



DATE: January 15, 2019  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GETTY MUSEUM PRESENTS  
*MAPPING SPACE: RECENT ACQUISITIONS IN FOCUS*

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center  
February 26–July 14, 2019



**LEFT:** *Untitled (Outside the Frame #9)*, 1981 – 1982, Uta Barth (German, born 1958). Gelatin silver print. Image: 11.2 × 11.1 cm (4 7/16 × 4 3/8 in.). 2012.21.9. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. © Uta Barth **CENTER:** *Apt. 4*, 2011 – 2012, Mark Ruwedel (American / Canadian, born 1954). Gelatin silver print. Image: 17.7 × 17.7 cm (6 15/16 × 6 15/16 in.). 2014.22.4. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Purchased in part with funds provided by Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser. © Mark Ruwedel **RIGHT:** *One Hundred Signs of the Demolition #1997*, 1999, Wang Jinsong (Chinese, born 1963). Chromogenic print. Image: 183.2 × 123.2 cm (72 1/8 × 48 1/2 in.). 2015.115.3. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Anonymous Gift. © Wang Jinsong

**LOS ANGELES** – Photography's dynamic relationship to the landscape can be traced to the origins of the medium, when the camera offered a revolutionary method for recording the world. The 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a range of approaches, from land surveys that systematically documented the topography of unsettled regions, to artistic depictions of nature's majesty that rivaled landscape painting. Beginning in the 1960s, many artists sought novel approaches to representing their surroundings by incorporating personal, critical, and symbolic references to their work. *Mapping Space: Recent Acquisitions in Focus*, on view February 26–July 14, 2019 at the J. Paul Getty Museum, features a selection of recently acquired works by artists whose photographic views have been informed by new ways of thinking about a familiar subject.

On view at the Getty for the first time are works by five artists: Robert Kinmont (American, born 1937), Wang Jinsong (Chinese, born 1963), Richard Long (English, born 1945), Mark Ruwedel (American/Canadian, born 1954), and Uta Barth (German, born 1958). These artists draw from a variety of influences, ranging from photography's documentary tradition to Conceptual Art, a movement that first gained significance during the 1960s for its prioritization of ideas over the production of objects. Operating against conventional notions of landscape photography, each of these artists has developed his or her own approach to site-specific spaces.

"The *In Focus* gallery in the Center for Photographs provides us an opportunity to highlight the Museum's collection in telling ways, frequently with thematic overviews of the history of the medium, or, as in this case, by emphasizing recently acquired works that indicate an area of collecting interest," says Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "Spanning almost half a century, from the late 1960s to 2012, the works in this presentation build on the Museum's important holdings of landscape photography while revealing the importance of site-specificity and a personal response to our environment."

Robert Kinmont's photographs of the landscape emphasize the mundane over the majestic. His series of gelatin silver prints *My Favorite Dirt Roads* (1969) features empty and unpaved roads that lead to Bishop, California, where the artist grew up. These images show open, unpaved roads and views of the horizon that, with their occasional stippling of powerlines, indicate the presence of communities. In documenting the vastness of this remote landscape, Kinmont communicates a personal connection to a place that most people would overlook.

Destruction, symbolism, and power are encapsulated in Wang Jinsong's series *One Hundred Signs of the Demolition* (1998). Depicting brick walls painted with the Chinese character "chai," which translates to "tear down," these photographs document buildings slated for demolition in order to make way for new construction. The artist's decision to focus on a written notice that signals demolition instead of the act, or the aftermath, serves as a quiet critique of a carefully coordinated government practice of the 1990s that discarded vestiges of the past to accommodate rapid growth in cities such as Beijing. The massive scale of these prints, their extreme frontal view, and the elimination of all architectural surrounds heighten the immediacy of this programmatic urban transformation.

Richard Long's iconic work *A Line Made by Walking* (1967) depicts a field outside of London in which the grass has been flattened in a straight line by the artist's footsteps. Performed in the landscape, this modest intervention underscored the potential for an ordinary act to become a work of art that is a meditation on the relationship between the artist and the landscape. This photograph reflects not only the artist's interest in nature but represents his role in the Land Art movement that emerged in the late 1960s and operated on the notion of direct engagement with the environment.

Mark Ruwedel's *We All Loved Ruscha (15 Apts.)* (2011-2012) is deeply informed by the legacy of Conceptual Art. In returning to the urban and suburban locations of the apartment buildings originally captured by the artist Ed Ruscha (American b. 1937) almost 50 years earlier and published in the 1965 book *Some Los Angeles Apartments*—photographs from this publication are well represented in the Getty's collection—Ruwedel pays homage to a project that is widely associated with defining the tone of West Coast Conceptual photography. Displaying the same deadpan approach that became a hallmark of Ruscha's style, these photographs are also documents of the changes these buildings have undergone.

Photography's perceived ability to faithfully describe the environment has long been a central concern for Uta Barth. Made between 1981 and 1982, the nine untitled gelatin silver prints in this exhibition present some of her earliest investigations of the medium's limitations in conveying the spatial dimensions of a specific area. After photographing her immediate surroundings, Barth marked the surface of each print with black and red grease pencils to delineate various compositional elements. The inclusion of numbers, brackets, and occasional curvilinear forms suggests a desire to create a rational order. These markings also guide the viewer's eyes to consider areas of each print that are not the obvious subject, thereby creating additional layers of meaning.

"Conceptual Art has been a major source of inspiration and influence for many contemporary photographers," says Arpad Kovacs, assistant curator of photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum and curator of the exhibition. "The Department of Photographs has made the collecting of Conceptual photography a priority over the last decade and this show provides an opportunity to display some of the works acquired."

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