

May 09 – Aug. 17, 2013:

**The Biography of Images:**  
Parallel Biographies

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**Audin Gallery**

Talk: **May 8, 6pm**  
Opening: **May 8, 7pm**  
Tour: **May 9, 6pm**

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Thomas Freiler  
Arni Haraldsson  
Krüger & Pardeller  
Tatiana Lecomte  
Tim Lee  
Kyla Mallett  
Christian Mayer  
Sissa Micheli  
Jayce Salloum  
Kevin Schmidt  
Anita Witek  
Elizabeth Zvonar

#### **Events:**

May 8, 6pm  
**Artist Talk** with Anita Witek  
and Christian Mayer

May 9, 6pm  
**Exhibition Tour** with Ruth Horak

The Audain Gallery is part of Simon Fraser University Galleries and a vital aspect of the Visual Art program in the School for the Contemporary Arts.

Encouraging conceptual and experimental projects that explore the dialogue between the social and the cultural in contemporary artistic practices, the Audain Gallery's mission is to advance the aesthetic and discursive production and presentation of contemporary art through a responsive program of exhibitions.

The Audain Gallery staff are Melanie O'Brian (SFU Galleries Director), Amy Kazymierchyk (Curator), and Brady Cranfield (Gallery Assistant).

*The Biography of Images: Parallel Biographies* is curated by Sabine Bitter and Ruth Horak.

The exhibition is presented in partnership with the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK). *The Biography of Images* series was initiated by Gudrun Schreiber, Deputy of Arts Division of BMUKK ([www.bmukk.gv.at](http://www.bmukk.gv.at)).

For more info, please contact  
[info@audaingallery.ca](mailto:info@audaingallery.ca)

## ***The Biography of Images: Parallel Biographies*** Sabine Bitter and Ruth Horak

Again, place has come to haunt globalization.

One of the early and central understandings of globalization was that it complicated and dispersed concepts of place and locality. However, even in the midst of claims that location was rendered obsolete, and that globalization was characterized by open flows, and that the old periphery and centre model was washed away, the global art world appeared to intensify its specific emphasis on space and place. Marked by important exhibitions such as *documenta 11* and *Shrinking Cities*, the global art world again and again shows an intensification of engagement with place.

Vienna and Vancouver, aside from being two mid-sized cities that often compete on the curious global index of the most liveable city in the world, exist within very different contexts. But perhaps a consistent artistic engagement with the question of place links these two cities and their artistic production. Yet, the concept of place that is highly present in artists' works from Vancouver and Vienna is not one tied to locality. Therefore, such works do not necessarily take Vancouver and Vienna as their sites of investigation and representation. Rather, they depart from these cities as a way to examine place through issues of modernism, colonial histories, and the mediatization of place.

*Parallel Biographies* is the third in a series of group exhibitions from the Austrian Federal Photography Collection, in this case bringing together artists from Vienna and Vancouver. Every photograph has a background story linking its creator and the circumstances of its production: what decisions were made, what steps were rejected, what traces of production are still visible? Once such questions are asked, a biography of the image can be written. In bringing these artists together, parallels can be drawn in the questions asked through their work. What traces has modernist architecture left in the world? Why is each photograph a reflection of its media? Why is working with archives and collage a consequence of working with printed media? Corollaries, which could be categorized as largely conceptual, exist between the works' different locales and approaches as they explore these, and other related questions.



### Krüger & Pardeller

In 1961 my father and grandmother hitchhiked from Vienna to India. One of their destinations was Chandigarh, the new state capital that was being constructed at the time, and featured architecture by Le Corbusier. Only a few buildings had been completed, and the development was largely uninhabited. Mud bricks for future buildings in this city of a million or so residents were being manufactured locally. They took four photographs, which we composed into *Material Work* (2013). We selected *Tower of Shadows* (2005) from a collection of over 120,000 slides belonging to Hasso Hohmann, an ethnologist and architecture theoretician. It became part of a series of sculptural and photographic works that we subsequently produced on the theme of *The Tower of Shadows*.

### Arni Haraldsson

When I arrived in Chandigarh in January 1996, I was unaware that a state of martial law had just been declared following the assassination of Beant Singh, the High Minister of the Punjab. My interpreter and I often came under the scrutiny of soldiers suspicious that the large-format camera was some type of x-ray apparatus that could see through buildings. Photographing was simply out of the question. There were soldiers everywhere and after a frustrating week I was ready to pack it in... until my host, Ramanjat, asked his father who was a judge in the High Court building to write a letter of introduction for me. Letter in hand, I found that doors opened magically, and I was finally able to begin photographing the Capital Complex.

