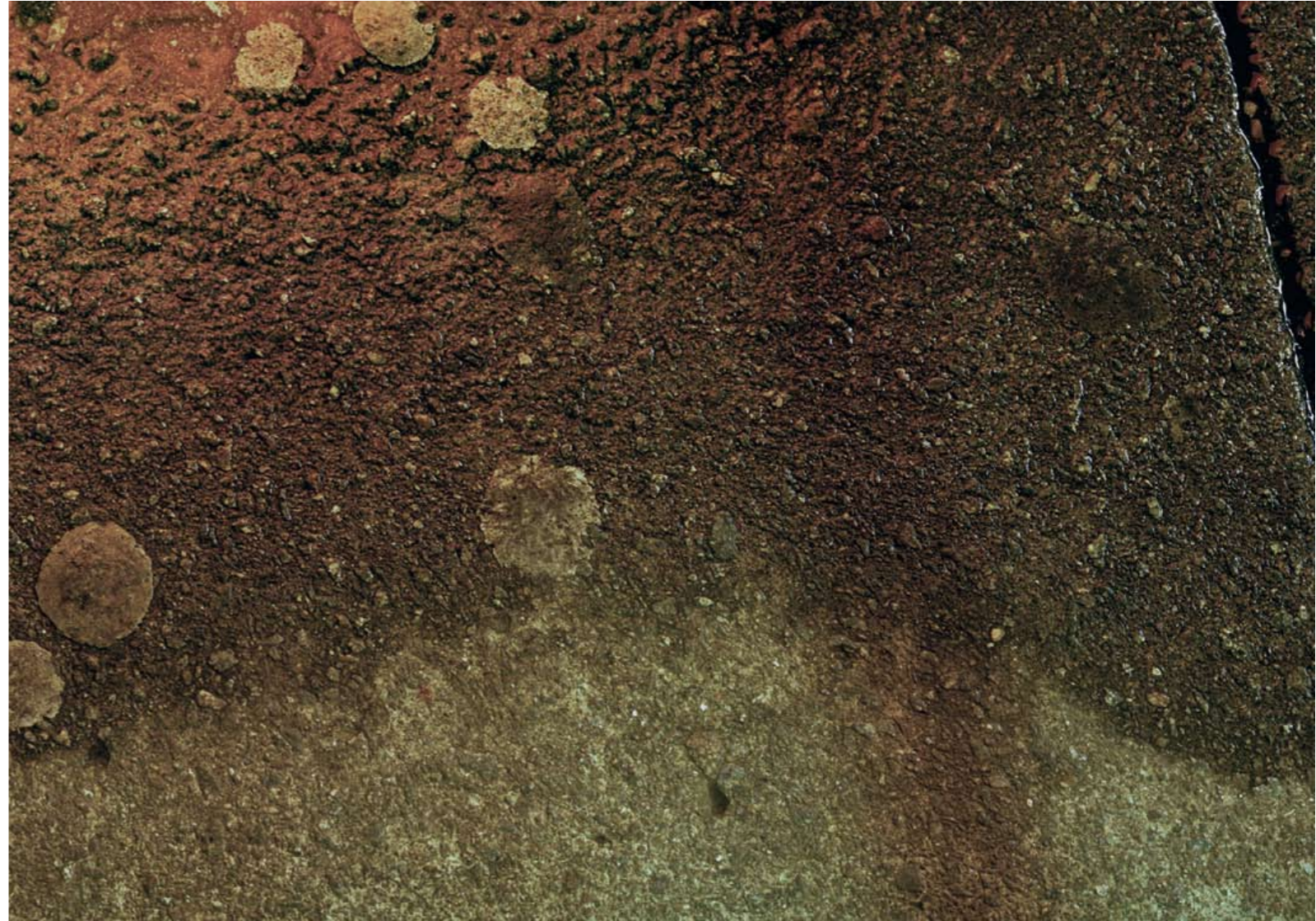




# Strange Places

Urban Landscape Photography



STEFFI KLENZ *Pudding Mill Lane*, from *A Scape* 2005 (COVER)

RUT BLEES LUXEMBURG Detail of *Rayners Lane*, from *Picadilly's Peccadilloes* 2007 (PREVIOUS PAGE RIGHT)

stanleypickergallery:

# Strange Places

## Urban Landscape Photography

Sabine Bitter/Helmut Weber, Rut Blees Luxemburg, Hannah Collins, Ori Gersht, Steffi Klenz, Sze Tsung Leong, Mark Power, Xavier Ribas, Heidi Specker, Thomas Weinberger, Rachel Wilberforce

Curated by Alexandra Stara

## In Strange Places, Alexandra Stara

*In the grip of rigid images and precise delineations, the urban imagination lost vitality. In particular, what is missing in modern urbanism is a sense of time – not time looking backwards nostalgically but forward-looking time: the city understood as process, its imagery changing through use, an urban imagination formed by anticipation, welcoming surprise.*<sup>1</sup> Richard Sennett

Urban theorists like Richard Sennett have been arguing for a radical change in the way we look at cities, for several decades now. More recently, an increasing number of cultural critics have espoused versions of this critique of modern urbanism, in view of our rapidly expanding, globalised cities. The practice of urbanism is still largely dominated by modernism's greatest failure: operating with instrumentalising abstractions, coveting positive scientific authority and mathematical precision. Converting cities to statistics and diagrams in order to understand them results in a drastic reduction of their actuality, which, although of use for certain purposes, is totally inadequate as a complete image of the complex living thing that is the urban condition. In contemporary cities, where few traditional certainties survive, the rendering of fundamental notions, such as identity and place, needs constant renegotiation and active, reciprocal defining.

In the context of such a radical rethinking of urbanism, it appears that art has an important role to play. Sebastien Marot, for example, has discussed the work of the poet William Carlos Williams and artist Robert Smithson at length, as a way of reading and intervening in the urban landscape, which responds to the specificity of place and enhances its richness.<sup>2</sup> More contemporary practices, such as the Office for Subversive Architecture, have been displaying a similar sensibility and intent, in their hybrid projects bridging art and architecture.<sup>3</sup> The understanding of urban landscapes not as slates to be wiped clean with 'development' but as palimpsests rich with sediment of life and meaning, is fundamental to this attitude,

which allows for the full spectrum of relationships that define a place to come into play. This includes tensions and outright conflict between such realms as private and public or culture and nature, which are rife in contemporary cities and their edges, and can neither be disregarded nor 'sanitised' without defeating the purpose.

