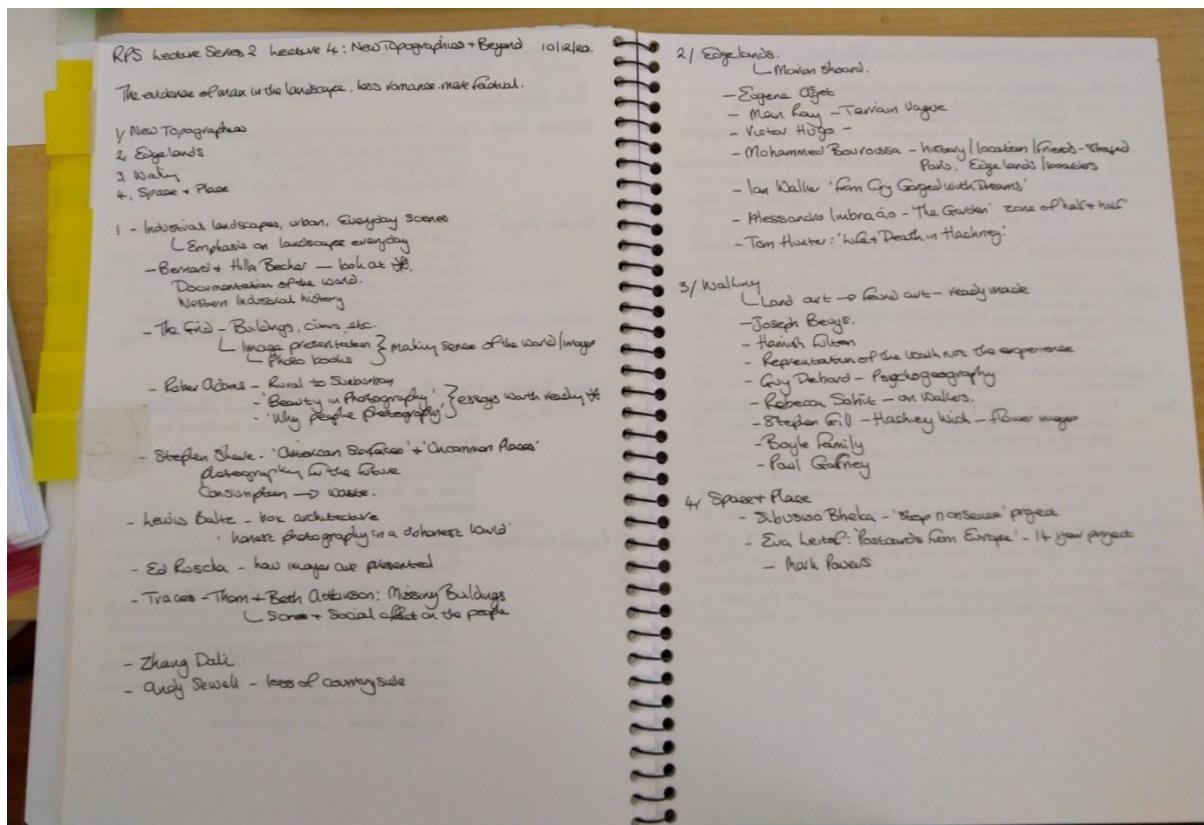


## Lecture 4: Series 2 New Topographics and Beyond



## Lecture 4: New Topographics and Beyond



Take an object / Do something to it / Do something else to it. [Repeat.]

(Jasper Johns, sketchbook note, 1964)

1. New Topographics
2. Edgelands
3. Walking
4. Space and Place

(and lots of places in between)



## New Topographics exhibition 1975

- A turning point in the history of photography, the 1975 exhibition New Topographics signaled a radical shift away from traditional depictions of landscape.
- Showed how the land had been used, rather than how the land could be used
- Emphasised documentary aspects of landscape, not artistic aspects
- Industrial landscapes
- Suburban sprawl
- Everyday scenes
- Featured: Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Joe Deal, Frank Gohlke, Nicholas Nixon, John Schott, Stephen Shore, and Henry Wessel.

# Bernd and Hilla Becher

- Used large format camera
- Rigorous discipline
- Attention to light
- Ladders to frame correctly
- Presented in grid pattern
- Connects to Victorian typologies – eg Bertillon
- Difference came from the similarity presented in the same way
- They were really interested in this!
- Became godfathers of deadpan and the Dusseldorf School – Gursky, Struth, Ruff, Hofer – but also Dijkstra, Simon,

(see also the Deadpan chapter in Charlotte Cotton's *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*)



'Their first photobook *Anonymous Sculptures* was published in 1970 and is their most well-known body of work. The title is a nod to Marcel Duchamp's *readymades* and indicates that the Bechers referred to industrial buildings as **found objects**.'

## SO THE BECHERS ARE SCULPTURAL AND READYMADE?

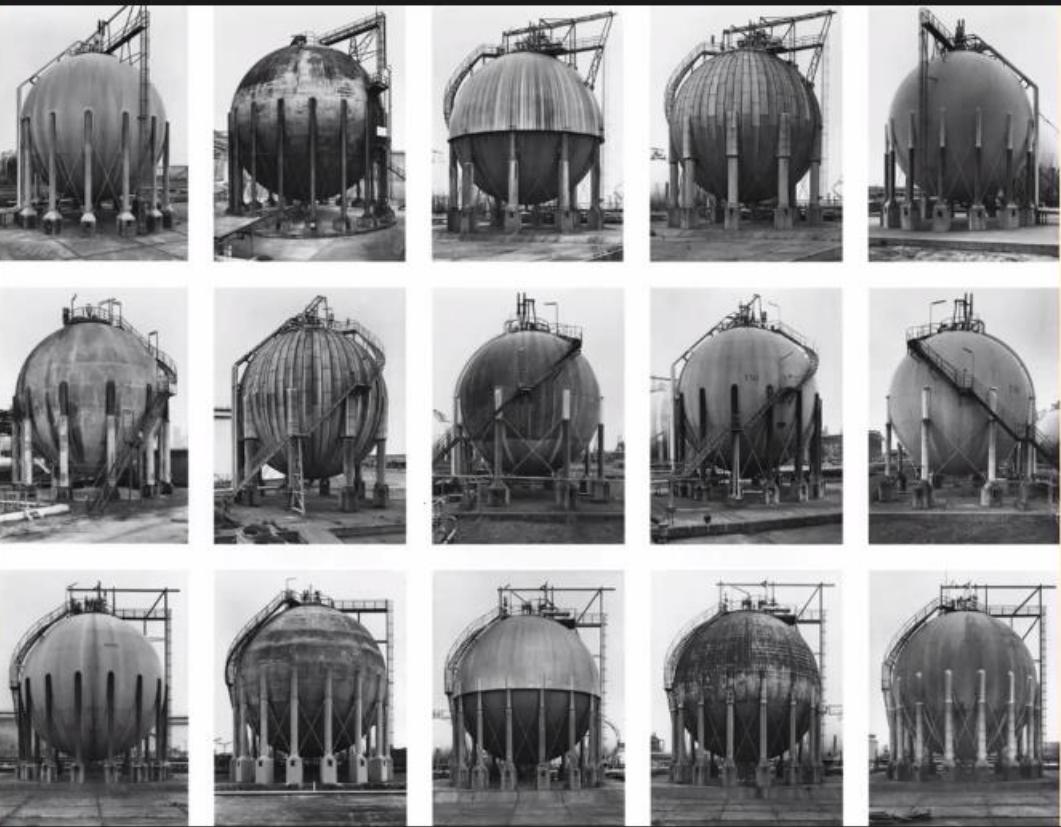
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/bernd-becher-and-hilla-becher-718/who-are-bechers>



'The idea', they said once, 'is to make families of objects', or, on another occasion, 'to create families of motifs' – objects or motifs, that is, they continued, 'that become humanised and destroy one another, as in Nature where the older is devoured by the newer'

### SO THE GRID AS DARWINIAN PHOTOGRAPHY? (CONNECTS TO ANTHROPOLOGICAL GRID)

<https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/01/photographic-comportment-of-bernd-and-hilla-becher>



'...their industrial history is exclusively and resolutely a history of the west. We need make only the most rudimentary comparisons to see that theirs is a project about modernisation not globalisation and so does not detail, or even allude to, the geopolitical ambitions and conflicts that drive the process.'

### IS THIS ALLIED WITH NEW OBJECTIVITY?

<https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/01/photographic-comportment-of-bernd-and-hilla-becher>



## The Grid

As architecture developed from building with stone, to engineering with metal, the framework itself (the grid) became visible, an expression of modernity in its own right.



## The Grid

Typography did exactly the same thing.  
It went from being 'built', to being 'engineered'.

