

Press release

John Miller
The Insanity of Place

June 24 – August 5, 2017
Opening Saturday, June 24, 6–9 pm
Gallery hours, Tue–Sa, 11 am – 6 pm

In John Miller's seventh solo exhibition at Galerie Barbara Weiss the central element – both spatially and conceptually – is a simple construction to display light boxes, inviting the viewer to circle around. To produce the images for these light boxes, Miller has drawn from two previous bodies of work. One is his ongoing project *The Middle of the Day* in which he shoots photographs – usually in public space – between 12:00 and 2:00 pm. Over such images, Miller has superimposed silhouettes that recall some of the brown impasto paintings and sculptures, presented 30 years ago at American Fine Arts in New York. These overlays suggest mirages or imaginary public monuments.

The exhibition's title – *The Insanity of Place* – refers to the Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman (1922-82), who had published a paper of the same title in 1969. In this field study, Goffman investigated into the precarious situation of inmates in mental hospitals and the different realities that collide in these institutions. The titles of the light boxes are all taken from other writings by Goffman, for example *As I move from one reality to the other, I experience the transition as a kind of shock* or *I experience everyday life in the state of being wide-awake*.

The slightly dimmed exhibition display is framed by black-and-white wallpaper on both ends of the gallery. Edited and turned into a repetitive pattern, the wallpaper depicts an irritating urban situation of reflections, architecture and bridal fashion.

The third element of the exhibition is the PowerPoint presentation *Primary Structures*, 2017. The technically simple slide show made from found imagery as well as Miller's own embedded in a narrative that departs consciously from lavish video art and instead invites the viewer to reflect upon perception, contingency and mortality. "Right and wrong is a matter of context" is one of the first observations here. The piece goes on to reference, among other things, Chinese funeral rituals, dissatisfied customer reviews from Amazon.com and symptoms of dementia.

The juxtaposition of light boxes, wallpaper and PowerPoint points to a subjective relationship to specific sites and how tenuous that relationship can be, especially through memory.