

# Urban Encounters 2015 (Re:)Thinking the Street Tate Britain, Clore Auditorium

Friday 23 October 2015, 18.30 – 20.00  
*Followed by a drinks reception*  
Saturday 24 October 2015, 10.30 – 18.00

Urban Encounters is pleased to announce its eighth annual conference focusing on street-based urban photographic practices. As part of a wider programme of events around London exploring critical ideas addressing how 'the street' might be experienced, imagined, represented, performed and archived, Urban Encounters hosts a number of international artists, photographers, urbanists and academics concerned with theorizing, researching and creating visual work around street spaces.

The conference panels re-examine what is traditionally understood by the genre of 'street photography', an increasingly popular but also highly contentious and at times, problematic set of practices. Speakers discuss issues relating to aesthetics; the politics and ethics of street-work; notions of locality and flow; performativity, mediation and the disruption of 'authenticity'. The second day of the conference also includes a series of breakout seminars led by speakers and film screenings designed to encourage audience participation within research, theory and visual practice, which aim to build upon the conference presentations and audience discussions.

Urban Encounters is part of the five day UrbanPhotoFest programme supported by Openvisor, the Centre for Urban and Community Research, Goldsmiths, and Kingston University. See [www.urbanphotofest.org](http://www.urbanphotofest.org) for further programme details.

## Friday 23 October

18.30 Welcome by **Marianne Mulvey**

18.40 Keynote by **Rut Blees Luxemburg**: *London Dust/Silver Forest*

London Dust looks at the upheaval at the heart of the City of London, where the forces of rapid architectural transformation currently abound. Architects, designers and developers utilise Computer Generated Images to invent the future city. The final architectural realisation is, however, not always fulfilled. London Dust focuses on one of those future buildings: The Pinnacle. Using the streets of the city as a studio, Luxemburg foregrounds the material reality of the urban space through the disorderly force of dust and its ability to tether the photographic image to a present tense. Rut Blees Luxemburg will introduce her public art work Silver Forest, a large-scale concrete photographic frieze on Westminster City Hall, highlighting questions around materiality and the urban image.

19.20 Chaired discussion and audience Q&A chaired by **Paul Halliday**

20.00 Urban Encounters and Urban Photo Fest opening reception  
Drinks served in the Clore Foyer

21.00 End

## Saturday 24 October

10.30 Welcome and Introduction by Paul Halliday

10.40 Keynote by **Saskia Sassen**:

*Cities - A window into larger social and economic realities*

Cities are complex systems but they are also incomplete systems. In this incompleteness lies the possibility of making the urban, the political, the civic, a history. Every city is distinct and so is every discipline that studies it. And yet, a study of the urban must deal with these key features -- incompleteness, complexity, and the possibility of making. This makes cities strategic sites for the exploration of many major subjects confronting society such as the processes that are constituting a whole new political economy including the massive growth of corporate buying of urban land. Streets, squares, shops and homes are increasingly eliminated to build mega projects, which add density, but actually de-urbanize the city. There are also multiple positive trends happening, notably the multiplication of cultural initiatives. Today, as we have entered a global era, the city is once again emerging as a strategic site for understanding some of the major new trends reconfiguring the social order.

11.20 Audience Q&A

**Panel Performativity and the Politics of Place**

Chaired by **Caroline Knowles**

11.40 **Mitra Tabrizian**: *Another Country*

*Another Country* focuses on Muslim communities from the Middle East, taking a more oblique view of the politics of everyday life. If we read the images of this series from the perspective of displacement, there is an unmistakable sense of unease once we realise we are in fact in London. Is this because we are dealing with the lives of Middle Eastern exiles and refugees, of people who feel 'unhomed', or not yet integrated into the host culture? Or does this feeling of strangeness stem from the idea that we are facing a break down of the barriers of 'otherness', which currently are so prevalent in relation to the Middle East? In this context, the title *Another Country* no longer refers to some other country out there, but to a culture within.

12.00 **Julia Schulz-Dornburg**: *Modern Ruins, A Topography of Profit*

Julia Schulz-Dornburg explores her photography project *Modern Ruins, A Topography of Profit*, which grows out of a body of ongoing research that started in 2010 with the exploration of leisure worlds, ghost towns and the landscapes of profit. The centerpiece of the work is the photographic inventory of abandoned speculative construction in Spain, a compilation of Iberian landscapes occupied by unfinished and abandoned residential resorts.

