

Tor Seidel
*From Landscape
to Cityscape*

Curated by
Dr. Zoltán Somhegyi

From Landscape to Cityscape

Exhibition of Tor Seidel in the Rewaq Gallery

In his new exhibition, the UAE-based German photographer Tor Seidel shows a series of images documenting a certain “transition”. He is particularly interested in how a landscape can turn into a cityscape, i.e. how a seemingly genuine appearance of the natural environment is transformed into a well-designed and meticulously planned view of the city. In the photographs we can see traditional locations and still-deserted areas, rapidly extending construction sites, partly-finished though promising projects as well as already functioning ultramodern districts of the booming cities. The high-paced level of the construction and urban development in the United Arab Emirates is renowned on a global scale, and the impressive examples of contemporary architecture are attracting amateur and semi-professional image-takers to capture the breath-taking buildings in quick and “instagrammable” ways.

Tor Seidel however is more interested in seeing behind the immediate appearance and to examine the nature of the process itself: in analysing the transitory moments of turning the landscape into cityscape. At the same time, he is also aware of the subjectivity of both categories. A landscape – this is why we have described it as “seemingly genuine” above – is never “pure” or objective. From the Romantic philosophy of Nature and aesthetics of landscape representations through the theories of Georg Simmel up to Joachim Ritter and even contemporary environmental philosophy, the importance of the personal element in the construction of the vision of landscape – i.e. how objective Nature appears to us in the form of landscape – is profoundly analysed and highlighted, and can also be traced in Tor Seidel’s works.

This also means that, in the end, both categories – landscape and cityscape – are subjective views: the landscape is not a pure and objective rendering of Nature or of the natural environment, but depends on the viewer herself, hence we all have our own individual

visions of Nature, our own visual interpretations of what we see, which can of course easily be influenced by our visual vocabulary, experiences, memories and aesthetic preferences. The same with cityscapes: how the snippet of the city appears is the result of not only what we see, but also what we can see and what we want to see. Precisely this personal view of landscapes and cityscapes will be crucial in the photographs, and this is why we are interested in the works. We are less curious how the city “is” – because we can never really know it – but how it is seen by the artist. We can learn about, for example, his special approach, capturing the aforementioned rapid transition from the landscape to the cityscape, seizing and immortalising those moments between the not-yet and the already that are normally forgotten as soon as the new city area is built, functioning and actively used by its inhabitants.

Tor Seidel’s works are thus not simple snapshots of these locations, and he does not want to impose his own interpretation on the viewer. He rather invites us to reflect on these questions ourselves, and to arrive at our own reading of those significant changes that the pictures indicate and investigate. Therefore, the photographs can also be seen as creative objects that have a dual way of functioning: besides being artworks showing the photographer’s point of view, they are also aesthetic reminders of the importance of this interpretative process, thus encouraging the viewer to create her own understanding.

Dr. Zoltán Somhegyi

Tor Seidel grew up and raised in Berlin (Germany), studied Art and Philosophy (M.A.), is travelling a lot to explore his specific fields in photography and to work on his projects. He is presented at “The Empty Quarter Gallery” in Dubai, he exhibits internationally. Tor Seidel is Visiting Lecturer for Fine Art Photography at the University of Sharjah, Member of the International Association of Photography and Theory (IAPT) and the German Association of Fine Artists (BBK). Books: «X-Ray-Portrait» (BühlerHeckel, 2005), «The Dubai» (Hatje Cantz, 2014), “Realms of Imagination - Sharjah Al Noor Island” (Frame 2016), “18*-Capital Tower Abu Dhabi” (Birkhäuser 2016) , “Mannequins» (Kerber 2017).

www.torseidel.de

Dr. Zoltán Somhegyi (1981) is a Hungarian art historian, teacher and writer, holding a Ph.D. in aesthetics, based in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. As a researcher, he is specialised in 18th-19th century art and theory, besides that his other fields of interest are contemporary fine arts and art criticism. He curates exhibitions, and is a consultant of Art Market Budapest – International Contemporary Art Fair. He is the author of books, artist catalogues, and more than two hundred articles, critiques, essays and art fair reviews. After teaching at different universities in Hungary and in Turkey, currently he is Assistant Professor at the College of Fine Arts and Design at the University of Sharjah. He is the Secretary General and Website Editor of the International Association for Aesthetics, and editorial board member of various academic journals.

