All photos exist between recognition and speculation.

Common Ground has formed, a carefully constructed expanse of imagery. Each image chosen by Excerpt Magazine as a building block pressed in to place. Some images selected provoke the slightly off-feeling of Déjà vu as though the squillions of photos out there have built an eerie plain of familiarity; where nothing exists that we don’t recognise from places we haven’t been to people we’ve never met. Other images have a clarity that puts you at the spot, there. Certain photos are unreachable, their uncommon terrain breaking the sullen permanence of concrete’s materiality. The lull of ubiquity spearheaded.
COMMON GROUND

CONTRIBUTORS

Clockwise from top left:
Aleix Plademunt, image from Dubailand Series 2008
David Wadelton, A creek in Highton 2012
Alireza Mirzaee, image from Series Forgotten 2011
Clockwise from left:
Chris Round, Car park, Lane Cove, Sydney 2011
Chris Round, Darling Harbour Flyover 2011
Alexis Vasilikos, Untitled 2003
Clockwise from left:
Jan Sievers, Silo, St Margarethen 2010
Lee Yunho, on the shore 2012
Heather Lighton, Meeniyan Hotel is for Lovers 2012
Clockwise from left:
Ernesto Oroza, Untitled - Architecture of Necessity 2012
Jane Brown, Remains from 2003 bushfire, Mount Stromlo Observatory Canberra 2012
Jane Brown, Towards the Alexander Column, St Petersburg 2006
SFMoMA was giving away free posters (an untitled piece by Felix Gonzalez-Torres) as part of their 75th anniversary celebration, and you could see people walking around with these large rolls of paper all over the museum. I guess someone decided they didn’t want their free art after all, and there it sat in a puddle of water in the museum’s top-floor sculpture garden. ‘Free’ seems very enticing, but so often free is simply not valued.
Clockwise from left:
Avard Woolaver, Elevator Shaft 2012
Vivien Ayroles, 42 rue Pierre Larousse 2012
Vivien Ayroles, 34 rue des Grands Champs 2012
From left:
Mark Schaer, Untitled 2012
Aleix Plademunt, image from Small Dreams series 2009 - 2010
Letha Wilson, Grand Tetons Moonrise Concrete Bend 2011
Unique C-print, concrete, woodframe
Anti-clockwise from top left:
Lee Yunho, cubes on street 2011 (image rotated by 270°)
Alexis Vasilikos, Untitled 2011
Isadora Vaughan, Untitled 2011
From left:
Daniel Aulsebrook, Hong Kong 2012
Zhang Xiao, Subdue-No.7 2008
From left:
Jane Brown, Woolworths Building, Rhyll, North Wales 2008
Lee Yunho, man, seoul 2012
From left:
Daniel K Sparkes, Alsby 2011
Alireza Mirzaee, image from series After the End 2012
Clockwise from top left:
Kel Glaister, Concrete Hands 2012
Daniel Aulsebrook, Rubble 2011
Yvette King, real and fake stones 2012
From left:
Zhang Xiao, Coastline No.279 2011
Rohan Hutchinson, Material Survey 2012
From left:
Nicole Marie, Untitled 2012
Jane Brown, Hume Dam 2011
Concrete: it is poured, heavy, it cracks and weathers and stains. We know how it feels against our bare feet, its temperature in the shade, most of us have fallen upon it or grazed against it. Concrete means something definite. Yet, in all but the most bland images things that seem definite aren’t. Across the pages an alternative landscape of unexpected juxtapositions and proximities formed as Common Ground sought to test the place of place within photographs.

Has everywhere become anywhere?

Visually today we straddle the globe and the occupation of spaces via photography is saturated: from satellites to Street View we have it covered. Wrapped up in ideas of Common Ground I crept through my suburban childhood; Google Street View lurching me past rose gardens whilst an awful echoing in my head kept saying, ‘don’t play on the street’. Like a cheap 80’s videogame I had trouble navigating; this surface was a deceptive labyrinth. The banality of the rolling image would have sunk without trace, yet I could verify the absence of places since demolished and feel the real world bracing itself against the pixels.

Skimming across thousands of digitised images it is hard sometimes to know if the ground is contracting or expanding. I initially expected a decimation of exactness, like the popular digital filters that dislocate nuanced light. As we get used to witnessing places we never inhabit, unverified spaces could blur and collapse. Except, that we recognise things in photos and recognise things through photos: trends, tropes, outliers, the similarities and differences to other images, all of this builds our capacity to speculate. Each image becomes a marker for others, merging in to a ‘lived photography’ that adapts, shifts contexts and inhabits space itself.
CONTRIBUTORS

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