

PRESS RELEASE

BICHA
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Architectural Views: Industrial Evolution

An exhibition of photography by Robin Forster

16 September - 10 October, 2010

Opening Reception: Thursday 16 September, 2010 | 6.30 to 8.30pm

A London Design Festival Partner Event



Robin Forster, *Untitled (Khromtau I)*, W 1143 x H 762 mm, Metallic digital C-type print

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Bicha Gallery's second annual Architectural Views – a partner exhibiton of the London Design Festival 2010 – highlights recent location work of English photographer Robin Forster. The show captures the startling scale and disturbing beauty of the industrial architecture, infrastructure and landscapes within the metal processing centres of Central Asia – the mighty powerhouse of the former Soviet Union.

These industrial sites have gone through an evolution from what was once a powerful communist state – itself created by a revolution. Set up as part of the communist machine to provide essential raw materials for the whole of the population of the USSR, one could argue they have changed little over the years. In fact, most of the technology dates back to the industrial revolution, the chemistry is the same regardless of who pushes the buttons.

Yet they have evolved to providing metals for the world markets under private ownership with more and more emphasis on the environmental aspects of their production. These amazing assemblages above and below ground, all perform primary functions necessary for the extraction of raw metals. We all depend on these for our daily lives whether we agree or not with the resulting damage to our planet.



Robin Forster, *Untitled (Vostochny I)*, W 1143 x H 762 mm, Metallic digital C-type print

The images have resonance with photographers such as the Bechers, who always photographed in a straightforward “objective” point of view. Former students of Bernd and Hilla Becher include Andreas Gursky, Thomas Ruff, and Candida Höfer. Industrial structures are portrayed here, not only in stark black and white but in brilliant colour. The processes and function of each site do not appear to have halted for the photographer. They are almost snap shots of an industrial moment, an occluded view of some large, mysterious and unfathomable machine performing an undisclosed function! We only get part of the picture, the rest is up to our imaginations.

We are confronted by the conflict between the beauty of the image on lush metallic photographic paper and the reality of the often destructive and polluting processes involved. The intricate physical structures, their function at times obscured or totally hidden, bask amongst vibrant colours and unseen operatives. Gangways and staircases give way to rail tracks and winding roads. Brightly lit pathways disappear into murky depth of the industrial unknown. Do these provide a way out of this industrial abyss or is the only hope to find refuge in the beauty that is presented in these images?

Curriculum Vitae

1999-2001	Goldsmiths College, MA Fine Art
1992-3	Central St Martin's School Of Art, Graphic Design
1991-2	Sir John Cass School Of Art, Foundation
1982	Heriot-Watt University, MEng Petroleum Engineering
1979-81	Leeds University, BSc Mining Engineering

Solo Projects

2010	17th Century Landscapes Re-Seen, Kensington Palace, London (On Going)
2010	Under Wraps, National Trust and Historic Royal Palaces, UK (On Going)

- 2010 Transformation, Torstraße 95, Berlin
- 2010 Architectural Landscapes, Gallery Judin, Berlin
- 2009 Architectural Landscapes, Architectural Gallery, Zurich
- 2008 Kazakhstan Industrial Project, Kazakhstan
- 2007 Coastal Profile Project, Australia and New Zealand
- 2006-7 Commission for G Hager, Landscape Architect,
Switzerland and Germany
- 2003-4 MOMA Ice Blink, London, Funded by the Arts Council for England

Group Projects

- 2007 Grizedale Forest Gallery, Cumbria
- 2007 Bicha Gallery, London
- 2006 Crane Kaleman Gallery, Brighton

Solo Projects as Barrett-Forster

- 2003-4 Prowler Project Space, Wreck! London
- 2003 Catto Contemporary I'm Desperate...Love Me! London
- 2000 North Melbourne Town Hall, Bad Things
(Collaboration With Finucane/Smith)
Funded: British Council, Arts Council for England,
Australia Council, Melbourne City Council, Northern Arts UK
& Sydney Mardi Gras, Green Rooms Bad Things, Manchester
- 1999 Metro Cinema Anamorph London
- 1998 Australian Centre For Photography, Vertigo, Sydney
Funded: Australia Arts Council, British Council,
Sydney Mardi Gras
Museum Of Installation, Blow, London
Castlefield Gallery, Vertigo, Manchester
- 1996 Cambridge Darkroom Gallery, Vertigo, Cambridge
- 1994 Harvey Nichols, Department Store Windows, London
- 1992 Rear Window Gallery, Trading In Futures, London

Private Collections

- Nancy Archillies, San Francisco
- John Cox And John Hayes, London
- Liz Dewhurst, London
- Pedro Girao, London
- Guido Hager, Zurich And Berlin
- David Jensen, Los Angeles

Public Collections

- Victoria & Albert Museum, London
- FNAC, Paris
- Duke University, North Carolina USA
- City Of Senigalia, Italy
- John Kobal Collection, London

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Open Tuesday through Sunday from 11am till 7pm

Bicha Gallery | Architectural Views: Industrial Evolution | 16 September -10 October, 2010
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020 7928 0083, 7 Gabriel's Wharf, South Bank, London SE1 9PP | 11 am - 7pm Tues-Sun
Tube: Waterloo, Embankment, Covent Garden, Southwark.