

GLOBAL ANXIETIES

NINE PERSPECTIVES ON A CHANGING PLANET



RICHARD BARNES
 NORIKO FURUNISHI
 ANTHONY GOICOLEA
 KIM KEEVER
 LORI KELLA
 DAVID MAISEL
 LUIS MALLO
 JAMES WELLING
 WIM WENDERS



Kim Keever

June, 2003

C-print

31 x 44 inches

Courtesy the artist and Kinz, Tillou + Feigen, New York



Anthony Goicolea

Glacier, 2002

C-print

72 x 24 inches

Edition of 9

Courtesy the artist and

Postmasters Gallery, New York

Early 21st-century life is dirty, dangerous, and rife with ill-gotten gains and fugitive pleasures. We live in altered states and toxic environments. Yet, we live and dream and sometimes recalibrate our expectations when efforts to effect change fail. The photographers in *Global Anxieties* grapple with rapid global climate change and its deleterious planetary effects. Their photographic interventions both punctuate and attempt to redress those problems through fantasy constructions, documentary modes, and reconstructed, otherworldly landscapes.

Photography is the silky surface upon which we circumscribe the world made visible and visual through the effects of light. The photographers in *Global Anxieties* understand their position as producers of visibility. They reconstitute how we experience

our environment through their interventions, simulations, and repositionings. Several artists in the exhibition craft simulated documentary photographs, parsing notions of “truth” within the photographic process. In Anthony Goicolea’s imaginary landscapes, he focuses on documenting landscapes that are nonexistent, except as they exist in the studio. *Glacier* is a harrowing look into an icy abyss, and stairs carved into the side of the glacier do not alleviate the vertigo created by that dark drop into frozen nothingness. Danger pervades this constructed photograph in which one slip of the foot sends the imaginary climber into a dead zone. In Goicolea’s fake/actual reality—it is a construction after all—nature is an inhospitable place of false leads and dire consequences.

Disquietude infuses many of the exhibition’s photographs with a sobriety of intent. Kim Keever’s

Luis Mallo

In Camera #3, 2001–02

C-print

50 x 60 inches

Edition of 2

Courtesy the artist and

Hasted Hunt Gallery, New York





Lori Kella

The Long Cold Advance, 2005
4 C-prints
36 x 96 inches (overall)
Courtesy the artist, Cleveland

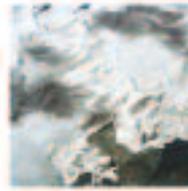
photographs in particular look as if they are photographs of an emptied earth, devoid of any human presence, as if by nuclear holocaust. The hazy atmospheric effects, which at first seem alluring, dissolve into menace and unbreathable air. Creepily unearthly, Keever's photographs telegraph a world gone catastrophically bad. Like Goicolea, Keever constructs environments which he then photographs, although Keever's constructions are in aquariums he fills with water. He achieves the smoky effects by dispersing pigment through the water before shooting the scene.

Lori Kella creates fictitious scenes to photograph as well. In the series *The Long Cold Advance*, she recreated the ice sheets and glaciers that covered North America. Her photographs simulate aerial images that "track" glacial movements over time. She notes,

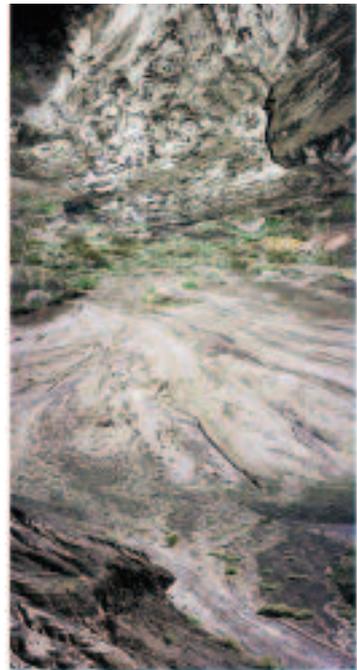
By creating aerial photographs of these constructions I am giving a modern face to something before our time, to a world without cameras and satellites and airplanes. These aerial views littered with and obscured by clouds are mere approximations and illusions of the original places. By reconstructing familiar, yet implacable images, the work attempts to examine the authenticity and integration of technological imaging systems while challenging notions about the veracity of photographic information.

