

Destination anywhere: Experiences of place in the work of Ed Ruscha and Andreas Gursky

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how the meaning of place and identification with place can be produced through photographic images of the city. As an aesthetic, social and cultural practice, photography provides a way of imagining place and a means of knowing and classifying the urban spaces. Photographic images of the city can be understood as a form of aesthetic knowledge production, which represents and enacts the experiences of the urban environment. The urban spaces imaged by artists Ed Ruscha and Andreas Gursky, in the 1960s and 1990s respectively, actively represent and perform the symbolic and material properties of urban spaces. By exploring the ways that these artists read and map city spaces and how they articulate an experience of the city that engages with the identification of place, an argument is presented about how this process and imaging can be situated in relation to anthropological and geographic concepts of place. More specifically, what this paper explores is how their work demonstrates a sense of place that is complex and mobile, which can oscillate between notions of site specificity, identification and non-place as defined by Marc Augé.

The significance of place in a global world

In recognition of contemporary processes of globalisation there has been reconsideration of the meanings of space and place in a period defined by “time-space compression” (Harvey, 1990) and flows of people, objects and ideas (Urry, 2000, 2003; Appadurai, 1996). The notion of place as a fixed territory in space or as a reactionary identification against global mobility is challenged (Massey, 1991). Place is important, but how it is experienced and known requires new frameworks for analysis which acknowledge mobility, flows and diverse forms of belonging (Savage, Bagnall & Longhurst, 2005). This type of conceptualisation of place, as a material, social and imagined site, reconfigures the locus of identity formation and attachment as being part of and not separate from the processes of globalisation:

[T]he more global our lives seem to be, the more we insist on the existence of demonstrably different places where we are socially and culturally anchored ... it is not *despite of*, but rather *because* we live in a world that has become so closely interwoven, that place has become so significant (Olwig, 2003: 59).

What geographer Karen Fog Olwig indicates is that in the contemporary global context place is not just a geographic site where you live and then ascribe particular meanings. It can also be an “anchoring point” that you identify with, even from a distance. Furthermore, physical and imagined mobility, enabled by processes of globalisation, does not preclude a sense of belonging to place,

but rather invites more complex and flexible distinctions of attachment and identification. In this context, place is better understood as a “cultural site”, one that is ascribed meaning in relation to global dynamics.

Henri Lefebvre (1991) similarly considered place to be more than just about physical locations. As a form of space, place defined through social relations and practices, including imagining, is a space of lived experience. Arjun Appadurai (1996) adds to this that the social relations defining place are not only created through in-situ experience, but can also be imagined from a distance. That is, a relational and contextual sense of place can be an emotional or symbolic attachment that can be more imagined than socially or materially actual.

Lefebvre distinguishes between the *representation of spaces* (such as the “official” images of a city realised in science, urban planning and architecture) and *representational spaces* (spaces that are lived in and used, and as such are subject to habit, rules and various social codes). Lefebvre argues that the space of lived experience is rarely granted a visibility and representation in the production of space. Like Lefebvre, art theorist Lucy Lippard (1997: 7) emphasises that place is about experiencing and exploring a site; it is an affective site. Lippard argues that artists, in particular, can articulate this experience and even offer new ways of experiencing places: “Artists can make the connections visible ... [they can] bring out multiple readings of places that mean different things to different people at different times rather than merely reflecting some of their beauty back into the marketplace or the living room” (19). Notable texts have been written about artists exploring social relations of space and the social production of place, particularly since the 1990s (see Lacy, 1995; Deutsche, 1996); however, these ideas can also be applied to artists whose work has not been explicitly understood in this way.