Words laid like bricks on top of each other

SYMMETRICAL  
AND  
DECORATIVE



Words hung from a scaffold

asymmetrical  
and  
functional



# The Grid

## Summary

1. The grid was not invented by Josef Müller Brockmann! His (and others) use of it merely reflected notions of order and logic in the late Modernist period.
2. The grid reflects a primitive human need to make sense of (and construct) the world.
3. The grid has always been an instrument for social order and control, and has been simultaneously celebrated and despised.
4. The grid found particular expression in architecture, as it went from stone-building to metal-construction. This shift was reflected in how we organised information, especially page composition.
5. As our conception of space and time has profoundly changed, particularly by quantum theory and relativity, we have developed new architectural forms, and a new architecture of information.
6. This new architecture reflects the interconnectedness of stuff, and is much less 'stable'.
7. Has the Modernist grid given way to the PostModernist matrix?

## Taryn Simon: A man declared dead and other stories...



Portrait panel of Arthur Ruppин's bloodline  
Chapter 8, page 19 and 20

© Card index of immigrants and candidates for immigration to Palestine/Israel from 1919 to 1965. Israel State Archives, Tel Aviv, presentee

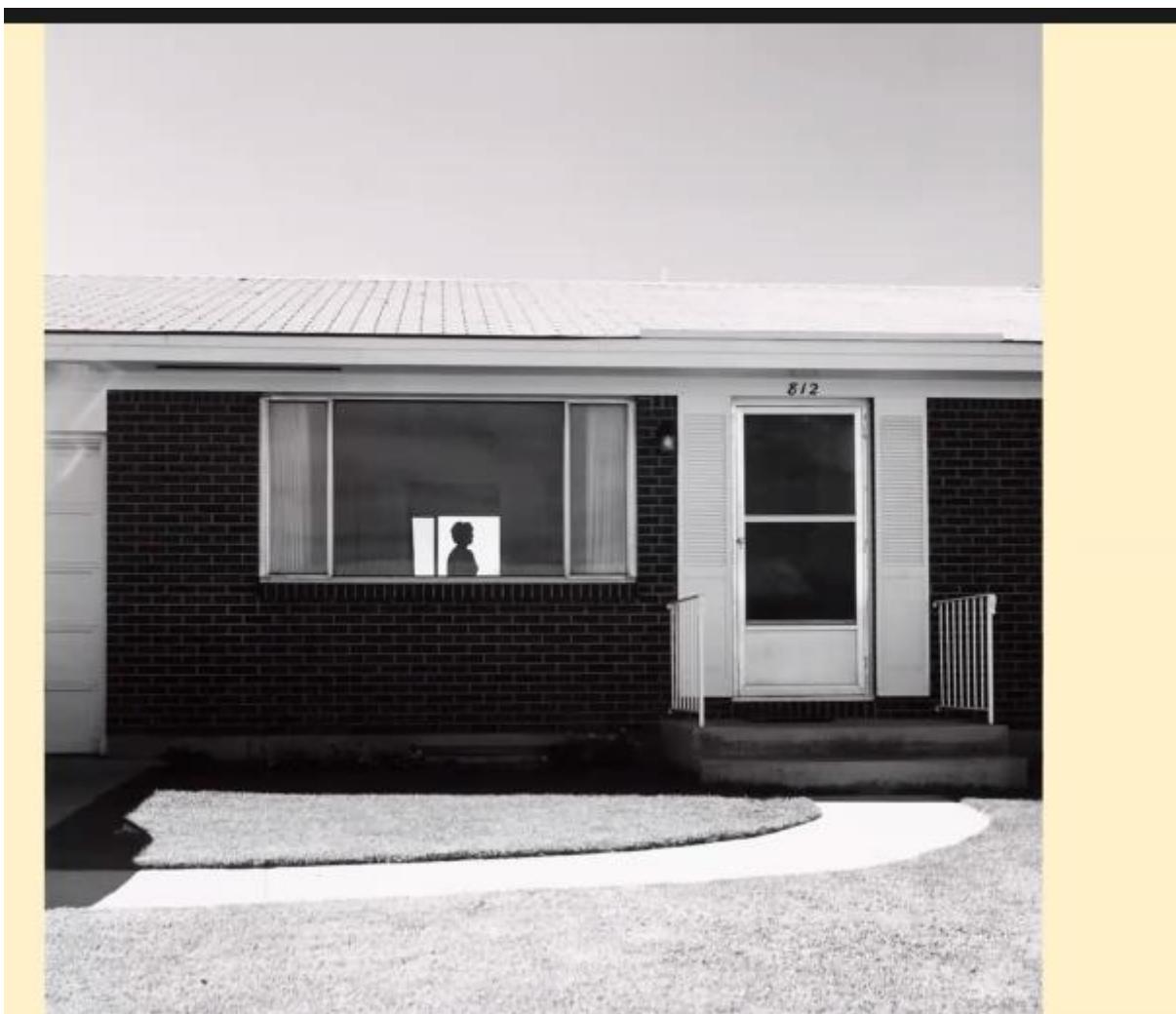


Card index of immigrants and candidates for immigration to Palestine/Israel from 1919 to 1965 and Palestine Police Curfew Pass issued to Arthur Ruppin

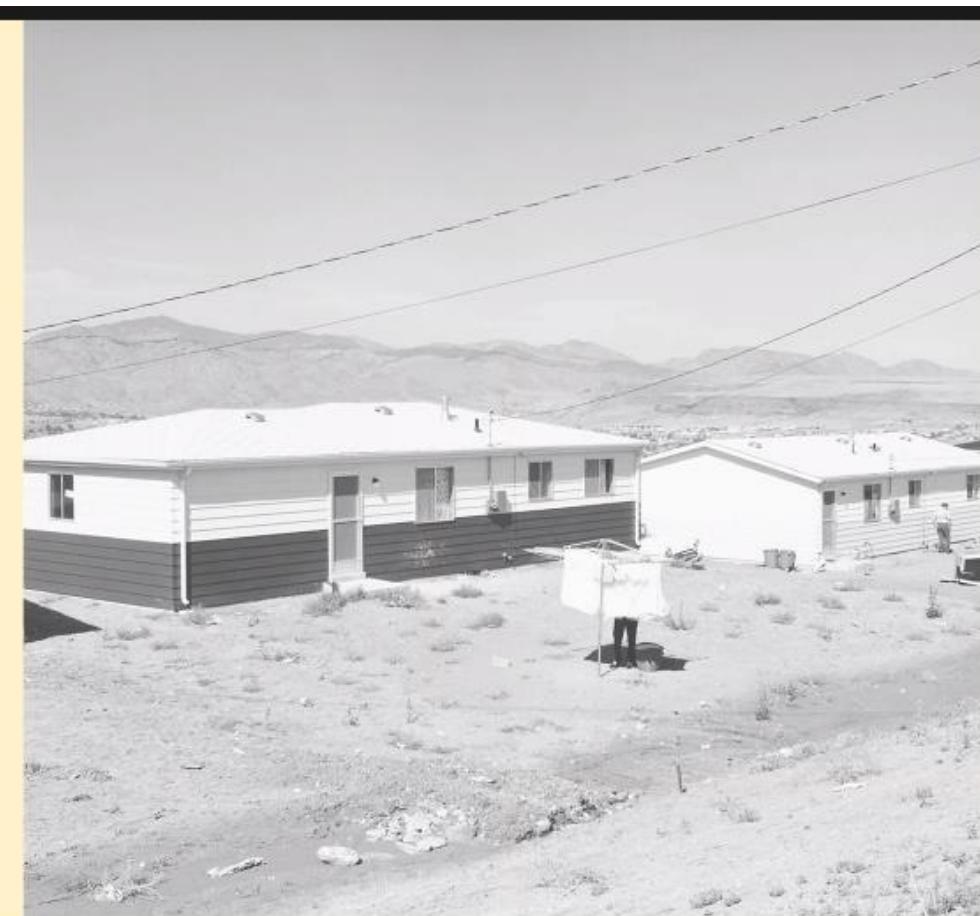
## Robert Adams

- Photographs the transition of the land
- Especially photographed in the West, around Denver
- Shows how land is transformed from rural to suburban
- Connected to survey photography
- Highly critical of land use
- Grey palette
- Best known for *The New West*
- Also writes accessible essays including: *Beauty in Photography*, *Why People Photograph*









‘Landscape pictures can offer us, I think, three varieties – geography, autobiography, and metaphor. Geography is, if taken alone, sometimes boring, autobiography is frequently trivial, and metaphor can be dubious. But taken together ... the three kinds of information strengthen each other and reinforce what we all work to keep intact – an affection for life.’

