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FAKE EMPIRE

Olivo Barbieri, Rob Carter, Susan Giles, Dionisio Gonzalez, Lee Stoetzel
curated by Lee Stoetzel
June 8- July 6
Opening: Friday, June 8, 6-8pm

Mixed Greens is pleased to present *Fake Empire,* a group exhibition curated by Lee Stoetzel. As curator and participant, Stoetzel joins four other contemporary artists who use hyperbole to question our absurd exploitation of important historic sites. Churches, monuments, and ancient architecture are constructed, spliced together, or torn apart to create visually jarring images and objects.

Currently, American tourists visiting the Giza Plateau are recommended by Trip Advisor to eat at the KFC/Taco Bell situated at the foot of the Sphinx. If you can't make it to Egypt, you can stay at the Luxor Hotel in Las Vegas to visit the half-scale Sphinx and the half-scale Eiffel Tower within a few minutes of each other. Modern buildings are built next to structures hundreds of years old; Disney has made it hard to decipher cartoons from historic precedent; and mashups are de rigueur.

Italian artist Olivo Barbieri uses tilt-shift lenses to create foreshortened aerial perspectives of famous monuments and recognizable skylines. In his Site Specific series on Las Vegas, 1:2 scale buildings, such as the Luxor Hotel and the Sphinx, appear as miniature, toy-like tabletop models in photographs and video. In other works documenting the Roman Coliseum, he shows tourists crawling around the fragile ancient site like ants.

Chicago artist Susan Giles works with paper to build historically important buildings, splicing them together to make new hybrids. One architectural style is blurred into another as a metaphor for the experience of traveling. When ceiling mounted, scale models of castles, towers, and churches are installed upside down to reference the primal architecture of a cave's stalactites.

Philadelphia artist Lee Stoetzel constructs models of cultural monuments, including the Pyramids and the Great Sphinx of Giza, using American fast food. French fries and chicken nuggets portray limestone megaliths and critique chain restaurants invading land near World Heritage Sites. The photographs are printed in black and white to mimic early National Geographic photographs of the sites.

Dionisio Gonzalez is a Spanish photographer using Photoshop to insert buildings by Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Louis Kahn into the historic city of Venice. Buildings by these modern architectural masters were proposed but never realized due to Italian bureaucracy. As he says about his project, "I have created a Venice that could have been."

British artist Rob Carter's stop-action animation Stone on Stone dismantles Le Corbusier's modernist Sainte-Marie de La Tourette monastery in France and the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City, which has been under construction since 1892. Carter takes us back to the beginning of architecture to quarry the stone, erect the religious monument, and experience the grand highlights of architectural styles, but everything we see and experience is miniature, re-cut by his hand.