Alongside these more or less explicitly urbanistic concerns and practices, artists working with photography have been offering a reading of the city that resonates strongly with the call for a poetic alternative to mainstream urbanism. Whether knowingly responding to questions of urbanism or engaging with the urban as part of a broader preoccupation with notions of territory and identity, in the past two decades a growing body of photographers has been producing land- and cityscapes that share a distinct common sensibility, across considerable variety of subject matter and technique. These photographs do not focus on urban life as action, but meditate on the spaces where it unfolds. Unlike the photojournalistic approach to the city and its aim to capture the moment, this photography offers an engagement with the duration of the city fabric as setting. The temporality of the images is ambiguous – a quality which pervades the work on a number of levels and is another of its key defining features. Uncertainty of location, scale, time of day or stance towards the implied drama of the image render the photographs resonant with possible interpretations, offering an 'open' space for the viewer's projection and engagement. Often what is shown is not meant to be seen, because of its marginality, transience or clash of scales. Things too big, too small or too ambivalent to be adequately framed by our perception are mediated in the photograph. What is background in everyday urban life becomes foregrounded.

The eleven artists in *Strange Places* define this trend in contemporary photography by focusing on different aspects of the urban landscape and the complex modes of its inhabitation, appropriation, alienation and destruction.

The definition of boundaries and edge conditions, both physical and conceptual, occupy the work of Ori Gersht, Steffi Klenz, Mark Power and Rachel Wilberforce. The vegetation in Gersht's photographs offers a disorientating image of a city fragment, which, through its extreme overexposure and framing alludes to lush prairies while actually depicting the desolation of traffic islands and motorway curbs. Klenz's look at heaps of leftover road surfacing material at the edges of the city is simultaneously elliptical and detailed, denying scale and location while offering strong allusions to the tradition of landscape painting. Also on the city's edge, Power's 'dutiful' recording of the boundaries of London according to the A-Z offers the banal and the uncanny in equal measure, conjuring up a host of questions and associations regarding the suburban condition. Moving further out into what could be a 'wild west' location, Wilberforce pushes the boundaries of the urban, commenting on the uncomfortable meeting of built and natural environment.

Picking up the theme of elliptical framing and the focus on fragments in order to reveal the extraordinary in the mundane, is the work of Rut Blee Luxemburg, Xavier Ribas and Heidi Specker. Blee Luxemburg and Ribas turn their lens to the ground, recording with a care that verges on the obsessive abject instances of inner city fabric. Gum-strewn tarmac and worn-out steps reflect other dimensions and are subtly transformed to thresholds of possibility. Specker's compositions from one of the world's most chaotic cities show trivial urban fragments as near-abstract configurations with an almost emblematic quality.

The works of Bitter/Weber, Hannah Collins, Sze Tsung Leong and Thomas Weinberger engage with the urban in its most recognisable form, through sweeping views of high rises and housing estates. However, this apparent straightforwardness belies the complexity of what is actually shown. In Collins' and Bitter/Weber's depiction of social housing schemes, the

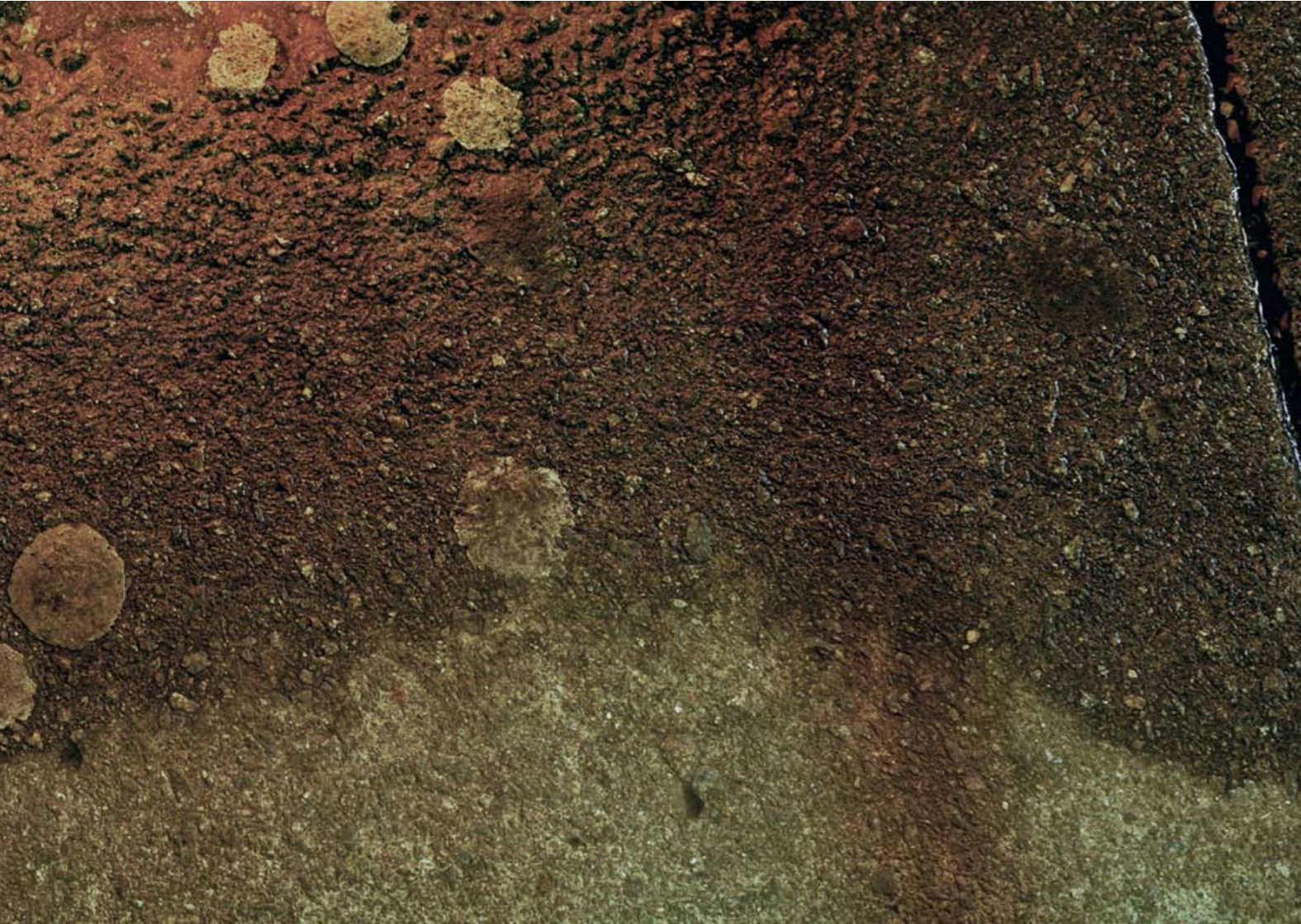
narratives underpinning the images challenge the drabness of the subjects. This is further undermined by the aesthetic of the photographs, which alludes to romantic views of ruins. The romantic landscape tradition is lurking behind much of the work in the exhibition, and no less in Leong and Weinberger's panoramas of building sites in Shanghai and Dubai. In these vistas of rampant development on a massive scale, subtle juxtapositions undermine first impressions, and technical devices in the production of the photographs introduce a tone of ambivalence and unreality against the perceived harshness of the subjects.