Robert Adams (1996) *Beauty in Photography* New York: Aperture p. 14

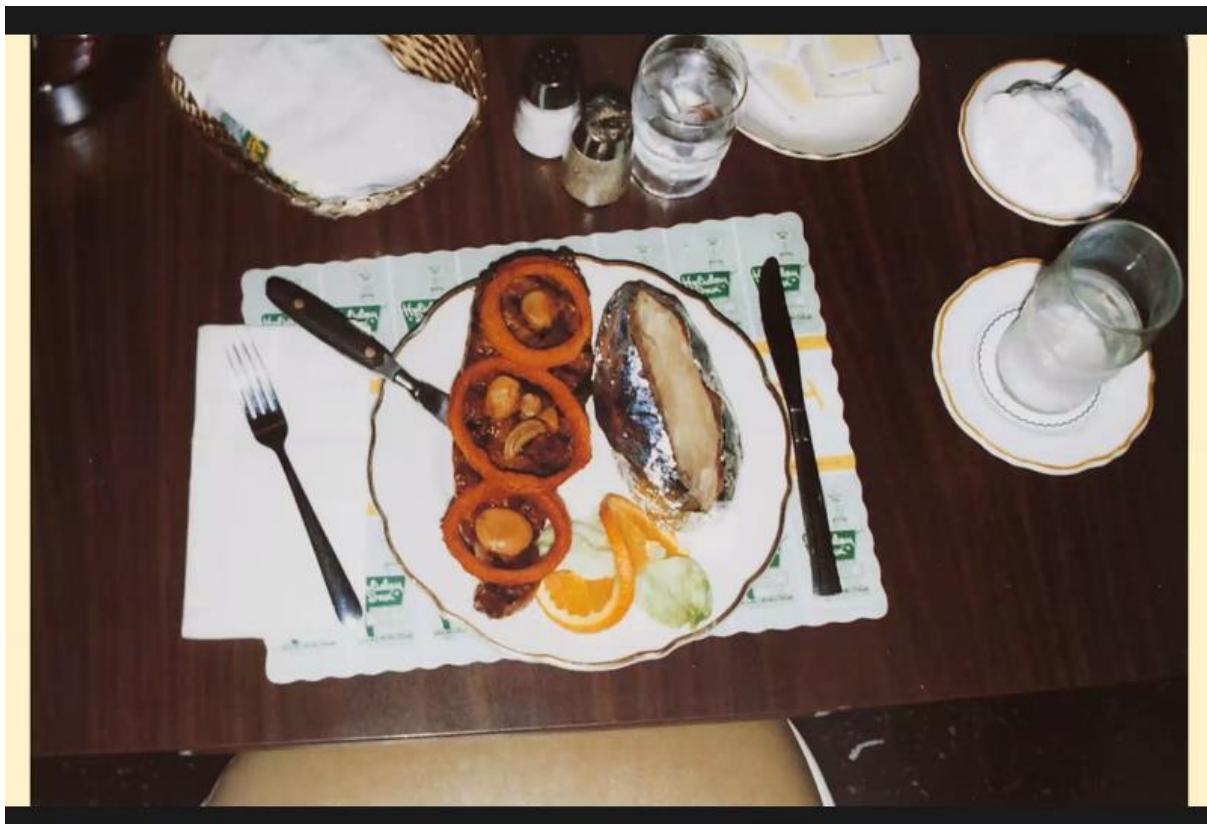
## Stephen Shore

- Used colour at the same time Luigi Ghirri, William Eggleston and Joel Meyerowitz
- Used large format for clarity
- Photographed American Surfaces with a Rollei 35mm camera – road trip photography that photographed the ephemera of everyday life
- Best known for American Surfaces and Uncommon Places









## Lewis Baltz



Lewis Baltz, 'Construction Detail, East Wall, Xerox, 1821 Dyer Road, Santa Ana 1974' from the series  
The New Industrial Parks near Irvine, California, 1974

'...industrial parks barely even try to pretend. All that is required is a company logo riveted to the exterior, parking and a token row of trees.'

<https://davidcamppany.com/fast-worlds-slow-photography/>



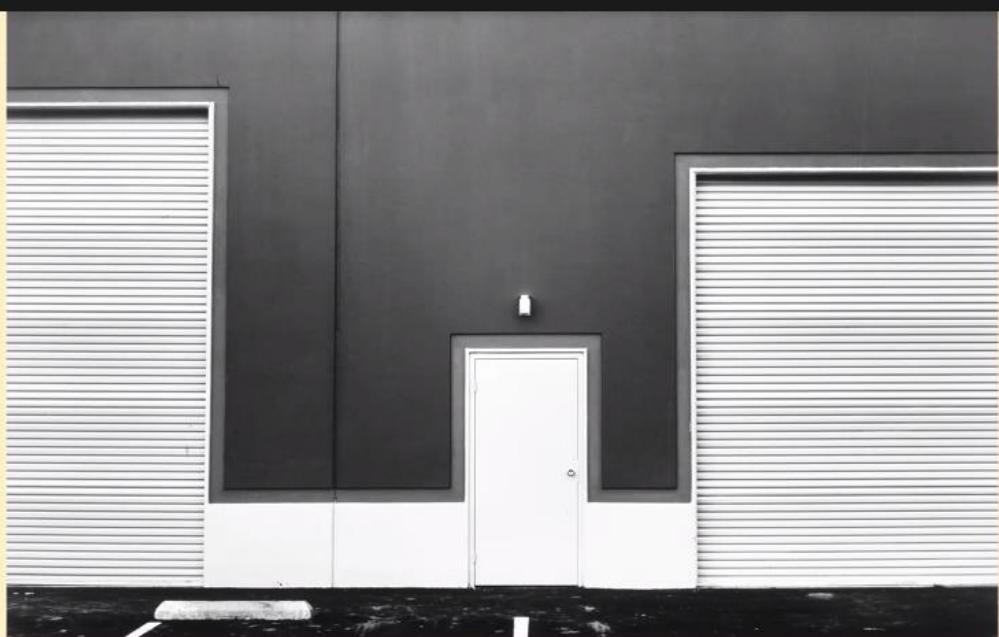
Lewis Baltz, 'North Wall Steelcase 1123 Warner Avenue Tustin, 1974' from the series The New Industrial Parks near Irvine, California, 1974

'Just like the buildings, his pictures are technically perfect and artless. One could not ask for a better visual description of those surfaces. Here the camera is exceptionally good at showing what that world looks like. It lays it bare and yet nothing is revealed, not in any straightforward sense. This is honest photography of a dishonest world and the strange force of Baltz's vision comes from the dissonance.'

<https://davidcampany.com/fast-worlds-slow-photography/>



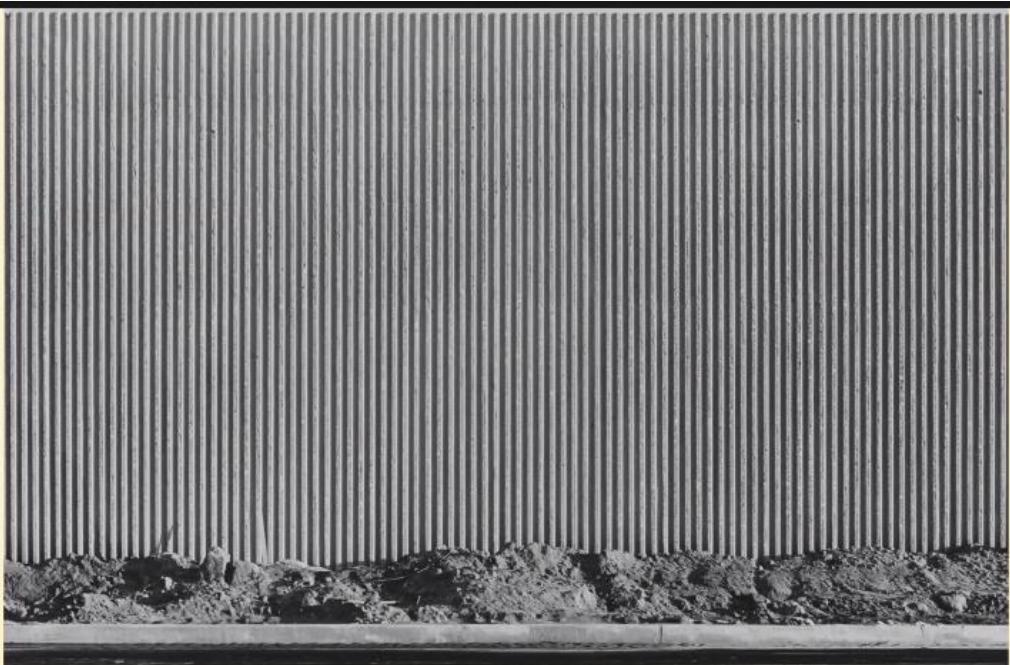
Southeast Corner, Semicoa, 333 McCormick, Costa Mesa