12.20 Chaired discussion and audience Q&A

12.45 Lunch break

14.00 Breakout Seminars

Places are allocated on a first request basis: please select your chosen seminar upon booking

**Seminar 1** *Disappearances: Traces in the Landscape*

**Lara Almarcegui and Jean McNeil** chaired by **Diego Ferrari**

**Location:** Taylor Digital Studio

Antarctica is the antithesis of urbanity – a blank space at the tail end of the world, and nobody's country. Through images and readings from her forthcoming memoir and polar travel

narrative *Ice Diaries*, Jean McNeil charts the streetless continent's mysterious flows of ice, subterranean frozen lakes, and constantly changing topography. Artist Lara Almarcegui examines processes of urban transformation brought on by political, social, and economic change. Since the mid-1990s, she has studied urban features that are not usually the focus of attention: wastelands, construction materials, invisible elements. The session is chaired by artist and photographer Diego Ferrari.

### **Seminar 2 *Towards an Ethics of Collaboration***

**Stefan Horn and Virginia Nimarkoh** chaired by **Andrew Bick**

**Location:** Duffield Room

Artist Virginia Nimarkoh's project *Viva Phoenix!* documents the last of the original seven Covent Garden community gardens. The site is the meeting point for diverse narratives around community, nature, ownership and the city. *Viva Phoenix!* is evidence of a political and horticultural ideal; it celebrates the ongoing collective efforts that sustain such sites. Nimarkoh is joined by Stefan Horn, the artistic director of Nine Urban Biotopes, an international, socially engaged art project delivering artistic research and cultural exchange in cities in South Africa and Europe. The participating initiatives all distinguish themselves by addressing vital matters of social concern with regard to contemporary urban living in innovative ways, responding to issues of safety and housing, youth and migration, mobility and economical subsistence. Their exploration of collaboration and urban community is chaired by artist, curator and lecturer Andrew Bick.

### **Seminar 3 *Art, Power and the Street***

**Anton Kats and Rosemarie Chung** chaired by **Paul Halliday**

**Location:** Clore Auditorium

The seminar derives from the proposition that any given activity of the everyday can become a useful method from which to learn how to work and live together. You are invited to become part of a live radio show (Radio Narrowcast) as part of a seminar chaired by Paul Halliday with the participation of Rosemarie Chung and Anton Kats. The Clore Auditorium is transformed into an open Radio Studio in order to collaboratively introduce and develop diverse methodologies of art practice, research and pedagogy. The seminar opens up to questions around form and content driven by the motivation to be practically useful to the practitioners involved in it at a given place and time. The participants are encouraged to bring a radio receiver.

### **Seminar 4 *Sound, Rhythm and the Street***

**Salomé Voegelin and Samuel Bianchini** chaired by **Anne Zeitz**

**Location:** Manton Studio

This seminar concentrates on the ways in which contemporary artists translate urban experiences through sound media and communication technologies. Salomé Voegelin presents listening to the urban environment as a civic engagement, highlighting the socio-political importance and consequence of hearing place. Samuel Bianchini's work brings together old and recent communication technologies by transforming mobile phone messages into light that emerges in public space. In both practices, the aural involves the visual and vice versa, while the street becomes a space of interaction. Chaired by Anne Zeitz, the seminar reviews how artists use technology to reflect on the street, and what possibilities are offered by engaging with the virtual networks of contemporary cities.

15.30 Tea and Coffee served in the Clore Auditorium foyer

16.00

### **Artists' Discussion *Black Urbanism and the Street***

**Vanley Burke and Charlie Phillips** in conversation with  
**Paul Goodwin**

Vanley Burke and Charlie Phillips discuss the socio-political and aesthetic engagement of black photographers in Britain with the city and the street. Chaired by Paul Goodwin, the

conversation considers the photographers' respective practices of documenting the black urban presence in Birmingham and London for over 30 years.

16.45 Audience Q&A

17.10 Closing Remarks, **Abbas Nokhasteh** and seminar chairs

17.15 End

17.30 A free bus service departs from Tate Britain to Goldsmiths MA Photography & Urban Cultures' exhibition opening. Places available on a first-come, first-served basis, please sign up during lunch or tea break.

## Speakers' Biographies

**Lara Almarcegui** is a Spanish artist whose work often explores neglected or overlooked sites, carefully cataloguing and highlighting each location's tendency towards entropy. Recently Lara was the highly acclaimed representative of Spain at the 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennial, where she filled the interior of the pavilion with massive piles of building rubble similar to those used by workers during its construction. Working at a time of widespread urban renewal in Europe, she has remained a champion of overlooked, forgotten sites — creating guides for the cities' wastelands and even instigating their legal protection. Other recent group exhibitions include Manifesta IX, Genk, (2012), Radical Nature, Barbican Art Centre London, Shenzhen and Athens Biennale (2009).