To find the uncanny in the familiar, the poetic in the critical, wonderment in banality, that is what the artists in this exhibition invite us to do, initiating a conversation about contemporary cities as strange places of endless attraction and possibility.

<sup>1</sup> Richard Sennett, *The Open City*, The Endless City, R. Burdett & D. Sudjic (eds), London & NY: Phaidon Press 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Sebastien Marot, *Sub-urbanism and the Art of Memory*, Architectural Association Publications 2003.

<sup>3</sup> see Stara, 'Urban Fictions with the Office for Subversive Architecture', in Chaplin & Stara (eds), *Curating Architecture and the City*, Routledge 2009.



## Exhibiting artists:

SABINE BITTER/HELMUT WEBER	8 - 11
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## Sabine Bitter/Helmut Weber

Since 1993, Vienna- and Vancouver-based artists Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber have worked on projects addressing cities, architecture, and the politics of representation and space. Their series of photo- and video-works like *Caracas Hecho en Venezuela*, *Living Megastructures*, and *Differentiated Neighborhoods of New Belgrade*, engage with instances of urban change across the globe, and their effect on both the fabric and life of the city. Bitter/Weber have been members of the cultural collective Urban Subjects since 2004 and founding members of The Vancouver Flying University in 2008. Sabine Bitter has been teaching at SFU, Vancouver since 2007.

Bitter/Weber have held exhibitions and participated in projects in such places as Kunsthau Graz; Museum of Modern Art, Vienna; Photomuseum, Winterthur; State Gallery Linz; and also in various locations in New York, Vancouver, Tallin, Ghent, Belgrade and Rotterdam, among others. They have published several books with their work, among which *Live Like This!*, Edition Camera Austria, Graz 2005, and, most recently, *Autogestion*, or *Henri Lefebvre in New Belgrade*, Sternberg Press, Berlin, Phillip Editions, Vancouver, 2009.

### Exhibited work:

#### *Live like this! Did that Building Do That To You? Or Did You Do That To The Building?*

The planning and construction of the Pedregulho public housing project in the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro (1946-1954) roughly coincided with the brief period when the government's modernization efforts put Brazil in the centre of international attention and the post-war architecture debate. Siegfried Gidion nominated the housing project for the first prize of the São Paulo Biennial in 1951 and architects such as Max Bill and Walter Gropius saw the project as an exemplary international model. Built by architect Affonso Reidy with landscaping by Roberto Burle-Marx, Pedregulho's 50,000sq.m. included four apartment blocks, a primary school, health centre, kindergarten, laundry, fitness centre, swimming pool and a market, as a complete housing zone. The most distinctive element of the housing complex is a curved 260-metre-long block with 272 apartments, which perfectly traces the slopes of the terrain. Resting on pilotis and arranged on two levels, interrupted by a public viewing and services area, the complex is visible from afar as an accomplished example of modern architecture. While the buildings still provide a functioning housing and living environment for the inhabitants today, the social and political ideals originally linked to the architecture have become obsolete. The mistakes of utopian modernist vision, corruption and failure symbolically 'stick' to the architecture and circulate as images of the ruins of modernism.

The seven-part photographic work *Live Like This!* recombines pictures of this distinctive building complex to create new architectural constellations, which portray the formal qualities of the structure without obfuscating the traces of wear. The work juxtaposes the reality of the building as still-inhabited housing with the pictorial qualities of a ruin, symbolising the failure of political and social ideals.



*Live like this! Did that Building Do That To You? Or Did You Do That To The Building?, Rio de Janeiro, composition 2. 2000*

Sabine Bitter/Helmut Weber exhibited work



*Live like this! Did that Building Do That To You? Or Did You Do That To The Building?, Rio de Janeiro, composition 3. 2000*



*Live like this! Did that Building Do That To You? Or Did You Do That To The Building?, Rio de Janeiro, composition 1. 2000*

## Rut Blees Luxemburg

Rut Blees Luxemburg's work shows the public spaces of cities, where the ambitions and unexpected sensual elaborations of the 'modern project' are revealed. In her work she brings to light the overlooked, the dismissed and the unforeseen, and creates immersive and vertiginous compositions whose constituent parts offer different ways of experiencing our shared common spaces. Her work has been exhibited internationally and has recently been shown at the Pompidou Centre, Paris, the Royal Academy, London and LaBoral, Spain. Many public collections such as the Tate Modern, Victoria & Albert Museum, Denver Art Museum and Centre George Pompidou have collected the work of the artist.

Rut Blees Luxemburg's new monograph *Commonsensual* was recently published by Black Dog Publishing, London and is a comprehensive survey of the artist's work, including her collaborative projects such as the opera *Liebeslied/My Suicides* and her public art installations *Caliban Towers*, *Piccadilly's Peccadilloes* and *Pied-a-Terre Lumiere*. Her collaborative forays into music and urban culture have led to celebrated album covers such as The Streets' Original Pirate Material. She is teaching on the Photography MA at the Royal College of Art, London and has a regular column in *Architectural Review*, where she curates a monthly series of artworks relating to questions of space and architecture.