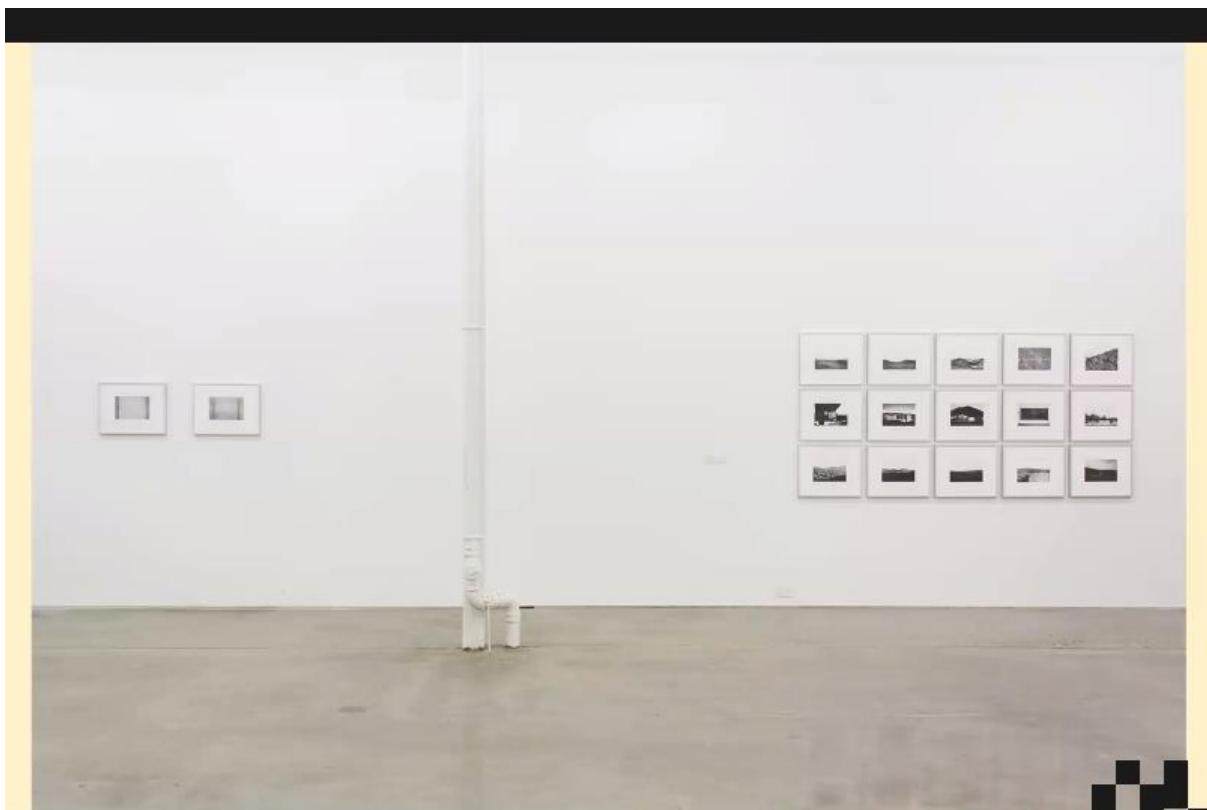
Southwest wall, Ware, Malcolm and Garner, 16722 Hale, Irvine, 1974



South Wall, Semicoa, 333 McCormick, Costa Mesa

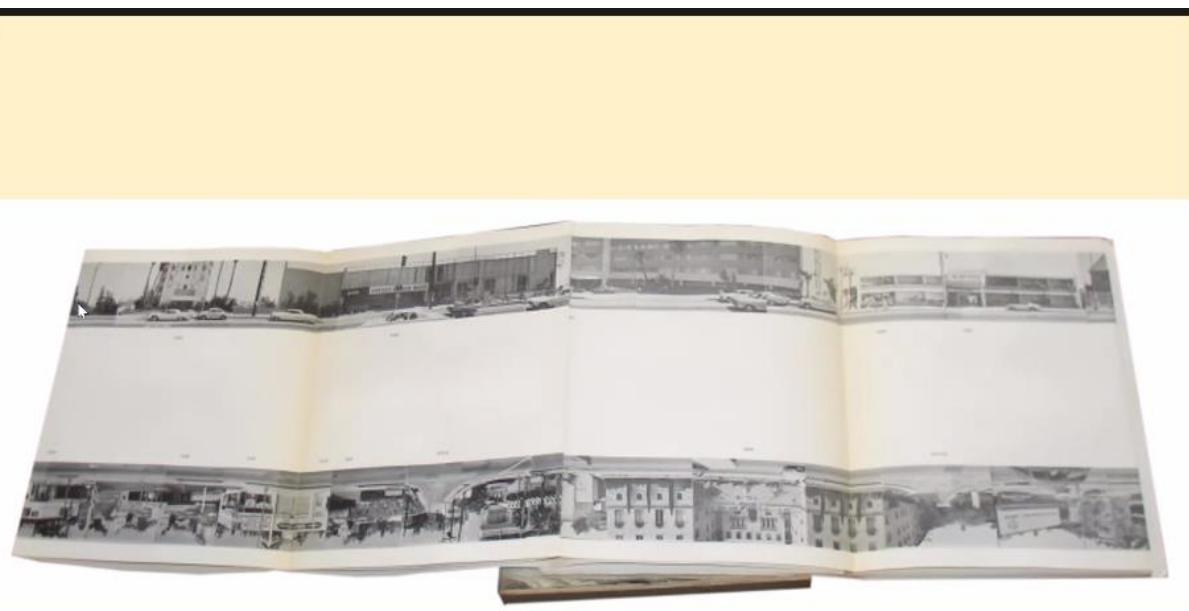


West Wall, Unoccupied Industrial Structure, 20 Airway Drive, Costa Mesa



Ed Ruscha





Every Building on the Sunset Strip, 1967  
<https://americansuburbx.com/2012/04/ed-ruscha-one-way-street-2005.html>

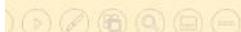
## Traces - Thom and Beth Atkinson: Missing Buildings

- Photographed spaces in London where buildings are missing
- Used bomb maps to find out where buildings were bombed
- Could identify what bombs were used from some 'bomb map' archives
- Brought into vision something people noticed but hadn't 'seen' before
- Stirred memories of older people





‘Most of our sites can be traced back to the Blitz easily, using the bomb census maps. In many cases we can even discover the kind of bombs which caused the damage. But some of the sites are sort of lost in the mists of time - they look like bomb sites and there’s a good reason to believe they are, but the records aren’t always there to know for sure. The bombing has left its mark on the physical landscape, but it’s also left a mark on our imaginations - in the mythology of London - and a missing building in London just means something different to one in say, Paris or Edinburgh. For us that’s where the depth of the project lies - in the myth.’



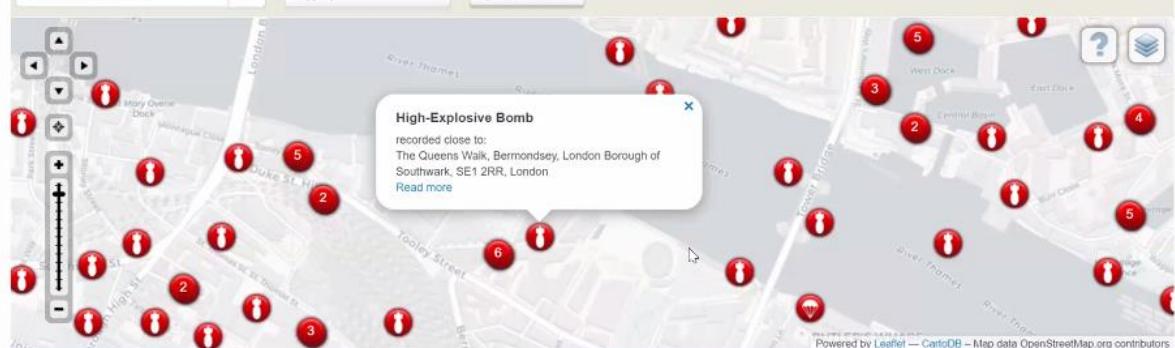


**BOMB SIGHT**  Mapping the WW2 bomb census

Map | Explore London | About | FAQ | Data | Android App |

EXPLORE THE LONDON BLITZ during 7th October 1940 to 6th June 1941

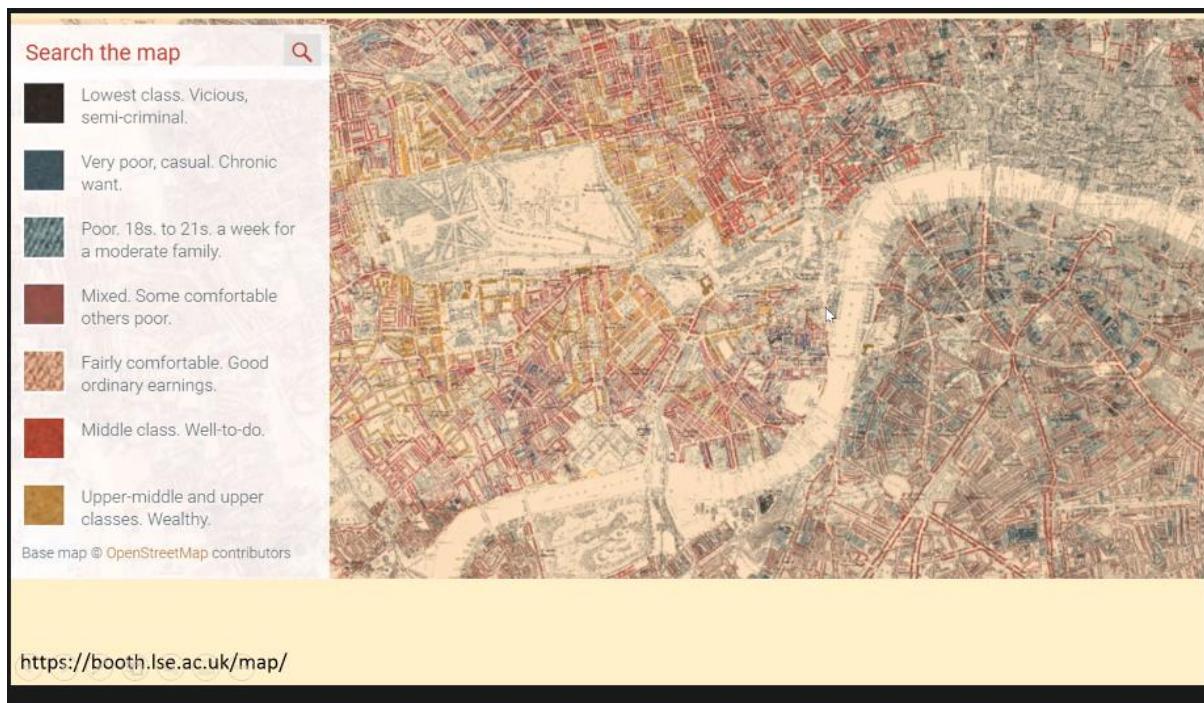
Type Street, Location: ...  Aggregate Bomb Census

