

# THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY

## Welcome to the Fake: Photography and the Politics of Authenticity Saturday 14 July 11.00 – 16.00

*What are the relationships between urban photography and the politics of 'the fake', in a time of shifting perspectives around what constitutes 'the real'?*

Photography has for some time struggled with core questions around how the world of experience and perception relates to the world 'out there'. Philosophers, historians, artists and urbanists have become increasingly interested in the roles mediation, selection and framing play within the visual representations of so-called truth. This symposium questions, challenges and expands on some key issues relating to politically engaged photography. A range of subjects are explored such as street photography, urban design, communities, the politics of change and gentrification through several case studies.

*Organised as part of the ongoing Cities of Light symposia series by Goldsmiths, Open Vizion and UPA – The Urban Photographers Association. Events will be held in Paris, London, Lisbon, Cork, Barcelona and Düsseldorf.*

#CitiesofLightLondon

### Schedule:

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| 11.00 | Keynote: <b>Paul Halliday</b><br><i>Democracy Wall: Photography in an Age of Silence</i> |
| 11.30 | <b>Panel One: Photography does Politics</b>  |
| 11.30 | <b>Laura Cuch</b> <i>Spiritual Flavours: Food and Faith in West London</i>               |
| 11.50 | <b>Alma Tischlerwood</b> YOU ARE NOT HERE ↗  |
| 12.10 | <b>Tanya Houghton</b> <i>Songlines of the Here+Now</i>                                   |
| 12.30 | Q&A chaired by <b>Peter Coles</b>  |
| 13.00 | <b>Lunch</b>   |

14.30	<b>Panel Two: <i>Photography and the Neoliberal City</i></b>
14.30	<b>John Wood</b> <i>The Hollow Eye</i>
14.50	<b>Gill Golding</b> <i>Welcome to the Fake</i>
15.10	<b>Bas Losekoot</b> <i>Private Lives in Public Spaces</i>
15.30	Q&A chaired by <b>Peter Bennett</b>
16.00	Drinks

## Abstracts & Biographies

### **Paul Halliday** *Democracy Wall: Photography in an Age of Silence*

In this talk, photographic artist and urbanist Paul Halliday will focus on his recently completed project *Democracy Wall*. The work has been made over an extended period across the south of England, and focuses on the nature of grounded, everyday politics and photographic practice. Halliday works with notions of dissent, fragmentation and decay as metaphors for contemporary urban life; and will talk about the pragmatics of researching, and putting together a project that speaks to the construction of 'the real', and its corollary 'the fake'.

Paul Halliday is a photographic artist, filmmaker and urbanist based at Goldsmiths, University of London where he convenes the MA Photography and Urban Cultures. He is a member of UPA - the Urban Photographers' Association, and creative director of UrbanPhotoFest. He studied photojournalism, fine art film, social anthropology, art history and archaeology. A former Channel 4 documentary film director and British Refugee Council media advisor, Halliday has been involved with a number of human rights campaigns over many years.

### **Panel One: *Photography does Politics***

#### **Laura Cuch** *Spiritual Flavours: a visual project exploring food and faith in West London*

*Spiritual Flavours* is a visual arts project resulting in a photographic series, a short film and a 'multi-faith' photo cookbook, which form part of the practice elements of Cuch's PhD in the Geography department at UCL. This presentation reflects on her experience using photography and film to investigate the relationship between food, faith and everyday material practices of different faith communities in the suburbs West London. Whilst the photographic series focuses on the spatial arrangements of commensality within religious buildings, the book focuses on the more personal narratives, exploring a diverse range of experiences around food and spirituality across both domestic and worship spaces. Cuch discusses how her visual research practice does politics by contributing to a performative

understanding of religious culinary traditions in ways that are inseparable from the practices involved in the creative process itself.