Rut Blees Luxemburg is currently working on a new project *Iconoclasm and Orificity*, which delves into the violence of the image, and the notion that after apparent destruction, invention and reconstitution are part of the perception of an image.

### Exhibited work: *Rayners Lane*

*Rayners Lane* is part of the series *Piccadilly's Peccadilloes*, which was exhibited at Heathrow Airport, a temporary public art installation commissioned by Art on the Underground, London. The series shows reflected fragments of the underground stations built by the British modernist architect Charles Holden. These poetic entry-points into the underground provide an alternative map of London.



*Rayners Lane*, from *Piccadilly's Peccadilloes* 2007



Rut Bles Luxemburg's other work



*Speak Stone* 2004



*Faith in Infrastructure* 2008



*The Temptation* 2005



*Acton Town*, from *Picadilly's Peccadilloes* 2007

## Hannah Collins

Artist, photographer and filmmaker Hannah Collins was born in the UK in 1956. She lives in Barcelona and London. Collins makes work on the collective experiences of memory, history and the everyday in the modern world. She is known for her photographic installations but has also made films with gypsies in Spain and in a village in rural Russia. She has had many international exhibitions and her work is in numerous public and private collections including Tate Modern, Centre George Pompidou, MACBA Barcelona, Reina Sofia Madrid, Dallas Museum of Art, and Luxembourg Museum. Hannah Collins was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1993. There are several publications of her work, most recently: *Finding, Transmitting, Receiving*, Black Dog, 2007; *Parallel*, ACTAR, Barcelona 2008; and *Historia en curso*, Fundacion La Caixa, Barcelona, 2008. Alongside her work, Collins has been consistently involved with teaching in such places as the Royal College of Art, London, the University of California at Davis, and Le Fresnoy, Studio Nationale des Arts Contemporains, Roubaix.

Hannah Collins' current projects include an extensive work about the origins and processes of food used in the restaurant El Bulli in Spain and a film project being shot in the Prado Museum in Madrid with African migrant Dewa Abdoosalaam, which re-looks at classical painting. Her exhibition containing three multi-channel film projects, *Historia En Curso*, opens at Caixa Forum in Madrid in late 2009.

## Exhibited work:

### *Paseo Cameron - La Mina*

A project involving both film and photographic projection, *La Mina* was shot in a large housing estate of Barcelona, which is home to a substantial gypsy community. Keen to avoid patronising or stereotyping depictions, Collins composes her work through a mix of observation and performance, allowing, in a sense, the place to show itself. She describes her position as one of empathy and collaboration rather than social or political overview, aiming to give this marginalised culture its own voice rather than become a platform for the artist's rhetoric. In this scheme, the built fabric of the urban estate appears as an integral part of human dwelling rather than a mere backdrop. The unpopulated frames of precarious shacks or concrete expanses are resonant of inhabitation as much as their counterparts brimming with human action. The image *Paseo Cameron, La Mina V* was taken from above the housing blocks and shows the roofs of the buildings as the place where the residue of communication is collected, in the form of cables, antennas and satellite dishes.



*Paseo Cameron - La Mina* 2004

Hannah Collins other work



*Life on Film 5* 1996



*In the Course of Time, Gypsy Camp* 1995

## Ori Gersht

Ori Gersht was born in Tel Aviv in 1967. Since 2006 he has been Professor of Photography at the University of Creative Arts, Rochester, UK. He has had solo exhibitions at Tate Britain, London (2002), Tel Aviv Museum, Tel Aviv (2002), Photo Espana, Madrid (2004), Photographers Gallery, London (2006), Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven (2007), Centro Andaluz De La Fotografia, Almeria (2008) and the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington DC (2009). He has participated in numerous group shows since 2002, in institutions such as Tate Modern, Tate Britain and the V&A, London; the Jewish Museum Berlin and New York; and MoCA, Cleveland. His work is in public collections across the world such as MoMA, San Francisco, the Guggenheim Museum, NY, the Getty Museum, LA, and Tate, London. There are two monographs of his work: *Afterglow*, August Publications, 2002 and *The Clearing*, Film & Video Umbrella, 2005; and a long list of journal articles and chapters in international photography surveys.

Ori Gersht's work involves photography and film-loop installations. Thematically and technically complex, it invests in metaphors for the passage from the specific and topical to the broadly resonant and meaningful. History and its traumas, as imprinted or implied in the landscape, alternate as subject matter with traffic islands, urban skies and exploding fruit, in an exploration of violence, transience and alienation. Gersht's mode of working is technically innovative, pushing the camera and the boundaries of the visible to their limits. At the same time, the images have a highly researched aesthetic, drawing from a wide range of pictorial references, as tribute or iconoclasm – and often both.

## Exhibited work:

### *Wildflower*

*Wildflower* is one in a series of five photographs taken by Ori Gersht in 2004, at locations in and around London. They depict wildflowers that have grown up in mundane and often ugly places such as traffic islands and road verges. Gersht concentrates on the flowers themselves, rather than their location, and, using a long exposure that almost erases the film, distorting colour and form, creates images that appear to be of Elysian Fields, not roadside wildernesses. Gersht has long been interested in the camera as a subjective, rather than an objective tool with which to depict reality and transform its subject. In these works the transformation is from the mundane to the magical. There is an undeniable elegiac feel to the photographs and they are resonant of both remembering and forgetting.



*Wildflower*, from *Flowers* 2004

Ori Gersht other work



*Drapes #03*, from *Hide & Seek* 2008-09



*Swamp #01*, from *Hide & Seek* 2008-09



*Olive #02*, from *Ghost* 2003

## Steffi Klenz

Steffi Klenz was born in Germany in 1979. Since her graduation from the Royal College of Art with an MA in Photography in 2005 she has had several solo exhibitions and group shows nationally and internationally. Publications on her work include articles in journals such as Portfolio Magazine, London Independent Photographers, Camera Austria, the Times, the Independent and the Architect's Journal. Her work was also featured in a recent survey of contemporary art by Chris Townsend, *New Art from London*, Thames & Hudson 2006. A monograph entitled *Polo bound for Passaic: Works by Steffi Klenz* is coming out later this year, to coincide with her forthcoming solo exhibition of *Nummianus* at the New Art Gallery, Walsall in September 2009. The exhibition will tour to the gallery Street Level Photoworks in Glasgow in early 2010, to coincide with the show of her new work *La Posa* at the Goethe Institute in the same city. Steffi Klenz is also one of the chosen artists to undertake the Pavilion Commission 2009 and will show her work at the Djanogly Art Gallery in Nottingham in January 2010. Her first curated exhibition, *The Skinned City*, will be staged at Yinka Shonibare's Space, London, in spring 2010.