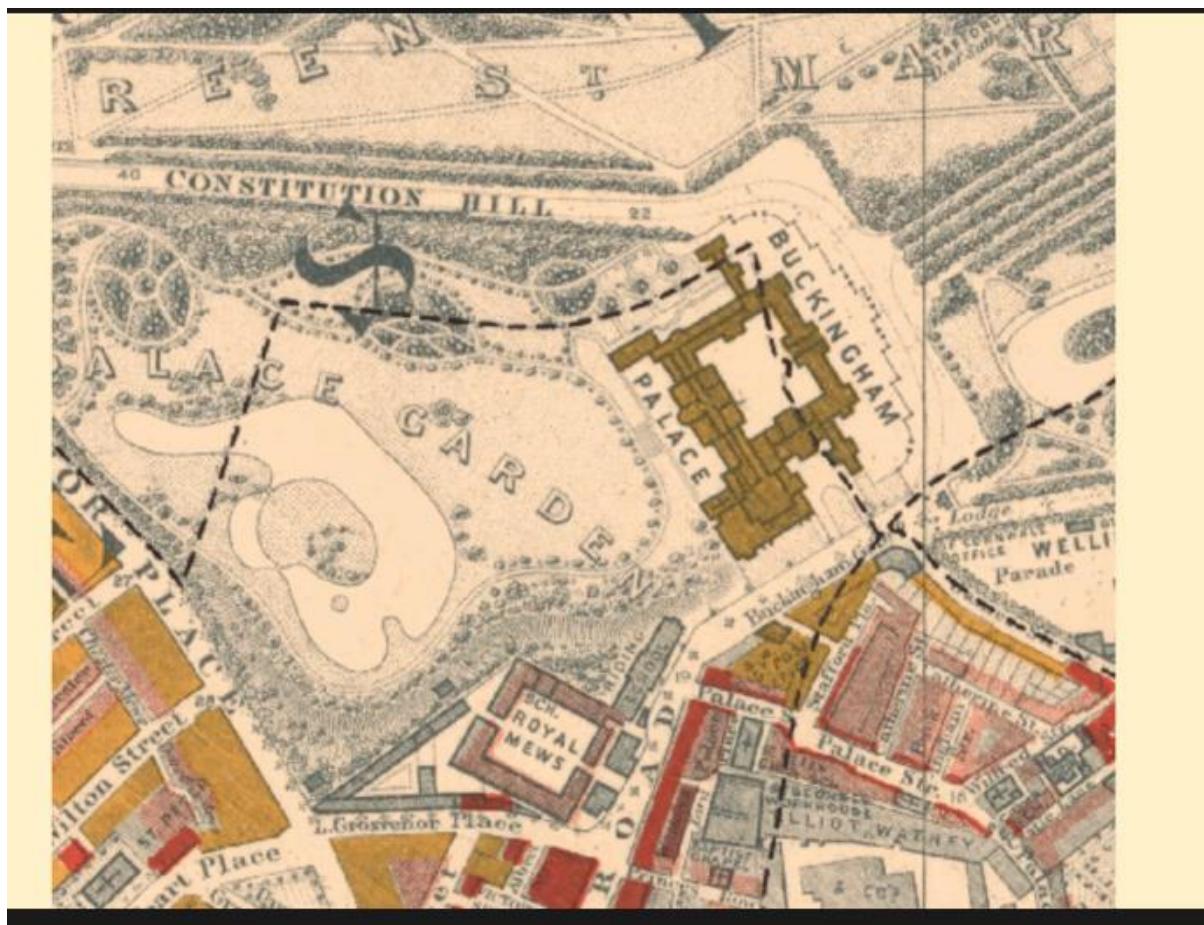


High-Explosive Bomb  
recorded close to:  
The Queens Walk, Bermondsey, London Borough of Southwark, SE1 2RR, London  
[Read more](#)

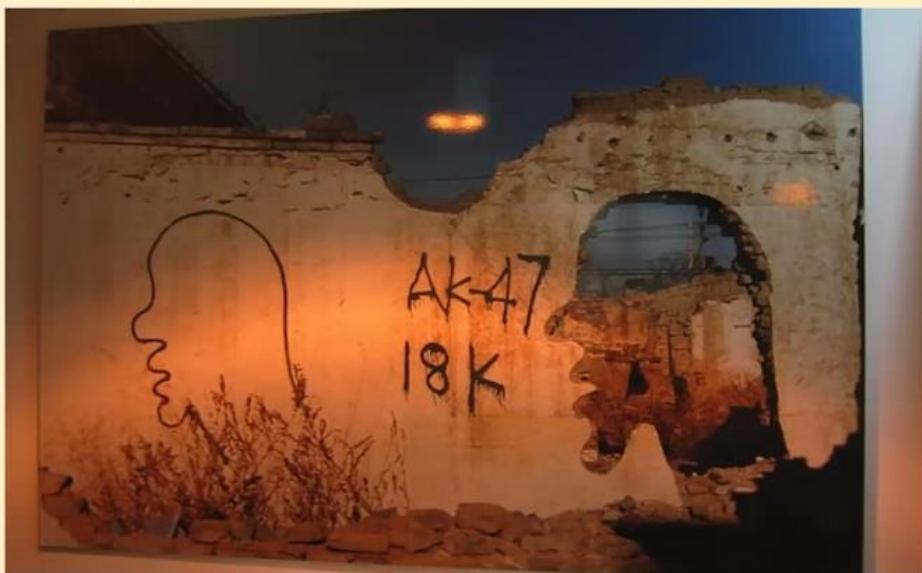
Powered by Leaflet — CartoDB — Map data OpenStreetMap.org contributors

<http://bombsight.org/>





Zhang Dali (see Between Past and Future)



Into the country? Andy Sewell

- Something Like a Nest
- Looks at British countryside as an industrial landscape
- Uses community to focus on countryside
- Uses architecture to focus on land use
- Seasonal narrative



# Andy Sewell: Something Like a Nest



## Edgelands

Marion Shoard

‘...unplanned, certainly uncelebrated and largely incomprehensible territory where town and country meet...’

<http://www.marionshoard.co.uk/Documents/Articles/Environment/Edgelands-Remaking-the-Landscape.pdf>

'Huge numbers of people now spend much of their time living, working or moving within or through it. Yet for most of us, most of the time, this mysterious no man's land passes unnoticed: in our imaginations, as opposed to our actual lives, it barely exists'.

## Terrain Vague and the Zone – Eugene Atget



## Man Ray Terrain Vague



## Victor Hugo

'To wander in a kind of reverie, to take a stroll as they call it, is a good way for a philosopher to spend his time; particularly in that kind of bastard countryside, somewhat ugly but bizarre, made up of two different natures, which surrounds certain great cities, notably Paris. To observe the banlieue is to observe an amphibian. End of trees, beginning of roofs, end of grass, beginning of paving stones, end of ploughed fields, beginning of shops, the end of the beaten track, the beginning of the passions, the end of the murmur of all things divine, the beginning of the noise of humankind - all of this holds an extraordinary interest. And thus, in these unattractive places, forever marked by the passer-by with the epithet sad, the promenades, apparently aimless, of the dreamer.'

## Mohammed Bourouissa: Périphérique



Périphérique, 2007 -

<https://publicdelivery.org/mohamed-bourouissa-peripherique/>

## Ian Walker – from City Gorged with Dreams

‘The most extensive of these derelict spaces lay between the Parisian fortifications and the *banlieue*; the Zone. This was a strip of land about 250 metres wide immediately in front of the fortifications where building had been forbidden for defensive purposes. But the Zone outlived such practicalities and by the late nineteenth century it was inhabited by gypsies, ragpickers, itinerants - known collectively as zoniers - whose presence had become integral to the myth of the city itself.’



