

Tristan Hoare

Movie Theaters

Yves Marchand & Romain Meffre



Proctor's Theater, Troy, NY (2012)

EXHIBITION

10TH FEB - 11TH MAR 2022

TUES - SAT, 11AM - 6PM

TRISTAN HOARE

6 FITZROY SQUARE

LONDON W1T 5DX

Movie Theaters

Yves Marchand & Romain Meffre

Tristan Hoare is delighted to present *Movie Theaters* by Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre, the result of a 15-year collaboration between the two French photographers which captures the former “cathedrals of cinema” of America. Shooting with a large format 4x5 camera using long exposures in dimly-lit auditoriums, the images are conceived as historical documents of what was once the Golden Era of the American movie-going experience.

The exhibition is accompanied by Marchand and Meffre’s newly published book, *Movie Theaters* (Prestel, 2021), in the making since the inception of the project 16 years ago. This bygone era of entertainment is captured in 260 coloured illustrations over 300 pages, presented in an oversized linen-bound hardcover format. This will be Marchand and Meffre’s 4th photobook which we are thrilled to be launching alongside the exhibition.

Understanding the history of motion picture exhibition is central to the context and content of Marchand and Meffre’s photography. At the start of the 20th century, thousands of ornate movie palaces were built across America, seating patrons in lavish settings for film screenings, live shows, newsreels and other ‘shorts’ that presented opportunities for education, information and entertainment. However, after World War II, the introduction of television, the rise of the multiplex and the dissolution of city centres caused lavish movie palaces to become outdated. In the ‘60s, ‘70s, and ‘80s, many were demolished to make way for parking lots, or sold off for other redevelopments. Some were converted into multiplexes, performing arts



United Artists Theatre, Detroit (2005)

centres, or adult theaters. Others were repurposed into different (and somewhat incongruent) businesses entirely. The remainder were simply left to fall apart.

In 2005, Marchand and Meffre first came across these atmospheric venues while capturing images for their *Ruins of Detroit* series. Their first foray into a former movie palace was the United Artists Theatre in Detroit, its Neo-gothic interior whitened by three decades of abandonment. Subsequently, noticing the sorry state of many of the movie theatres they came across in Detroit, they began to investigate beyond the city and found that this was the case all across America. Since then, Marchand and Meffre have acted as modern archeologists, unearthing the forgotten splendours of the past, the abandoned and the discarded leftovers of a movie-going civilisation.

Many of the theatres captured by Marchand and Meffre date from the golden age of American film (1910s to 30s) when the big film studios competed to build extravagant venues to entice and thrill their audiences. A night at the movies was a glamorous occasion where the buildings themselves became as much of a draw as the movie being screened. Following the stock market crash in 1929 and in the post-war era thereafter, multiplexes and shopping malls made these theatres redundant, inevitably causing them to fall into disrepair. Many were converted into a multitude of purposes ranging from churches, retail space, flea markets, bingo halls, discos, supermarkets, gymnasiums, or warehouses, and often with comical results! While some remain relatively unchanged, others clash with their newfound purpose, creating unexpected spaces which act as a fascinating documents of American History.

Marchand and Meffre shoot their images using available light to respect the original atmosphere, which, in the darkest of the spaces, sometimes requires exposures as long as an hour. When absolutely necessary, they rely on handmade battery-powered lights, using them to paint the scene. Marchand and Meffre's explorations of many of these boarded-up venues were often aided by preservationists who dream of bringing a theatre back to its former glory. Other times, as in the case of the now-demolished Adams Theatre in Detroit, they make images of something that will soon only exist in records and in peoples' memories.

The exhibition presents the never-before exhibited *Proctor's Theater, Troy, NY* (2012), taking the central place in the gallery's first room. The works exhibited present examples of abandoned theatres with their curtains torn and seats shrouded in decades of dust, reused cinemas in disrepair, acting as bus depots or car workshops, and finally those that have been reused and refurbished, often hiding the grand vaulted ceilings and ornamental mouldings that once attracted visitors. The exhibition will also present a series of typologies of the exteriors of the grand movie palaces Marchand and Meffre ventured into.

Marchand and Meffre's images represent some of the survivors of a century of industrial, aesthetic and social change, their continued existence prompting a sense of nostalgia for the golden age of American cinema which carried American values, ideas and entertainment across the world.

Movies Theaters | Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre will run from 10th February to 11th March 2022.

Movie Theaters (Prestel, 2021) will be on sale at the gallery for £65.00.

The Gallery

Founded in 2009, TRISTAN HOARE is a multi-layered gallery focusing on young and established artists working in a variety of mediums. African photography, glass, painting and drawing are all areas of interest, as well as a developing passion for ceramics.

Each year we curate an ambitious exhibition with an overarching theme. *Geometrica* (2018), *Botanica* (2019) and *Folds* (2021) enabled us to collaborate with multiple artists and galleries, combining work from BC to the present day. Exhibitions are executed with the intention of telling a story and connecting with both seasoned collectors and people less familiar with the art world.

The gallery is located in a Grade I listed Georgian house in Fitzroy Square.

Press Enquiries

info@tristanhoare.co.uk
+44 (0) 207 383 4484
tristanhoaregallery.co.uk
@tristanhoare

TRISTAN HOARE
6 Fitzroy Square
London, W1T 5DX

Tuesday - Saturday
11am - 6pm