**JOEL WHITAKER**

**Cities**

***Cities and Invisible Cities 2010-13***

“Only in Marco Polo’s account was Kublai Khan able to discern, through the walls and towers destined to crumble, the tracery of a pattern so subtle it could escape the termites’ gnawing.” *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino

These photographs are prompted by my interest in the representation of a place, the process of arriving at this representation, and my physical and intellectual engagement with this process. I am particularly interested in the notion and ephemeral nature of structure, location, and process. In *Cities*, I use discarded historical glass plate negatives as my subject, and for *Invisible Cities,* I use Google Earth downloads; two modes of representation and photographic processes that span well over a hundred years. In the resulting photographs I attempt to reinvent the idea, representation, and physical form of cities and the photographs that define and describe them. I use the photographic process as a way to explore this notion as well as the more suggestive and poetic qualities of the medium. The resulting photographs are as much informed by my experiences in such places as by my relationship to the physical and intellectual underpinnings of the photographic medium that serve as a record of these experiences and interactions. I consider the city and the photographic medium transitional—organic things that are constantly in flux, both physically and intellectually.

***Practice***

Purity of the photographic medium, or any other, does not interest me. I see the photograph and the photographic process as a way to engage in various methodologies regarding the act of art making through the more suggestive and poetic qualities of the process and resultant work.

I make photographs from very basic things, common things, and do so in common places. I have always shied away from the exotic and prefer to rely on things close at hand. I rarely travel any great distance to photograph and I work economically with minimum fuss. I consider photography to be a pliable and malleable medium and do not hold any preconceived notions as to what a photograph should look like, nor how it should be made. I am intrigued by what is left behind, what is lost, and what is found, and how the photographic process engages the various meanings and reinventions that result from the investigation of this detritus or remnant. This is not an unusual approach, but it is of particular interest to me.

My goal is to think more about what I have and what I can do with it, and do so through contemplation, engagement, and execution. My practice is to investigate the intersections of the photographic medium with that of other media by using simple, often discarded and forgotten objects as subject, and to explore in greater depth the subject and the materiality of the medium.

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