Le groupe, 2007



La rencontre, 2005

## The Garden: Alessandro Imbriacio

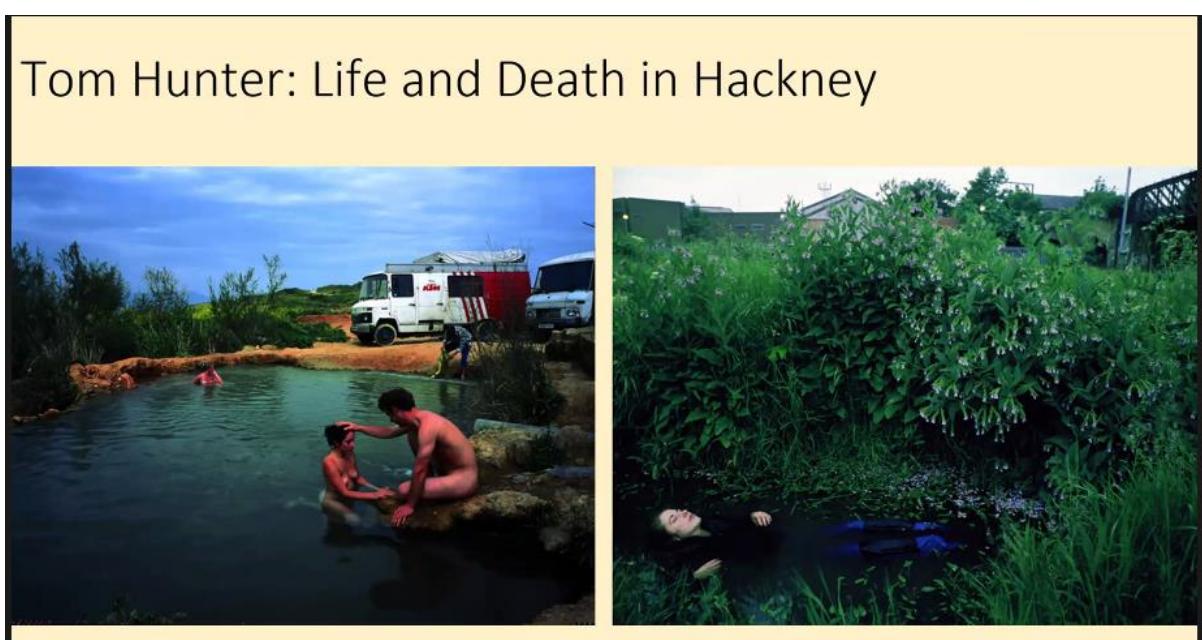
'After the Second World War, Rome had an intense urban development that changed its nature - a process without a clear plan, often supported by illegal constructions.'

In Italian we have this word - abusivismo - that can't be translated into English because it's a concept that does not belong to legal societies. [Abusivismo is an illegal practice, based on widespread building code violations resulting from building without planning permission.]

The consequence of this irregular development is the existence of great natural interstitial territories that continue until the city centre. In these places that are hidden and safe and free, people who can't afford to pay rent can find shelter.'







Tom Hunter: Life and Death in Hackney

John Everett Millais: Ophelia (1851-1852)



## Walking

- Hamish Fulton
- Richard Long
- Paul Gaffney

Joseph Beuys

“Everything is art, that every aspect of life could be approached creatively and, as a result, everyone has the potential to be an artist.”



A Line Made by Walking, 1967 - Richard Long

‘When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art.’  
(Sol Lewitt, 1969)



IS THIS TRUE FOR LONG?  
IS IT TRUE FOR THE BECHERS?



Line Japan, 1979 - Richard Long

MUDGY BOOTS WALK

A WALK OF THE SAME LENGTH AS THE RIVER AVON

FROM MAKING FOOTPRINTS ON A MUDFLAT AT THE MOUTH  
TO WASHING MY BOOTS IN THE SOURCE  
A WALK OF 84 MILES IN TWO DAYS

1991

W A T E R S H E D

RIVER AVON TO RIVER THAMES

A WALK OF 120 MILES IN 39 HOURS FROM BRISTOL BRIDGE TO LONDON BRIDGE

A DAY NIGHT DAY NIGHT WALK

ENGLAND 1992

Hamish Fulton



# B R A I N

A GUIDED AND SHERPA ASSISTED CLIMB TO THE SUMMIT PLATEAU OF CHO OYU AT 8175 METRES

# H E A R T

VIA THE CLASSIC ROUTE WITHOUT SUPPLEMENTARY OXYGEN TIBET AUTUMN 2000

# L U N G S

‘In no way can they (the artworks) actually record or index their subject; all they can do is suggest an idea of the felt experience.’  
(McKibben, 2002)

‘The artworks are facts for the walker and fictions for everyone else’  
(McKibben, 2002)

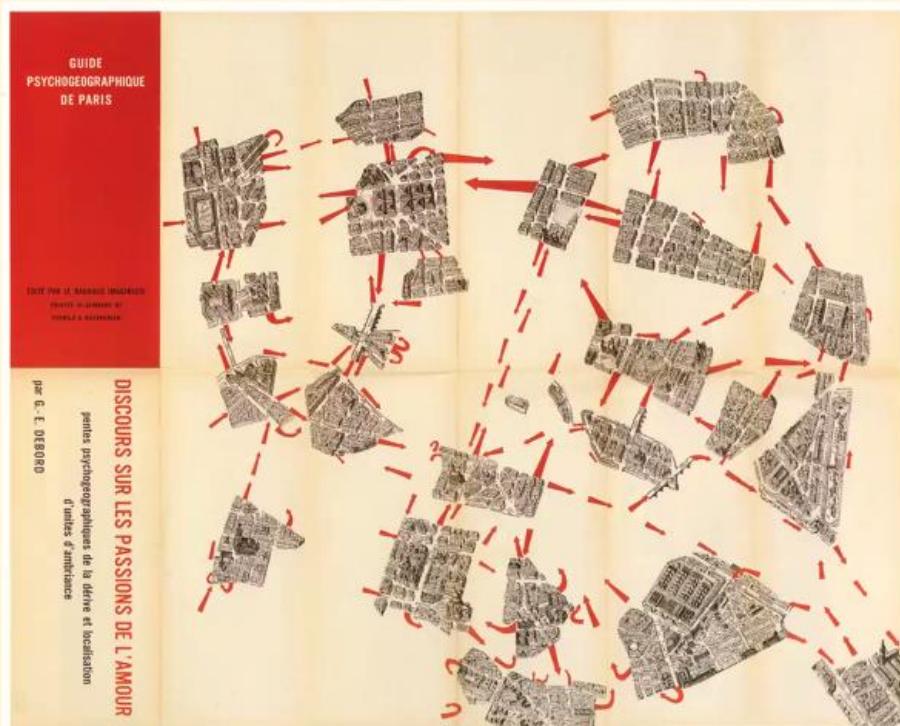
IS THE SAME TRUE OF, FOR EXAMPLE, THE BECHERS?

Rebecca Solnit

‘Many people nowadays live in a series of interiors...disconnected from each other. On foot everything stays connected, for while walking one occupies the spaces between those interiors in the same way one occupies those interiors. One lives in the whole world rather than in interiors built up against it.’

