

SOMEWHEN

**Gabriele Basilico / Primož Bizjak / Andrea Botto / Edward Burtynsky /
Martina Della Valle / Guido Guidi / Teodoro Lupo / Jürgen Nefzger / Robert
Polidori / Joël Tettamanti**

Curated by Daniele De Luigi

September 10 2008 – November 15 2008

Opening: Wednesday September 10 2008 / 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

**Gallery hours: 10:00 am – 1:00 pm / 2:30 pm – 7:30 pm from Tuesday to Saturday
Sunday and Monday by appointment only**

Jarach Gallery is pleased to announce *Somewhen*, a group exhibition curated by Daniele De Luigi, presenting the works of renowned contemporary artists and emerging talents of the international scene. Taking place in conjunction with the Architecture Biennial of Venice, the exhibition hinges on the notion of transience as a condition which, though predominantly invisible, is always present in the human dwelling experience.

Intrinsically tied to the here and now, to a contemporaneity and to a simultaneous presence with respect to its own subject, the photographic image re-presents a “state of things”. The question of the relationship between art and photography fundamentally rotates around the photographer’s ability, despite the manner in which he or she practices, to overcome this limit and to extract the specific potential of each image, conscientiously leading the viewer, through a mental journey, beyond the limits which appear within. The works in this exhibition are connected by the pursuit of this goal through the implementation, on the part of the artists, of a personal aesthetic strategy which presents the visible by simulating an analytical, neutral and impartial gaze. The static vision of the precise moment in the history of a given place, whose expansion in time remains indeterminate, collides with the viewer’s definite perception of a sense of instability and of mutability regarding the human presence. Though portraying the present, the photographs lead the mind to fluctuate in time, allowing one to imagine a past while hypothesizing a future.

If the art of planning and building domestic spaces presupposes the need to imagine a utopic immutability and to ignore the possibility that, at an unspecified moment in time, a catastrophic event, human recklessness, madness, or simply the volatility of the human soul, could destroy or modify that which has been built, then another art takes on the task of representing the ephemeral nature of the peculiarities and senses of spaces facing the relentless advance of time, leading the viewer to imagine other moments of their existence.

The images taken by Gabriele Basilico in Beirut (1991), just as those taken by Robert Polidori in New Orleans (2005–2006), in different manners yet both of extraordinary formal balance, dramatically bear witness to what remained of two cities devastated by two completely different but equally tragic events. The former focuses mainly on a comprehensive view of the city, the

latter on the private spaces, placing us in front of the material remains of eras and lifestyles that have forever disappeared, while the questions about their futures are unfortunately still unresolved. Though removed from collective drama, Guido Guidi also treats the memory of spaces. His decision to take photographs in perfectly structured places, in terms of spatial dimension and impact of light, feigns disinterest in the traces of the past lives which quietly yet powerfully emerge. The epic-like series taken by Edward Burtynsky in the Yangtze River Valley (2002) shows the ghostly atmosphere of the last days of existence of a human settlement, before being completely and permanently erased by the colossal Three Gorges Dam, commissioned by the Chinese government. The instability of human dwelling conditions as a consideration of immense environmental changes, one of Burtynsky's main research subjects, is once again presented as an inevitable consequence of the contemporary world.

The moment in which change manifests itself is the focus, though in different ways, of the work of Primož Bizjak, Teodoro Lupo and Andrea Botto. During the wee hours of the night, Bizjak encroaches upon urban buildings in a state of abandon or renovation, photographing their exoskeletons from within. The artificial light, emanating from the pulsating city, floods these empty spaces, becoming a ghost of memory and modifying perception by suspending time in an unreal dimension. In the photographic series *Staubfilm* (Dust Film), Lupo photographs commercial areas of Berlin during the span of time between the closing of one activity and the opening of a new business on the same location. Thus the fixity of the image, paradoxically, becomes symptomatic of the mutability of a city. Botto's image, taken during the production of a large-scale public work in the Po Valley, does not directly show the execution of the works, but rather, by taking advantage of the exceptional illumination necessary to carry them out, leads our attention to the houses of the locals. These latter are the passive spectators of the irreversible changes-in-progress to their landscape.

Marina Della Valle's diptych also presents a situation of indefinitely suspended construction. On one side she shows the entire wall of a house, the only remaining trace of a lived history after the partial demolition of a building. The second image is a detail of another wall of a house, also in ruins. On this second wall, the presence of the traces of a fresco, portraying an antiquated village, creates a dialogue between the parts, triggering a reflection on the image and the passage of time.

Joël Tettamanti and Jürgen Nefzger's photographs are set there where life seems to peacefully flow in a cyclical and undifferentiated repetition, aiding the formal composition of the image. Nonetheless, it is precisely this ambiguity which conversely contributes to the generation of a projection toward an anything but certain future. The villages of Greenland photographed by Tettamanti, immersed in the absolute peace of a fable-like atmosphere, hide the threats of immense climatic changes and of the globalizing grasp on the indigenous population. The peaceful flow of daily life is ironically represented in Nefzger's photographs, contrasted by the unsettling profiles of nuclear power plants which transform themselves into ordinary landscape elements, disguising the unwieldy environmental legacy of their energy production.