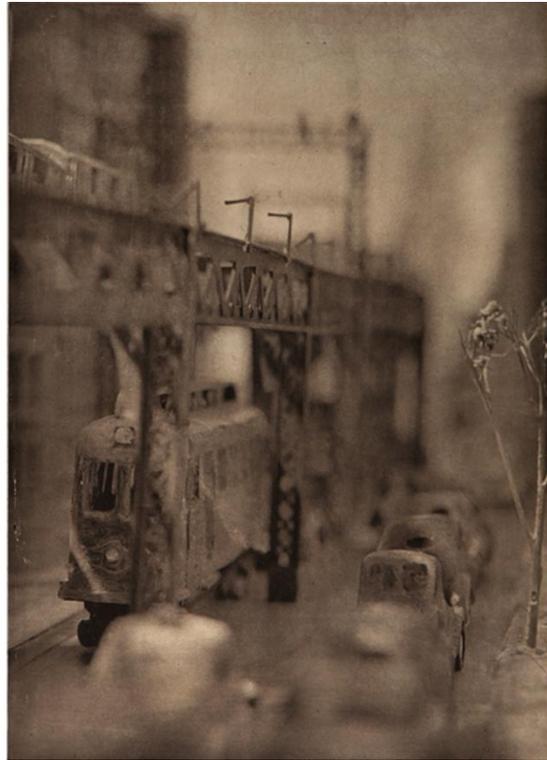


April 18, 2016



## LOTHAR OSTERBURG AND KATHERINE NEWBEGIN AT LESLEY HELLER WORKSPACE

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*Image above: ©Lothar Osterburg, Streetcar of Lonliness, 2011 Ed. 1/7, Photogravure with gampi chine colle on somerset white*

### **Lothar Osterburg:**

Working from memory, using small-scale models built quickly and intuitively by hand from readily available, found material, Osterburg creates images of lost or imagined worlds. Photographed, then printed in photogravure, they become timeless. The soft focus, the scratches and traces from the photogravure process, and the use of rough and unfinished models all work together to suspend the final image somewhere between the real and the imaginary.



*Image above: ©Lothar Osterburg, Under the El, 2011 Ed. 1/8 Photogravure on Somerset Soft White*

**“Imagining New York”**, created in the artist’s Brooklyn studio, is a delightful amalgam of fact and fiction. Osterburg’s New York is a great city of endless possibilities, as imagined by people from afar who may never be able to visit. The images are drawn from forgotten or imagined times during the heyday of photogravure, the 1860’s through the 1930’s, when great waves of immigrants came to Ellis Island.

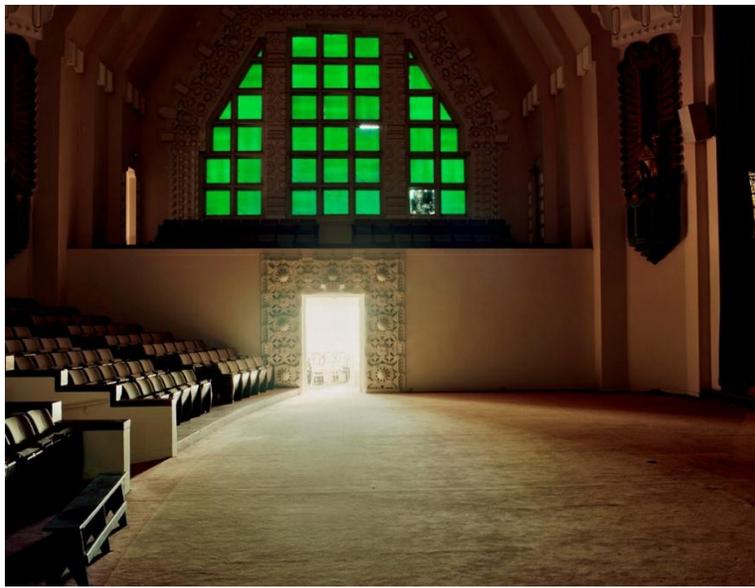


*Image above: ©Lothar Osterburg, Zeppelins Docking at Grand Central, 2013 Ed. 5/2 AP Photogravure with gampi chine colle on somerset white*

Growing up in Germany, Osterburg's idea of New York was far from reality. Books from the local library were at least twenty years old, and the stories told by his great aunt, who had worked in America in the 1930s, were historic accounts. Movies and literature gave skewed or fantastical perspectives, while stories from visitors described only a narrow, simplified tourist's point of view. Images from these pre-New York days persistently resurface and find their way into "Imagining New York".

**Katherine Newbegin:**

For the past nine years, I have photographed vacant spaces of leisure, travel and transitional occupancy. What initially brought me to former communist locations was a fascination with what it might have felt like to be behind the curtain, to live and exist in a place that seemed like a secret. I wanted to go to these places, to unearth what is hidden, and bring it back to be seen. I wandered and photographed these places in order to understand and compare my memories of vacation as a child to what might have been experienced by a family from the former Soviet block countries.



*Image above: ©Katherine Newbegin, Scottish Rite Temple (Miami FL), 2014 Ed. 1/5 C Print*

Traveling widely to track down numerous gigantic Soviet-era hotels in Moldova, Romania, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, Bulgaria, Croatia, Belarus, Cuba, Cambodia, and Vietnam, which were used as vacation escapes for the best workers, and I found that many have since become relics. These monuments to tourism are a specific type of “block hotel” built by the government, which were meant for nation building purposes and used as a reward for the best workers of the Soviet Union.



*Image above: ©Katherine Newbegin, Sold Church 138 Manhattan Avenue Brooklyn NY, 2015 Ed. 1/5, C Print*

My obsession with loss, disuse, and obsolescence took me to India to photograph in one of the most rapidly changing cultures. In my first visit there, I fell in love with a very old type of cinema, family run and small,

which is being displaced by multiplexes. The cinema provides an escape – the moment the film begins, the viewer is absorbed in the fantasy of the unreal dream experience, but when the lights come on, the audience is confronted again with the rawness of reality.



*Image above: ©Katherine Newbegin, Vagabond Hotel (Miami FL), 2014 Ed. 1/5 C Print*

All of the spaces are deeply informed by the human traces and activities that take place in them, but only remain in the evidence left behind. The architecture of these rooms, holds a stifling sense of deadness, as if it were already a museum, acting as a conduit into a displaced time. In these once treasured rooms, in these empty worlds, a patina is left from before a shifting occurred in the culture. These vacant places have been rejected, abandon, left for the people who have no other choice but to exist here.

More recently, working in video has allowed me the ability to further explore ideas of the dislocation of interior spaces, revealing secret hidden worlds, and the theme of vacation as it is expressed across different cultures. In the video piece titled Tropical Islands I filmed a resort located in a former aircraft hanger, which is one of the largest buildings on earth by volume. Located on the site of a former Soviet airfield just outside Berlin, Germany, the building can hold eight football fields, houses the largest indoor rainforest, many hotels and restaurants, and is reminiscent of the movie titled the Truman Show. In the video piece, I act as a silent observer, watching families interact, take photographs, swim, and socialize in this completely artificial environment.

Backroom: Katherine Newbegin & Lothar Osterburg is on view at Lesley Heller Workspace until May 1, 2016 at 54 Orchard st, New York, NY

“Lothar Osterburg and Katherine Newbegin at Lesley Heller Worksapce.” *Musée Magazine*, 18 April, 2016. [online]