The photographic works of artists Ed Ruscha (United States) and Andreas Gursky (Germany) offer multiple readings and experiences of site-specific locations. In this paper, I would like to investigate how their work articulates the experiences of urban environments and how, in the processes of producing their artworks, these artists contribute to re-interpreting the aesthetic and meaning of the places photographed. Through this reading I want to critically interrogate the meaning of place and look at the ambiguous relationship between the ideas of located, or situated place, and the anthropologist Marc Augé’s (1995) ideas on “non-place”. I argue that both the work of Ruscha and Gursky demonstrates a similar awareness of the complex meanings of place in the changing urban environments of the past fifty years. While Ruscha’s work in the 1960s emphasises and is clearly located in the specific place of Los Angeles in the 1960s, it also appears to anticipate the ideas of “non-place” through the aesthetic presentation of the images. Augé identifies the increasing proliferation of non-places as a defining feature of contemporary life, which he terms as “supermodernity”. Examples of non-places include airports, hotels, freeways and supermarkets. These places are associated with contemporary globalisation processes, such as increased mobility, and the spread of capitalism and developments in communications media. In contrast to Ruscha, Gursky working in the 1990s is fascinated by the very spectacles of supermodernity and could be said to be paradigmatic of Augé’s ideas of non-place. Yet his process of digital manipulation also seems to heighten a definitive sense of place. Simultaneously, the enhancement of the image also takes it beyond the visual recording of a situated place. His works thus continuously shift between these two positions.

Both artists, albeit working at different periods in the twentieth century, focus on urban environments in their work. Both artists, at the time their work was exhibited, offered new visions of the urban environment, and a typology of vision that also situates them in the different periods in which they were working. For Ruscha it was the car-dominated, post-war, suburban landscape of Los Angeles. For Gursky it was spaces associated with contemporary globalisation process and neo-liberal capitalism, the lobbies of large international chain hotels. What connects their work is the way that the places represented seem to oscillate between the particular and the homogenous, the ordinary and spectacle. Both artists appear to offer a detached view of these urban places, and yet

they also, I would argue, present an identification and attachment to these spaces. This analysis seeks to present these examples from photography as cultural practices, which demonstrate an aesthetics of knowing and being in and of the city. They offer a way of considering the relationship between the specific and the non-specific experience of place through their representations. It is not aiming to place these artists and images within a history of photography, but rather to consider these works as frameworks for reconsidering the lived experience of spaces as articulating ideas of both place and non-place.

Attachment and place

Belonging or attachment to a place is an important part of experience, use and imagining. In his discussion of the connections between cultural identity and architecture, architectural theorist Neil Leach (2005) draws attention to how acts of repetitive looking, through habit, can reinforce identification with place. For Leach, this process of identification with the built environment can forge a sense of belonging (308). Importantly, this process emerges in the act of social and material experience and is not something inherent to the built environment itself: “Just as words can be understood by the manner in which they are used, so buildings can be grasped by the manner in which they are perceived—by the narratives of use in which they are inscribed” (298).

Following the work of Michel de Certeau (1984) on the meaning of space being constructed through experience and Judith Butler’s ideas of performed identity (1990), Leach identifies how making sense of place involves identification through acts of repetition (301). In particular, he draws attention to the potential in acts of repetition to disrupt the social and cultural conventions of space.

Working with ideas of appropriation from Walter Benjamin (1968), Leach demonstrates how the incidental—something formed through habit—is an important component of how sense is made of space.

Buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception – or rather, by touch and sight. Such appropriation cannot be understood in terms of the attentive concentration of a tourist before a famous building ... Tactile appropriation is accomplished not so much by attention as by habit. As regards architecture, habit determines to a large extent even optical reception. The latter, too, occurs much less through rapt attention than by noticing the object in incidental fashion (Benjamin cited in Leach, 2005: 306).

It is the incidental, created through habit that enables identification with and attachment to place.

Leach argues that it is the continual and routine viewing of the mundane which drives an attachment to place. This offers a new way to consider the non-place. According to Augé non-places are characterised by their lack of specificity and by the emphasis on detachment and solitude: “If [anthropological] place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which can not be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place” (77-78). In fact, Augé (2009) himself identifies this in later interviews. Augé emphasises that anything can become a place, that is, non-places can become sites of social relations and psychological connection with which individuals can identify. In considering these views, it becomes clear that the definition of place or non-place is not fixed but is open to constant re-negotiation by users.