Opposite: *Der Turm der Schatten/The Tower of Shadows*, Le Corbusier, Chandigarh, 1965, 2005, pigment print, 78 x 102 cm. Courtesy Austrian Federal Photography Collection and Hasso Hohmann (detail).

Above: *Material Work*, 2013, set of 4, pigment print, 30 x 40 cm. Courtesy the artists (detail).

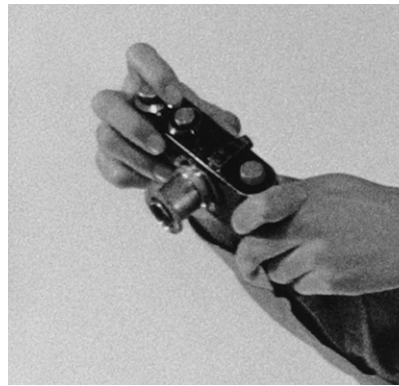
*Tower of Shadows* (1965), Chandigarh, India, 1996, transmounted c-print, 107 x 127 cm. Collection of Tom Cone and Karen Matthews (detail).



### Thomas Freiler

Thomas Freiler has experimented with the camera through improvisation, modification, and construction in numerous projects. In the words of Vilém Flusser, Freiler “outwits the camera’s rigidity.” In *Rat 1* (2012) Freiler combines a 24x36 mm small format lens with 6x6 cm medium format roll film. His publication *cameras work* (2012), presents a universe of connections within the cultural history of photography. His self-portrait *Me and my Nikon* (1985/2013), is a reflection on his first engagement with photography. Freiler’s experiments could be interpreted as making the phenomenon of photography palpable through empirical means. In the wake of Modernism no photograph merely depicts [...]; it must always also be a photograph, in the most extreme case solely a photograph, without an image and perhaps even without a camera.

*Kameraentwurf/Concept camera*, 2008, Leica Dlux4 Stereo, pigment print, 61 x 50.8 cm. Courtesy the artist. (detail)



### Tim Lee

In *Untitled I-IV* (Alexander Rodchenko, 1928) (2008), Lee draws on the work of early twentieth-century avant-garde artist Alexander Rodchenko and contemporary camera advertisement imagery. Rodchenko, a Russian Constructivist sculptor, photographer, and graphic designer active during the Bolshevik Revolution, used the new, portable 35mm format to enliven and estrange familiar subjects by shooting them from dramatic angles. Lee is fascinated by Rodchenko’s creative restlessness and his acrobatic, askance views, and believes the Russian artist created a new, ‘unproper’ perspective – a nonrational, nonlinear outlook on the world. To further the connection to Rodchenko’s dynamic handheld photography, Lee asks that the images be periodically rotated ninety degrees counterclockwise on the wall.

*Untitled I-IV* (Alexander Rodchenko, 1928), 2008, 4 b/w photographs, 70 x 70 cm. Courtesy the artist. (detail)



### Anita Witek

Anita Witek found the material sources for *Im Bild* (2011), in a folder of loose magazine pages portraying the city of Salzburg, Germany, that were published in 1942, during the Second World War. Witek identifies pictorial clichés in the images, and uses them as a foil for her series *Im Bild* [*Salzburg in the Picture*]. In one collage, a figure cut out of the facade of Mirabell Palace is transposed on a second image of a figure whose shadow is thrown on the wall by light streaming from a window in the Baroque building. In a second collage, the view from Mönchsberg on Salzburg’s city centre is framed by a black magazine page, setting a window on an insignificant part of the architecture.

*Im Bild*, 2011, collages, 20 x 30 cm and 30 x 40 cm. Courtesy the artist. (detail)



### Elizabeth Zvonar

My collage practice begins by hand-cutting images from magazines, scanning them, then outputting them as photo prints. The analogue process materially layers and juxtaposes perspectives of genre, scale, history, and cultural value; while the digital process flattens each image, symbolically levelling the hierarchies of cultural associations. For example, *Reading Buddha* (2012), *Skeet Shooting* (2012), and *Louis’ Legs* (2012) use images from *Connaissance des Arts*, a luxury domestic interior magazine published in Paris which caters to an upper-middle-class taste that favours a mélange of Victorian, Baroque, and Rococo aesthetics. The issues of the magazine that I cut images from are from the late 1960s and early 1970s – a period of social upheaval and class conflict. The May 1968 protests in Paris mark a particularly iconic moment.