### Exhibited work: *Pudding Mill Lane*

The series *A Scape* (2004-05) is devoted to the theme of landscape and its relationship to the city. The work questions the perceived opposition between the two, and sets out on a quest for a new space in-between, deliberately transforming the city into a strange space of indeterminate expanse and texture. Focused on the peripheral spaces of London, these images do not define the periphery as a 'green belt' but rather as 'displaced areas' – non-places presented in a state of ambiguity. The images challenge the viewer's understanding of 'landscape' and 'city', raising questions about the construction of meaning and its legibility.



*Pudding Mill Lane*, from *A Scape* 2005

Steffi Klenz other work



*Dagenham East*, from *A Scape* 2004



*Roding Valley*, from *A Scape* 2004



*Dagenham Heathway*, from *A Scape* 2004

## Sze Tsung Leong

Sze Tsung Leong was born in Mexico City in 1970, spent his childhood in Mexico, Great Britain and the United States, and currently lives and works in New York. His work has been shown internationally, at exhibitions including the 2006 Havana Biennial, *New Photography* at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, *An Atlas of Events* at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon and an exhibition of his series *Horizons* at the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art in Israel. His work is included in the permanent collections of MoMA, New York, MoMA, San Francisco, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington DC, the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, the High Museum of Art, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, and the Yale University Art Gallery, among others. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship. His book *History Images* was published by Steidl in 2006, and the catalogue *Horizons* was published by Yossi Milo Gallery in conjunction with an exhibition there in 2008. His work is represented by Yossi Milo Gallery in New York.

### Exhibited work: *Zhongyuan Liangwan Cheng II*

The photographs in *History Images* are of histories, in the form of cities in China, either being destroyed or created at this juncture in time. They are of past histories, in the form of traditional buildings and neighborhoods, urban fabrics, and natural landscapes, in the process of being erased. They are of the absence of histories, in the form of construction sites, built upon an erasure of the past so complete that one would never know a past had ever existed. And they are of the anticipation of future histories, yet to unfold, in the form of newly built cities.

Cities are the largest, most enduring, and most encompassing documents of history, uniquely recording the variations and residues of time. Substantial urban change is generally expected to span over prolonged periods. There are moments in history, however, that accelerate the rate of urban change. These moments force societies to evaluate their relationship to their own history and their attitude to their future, in turn affecting their relationship to their environments. China presently finds itself in one of these moments, as its recent transformations in politics, society, and economics have triggered changes to its cities to a degree not previously seen in its contemporary history.

As much as China's cities are presently changing, so has China's relationship with history. Presently in China, history as urban form is seen in contradictory terms: as proof of China's accomplishments and contributions to civilization, yet more often as an inconvenience to urban modernization. Ironically, China's current economic revolution is facilitating the physical destruction of history that was called for during the Cultural Revolution. From the resulting emptiness the components of China's new cities are built out of nothing: luxury apartments, shopping centres, supermarkets, widened roads, tennis courts, office blocks and parking lots.



*Zhongyuan Liangwan Cheng II, Putuo District, Shanghai 2005*



Sze Tsung Leong other work



*Beizhuanzi II, Siming District, Xiamen 2004*



*Suzhou Creek, Putuo District, Shanghai 2004*



*Jiangsheng Cun, Shanxi Province 2004*



*Wangjing Xiyuan Third District, Chaoyang District, Beijing 2003*

## Mark Power

Mark Power was born in the UK in 1959. As a child, he discovered his father's home-made enlarger in the family attic, a contraption consisting of an upturned flowerpot, a domestic light bulb and a simple camera lens. His interest in photography probably began at this pivotal moment, although he later chose to study painting and drawing instead. He (somewhat accidentally) 'became a photographer' in 1983, working in publishing and in the charity sector for nearly ten years, before he began teaching in 1992. This coincided with a shift towards long-term self-initiated projects, which now sit comfortably alongside a number of large-scale commissions in the industrial sector.

Power's work has been seen in numerous solo and group exhibitions across the world and he has published four books: *The Shipping Forecast* (1996), *Superstructure* (2000), *The Treasury Project* (2002) and *26 Different Endings* (2007). Current projects include *The Sound of Two Songs* (Poland 2004-2010), which will be published in 2010, and *Destroying the Laboratory for the sake of the Experiment*, a collaboration with the poet Daniel Cockrill.

He is Professor of Photography at the University of Brighton.

Mark Power joined Magnum Photos in 2002 and became a full member in 2007.

## Exhibited work:

### *O 145 East*

*26 Different Endings* is a series of pictures made from the extreme edge of the A-Z of London (2003 edition), the most popular atlas of any kind in the UK. In each case the photograph depicts the landscape that falls just off the page. It is about belonging, and not.

The work isn't intended as a literal description of the edge of London but instead serves as a generic representation of the periphery of any large British city, a bleak hinterland where life drifts by in painfully slow motion.



*O 145 East*, from *26 Different Endings* 2003-06

Mark Power other work



Z 22 West, from *26 Different Endings* 2003-06

G 57 East, from *26 Different Endings* 2003-06

New Brighton, from *Destroying the Laboratory for the Sake of the Experiment* 2008

Liverpool, from *Destroying the Laboratory for the Sake of the Experiment* 2008

## Xavier Ribas

Xavier Ribas was born in Barcelona in 1960. He studied social anthropology at the University of Barcelona and documentary photography at the Newport School of Art and Design. Alongside his practice, he teaches at the University of Brighton and the Universidad Politecnica de Valencia. Since 1994 his work has been shown in numerous international exhibitions across Europe and the USA, the most recent in 2009 including: *Nature as Artifice: New Dutch Landscape in Photography and Video Art*, at Neue Pinakothek Munich, George Eastman House, Rochester NY, and Aperture Gallery, NY; *Periferia*, Centro de Arte 2 de Mayo, Madrid and CAAM, Gran Canaria; and *Time as Matter*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona. The most recent of his several solo shows since 1999 are: *Habitus*, Belfast Exposed, Belfast and *Nòmades*, Galeria ProjecteSD, Barcelona, both in 2009. Ribas is also curator of the international photography exhibition *Traces*, which is touring in Spain 2009-10. There are two monographs of his work, which has also been included in numerous international surveys and critical publications on photography and architecture, most recently *PhotoArt: Photography in the 21st century* (Aperture, 2008). Ribas' work is in public collections such as the MACBA, Barcelona, Fotocollectie Universiteit Leiden and Fonds National d'Art Contemporaine, France.