(artist's statement 2006)

Goicolea, Keever, and Kella's fictitious places are closer to nonfiction than we or they might hope. Their photographs punctuate the condition of the places in which we live or are afraid we may live in in the very near future. These fictions, then, may be the opening paragraph in the essay on our damaged planet.



While Keever's photographs blur the boundaries between what is and what may be, Luis Mallo's photographs more straightforwardly image some of the sources of our unease. By photographing industrial sites through barricades, we may feel we are secretly privy to these cordoned off places that earn our skepticism. Are the fences designed to prevent us from knowing what dangerous and polluting activities are maintained within? Do they protect us or protect that which is within? Whatever the



Noriko Furunishi

Untitled (Grey Dry Stream), 2005
C-print
91 1/2 x 48 inches
Courtesy the artist and
Murray Guy, New York



Richard Barnes

Academy of Science: Untitled, 2005

light-jet print

48 x 60 inches

Courtesy the artist and

Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco/New York

photographs belie, with their abstract beauty, what they may in fact represent: the earth's poisoning. *Terminal Mirage #202-2* and Maisel's other photographs suggest the inherent illogicality in documentary photography that becomes an aesthetic pleasure while depicting a dangerous threat.

If David Maisel represents a telescopic and wide open view of the lonely toxic planet, then James Welling presents a microscopic view of a similarly beautiful subject. His *Flowers* series (cover) comprises photograms of flowers on black and white film. Welling uses Plumbago flowers, common in Los Angeles, on a sheet of film and makes an exposure. He projects the negatives onto Kodak Metallic Endura paper through a color mural enlarger and color filters. These intimate images seem particularly fragile and tender in proximity to the other works in the

answer, by shooting through the barricades, Mallo propels these places into the arena of fear and suspicion.

Rather than constructing a scene to photograph documentarily, as if real, Noriko Furunishi manipulates topography into a hybrid of time, experience, and formation. Patterning her photographs on Asian scroll paintings, with their verticality and their spatial inconceivability, Furunishi shoots the California landscape and then digitally reconstructs it, flattening the perspective and rendering the photographs essentially without a horizon line. The resulting disturbing effect—where do our eyes rest?—provides us with a landscape which we could not imagine ourselves inhabiting. Instead, the photographs become essays on the instability of the land and the futility of any attempt to render it static and easily comprehensible.

David Maisel's documentary photographs both record and exoticize his subject. His aerial photographs present what is "real" as sometimes beautiful and abstract, thereby both emphasizing and seemingly undermining his own intention. Maisel crops the photographs so that by their very flatness they become beautifully alien. The large patches of intense color resemble abstract painting more than photographs of the land. The toxic waterways and standing water that Maisel



David Maisel

Terminal Mirage #202-2, 2003

C-print

29 x 29 inches

Courtesy the artist and Von Lintel Gallery, New York

exhibition, thus suggesting the vulnerability of these artificially vivid flowers. Both Maisel and Welling trade on the effects of beauty and how its allure may underscore and undermine their message. Similarly, Richard Barnes' lyrical photographs of taxidermied animals in natural history museums present the world in diorama form, as if these animals have already disappeared from the planet through some unnatural attrition. In the context of this exhibition, his poetic and airless photographs suggest how one day we may only be able to experience the natural world through dusty museum dioramas. Like Welling's preserved flowers, Barnes' animals represent the natural world pressed and held inert in a timeless vacuum.

Beauty, documentary, toxicity, and inscrutability are the mechanisms by which the artists of *Global Anxieties* parse the exquisite and seemingly endless uncertainties about our environment. And while for most of the artists in the exhibition danger and pollution dominate, Wim Wenders lends an elegant grace note to the exhibition. His *Bamboo Forest, Nara, Japan* dramatically sweeps us upward toward a pinpoint of light hanging at the top of the photograph. The suffused light softens the air inside the photo, giving us a scene in which we could, perhaps, over all the other photographs in the exhibition, live. Wenders' work then appears to be a hopeful utterance in a world of anxiety.

