



Camera Emplacement 6X, 2007
Ted Ollier
Shaped plate print
7.5x2 inches

Front image: *Glance*, 2013
Grace Durnford
Colored pencil and thread on paper
7.5x3 inches

MUSEUM

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Invisible Cities

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Though “Invisible Cities” is completely devoid of representative figuration, its works imply the density of bodies and minds so inextricably tied to city life. We populate the space just out-of-frame with a cast of thousands, a thrumming cacophony of hypothetical narratives inferred from a simple surveillance camera or telephone pole.

Ted Ollier’s “Camera Emplacement” must have a watcher and a watched. Ubiquitous but often overlooked, the CCTV cameras that perch like pigeons among the eaves and towers of our cities are physical byproducts of a landscape saturated with human communication, for better and worse.

Windows face out onto other windows, thin walls and floors, neighbors and cameras redefine our concept of “privacy.” Yet, amid this constant press of human eyes, an individual can be invisible, lost as one pixel in the constant undulating whole. One siren on a still night cuts through the silence with startling intensity; one siren amidst many, joined by shouts, engines, snippets of doppled bass and straggling notes and you have a symphony with no soloist.

This intrinsic saturation causes our perception to slip over the cameras, the power lines, the spaces in between. Mara Brod’s “Opening” is a peek into one of these in-between spaces; framed and decontextualized, it invites us to look instead of overlook.



Opening, 2003
Mara Brod
Hand printed C-print
3.5x3.5 inches

“Opening” feels private, like a solitary exploration of a pocket of the landscape hidden solely by its mundanity. And yet, the feeling of ordinariness is transformed into something almost magical by the revelation of moving from invisible to visible.

Both the content and the experience of “Opening” echo fundamental principles of the Museum itself – instilling a sense of wonder into an otherwise invisible crevice in the urban landscape.

In Grace Durnford’s “Glance,” houses melt into the background and we are brought to focus on the clean linearity of power lines as they form abstract sketches across the sky. Again, it is the intensity of the artist’s gaze that

causes us to re-examine the subject matter – instead of sliding through our consciousness, these tableaus invite us to take the time to see the things we look at every day.



Microeddies (Cityspace #217), 2013
Emily Garfield
Ink and pen on paper
3x2 inches

The imaginary maps of Emily Garfield pull the viewer back, as though looking out of an airplane window. “Microeddies” abstracts the cityscape to its geometric components, revealing the macro order surrounding the micro chaos. Here our inhabitants are hidden

by scale, and yet we feel the energy of their movements in the latticework of infrastructure.

With Ted Ollier’s “City Silhouettes,” we have zoomed so far out that the city has become an organism itself; the people, buildings and cars are now invisible cells determining the features of a vast personality. By employing a classic form of portraiture, Ollier allows us to view the relationships between cities as one might assess interpersonal relationships; Boston and New York, posed like family pictures, reflect the sibling-like rivalry between the two metropolises.

Like the Museum itself, “Invisible Cities” focuses on the physical and emotional landscape of the city. The work explores the intricacies of the urban environment and what it means to inhabit this mutual space.

Judith Klausner
Curator



City Silhouettes: Boston,
2008
Ted Ollier
Shaped copper print
5x3 inches



City Silhouettes: New York,
2005
Ted Ollier
Shaped copper print
5x3 inches