
HEMISPHERE

VISUAL CULTURES *of the* AMERICAS

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“In our banal little world, where far too much living consists of staring at a computer screen, making low-grade decisions, art is pretty much the last bastion of insoluble mystery and radical transport. What’s art for? What it’s always been for. To get you out of here.”

Excerpted from, *What Is Art For?*
Waldemar Januszczak,
LONDON TIMES, OCTOBER 29, 2006

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: **SITE LINE**

Mary Goodwin

Site Line shifts the gaze of the traditional landscape panorama away from the horizon towards the ground. By turning the visual orientation of the landscape downwards, these images merge documentation of the land with its abstraction.

The photographs in Site Line carry the viewer to the various sites by acting like windows on the world, but where is the viewer going? What is the final destination of this *radical transport*, and why should the viewer travel there?

These images map places where a change of state, a transition, has occurred. The events behind these transitions range from the historically significant to the deeply personal. As the photographs focus on very localized sections of the earth, they delineate both a physical and a cultural geography; Site Line traces the tangible locations of intangible moments that define the history of the land and its inhabitants.

Sometimes evidence of events remains on the ground after the fact, but more often the transitions that lie beneath the surface of these images leave behind no impression visible to the camera. A seemingly uncomplicated image of the ground is often, through the written word, invested with an unexpected consequence.

Site Line creates a tension between the ambiguity of what is visible in the images and the concrete knowledge that something important happened here. Site Line, in its combination of visual detail and narrative text, questions how much can be truly known about place through the photograph.

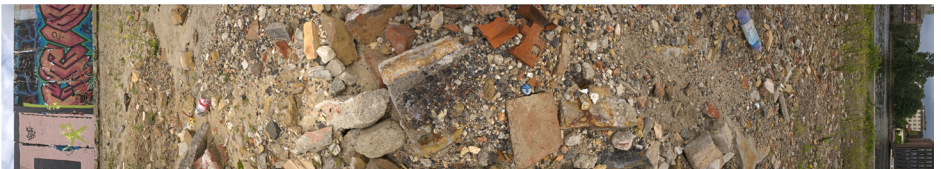
BERLIN WALL/RIVER SPREE

BERLIN, GERMANY

The former East-German government erected the Berlin Wall in 1961 as its *anti-fascist protection barrier*. It stood as a divider between countrymen and families, East and West, until November 9, 1989. Almost 200 people died trying to get past the Wall and into the West during this time.

I sat on the Berlin Wall the night it fell and was one of the first few hundred to jump over the wall into no-man's land without official permission. On that night, I was witness to the re-birth of a unified nation.

In today's Berlin, the euphoria of those nascent hours has largely disappeared, as has the Wall. The longest stretch of the Wall that still stands, the *East Gallery*, where this picture was taken, is about a half-mile long. It seems that this land exchanged one master for another: this historic site, once no-man's land between the Wall and the River Spree, is now endangered by developers.







YOU CAN/CAN'T HEAR ME NOW OUTSIDE BERNALILLO, NEW MEXICO

Like many in our connection-fed culture, I have my cell phone on all the time. I've never been in another place like New Mexico, where there is so much space that one can drive through where there is no cell phone connection. In this image, half of the picture shows where I can make a call, and the other half where I cannot. It's the line between help and being stranded.

The feeling of isolation that results from not being able to call may be one of the few remaining vestiges we have of the Wild West.

NORTH/SOUTH SIDES OF THE STRIP **BRANSON, MISSOURI**

Branson, Missouri is called the Sin City of the Middle West. It has a strip, just like Las Vegas, but here the comparison between the two cities ends. There is no gambling in Branson, and entertainment is limited to the family-oriented variety; however, sidewalks line both sides of the strip, making it accessible to pedestrians and other creatures of the land. I walked the strip in Branson looking for sexy razzle-dazzle but found none and went to bed early with the TV on full blast. How many dreams of release—besides mine—have died crossing the strip in Branson?







FEAR/FEARLESS (BRIAN'S FIRST DIVE)

SANTA ROSA, NEW MEXICO

It was late on a Friday afternoon at the Blue Hole in Santa Rosa. Brian, nine years old, was there with a school group of about 20 of his friends. They had been trying to get Brian to dive all afternoon long, but he was too afraid. Now it was time to go, and all of his friends were out of the water: ready to leave, and watching.

For some reason, they were not going to let Brian go without jumping. An adult stood with him on the diving site high above the water, another waited in the water directly in his path. Brian wore a life vest, just in case. Still, he cried and shook with fear. After many minutes of painful indecision, he finally cinched his nose closed and jumped, feet first.



**LIFE/DEATH FOR
GONZALO BRENNER**
OUTSIDE ESPANOLA,
NEW MEXICO

Gonzalo Brenner, 29, was driving alone in the dusk hours of August 19, 2002, when he lost control of his car and swerved off the road, flipping the car. He died before being discovered on the side of Highway 285.