Laura Cuch is a documentary and fine art photographer. She teaches photography in various programs at Goldsmiths, University of London, including the MA in Photography and Urban Cultures (which she completed in 2006) and the International Urban Photography Summer School. In 2015 Laura received an AHRC Doctoral Award to join the project 'Making Suburban Faith' based at UCL, where she has initiated the project 'Spiritual Flavours'. Her photography has been published and exhibited internationally, including exhibitions at Tate Modern, Photofusion, H2O Gallery, Museo Thyssen Bornemisza, Bogotá Contemporáneo, Paraty Em Foco15, Descubrimientos PhotoEspaña, Rich Mix Centre, Centro Cultural Blanquerna, Arts Santa Mònica, Scan09, the Viewfinder Gallery, Zoom In and City University.

## **Alma Tischlerwood** YOU ARE NOT HERE ↗

In the 21st century we have all become accustomed to using Descartes' grid as a signifier of our 'real' location. How will drones and digital technologies affect the way we dream, as city dwellers? Of course, Descartes' invention is as alienating as it is useful, as there can never be a full, or satisfactory, answer to the question, Where Am I? YOU ARE NOT HERE alludes to the paradox of arrows on maps that insist: "You are here". In this first collaborative work, visual artist, Alma Tischlerwood and filmmaker Alex Forsey investigate the notion of mapping and the evolving language of urban space.

Alma Tischlerwood lives and works in London. Her practice is abstract painting including video, photography and Foreign Investment, the international art collective, based and founded in the UK. Her work intends to raise awareness for the conditions we live in and formulate invitations to contribute to the (re) formation of this environment. After an MA in Fine Art at the Munich Academy, her work has been shown in solo shows in London, New York, Seoul and in Europe.

Alex Forsey is a London based filmmaker and photographer currently working on projects in New York, Taiwan, Greece and Sweden. He obtained his drone license in 2016 in order to develop his skills of documentary filmmaking. Recent projects include the documentary shorts, *I-D meets: Girl Skaters*.

## **Tanya Houghton** *Songlines of the Here+Now*

Songlines are Ancient Aboriginal maps passed on through song, story or dance. When sung, these songs describe landmarks of a journey, enabling the user to navigate their way across vast distances of the Australian landscape. In doing so, they keep the sacred land alive. Houghton travelled 10500 km across Australia, camping in the country's national parks, shooting gathering and collecting stories of those she met along the way. *Songlines of the Here+Now* sets out to draw parallels between the past (Indigenous) and present (New Gen) creating tied connections to the ancient landscape that Australians call home.

Tanya Houghton is a photographer currently based in London. She comes from a background in sociology and commercial photography. Combining traditional landscape and portrait photography, she creates conceptual still life using objects gathered from the spaces and people she works with. Her current practice focuses on themes centred on landscape and memory, with a strong interest between the tension of the Urban (man) and the Rural (nature) and the interactions between the two. Tanya works on a range of commissions with collaboration at the forefront. Her work is often shown globally at galleries and festivals and she has received awards from the British Journal of Photography and the D&AD.

## **Peter Coles**

Peter Coles is a freelance writer, translator (French to English), editor and photographer. He is Visiting Tutor at the Centre for Urban and Community Research, Goldsmiths, University of London, where he contributes to the Photography and Urban Cultures MA programme. He is a tutor on the International Urban Photography Summer School and is a founding director of the Urban Photographers Association. Since May 2016 Peter has been editor and principal researcher at Morus Londinium, a project to document, preserve and raise awareness of London's mulberry tree heritage, which he helped to set up. Hosted by the Conservation Foundation, the project has been supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

## **Panel Two: Photography and the Neoliberal City**

### **John Wood** *The Hollow Eye*

Perhaps it is because we have learned to applaud our own emptiness that the way we imagine the Camera has become hollowed out. In previous centuries it was fashionable to see it as a special kind of private room, rather than to re-imagine it as a vast desert, or distant constellation. This looked back to an older myth that the vanity of the eye is more wicked than the hypocrisy of the text. Although the Camera is now seen mainly as a technical invention, the logic that it embodies is ancient. As a living principle, the Camera existed long before alphabetical writing and has, therefore, earned its exemption from dogma or protocol. Some speculate that the Camera evolved and perished many times before emerging as the vacuous superstar of gossip and conceit it has become. If we are to avoid making ourselves homeless, as a species, we may like to start by re-designing authenticity. This means thinking beyond rooms, lenses, frames and scripts and focusing on the inclusive, receptive logic of the Camera.