Ribas' work investigates notions of place, memory and the city and is informed by his training as an anthropologist and former professional experience in the fields of urban planning and architecture. His images explore the relationship of man and territory, land and built environment, centre and periphery, focusing on the everyday, the unremarkable and undefined.

## Exhibited work: *Thresholds nr7*

The notion of threshold refers to the symbolic and physical delimitation and differentiation of space. The threshold is a space of transition, an 'in-between' which, in the disciplines of geography and architecture, is subject to a process of symbolic condensation. The images in this series represent entrance doors of a number of banks and financial institutions in the City of London and Amsterdam. These thresholds seem to associate the nature of the interior space of capital to the sacred and the funerary, in apparent contradiction with the corporate aspirations of transparency, circulation and luminosity. The images make visible the traces of little incidents occurred at the threshold itself, trying to visualise this 'space of transition' as a possible space of inhabitation.



*Thresholds nr7*, from *Thresholds* 2001-02

Xavier Ribas other work



Marseille, from *Some Cities* 2001-03



Sanctuary nr 1, from *Sanctuary* 2002



London Wall, from *Some Cities* 2001-03



Flowers nr 7, from *Flowers* 1998-2000

## Heidi Specker

Heidi Specker was born in Damme, Germany, in 1962. She studied photography at the University of Applied Sciences, Bielefeld and then at the Hochschule für Buchkunst und Grafik in Leipzig. Her work has been shown in several solo and group exhibitions, at institutions including the Art Museum of Wolfsburg, Sprengel Museum Hannover and Haus der Kunst, Munich. Since 2006 Heidi Specker has been teaching at the Academy for Visual Arts Leipzig.

Heidi Specker's photography questions the relationship between construction and deconstruction in the process of creating the image. In the Speckergruppen in the 1990s, Specker studied the structural principles that underlie modern architecture. There followed a body of work titled *Concrete*, a detailed examination of materials and their visual appearance. With *Bangkok*, Specker has returned to the nature of photography, once again exploring photographic models in the composition of her images in which urban spaces and the prolific vegetation they contain are completely divorced from narrative moments. The visual joy in Specker's photographs recalls the work of Albert Renger-Patzsch in beguiling colour compositions. Architecture and nature meld together to form graphically composed scenes of energetic luminosity.

### Exhibited work:

#### *Bangkok II (4, 5, 6 & 7)*

'In Specker's work, sprouting leaves are not pictured for their conventional beauty, and Modernist architectural façades are not portrayed in the service of ornament or nostalgia; rather, both become structural elements of an abstract visual language. Buildings are no longer seen as architecture, but as surfaces or patterns. Tiles or bricks become flat grids, and branches of trees spread like brushstrokes across the sky, as if both were part of the same flat surface before they were part of the photograph. However, Specker's abstraction is not pure form, but one possible way to organize a view of an urban landscape.' Christy Lange on Specker's work, from Frieze magazine.



*Bangkok II (4)* 2005



*Bangkok II (5)* 2005

Heidi Specker exhibited work



Bangkok II (6) 2005



Bangkok II (7) 2005

other work



Bangkok XIV (40) 2005



Bangkok XIV (41) 2005

## Thomas Weinberger

Thomas Weinberger was born in Munich, Germany in 1964, where he currently lives. Before turning to photography he studied architecture in the Technische Universität, Munich and the Università di Sapienza, Rome, and practised as an architect for seven years. Since 2005 Weinberger has had several solo exhibitions in Munich, Sydney and Paris, the most recent including: *Operation Reality*, Nusser & Baumgart Contemporary, Munich; *This isn't Sydney*, Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney; and *Nuits Claires: Photographies de Thomas Weinberger*, Centre Culture Calouste Gulbenkian, Paris, all in 2008. He has also participated in numerous group shows internationally, most recently at: Galeria Visor, Valencia (2008), Art Exhibition Centre, Rotterdam (2008), and American Academy, Rome (2009). After *Strange Places* Weinberger will be showing at *Dreamlands*, a major interdisciplinary show at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, in spring 2010.

Thomas Weinberger's work engages with urban spaces and industrial areas, focusing on their overlooked, unusual or contradictory aspects. Using a classic, large-format camera, the artist takes two analogue images of the same view, one in daylight and one at night, which are then digitally overlaid. The resulting image offers a super-real vision, in which the transient light conditions of the daily cycle are compressed into a perpetual simultaneity. Requiring exceptional accuracy, the camera must remain in the same position between takes in order to allow the precise superimposition of individual images. Weinberger sees these day-night photographs as models for capturing the space-time continuum as a densely layered phenomenon, throwing into question our assumed experience of reality as a linear sequence. At the same time, through the merging of what can be thought of as the diurnal and nocturnal anima of a place, Weinberger attempts to capture its genius loci.

## Exhibited work: *History Rising*

*History Rising* shows the view on the gigantic real estate development area around the Burj Dubai Tower, seen from the top of a building on the opposite side of Sheikh Zayed road. The title of the photograph is taken from one of the billboards that stand along the road, advertising the developer's claim of erecting not just the tallest building on earth, but also a historical landmark. Due to its elevated position, the camera offers a view behind the giant billboards and their seductive images of future urban living, where most of the construction site is still a desert. In stark contrast to this arid natural background, the foreground of the image shows the desert being transformed into flowerbeds, complete with irrigation tubes essential for their survival. By giving this unspectacular detail a prominent place in the photograph, Weinberger makes a subtle yet unmistakable comment about the whole project and its attitude towards the environment.



