightly different angles, mimicking the individual perspective of each of the viewer's eyes. The spatial shift is an integral part of the technical construction of seeing and the term "camera" derives from the Latin word for "room". By "folding" the two parts of the work and thus creating a factual double image of the real architectural space, Liz Deschenes picks up on the idea that photography is tied to movement through space, transforming our perception.

Biographical Notices Liz Deschenes:

Liz Deschenes (1966) lives and works in New York. Her works are part of museum collections such as Centre Pompidou, Museum of Modern Art New York, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, The Art Institute of Chicago, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco Aishti Foundation, Beirut, Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami or Pinault Collection. Her work is currently featured in the exhibitions "Une seconde d'éternité", Pinault Collection - Bourse de Commerce, Paris. Last year she participated in the exhibitions "Shifting the Silence", San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and in the Biennale de Genève: "Sculpture Garden". In 2021, Liz Deschenes was featured in the exhibitions "True Pictures?" at the Sprengel Museum in Hannover, Off the Wall at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and "The Inconstant World" at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. In 2020, her work was on display at Art Institute of Chicago in the exhibition "Photography + Fine Art: Material Meanings - Selections from the Contance R. Caplan Collection". The artist was presented in a group exhibition at Punta Della Dogana / Pinault Collection, Venice (2019). Past solo exhibitions include the ICA, Boston (2016); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2014); MASSMoCA, North Adams (2015) and Secession, Vienna (2012-2013). Deschenes' work was included in Collected by Thea Westreich Wagner and Ethan Wagner at the Whitney Museum, New York (2015) traveling to the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2016).



Treppenhaus Bauhaus Weimar mit Wandgestaltung von Herbert Bayer, 1923

vintage print
23 x 17,5 cm

Biographical Notices Lucia Moholy:

Lucia Moholy's (HUN/AT1894-1989) works are part of important institutional collections such as Museum Ludwig in Cologne, Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, and MoMA New York. In 2019/2020, the Museum Ludwig in Cologne dedicated a solo exhibition to her and, more recently, the Bröhan Museum in Berlin (2022-23). Lucia Moholy is considered the "silent co-author" of László Moholy-Nagy's officially published book *Painting Photography Film* (1925). She was instrumental in formulating the manifesto on the "New Vision" and developed techniques of camera-less photography such as the photogram. Because of her Jewish origins, she emigrated to Berlin and finally London in the 1930s. After Walter Gropius kept the negatives of her photographs and repeatedly published them without crediting Lucia Moholy, she regained the image rights after a complex legal dispute in the 1950s and thus the authorship of "her" pictures.

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