John Wood is currently Emeritus Professor of Design at Goldsmiths, University of London and Professor of Practice at Swansea School of Art. As an artist in the late 1960s, he built interactive electronic sound installations and toys, including a computer-assisted play with 27 characters ('King of Shouting House') which was performed at London's ICA. John was Deputy Head of Fine Art at Goldsmiths from 1978-1988, when the main YBA cohort was gathering. He then wrote and launched

several radical design degrees, which subsequently formed the basis for the current Department of Design. In collaboration with Dr. Julia Lockheart, John co-edits the *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice* (Intellect).

### **Gill Golding** *Welcome to The Fake*

Using a walking research methodology combined with a camera, this visual project draws on the regeneration of King's Cross as a case study in which to explore the relationship between the urban landscape and the street. From unused railway lands to 'London's Hottest New Neighbourhood', King's Cross Central is one of London's largest redevelopments, described as 'a whole new piece of London with a brand new postcode'. Using place branding that incorporates selective wording with computer generated images depicting young, stylish people enjoying a sophisticated lifestyle, King's Cross Central is presented as a space to invest, consume and enjoy memorable experiences. The new aesthetic appearance reveals an insight into the intentions and priorities of those who make decisions about the built environment that reflect cultural values and ideological interests. This presentation will raise questions about the commodification of our cities and consider the impact of neoliberal structural transformations on our urban spaces.

Gill Golding is an urban photographer who completed an MA in Photography and Urban Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her visual research interests lie in the field of post-industrial cities, with an emphasis on regeneration, gentrification, sustainability and more recently, the hyperreal. Her choice of walking as a research methodology allows her to encounter landscapes through an embodied practice, creating a dialogic relationship with the environment that encourages a critical approach to her work. Golding is a Visiting Research Fellow at Goldsmiths, is Education Director of the Urban Photographers Association, Organiser of the International Urban Photography Summer School and is a member of the Executive Board of the International Visual Sociology Association.

### **Bas Losekoot** *Private Lives in Public Places: The Urban Millennium Project*

We are facing the biggest wave of urbanisation in human history. How is this fast-growing population density influencing the behaviour of everyday commuters in the streets of the world's most crowded megacities? In his project 'Private Lives in Public Places', Losekoot presents a photo essay in which he provides insight into the psychological journey of commuters in modern megacities. Placing his camera in the liminal spaces of the city, he addresses the state of 'in-between-ness' of the modern urban experience. With an intuitive eye, he observes the 'presentation of self' and 'micro-second meetings' that everyday urban encounters prevail. He succeeds at distilling the extraordinary out of the banal, displaying an intimate, thought-provoking vision on private lives in the public domain.

Bas Losekoot is a Dutch artist and photographer, concerned with socio-cultural issues in cities around the world. Working with cinematographic apparatus, he challenges our understanding of reality in everyday city-life as well as the limited

narrative potential of representations of truth in documentary photography. Losekoot holds a BA in Fine Art Photography from the Royal Academy of the Arts in The Hague and recently graduated with an MA in Photography and Urban Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. His latest project has been exhibited widely in galleries, museums and festivals including: BOZAR Brussels, Christie's Amsterdam, Jimei x Arles in China, Kaunas Photography Gallery Lithuania, Fotolstanbul, LagosPhoto and Unseen Photo Fair Amsterdam, and published in a variety of international media including The New York Times LENS Blog, The New Yorker Photo Booth, CNN Editions, The Guardian, Die Zeit, NRC Handelsblad, IMA Magazine and the British Journal of Photography. He is a visiting lecturer at LUCA School of Arts in Belgium.

## **Peter Bennett**

Peter Bennett is a photographic artist and academic. He is a senior lecturer and course leader in BA Photography at the University of West London and has many years of teaching and industry experience in photography. He has an MA and MPhil in Photography from the University of Brighton and is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. His recent photographic practice explores the visualization of urban space in past and future time. Previous projects have examined the book, the sea and the materiality of the photograph, as metaphoric and material repositories of memory.