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Acknowledgment

Exhibition Organization

CFAD Events Committee members

Exhibition Curator

Dr. Zoltán Somhegyi

Exhibition Installation

Abdulhadi Al Salti

Catalogue Design

Ahmad Manar Laham



Construction of Palm Jebel Ali, 2008





Interchange Nr.1. Dubai, 2013



Rub Al Khali, 2008



Al Jahili Fort, Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, 2008



Construction of Giant Wheel Dubai Marina, 2017



Construction of Sharjah Mosque, Sharjah, 2017





Al Noor Island, Butterfly Pavillion, Sharjah, 2016





Construction Reem Island, Abu Dhabi, 2015

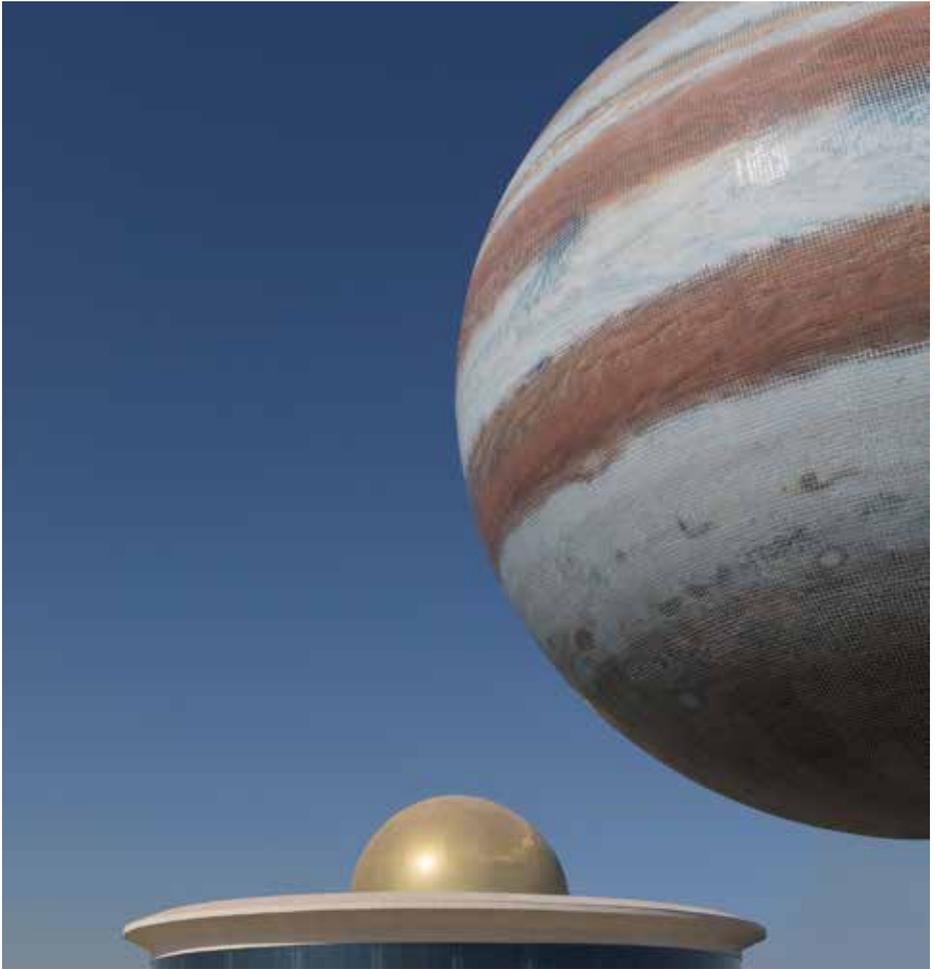




Construction of The World Islands, 2008



Model of DubaiLand, 2010



University of Sharjah Planetarium, Sharjah, 2017