*History Rising, Dubai 2006*



Thomas Weinberger other work



Marina, Dubai 2006



Rest & Peace, Sydney 2007 (ABOVE LEFT)



Cortile, Rome 2004 (ABOVE RIGHT)



Zone 30, Munich 2004 (RIGHT)

## Rachel Wilberforce

Rachel Wilberforce is an interdisciplinary artist working with photography, film, video, installation and live art intervention. Born in the UK in 1975, she lives and works in London. Wilberforce has presented work nationally, at: The Royal Standard, UK (2009), Dazed Gallery, UK (2008), Open Eye Gallery, UK (2007), Tate Modern, UK (2007), The Freud Museum, UK (2007), Leeds City Art Gallery, UK (2006), Courtauld Institute of Art, UK (2006), Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), UK (2005); and internationally, at: Galerie Dana Charkasi, Vienna (2009), Ron Mandos Gallery, The Netherlands (2007), Chaos Gallery, Serbia (2005), nn Foundation for Contemporary Art, The Netherlands (2005), and Raid Projects Gallery, USA (2004). Upcoming exhibitions include *Invisible Empires: Undefined Spaces*, Van Abbe Museum of Contemporary Art, The Netherlands (2009). Wilberforce's work is part of the Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade and National Museums Liverpool permanent collections.

Rachel Wilberforce's practice reflects on the human condition through psychological, cultural and social constructs, The series *Missing* (2007/8) addresses issues of voyeurism, ownership, domain and institutionalization, with an exploration of places related to prostitution and sex trafficking. The images often borrow the garish quality of theatrical or filmic sets, while hinting at darker implications and a pervasive sense of aftermath. In *Vanishing Point* (2009), the work engages directly with theatrical space and its transformative nature. By focusing on such spaces between performances and when left empty, *Vanishing Point* attempts to explore issues of temporality, morality and representation, as raised in the work of Brecht, Artaud and Brook. Wilberforce's latest work is *My Parallel Archive* and *All the Houses I've ever Lived*, a dual project that combines her ongoing interests in spectacle and theatricality with an exploration of her family history and dynamics.

## Exhibited work:

### *Mirage #3*

The series *Mirage* (2007) depicts marginal and transient places within the contemporary landscape that are left open to interpretation. The large-scale photographs deal primarily with the imprint of man on nature and the demise of purpose and place. What could be American or Middle Eastern scenes exist like postmodernist frontiers: scientific test sites, tourist spots or war zones. In an uncanny juxtaposition between land and the built environment, Rhyolite (Nevada, USA), the once thriving mining town of 1905 founded on a utopian vision, lives on within the physicality and presence of place, beyond stone and mortar.



*Mirage #3*, from *Mirage* 2007

Rachel Wilberforce other work



*Untitled #4, from Missing 2007-08 (ABOVE)*

*Untitled #5, from Missing 2007-08 (RIGHT)*

*Untitled #31, from Missing 2007-08 (FAR RIGHT)*



*Untitled #2, from Missing 2007-08 (ABOVE)*

## List of works

BITTER/WEBBER

*Live like this! Did that Building Do That To You?*

*Or Did You Do That To The Building?, Rio de Janeiro, 2000*

7 colour photographs, varying sizes, mounted on aluminium.

All images © Bitter/Weber, Courtesy Galerie Grita Insam, Vienna

RUT BLEES LUXEMBURG

*Rayners Lane*, from *Picadilly's Peccadilloes*, 2007. C-type print, 100 x 127 cm

*Speak Stone*, 2004. C-print, 165 x 135 cm

*Faith in Infrastructure*, 2008. C-type print, 150 x 120 cm

*The Temptation*, 2005. C-type print, 85 x 105 cm

*Acton Town*, from *Picadilly's Peccadilloes*, 2007. C-type print, 100 x 127 cm

All images © Rut Blees Luxemburg, Courtesy of the artist & Union Gallery, London

HANNAH COLLINS

*Paseo Cameron - La Mina V*, 2004. C-type print, 62 x 122 cm

*Life on Film 5*, 1996. Colour Giclee print on canvas, 193 x 376 cm

*In the Course of Time, Gypsy Camp*, 1995. Silver gelatin print mounted on cotton, 262 x 584 cm

All images © Hannah Collins, Courtesy of the artist

ORI GERSHT

*Wildflower*, from *Flowers*, 2004. C-type print mounted on aluminium, 120 x 150 cm

*Drapes #03*, from *Hide & Seek*, 2008-09

*Swamp #01*, from *Hide & Seek*, 2008-09

*Olive #02*, from *Ghost*, 2003. C-type print mounted on aluminium

All images © Ori Gersht, Courtesy Mummery+Schnelle, London

STEFFI KLENZ

*Pudding Mill Lane*, from *A Scape*, 2005. C-type print, 40 x 50 inch

*Dagenham East*, from *A Scape*, 2004. C-type print, 40 x 50 inch

*Dagenham Heathway*, from *A Scape*, 2004. C-type print, 30 x 40 inch

*Roading Valley*, from *A Scape*, 2004. C-type print, 30 x 40 inch

All images © Steffi Klenz, Courtesy of the artist

SZE TSUNG LEONG

*Zhongyuan Liangwan Cheng II, Putuo District, Shanghai*, from *History Images*, 2005. Digital C-Print

*Beizhuanzi II, Siming District, Xiamen*, from *History Images*, 2004. Digital C-Print

*Suzhou Creek, Putuo District, Shanghai*, from *History Images*, 2004. Digital C-Print

*Jiangsheng Cun, Shanxi Province*, from *History Images*, 2004. Digital C-Print

*Wangjing Xiyuan Third District, Chaoyang District, Beijing*, from *History Images*, 2003. Digital C-Print

All images © Sze Tsung Leong, Courtesy Yossi Milo Gallery, New York

MARK POWER

*O 145 East*, from *26 Different Endings*, 2003-06

*Z 22 West*, from *26 Different Endings*, 2003-06

*G 57 East*, from *26 Different Endings*, 2003-06

*New Brighton*, from *Destroying the Laboratory for the Sake of the Experiment*, 2008

*Liverpool*, from *Destroying the Laboratory for the Sake of the Experiment*, 2008

All images © Mark Power, Courtesy of the artist

XAVIER RIBAS

*Thresholds nr 7*, from *Thresholds*, 2001-02. C-type print, 89 x 106 cm

*Marseille*, from *Some Cities*, 2001-03. C-type print, 110 x 130 cm

*Sanctuary nr 1*, from *Sanctuary*, 2002. C-type print, 110 x 130 cm

*London Wall*, from *Some Cities*, 2001-03. C-type print, 10 x 130 cm

*Flowers nr7*, from *Flowers*, 1998-2000. C-type print, 89 x 106 cm

All images © Xavier Ribas, Courtesy of the artist & Galeria ProjecteSD, Barcelona

