

Richard Misrach: At the still point of the turning world, 2002-2022

March 11 – April 16, 2022
 510 West 25th Street
 New York



Richard Misrach, *Acrobat Super Grid* (2012/2021) © Richard Misrach, courtesy Pace Gallery

New York – Pace is pleased to present *At the still point of the turning world, 2002-2022*, an exhibition of work by photographer Richard Misrach, at its 510 West 25th Street gallery in New York. On view from March 11 to April 16, the presentation will spotlight photographs from Misrach’s *On the Beach*, *State of the Union*, *Notations*, and *Acrobats* series, among other bodies of work. Marking Misrach’s fifth exhibition at Pace’s New York gallery, this show foregrounds the artist’s mesmeric images that meditate on humans’ relationships to the natural world and each other.

To complement Misrach’s *Acrobats* series, which depicts tandem surfers practicing amid the ocean’s waves, the exhibition will feature Alexander Calder’s sculpture *Acrobats* (c. 1927). Together, these works open a dialogue between the two artists, centering ideas of movement and the body.

The exhibition comprises large-scale images of views seen from the same hotel balcony in Hawaii over the course of two decades. In a statement about his exhibition, Misrach enumerates what he has witnessed throughout the series. “For the past 20 years, I have stood at the still point while below me the world unfolded on the beach. The surfers. Bathers. The serious swimmers out at dawn—will they make it back? The sun worshippers. Kayakers. Yoga practitioners. The boot camp aficionados and their trainers ... Those who kissed and those who mercilessly splashed others ... The baptisms. A couple of shipwrecks on the reef...”

Imbued with mystery, *On the Beach* was partly informed by Walker Evans’s 1938 subway portrait series *Many Are Called*. Misrach says, “I read somewhere that he considered the subway, where he snapped pictures of strangers, his portrait studio. I loved that idea. Similarly, I have come to consider my eighth-floor perch of this hotel in Hawaii as my working studio. Down below, it seems as though the whole world passes before me. It’s a perfect spot to observe social interaction, our engagement with the natural world, and the sheer beauty of nature itself.”

These works can be understood as portraits despite the subjects’ distance from the photographer. Several large panels illustrate humans’ seemingly universal need to float on their backs, open to any contingency and oblivious to all. Another image shows a couple seated on the beach from two different angles. As the couple took a selfie, Misrach photographed them at the exact same moment. He later retrieved the selfie from the couple and incorporated both

images into a single print. “For me this uncanny duet launched a whole new series about the ubiquity and simultaneity of picture-taking in these digital times,” Misrach says of the work. “This picture embodies both a technological and cultural paradigm shift.”

A pioneer and champion of color photography since the 1970s, Misrach creates poignant, dynamic images that lean into contemporary issues and engage with the history of photography. Some of his recent work has focused on the US Mexico border and the aftermath of the 2016 US presidential election as seen through the landscape. He is currently completing a two-year commission to provide all the art for the UCSF Nancy Friend Pritzker Psychiatry Building in San Francisco.

Misrach’s monograph *Notations*, an homage to the end of the analog era in photography, will be released by Radius Books in March, coinciding with Pace’s exhibition.

Richard Misrach (b. 1949, Los Angeles, California) is considered one of the most influential photographers of his generation, instrumental in pioneering the use of color photography and large-scale format in the 1970s.

He graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1971 with a BA in Psychology.

For over 50 years, Misrach has photographed the dynamic landscape of the American West through an environmentally aware and politically astute lens. His visually seductive, large-scale color vistas powerfully document the devastating ecological effects of human intervention, industrial development, nuclear testing and petrochemical pollution on the natural world. His best known and ongoing epic series, *Desert Cantos*, comprises 40 distinct but related groups of pictures that explore the complex conjunction between mankind and nature. Otherworldly images of desert seas, rock formations, and clouds are juxtaposed with unsettling scenes of desert fires, nuclear test sites, and animal burial pits. Recent chapters capture the highly charged political climate following the 2016 US presidential election through photographs of spray-painted graffiti messages scrawled on abandoned buildings and remote rocky outcroppings in desolate areas of the Desert Southwest.

Other bodies of work include *Golden Gate*, a careful study of times of day, weather, and light around San Francisco’s famed bridge; *On the Beach*, aerial views of individuals and groups against a backdrop of water and sand; *Notations*, ravishing landscapes and seascapes in a reversed color spectrum; *Destroy This Memory*, a haunting document shot with a 4-megapixel pocket camera of graffiti found in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; and *Petrochemical America*, an in-depth examination of petrochemical pollution along the Mississippi River produced in collaboration with landscape architect Kate Orff.

Pace is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon.

The gallery has also spearheaded explorations into the intersection of art and technology through its new business models, exhibition interpretation tools, and representation of artists cultivating advanced studio practices. Pace’s presence in Silicon Valley since 2016 has bolstered its longstanding support of experimental practices and digital artmaking. As part of its commitment to innovative, technologically engaged artists within and beyond its program, Pace launched its own dedicated NFT platform, *Pace Verso*, in November 2021. The gallery’s past NFT projects have spotlighted digital works by Glenn Kaino, DRIFT, Lucas Samaras, Simon Denny, Urs Fischer, John Gerrard, and other artists.



Today, Pace has nine locations worldwide including London, Geneva, a strong foothold in Palo Alto, and two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, as well as an office and viewing room in Beijing. In 2020, Pace opened temporary exhibition spaces in East Hampton and Palm Beach, with continued programming on a seasonal basis.




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