**Samuel Bianchini** is an artist who lives and works in Paris. He shows regularly in France and abroad. Bianchini's work investigates the impact of technology on modes of representation, new forms of aesthetic experience and socio-political organisation, frequently collaborating with scientists and technology research centres. He is Associate Professor at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs (Ensad, Paris), where he is the head of the research group *Reflective Interaction* dedicated to interactive and performative installations.

**Andrew Bick** is an artist and curator. His art and curation are based on a critical analysis of the complex and ambivalent nature of our relationship to late modernism in relation to the social impact of contemporary art practice. His work is represented in significant public and private collections worldwide, notably The British Museum, Yale Center for British Art, GoMA, Glasgow, Goldman Sachs, Roche, UBS and Cranford Collection. He supervises PhD's at Kingston University and University of Gloucestershire where he is also Reader in Fine Art.

**Vanley Burke** was born in St. Thomas, Jamaica, in 1951. Having moved to England at the age of 14, Burke's work has captured the life of the Caribbean Diaspora over the past four decades. Often described as the 'Godfather of Black British Photography,' Burke's iconic images are testament to Britain's evolving cultural and social landscapes. A substantial part of his archive is housed at the Library of Birmingham and he has exhibited widely across the UK and abroad.

**Rosemarie Chung** is a British-Jamaican artist and educator. Chung is a graduate in Fine Art from Camberwell School of Arts, London. In 2001 Chung introduced the use of art as therapy through a programme she developed with the Jamaican government for hospitals and communities affected by violence. In 2005 Chung founded Studio 174, a non-profit arts studio and academy for children and young adults in Kingston, Jamaica.

**Diego Ferrari** is an artist and photographer, living and working in London. His recent work takes a fine art approach to street photography. His work interrogates the relationship between social values and public spaces, with a particular interest in the relationship between the body and its environment, urbanism and architecture. He also teaches 'Photography, Art and Architecture' at Central Saint Martins College of Art and is currently a lecturer on the BA in photography at Kingston University, London.

**Paul Goodwin** is a curator, urbanist and researcher based in London. He is Professor of Transnational Curating, Chair of Black Art & Design Studies and Director of the Research Centre for Transnational Art, Identity and Nation (TrAIN) at University of

the Arts London (UAL). He recently co-edited *Transfigurations: Curatorial and Artistic Research in an Age of Migrations* (2014, London: Royal College of Art) with Victoria Walsh and Pamela Sepulveda, and is currently working on *Black Artists and Modernism*, a new three year AHRC funded research project based at UAL in partnership with Middlesex University.

**Paul Halliday** is a photographer, film-maker and sociologist based in the Department of Sociology at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He originally trained as a photojournalist and film-maker at the London College of Printing and Central Saint Martins Art College, and studied social anthropology and art history at Goldsmiths and the University of Oxford. He has worked for many years in adult and higher education, and is a former local government media consultant and British Refugee Council media adviser. He is now the Course Leader of the MA in Photography and Urban Cultures at Goldsmiths College.

**Stefan Horn** works internationally as a free-lance curator, project manager, set and exhibition designer and in the field of visual communications. Since 2000 he has been the artistic director of the Berlin-based art association urban dialogues, which engages with all manner of change and flux in relation to urban issues through site-specific and community-based art projects and urban interventions. His background and training are in drama and philosophy, sociology and political science, which he studied at the University of Vienna and the Free University of Berlin.

**Anton Kats** is an artist, musician and dancer born in Ukraine and based in London. His practice explores methods of the everyday in relation to living and working together to reveal the pragmatics of learning through everyday doings. Kats is currently a PhD candidate at Goldsmiths College, conducting a practice-based project, which derives from and investigates the methodologies within the field of Artistic Research as Pedagogy. He is an editor of *Sound Space Downtown: Workbook and User Manual* based on his Radio Sonar project contribution to the artist-in-residence programme at Studio 174 in Kingston, Jamaica.

**Rut Blees Luxemburg** is an artist who deals with the representation of the city and the phenomenon of the urban, ranging from large-scale photographic works to public art installations and operatic mise-en-scène. Her public art installations include *Caliban Towers* with muf architects in Shoreditch, *Picadilly's Peccadilloes* commissioned by *Art on the Underground* in Heathrow Airport and *The Teaser*, her recent light-box installation in the square of Somerset House. November will see the launch of her large-scale concrete photographic permanent installation *Silver Forest* in the heart of Victoria. Her exhibition *London Dust* can currently be seen at the Museum of London. Her work is collected by many public institutions including Tate Modern, V&A and the Centre Pompidou. She created the iconic cover for *The Streets' Original Pirate Material*. Rut Blees Luxemburg is a Reader in Urban Aesthetics at The Royal College of Art.