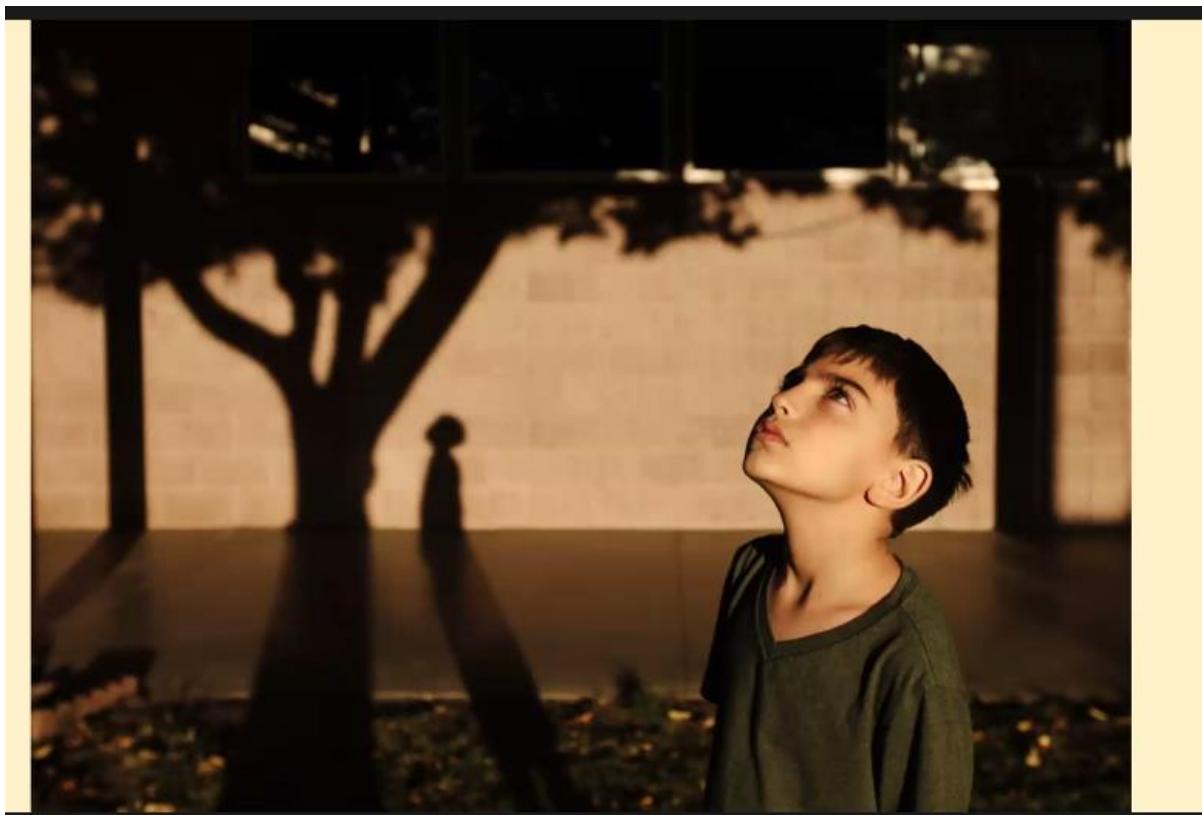
## Psychogeography: Guy Debord

- **PsychoGeography:** “the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals.”
- Transform the city from a functional place to a lived in place where art and technology are unified.



### Rebecca Solnit

‘Walkers are ‘practitioners of the city,’ for the city is made to be walked. A city is a language, a repository of possibilities, and walking is the act of speaking that language, of selecting from those possibilities. Just as language limits what can be said, architecture limits where one can walk, but the walker invents other ways to go.’



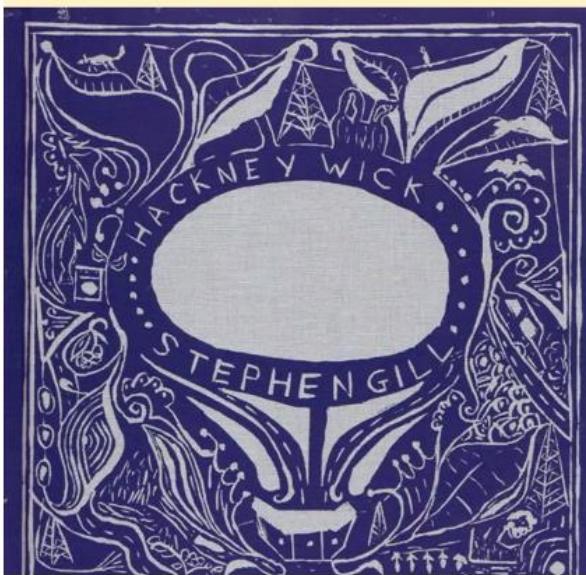
“Walking gives me time to think. I find that when I am walking, I don’t feel that same pressure as when I am on assignment. There is this moment where you disconnect and just stop mentally. It is not about taking pictures, it’s about reflecting on them, and not having that pressure to produce.”

(Diana Markosian)

<https://www.magnumphotos.com/theory-and-practice/diana-markosian-i-dont-know-where-im-going-when-i-walk/>

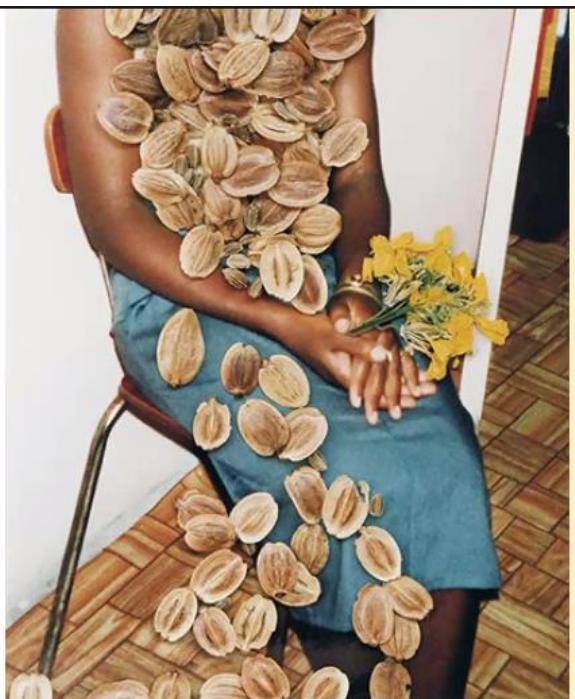
## Stephen Gill

- Interlinked areas of Hackney Wick and the way it was lived in through photography and archaeology
- Hackney Wick photographed Hackney Wick Market with a toy camera bought there
- Hackney flowers photographed flowers found in Hackney Wick
- Photographed spaces in the process of being made (for London Olympics)





- Walking?
- Street?
- Conceptual?
- Found?
- Trash?



## Urban Archaeologist: the Boyle Family

- Land art
- Trash Art
- Found Art

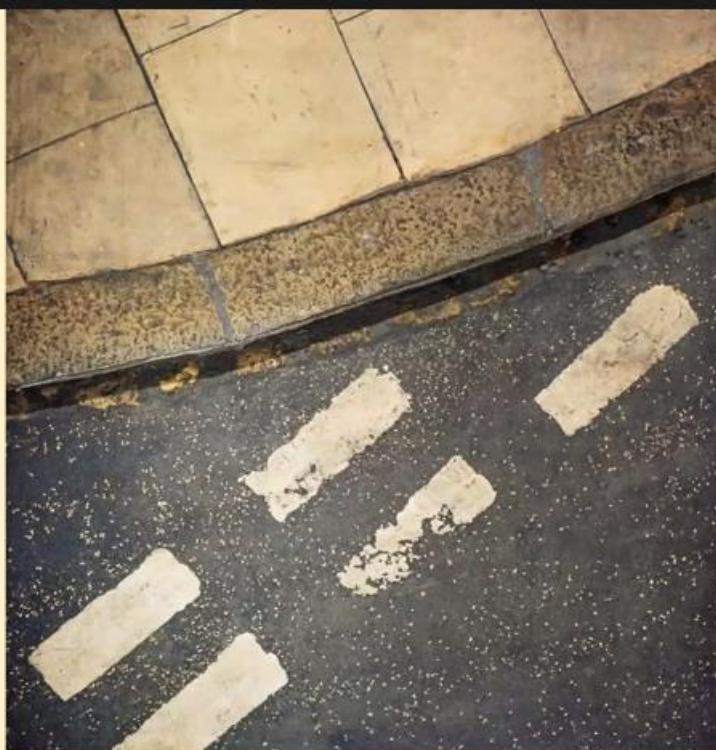
So connections to surrealism, connections to dada, connections to the readymades that the Bechers have compared themselves to

'We also want to be able to look at anything without discovering in it our mothers' womb, our lovers' thighs, the possibility of handsome profit or even the makings of an effective work of art. We don't want to find in it memories of places where we suffered joy and anguish or tenderness or laughter. We want to see without motive and without reminiscence this cliff, this street, this field, this rock, this earth.'

