

KATE WERBLE

JOHN LEHR
THE LAST THINGS
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PRESS RELEASE

"We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry." (W. B. Yeats, Anima Hominis, sect. 5.)

John Lehr's new exhibition of 16 photographs and 3 sculptures, titled *The Last Things*, depicts artifacts of a contemporary American archeological present: vernacular forms of architecture, signage, images, and objects made in a rush for attention, or abandoned in place after their usefulness expired. Lehr uses the language of public discourse as a springboard for uncovering the complexity and nuance of personal expression. His work vividly describes the current language of capitalism as a form of public address.

Each of Lehr's photographs are shown in a plexiglass frame, without glass, presented as mesmerizing objects to be displayed and also consumed. The pictures are printed in his studio with hyperreal detail and painterly attention to color. Words and images repeat and contradict, reflecting emphatic pleas and shifting priorities. Flaking paint morphs into JPEG vinyl printouts and LED displays, blurring the line between commercial speech and individual expression and what human marks are left behind.

The 3 sculptures in the exhibition embody a phenomenon that often occurs in Lehr's photographs: Image objects appear to have been dismantled as they were being observed, and then reappear in fragmentary new forms. Embedded in Lehr's work is a belief in the power and absurdity of objects that bear the traces of collective experience.

John Lehr (USA, b. 1975 in Baltimore, MD) graduated from the Maryland Institute College of Art (Baltimore, MD, 1995) and received his MFA in photography from Yale University (New Haven, CT, 2005). Lehr's work has been exhibited at venues including The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, NY; The Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, AZ; the Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; The Museum of Modern Art, NY; Center for Creative Photography in Tucson, AZ; the Yale Art and Architecture Gallery, New Haven, CT. His photographs are held in numerous public collections including The Morgan Library and Museum, New York, NY; Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, OH; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Davidson Art Center, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; the Yale University Library, New Haven CT; the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO. He has produced four monographs: "El Camino Real", (2018), published by Roman Nvmerals, "The Island Position", (2019), published by MACK, "Remote Sensing" (2024), published by Georgetown University, and "The Last Things" (2024), published by TBW Books. Lehr currently lives and works between Brooklyn, NY and Philadelphia, PA.