**Jean McNeil** is the author of ten published books including four novels and a collection of short fiction. In 2012 she won the Prism International prize for creative non-fiction for an extract from *Ice Diaries: a climate change memoir*, which she will read from at Urban Encounters and which will be published in 2016. She has been the British Antarctic Survey/Arts Council England Writer-in-Residence in Antarctica and has also been writer-in-residence with the Natural Environment Research Council in Greenland, in the Svalbard Archipelago and in the Falkland Islands. She is Senior Lecturer and co-director of the Masters in Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia.

**Marianne Mulvey** is Curator of Public Programmes, Tate Britain and Tate Modern.

**Virginia Nimarkoh** is a London based artist whose practice spans the visual arts, education, environmental regeneration, food activism and production. For more than twenty years, her socially engaged art projects have shown in contexts including ICA London, ICA Boston, The Royal Parks, The Photographer's Gallery, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, and Lakeside Kunstraum, Austria. As a lecturer, she has taught widely, including at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, Goldsmiths University of London, Camberwell College of Arts and University of Wolverhampton.

**Abbas Nokhasteh** is a curator, film maker and producer. He is the founder of Openvizor, an organisation that supports cultural collaborations and practice development across borders, cultures and disciplines. The projects combine practical knowledge and research, exploring new ways to express, educate and organise from the ground up.

**Roland 'Charlie' Phillips** was born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1944, then moved to Britain in 1956 to live with his parents in Notting Hill. He began to document life in the local community and later became a freelance photographer and worked for Harper's Bazaar, Stern and Life. In the 1960s he became involved with protest movements while also traveling across Europe. Phillips' body of work associated with Notting Hill was recognised in the 1990s with the publication *Notting Hill in the Sixties* (1991) and as part of the Museum of London exhibition *Roots to Reckoning* (2005).

**Saskia Sassen** is the Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology and Chair, The Committee on Global Thought, Columbia University. Her new book is *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy* (Harvard University Press 2014). Recent books are *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton University Press 2008), *A Sociology of Globalization* (W.W.Norton 2007), and the 4th fully updated edition of *Cities in a World Economy* (Sage 2012). Among older books is *The Global City* (Princeton University Press 1991/2001). Her books are translated into over 20 languages. She is the recipient of diverse awards and mentions, ranging from multiple doctor honoris causa to named lectures and being selected for various honors lists. Most recently she was awarded the Principe de Asturias 2013 Prize in the Social Sciences and made a member of the Royal Academy of the Sciences of Netherland.

**Julia Schulz-Dornburg** (Munich, 1962) graduated from the Architectural Association in London in 1990 and runs her own architectural practice in Barcelona since 1993. She has received Barcelona's city prize, the Triennial Maresme Architecture Prize for rehabilitation and two FAD Awards for ephemeral spaces. She is the author of the book "Art and Architecture: new affinities" (Gustavo Gili 2000) and "Modern Ruins, A Topography of Profit" (Ambit 2012). As Commissioner of "Contemporary landscapes" (Arquinset 2013-2015) she launched the collective project "Towards a public database of Spain's Real Estate Corpses".

**Mitra Tabrizian** is Professor of Photography at the University of Westminster. Born in Tehran, Iran, her photographic (and film) work has been published and exhibited widely in major international museums and galleries, including a solo exhibition at the Tate Britain (2008). She is a recipient of several photographic awards, including the Royal Academy 'Rose Award for Photography' (2013). Her most recent photographic book 'Another Country' with a forward by Homi Bhabha, is published by Hatje Cantz (2012). Her work is represented in major public collections. Currently she is working on a feature film entitled 'Gholam' to be released in 2016.

**Salomé Voegelin** is a Swiss artist and writer based in London. She is the author of *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art* (2010), and *Sonic Possible Worlds: Hearing the Continuum of Sound* (2014). Voegelin's artistic practice involves sound and text works produced in collaboration with David Mollin. Voegelin is Reader in Sound Arts at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London.

**Anne Zeitz** is a researcher and artist working with photography, video and sound media. She is based in Paris and holds a PhD in Aesthetics, Science and Technologies of the Arts. Her research focuses on mechanisms of surveillance and mass media, theories of observation and attention, and practices of counter-observation in contemporary art. Zeitz teaches at the University Paris 8, is a member of the research project *Média Médiums* and postdoctoral fellow of the Labex Arts-H2H.