Boyle Family Beyond Image Catalogue, 1986



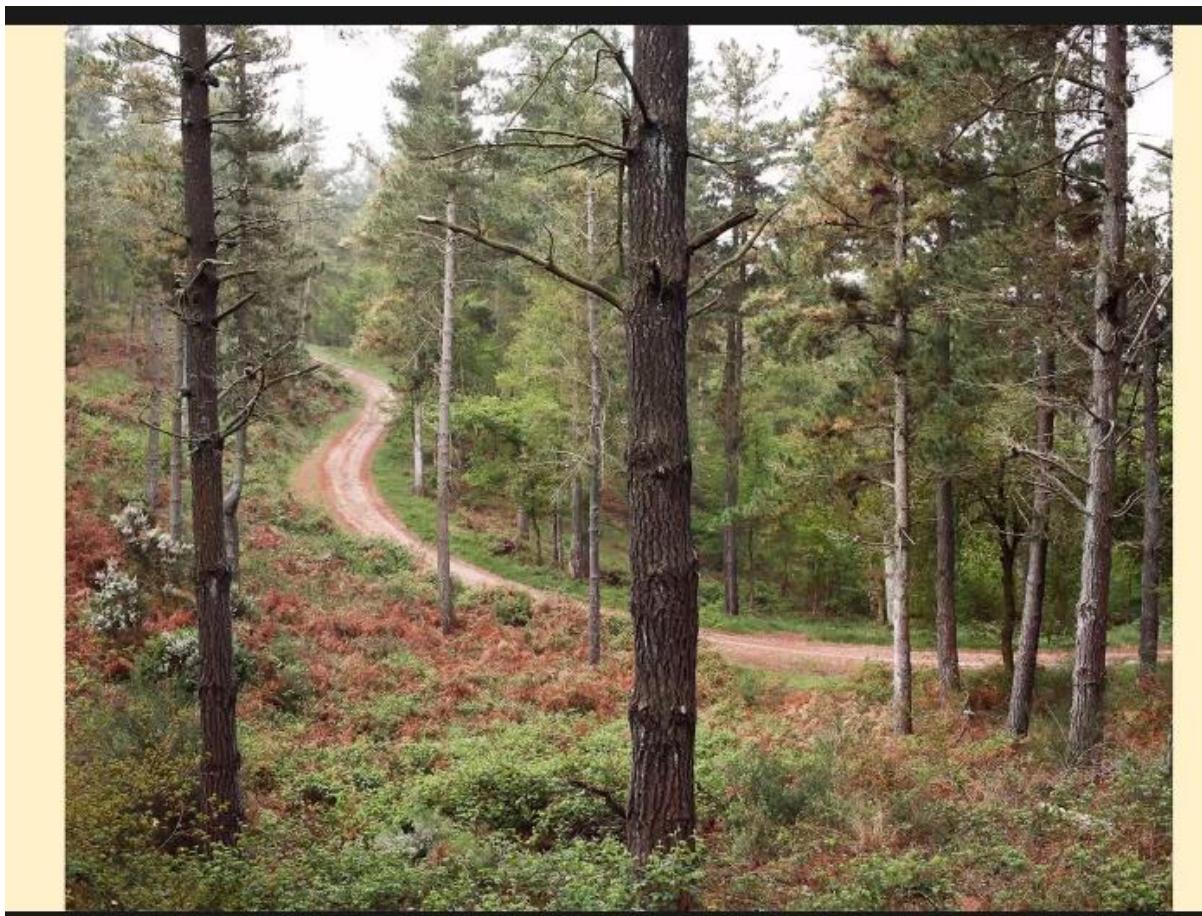
Holland Park Avenue Study 1967



Addison Crescent Study (London Series), 1969 – (painting from resin cast)

Paul Gaffney







## Space and Place

- The New Topographics looked at how space was used, and what that use looked like
- The Production of Space by Henri Lefebvre looks at how 'we conceive of space as reaching beyond the physical city, to encompass the conceptual, the psychological, the ideological and the social.'  
Tormey, J. Cities and Photography. P16-17
- As natural space disappears, space becomes less passive and more deliberately constructed.

# Sibusiso Bheka: Stop Nonsense





- In the **space mode**, people perceive the landscape primarily in terms of their biological needs; that is, they focus on the (instrumental) use of the landscape.
- In the **place mode**, however, people perceive the landscape primarily in terms of self-reflection (experiences, achievements) and social integration (values, norms, symbols, meanings)

## Eva Leitof: Postcards from Europe



### Ladders, Melilla 2006

In autumn 2005 the Spanish government announced plans to strengthen the border defences at its North African enclave of Melilla. Every day during the following weeks hundreds of migrants attempted to scale the fence using makeshift ladders.

According to eyewitnesses the Guardia Civil used stun guns, tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition. At least fourteen migrants lost their lives, fatally injured in the razor-wire of the fence or shot dead by border guards (according to the Spanish government from the Moroccan side).

A spokesman for Fundación Prodein said he believed that the government had intentionally left the ladders on snow to create the impression that there was an 'unstoppable avalanche of immigrants' and justify its use of force.

Later the same year, the European Union announced it would give Morocco forty million euros, largely for border policing and security.

*Der Spiegel, 27 September 2005; interview with José Palazón of Fundación Prodein, Melilla, 6 January 2006*

Eva Leitof, Postcards from Europe, work from the ongoing archive





**Petrol Station, near Szeged, Hungary 2009**  
Four Afghans were detained at an abandoned petrol station between Szeged and Röszke at 7:30 a.m. on 24 September 2009. They asked for asylum and stated that they had left Pakistan five months earlier, each having paid €7,800 to a smuggler who brought them to Serbia via Greece.

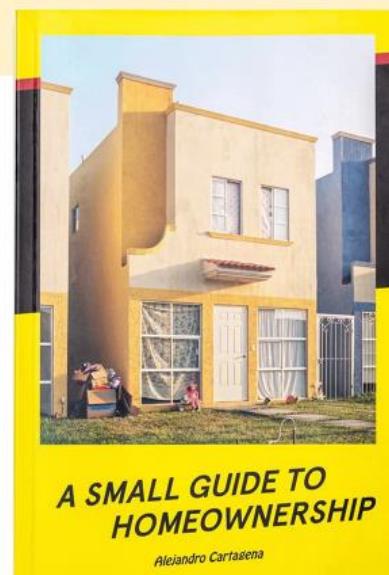
According to a member of the border police, traffickers send migrants to hide and wait in places like these knowing full well that the police are likely to find them there. Once they had received their money they did not care what happened to the migrants. In 2008 1,092 migrants and 54 smugglers were detained by police in the county of Csongrád.

Csongrád county police records for 24 September 2009, Szeged; interview with the Csongrád county head of police, Szeged, 7 October 2009

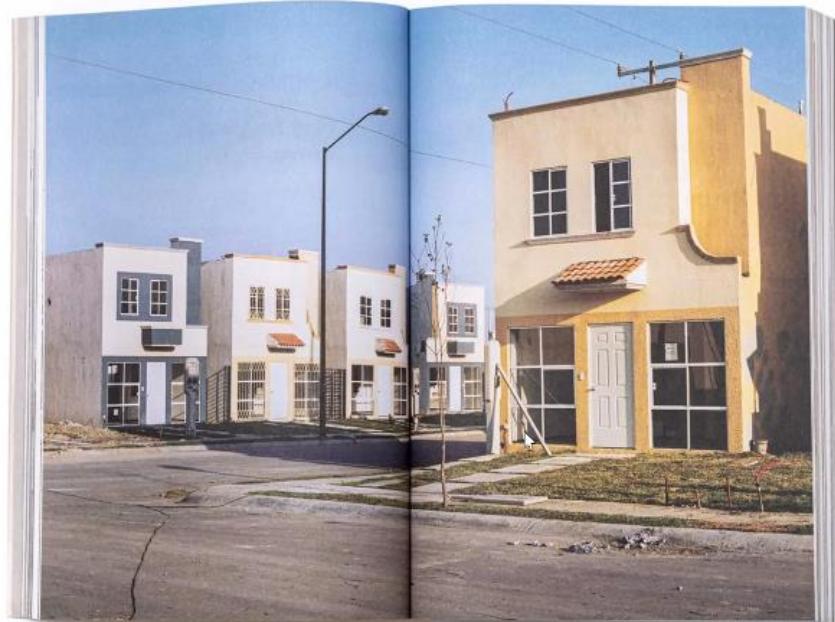
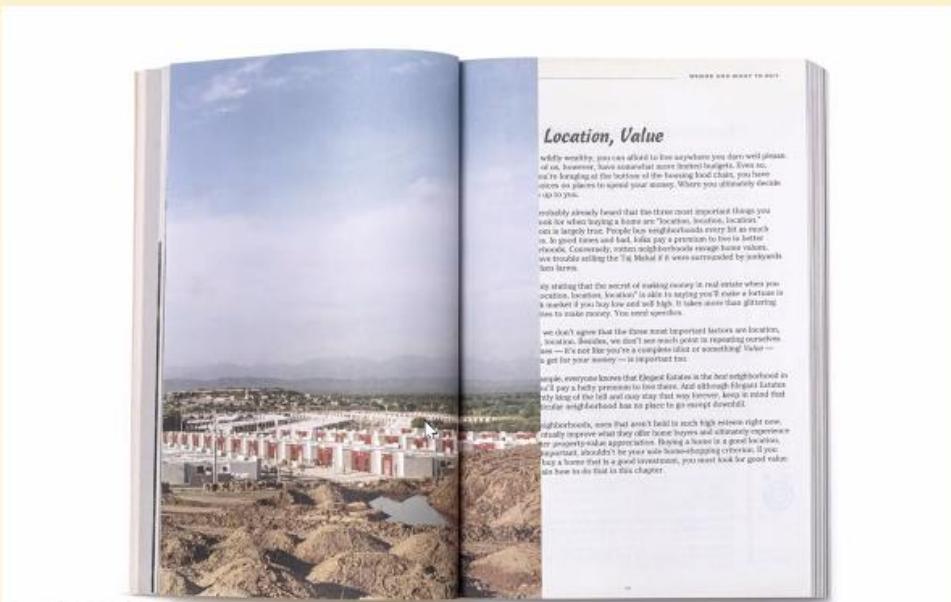
Eva Lendvai/Postcards from Europe: work from the ongoing archive

- Space is socially produced and politically determined
- Photography reflects that social production and political determination of space

## Alejandro Cartagena



# Alejandro Cartagena



- Space is complex
- The city is social/spatial/historical
- Rural/industrial/urban
- Global/local/private
- Physical/mental/social

- Which areas of space were the photographers we saw today working in?