*Louis’ Legs* (*XVème temps*), 2012, digital lightjet print of a hand cut collage, 31.8 x 35.6 cm. Courtesy the artist. (detail)



### Christian Mayer

During a visit to the island of La Gomera in the Canaries in 2012, I first heard about a whistled form of speech called ‘el silbo’ or ‘the whistle’. The canary birds Bibi and Büberl, which belonged to the Austrian Emperor Franz I in the 19th Century, came to my mind. They had been taken from the islands and brought to Vienna. Everything seemed congruent: the story of the birds, and their shared origin with el silbo, itself a speech reminiscent of bird song. The young man we filmed in Valle Gran Rey speaking el silbo had heard the story of Bibi and Büberl in Spanish, of which el silbo is a kind of dialect. Each syllable of el silbo is whistled, and restricted to four vowels (a, e, i, o), and four consonants (ch, k, y, g). Modulating pitch, stress, and articulation enables ‘silbadores’ or ‘whistlers’ to recognise words over a distance of some three kilometers.

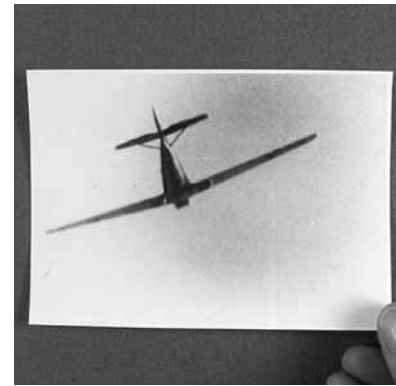
*El Silbo*, 2012, HD video, 10'. Courtesy Austrian Federal Photography Collection. (detail)



### Kevin Schmidt

In the summer of 2011, Kevin Schmidt returned to Tuktoyaktuk to locate the wooden billboard he had hand-routed with passages from the Book of Revelations, and erected on seasonal ice at the entrance to the Northwest Passage. Schmidt interviewed locals and scanned the coastline by plane, but did not find the artwork. A scientist who studies the Beaufort Sea speculated that the sign has likely drifted north of Russia. Until the billboard is located, the work endures – carried by the sea, through the exhibition of photographic and video documentation, the artist’s search for it, and the echo of the revelations across the north. A photo of the billboard when it was first anchored in April 2010 is accompanied by a print-on-demand photo book produced by Schmidt, of the billboard’s expedition from Vancouver to Tuktoyaktuk – a contemporary version of the journals produced by 19th century explorers searching for the Northwest Passage.

*A Sign in the Northwest Passage*, 2010, lightjet colour print, 163 x 124 cm. Courtesy the artist and Catriona Jeffries Gallery. (detail)



### Tatiana Lecomte

Twenty years ago, Tatiana Lecomte rescued a collection of slides from a wastepaper basket. They documented 40 years of life shared by a couple in their home, in hotel rooms, and at the naturist beach in El Alamein, Egypt in the 1960s. In 1942, years prior to the couple’s travels, allied forces under British command defeated German and Italian troops at El Alamein. Lecomte constructs a montage of WWII photographs, stills from period movies, the couple’s slides, and the artist’s own photographs to portray distinct positions taken at El Alamein. Through comparisons and analogies of global, personal, militaristic, and erotic events, Lecomte compels the viewer to consider the production and authority of each image.

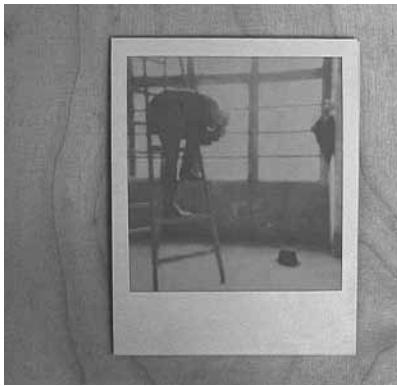
*Die El-Alamein-Stellung. Eine Montage/Positions at El Alamein. A Montage*, 2012, slide projection. Courtesy the artist. (detail)



### Jayce Salloum

*Kan ya ma kan* is an installation of fragments, formed out of residue, out of living, and out of the street, placed in the gallery to represent their larger whole. It is a transposition of a working studio, set up as a pseudo-scientific research lab/studio, paralleling/exposing my own productions/projects in Lebanon. Challenging the immense history of the production of knowledge of Lebanon and the Middle East, it presents some of the ‘resources’ and artifacts necessary to examine the mediated process inherent in the definition and perception of a culture. Here the viewer is/was part of that process, being forced to make decisions and to take responsibility for re-constructing their own cultural perceptions. The installation calls into question notions of history and research methodology, their roles in the effacement of histories, and the layers involved in depiction/representation and understanding of another/other culture(s).

*كان يا ما كان Kan ya ma kan/There was and there was not (fragments)*, 1988 – 1998, various dimensions. Courtesy the artist. (detail)



## Sissa Micheli

Reconstructing an image  
.....if one is to  
reconstruct an image of reality,  
the first question is  
where to begin.