HEIDI SPECKER

*Bangkok II (4, 5, 6 & 7)*, 2005. Digital Fine Art Prints, 31.6 x 24.6 cm each

*Bangkok XIV (40 & 41)*, 2005. Digital Fine Art Prints, 31.6 x 24.6 cm each

All images © Heidi Specker, Courtesy ftc. fiedler taubert contemporary, Berlin

THOMAS WEINBERGER

*History Rising, Dubai*, 2006. C-type print, Diasec / Glass framed, 125 x 1625 cm

*Marina, Dubai*, 2006. Diasec/Glass framed, 125 x 160 cm

*Rest & Peace, Sydney*, 2007. C-type print, Diasec / Glass framed, 125 x 1565 cm

*Cortile, Rome*, 2004. C-type print, Diasec / Glass framed, 125 x 151 cm

*Zone 30, Munich* 2004. C-Print, Diasec / Glass framed, 125 x 160 cm

All images © Thomas Weinberger, Courtesy of the artist & Nusser Baumgart Contemporary, Munich

RACHEL WILBERFORCE

*Mirage #3*, from *Mirage*, 2007. C-type print on aluminium, 110 x 147 cm

*Untitled #4*, from *Missing*, 2007-08. Archival Giclee Print, 104.7 x 157 cm

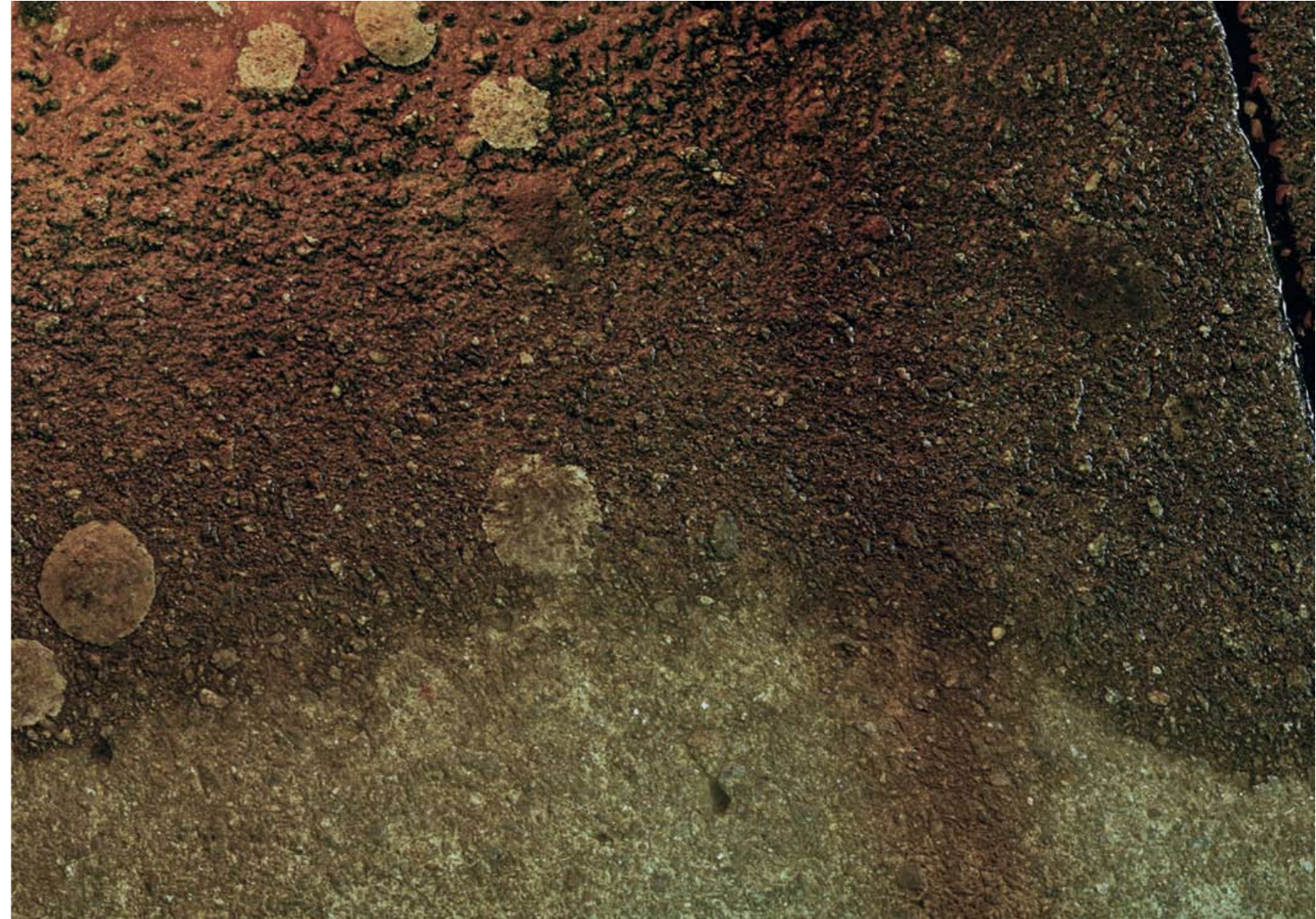
*Untitled #5*, from *Missing*, 2007-08. Archival Giclee Print, 138 x 93.5 cm

*Untitled #31*, from *Missing*, 2007-08. Archival Giclee Print, 104.7cm x 157 cm

*Untitled #2*, from *Missing*, 2007-08. Archival Giclee Print, 104.7cm x 157 cm

All images © Rachel Wilberforce, Courtesy of the artist

RUT BLEES LUXEMBURG *Detail of Rayners Lane*, from *Picadilly's Peccadilloes* 2007 (RIGHT)



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**Kingston University** London



**stanleypickergallery:**

Faculty of Art, Design & Architecture, Kingston University, Knights Park, Kingston upon Thames KT1 2QJ  
t +44 (0)20 8417 4074 f +44 (0)20 8547 8068 e picker@kingston.ac.uk [www.stanleypickergallery.org](http://www.stanleypickergallery.org)



Sabine Bitter/Helmut Weber, Rut Blees Luxemburg, Hannah Collins,  
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