Dana Self
Independent Critic and Curator
Kansas City, Missouri

(cover)

James Welling

#027, 2004
C-print mounted to aluminum
34 x 27 inches
Edition 2 of 5
Courtesy the artist and
David Zwirner, New York

Wim Wenders

Bamboo Forest, Nara, Japan, 2000
C-print
149 1/2 X 56 1/2 inches
Courtesy the artist and
James Cohan Gallery, New York



Checklist

Richard Barnes

1. **Academy of Science: Untitled**, 2005
light-jet print
48 x 60 inches
2. **Smithsonian (Zebra)**, 2004
C-print
31 x 38½ inches

Courtesy the artist and Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco/New York

Noriko Furunishi

3. **Untitled (Grey Dry Stream)**, 2005
C-print
91½ x 48 inches
4. **Untitled (Tecopa L)**, 2005
C-print
101 x 48 inches

Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York

Anthony Goicolea

5. **Glacier**, 2002
C-print
72 x 24 inches
Edition of 9
6. **Snowscape with Owls**, 2002
C-print
30 x 30 inches
Edition of 9

Courtesy the artist and Postmasters Gallery, New York

Kim Kever

7. **Shelter**, 1998
C-print
30 x 40 inches
8. **Red Sky Morning**, 2000
C-print
30 x 40 inches
9. **June**, 2003
C-print
31 x 44 inches

Courtesy the artist and Kinz, Tillou + Feigen, New York

Lori Kella

10. **The Long Cold Advance**, 2005
4 C-prints
36 x 96 inches (overall)

Courtesy the artist, Cleveland

David Maisel

11. **Terminal Mirage #202-2**, 2003
C-print
29 x 29 inches
12. **Terminal Mirage #243-8**, 2003
C-print
29 x 29 inches
13. **Terminal Mirage #261-12-1**, 2003
C-print
29 x 29 inches

Courtesy the artist and Von Lintel Gallery, New York

Luis Mallo

14. **In Camera #1**, 2001–02
C-print
50 x 60 inches
Edition of 2
15. **In Camera #3**, 2001–02
C-print
50 x 60 inches
Edition of 2

Courtesy the artist and Hasted Hunt Gallery, New York

James Welling

16. **#027**, 2004
C-print mounted to aluminum
34 x 27 inches
Edition 2 of 5

Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner, New York

Wim Wenders

17. **Bamboo Forest, Nara, Japan**, 2000
C-print
149 ½ x 56 ½ inches

Courtesy the artist and James Cohan Gallery, New York

Dimensions h x w

Acknowledgments

Global Anxieties was organized as a result of a request by the Environmental Analysis and Action Committee at The College of Wooster to develop an exhibition that would explore, in visual terms, contemporary responses to facts and perceptions about rapid environmental change. We thank the Henry Luce Foundation for supporting the Spring 2007 campus symposium, *Global Climate Change*, and this exhibition.

Such projects always involve the efforts of many, and I thank the co-organizer of *Global Anxieties*, Bridget Murphy Milligan, assistant professor of art at The College of Wooster, for her keen eye and help in selecting the work in the exhibition. Heartfelt thanks go to guest essayist Dana Self for her eloquent, energetic, and illuminating essay. And of course, we gratefully acknowledge the many galleries and their staff who made this exhibition possible.

Our greatest debt of gratitude, however, goes to the artists themselves whose persuasive visions expand our conception of cause and effect.

Kitty McManus Zurko
Director/Curator
The College of Wooster
Art Museum

GLOBAL ANXIETIES

March 27–May 13, 2007
Sussel Gallery and the Burton D. Morgan Gallery

The College of Wooster Art Museum
Ebert Art Center

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1220 Beall Avenue, Wooster, Ohio 44691
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