

Artist Resources – John Wesley (American, 1928-2022)

[Wesley at Fredericks & Freiser](#)

[Wesley at MoMA](#)

[Wesley at Waddington Custot](#)

[Wesley at Chinati Foundation](#)



Wesley, 2009
Photograph: Todd Heisler

Wesley's first major retrospective was at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam before travelling to [Portikus Frankfurt](#) in 1993.

Wesley notoriously did not give interviews or studio visits. Read about Paul Hasegawa-Overacker's experience in [Artnet](#).

The 2001 exhibition [John Wesley: Paintings 1961-2000](#) was on display at MoMA PS1. Alanna Heiss, the exhibition's curator, wrote: "Wesley's work stands eerily apart...he mixes images of traditional emblems, historical figures, comic book personalities, animals, sexy women, athletes and showgirls into surreal daydreams, prompting the viewer to rejoin her own private dream-world."

[John Wesley: Love's Lust](#) was installed by the Harvard Art Museums on the heels of the artist's MoMA PS1 retrospective, but instead focused on Wesley's pictorial strategies and process.

Wesley had a blockbuster retrospective at the Venice Biennale in 2009 that was organized by the [Fondazione Prada](#). The exhibition included over 150 works spanning from 1961 to 2007. Read a [review](#) of the installation in the New York Times.

Read an article in [Frieze](#) about the exhibition [Jo and Jack: Jo Baer and John Wesley in the Sixties](#) at Matthew Marks Gallery in 2010. The exhibition explored the work of both artists, who were married from 1959 until 1970.

[Carl Andre/John Wesley: Serial Forms](#) at Mitchell-Innes & Nash was on display in 2012, juxtaposing the two artists' works in terms of seriality, repetition, and modularity.

David Kordansky Gallery installed [John Wesley: Objects and Paintings](#) in 2013. The exhibition included rarely seen sculptures by the artist in addition to his iconic paintings.

Wesley passed away at the age of 93 in 2022. Read obituaries in the [New York Times](#) and [Glasstire](#) and an [article](#) by Brad Phillips reflecting on the artist's legacy in Office Magazine.



John Wesley (American, 1928-2022)
Show Girls, 1996
Acrylic on canvas

Private Collection; L2022:134.1

The hard-edge, comic-strip style of John Wesley aligned with the Pop Art movement in the 1960s, but he felt more affinity with Minimalist artists in his approach to production. Wesley was interested in the American psyche; his paintings are often intimate or personal representations of fear, desire, and joy. In the 1990s and 2000s, Wesley began painting women in extremely cropped views sharing moments of erotic or emotional intimacy. **Show Girls** is one example of this theme. The two subjects look beyond the frame, perhaps sharing a secret or piece of gossip.

On view January 18 – April 23, 2023