I decide to start in the middle.  
Isn't it stupid  
to be interested only in  
the beginning  
and in the end of a thing?  
In the origin and the result?

Judging from one photograph  
we don't know  
what happened before and after.  
Our imagination tells us.  
A short period of time is captured  
and everything around it is an ellipse  
says Denis Roche.

So it is in the middle somewhere. Isn't it?  
I'm referring to time and space.  
Imagine what  
is around the image.  
Draw it in your mind.  
Imagine  
what happened before and after.

*Reconstructing an image*, 2008, SD video, 5' 10". Courtesy Austrian Federal Photography Collection. (detail)

## Kyla Mallett

*The Library* was made in the Vancouver Art Gallery's library, for their exhibition *How Soon Is Now* (2009). Conversations with the librarians and curators, and the allegorical narratives of Jorge Luis Borges' *The Library of Babel* and Walter Benjamin's *Unpacking My Library* cultivated this work. During her site-specific research, Mallett imagined visually cataloguing the tension and cohesion between the abstract idea of (infinite) knowledge and concrete processes of *knowing*. She looked for traces of the curatorial, critical, and archival processes that occur in the library. Following the trail of well-read spines, earmarked pages, marginalia, de-accessioned books, and disintegrating primary documents, Mallett salvaged and composed a breadth of residual materials that evidence the systematic and arcane aspects of exhibition making for the art gallery.

*The Library*, 2009, 23 panels (12 screen prints and 11 lightjet prints), various dimensions. Courtesy the artist. (detail)

## Biographies

**Thomas Freiler** is an artist and photographer based in Vienna. His practice considers the instrumental constructions and scientific conditions of chemical and digital photography. He also writes and lectures on the cultural history of photography.

**Arni Haraldsson** lives and works in Vancouver. Much of his work has concerned the lost aspirations of the utopian principles of Modernism, in terms of the design, and social life of the city.

**Doris Krüger** and **Walter Pardeller** live and work in Vienna. Working predominantly with sculpture and photography, they transcend architecture, design, and engineering to question the function and use of space, place, and objects.

**Tatiana Lecomte** lives and works in Vienna. She mainly works with found images or existing reproductions, which refer (again and again) to (traumatic) historical events, the significance of which is essentially unrepresentable. For this reason, Lecomte's work has to be read as querying photographic representations in terms of doubt about the appropriateness of visualization.

**Tim Lee** lives and works in Vancouver. Working with photography, video, text and sculpture, Lee both replicates and reimagines seminal moments in art history and popular culture.

**Kyla Mallett** lives and works in Vancouver. Her work consistently deals with the intersection of language and the social realm, utilizing pseudo-anthropological strategies of research, collecting, and archiving.

**Christian Mayer** lives and works in Vienna. His works often begin with historical eras and events that have impacted the structure of society. With great precision, he brings (popular) cultural, political, and social contexts together in tableaux, systematically reordering reality to give it a new and unexpected script.

**Sissa Micheli** lives and works in Vienna. Her practice possesses strong cinematic qualities in which reality and fiction are accomplices in constructing narratives of psychological drama. Her poetic etudes of elemental passion, everyday torments, and intimate and rare moments of striking emotional intensity.

While **Jayce Salloum** has lived in many locales, he currently resides in Vancouver. His practice exists within and between the personal, quotidian, local, and the trans-national. His work engages in an intimate subjectivity and a discursive challenge, while critically asserting itself in terms of the perception of social manifestations and political realities.

**Kevin Schmidt** is a Vancouver-based artist, working in diverse media but primarily in photography and video. He has a strong interest in landscape, music, and popular culture. He is represented by Catriona Jefferies Gallery.

**Anita Witek** lives and works in Vienna. Her works are snapshots of a continuous process of appropriation in the shadow of the cultural history of photography, hovering between the reproduced and the unique. In her photographs and installations she investigates the mutual constitution of and possibilities for demarcating space, body, and identity.

**Elizabeth Zvonar** lives and works in Vancouver. Her work often uses iconic symbols from pop culture to reference art historical works, mixing images through collage or rendering popular forms using traditional methods and materials.

All texts are written by the artists, except: Tim Lee by Toby Kamps (Excerpt: *Spot Magazine*, Houston Center for Photography, fall, 2008.); Anita Witek by franz Thalmair; Thoma Freiler and Tatiana Lecomte by Ruth Horak (Translation Stephen Telfer); and Kevin Schmidt and Kyla Mallett By Amy Kazymchuk.

## Audain Gallery

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Tue-Sat: 12pm-6pm

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