

*THE MOBILE  
HOUSE TURNS  
WITH THE SUN*

Niklas Goldbach  
Verena Issel  
Marion Orfila  
Martijn in 't Veld

curated by  
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## Drifters

Tourists have ridiculous facial expressions when they look at buildings. They move around, oblivious to streets, their inhabitants and children. They stare up to buildings whilst cities increasingly resemble each other in their looks.

"All cities are geological. You can't take three steps without encountering ghosts bearing all the prestige of their legends. We move within a closed landscape whose landmarks constantly draw us toward the past. Certain shifting angles, certain receding perspectives, allow us to glimpse original conceptions of space, but this vision remains fragmentary. It must be sought in the magical locales of fairy tales and surrealist writings: castles, endless walls, little forgotten bars, mammoth caverns, casino mirrors."  
Gilles Ivain

*The Mobile House Turns with the Sun* brings together surrealist, poetic and dystopian ruminations on landscape and architecture in the past, present and future. The title is a quote from Ivan Chtcheglov's *Formulary for a New Urbanism*, written in 1953 under his pseudonym Gilles Ivain. This text, both poetic and theoretical, and fundamental to the Situationist International movement, set the tone for Guy Debord and the Situationists in their early phase: aspects of urbanism, urban space, transit and flexible forms. Gilles Ivain sought a total transformation of everyday life as well as structural elements of social environs of individuals. *The Mobile House Turns with the Sun* brings together contemporary strategies of infiltration, immersion and encryption.

Psychogeography, earlier and nowadays, was and is a term for transformation – it generates the idea of drifting. In Marion Orfila's work *Orée Délocalisée* she stages a variable geographical platform. A forest floats and drifts through the landscape and gives it an illogical atmosphere. The presence of the character, immersed in this unstable landscape, down in the liquid ground, responds to the contemplative aspects of watching a floating forest. Pictures of an artificially modified nature contrasts with factual images framing the film, beginning with the animated cartography of the decline of the earth's magnetic field, bound to the movement of the magnetic fields in the North. The video ends with found footage of a real-life floating island passing by the dam of Narva in Estonia.

Orfila is interested in remote places. She deliberately mistreats physical boundaries, in order to shift the human perception. She works in the snow, in the woods, in a valley – anywhere except the city. In the gallery she shows *Forêt Délocalisé*, an ongoing series of models serving for installations such as *d'une rive à l'autre* realised in Normandy, France. Trees float inside a large-scale pool inside the exhibition space, colliding with a view of the forest outside. She reveals how illogical our objective and anthropocentric perception of landscape and its rules can be.

Without featuring any human protagonists, Niklas Goldbach's video *Land of the Sun* instead focuses on the visible architectural leftovers of one of the world's biggest failed urban planning projects.

California City is the third-largest city in the state of California, and is located in the Mojave Desert. In the Sixties, real estate developer and Sociology professor Nat Mendelsohn purchased 320 square metres of land in the Mojave Desert, with the aim of masterplanning California's next great city. He designed his model city, which he hoped would one day rival Los Angeles in size, around a Central Park with an artificial lake and a golf course. Growth did not happen anywhere close to what he expected. To this day, a vast grid of crumbling paved roads, scarring vast stretches of the Mojave Desert, which had been intended to lay out residential blocks, extends well beyond the developed area of the city. As of 2008, fifty years after Mendelsohn, California City had a total population of just around 14000.

*Permanent Daylight* is Niklas Goldbach's ongoing research on the patterns of power structures represented by architecture worldwide. Initiated in 2013, the series examines the concept of a growing global interconnectivity and includes around 240 photographs so far. The *Mobile House Turns with the Sun* includes the conceptual constellation *For All the Dark Things* consisting of nine photographs. Each building tells stories of contradiction: A perfect romantic idyll in Berlin's suburbs turns out to be a residential colony built for SS generals. (Present inhabitants were informed only recently that they lived in privileged family houses that had honoured SS soldiers' special services during the Second World War.) The Apple Store on Fifth Avenue; a door in the Palestinian Wailing Wall, locked; The CCTV Tower, a national symbol of the news in an autocratic system in Beijing, China.

In Silent Utopia (Murals of a tourist) Verena Issel shows her recent series about forgotten soviet emperors, and connects them to the Nazca lines, dated back 2000 years ago in Peru. Two places, two ballads,, one common ground. The immersive installation presents a humourous comment on global traveling, linking unconnected strings together. An artist residency brought Issel to Vladivostock this year, where she responded to Soviet murals in the streets. Her silent utopian figures stay conserved in the streets and show a contradiction to its fast developping global market.and, when taken out of context, become a general representation of travelling entities. The original Nazca lines are carved 10 to 15 cm deep into the ground ,and cover an area of about 50 square kilometres. Issel uses polystyrene and simulates the lines, drawn in disproportionate dimensions, into the gallery space. The original Nazca line vary in complexity. Hundreds are just simple lines and geometric forms; but more than 70 are zoomorphic designs of animals . Scholars disagree with each other in their interpretations of the purpose of the designs, but generally speaking, they ascribe religious significance to them. The Portraits of the tourists become larger than life, larger than Nazca and the fascination about the lines is diminished to the non-significance of 'Been there, seen it!' Google Image spits out the image for us. Psychogeographies are born in subjective perception itself. In former installations, the artist included her direct environment, its rules and social structures tapping into some of the most mysterious, political and controversial topics.

A cobblestone with a straw. Is it to mark a border? Or the metaphor for coconut drinks in exotic countries, or the idea to lighten the weight of cobblestone pavements for bikers? Martijn in 't Veld is artist, writer and publisher. In hisshort stories, he questions the transformable quality of objects. A stone is not a stone, a house not a house. Windows themselves tell stories, as much as whole buildings do. Their very existence starts in flower pots, and they grow and grow, until at one point they vanish or explode. In 't Veld's universe starts with an idea or a simple question, and mirrors his satisfaction in revealing their nature, be it light or, as is more often the case, dark. In this way he comes closer to conclusions on how societies are built, why we love, and why we grow.

„ ... An average plant grows about two to three 'rooms'. And if the plant is doing very well it might grow a couple more. And when it is doing exceptionally well it might grow really rare rooms. Rooms which are filled with swimming pools or billiard tables or skateboard parks. Although these are seldomly seen.

It is, however, quite common for most plants to grow in rooms inside which other plants will grow, which in their turn grow new beams and new houses which in their growing push out the plant houses they inhabit.

This is how houses grow. From inside out. Whereby the old houses, slowly break apart, walls wither, ceilings turn yellow, windows break and drop out of their frames, like flowers falling from their stems. “

Martijn in 't Veld

You visit an exhibition in a commercial gallery, situated on a 'gallery street' in Berlin, and you are able to, and indeed invited to, purchase works exhibited with a title taken out of the *Formulary for a new Urbanism* from 1953. In the original article, the art market was deemed a demon, Corbusier an idiot and labor in general questioned as a misguided contribution service to the *Society of the Spectacle*. Instead, art itself was supposed to raise awareness of the current state of urban structures. Fifty-five years later, we still debate about basic income, Corbusier has become a hero, and we create situations, although the rules and the goals might be entirely different.

Carola Uehlken  
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