Lucy Lippard, like Augé, defines place in relation to social relations, a sense of identity and history. She refers to contemporary urban environments as the “geography of nowhere” characterised by concrete jungles (1997: 9). She identifies a particular “placelessness” (9) in city environments. These places are “ignored, unseen, or unknown” (9). In contrast, Lippard privileges a sense of place as

... a portion of the land/town/cityscape seen from the inside, the resonance of a specific location that is known and familiar ... [a] layered location replete with human histories and memories ...

[it is] about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there (1997: 7).

Lippard's argument is that place defined as such is lost in the contemporary city, and that "placelessness" is characterised by a lack of personal relationship and memory, a lack of psychological connection to a site. Yet if Leach's argument is followed then even spaces in the "geography of nowhere", the concrete jungles of the urban environment or the hyper-slick spaces of neo-liberal capitalism, can become sites of attachment or places through experience.

At first the photographic works of Ruscha and Gursky, in their images of streetscapes and hotel lobbies, seem to represent the "geography of nowhere" and "placelessness" that for Lippard and Augé characterise the contemporary urban environment. They are images marked by repetition and homogenous surfaces. Yet, there are aspects of their images that, I argue, articulate a sense of place and an attachment to place. Ruscha's work draws attention to the incidental experiences of everyday life—the car and the street—and brings them into the space of concentration and contemplation. Gursky too takes what appears to be the non-descript repetitive feature of the hotel lobby atrium and brings the detail to notice. In an extension of Benjamin's analysis, their work brings the incidental into a place of attention. In doing this, it has the potential to offer a sense of attachment to place and a detailed particularity of place rather than a detached "placeless" view. The photographs articulate an experience created through use and imagination that is separate from the "official" discourse of planning maps or architectural plans, and therefore is similar to Lefebvre's idea of "representational spaces". That is, they articulate a way of knowing and using a space through social relations.

In the following discussion, I will endeavour to show how the urban spaces depicted in the images of Ruscha and Gursky demonstrate both the particularities of specific places, and simultaneously the "placelessness" associated with contemporary urbanism.

Drive-thru city: Ed Ruscha

Ed Ruscha's *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966) (Figure 1 and 2) is a limited edition accordion folded artist's book with reproductions of two panoramic views of each side of the Sunset Strip in Los Angeles. The emphasis in the images is on the built structures defining the streetscape. Beneath the images Ruscha presents a horizontal strip of text identifying the addresses of the buildings. The two views of the street are placed opposite one another in a mirror-like reflection across the page. When the book is fully extended it is over seven metres in length. While the book can be read conventionally, as a hand-held book and by turning the pages, it can also be laid out and experienced as a three-dimensional object, which because of the mirror layout requires movement around the book to experience both sides of the street according to the correct view (otherwise one side is always upside down).

The series of photographs of urban Los Angeles in *Every Building* has often been discussed in terms of its "documentary-style" recording of the streetscape. The history of the documentary image is part of long history of discussion on photography, realism and the indexical image. The indexicality of the photographic image (Sontag, 1979; Barthes, 1984) emphasise the ways in which the photograph refers to actual phenomena. The emphasis on the indexical image, on the photograph as a trace of reality, has been challenged (Manovich, 2001; Kember, 1998). The issue of the indexical has also become part of comparative debates between analogue photography (like Ruscha's) and digital photography (like Gursky, although he also uses analogue technology). However, they need not be considered opposites if the idea of the indexical is differentiated from debates on realism:

While it plays a part in forming our beliefs in photography's realism, photography's indexicality is, in fact, something quite different from realism. The indexical quality of a photograph has more to do with a sense of presence than realism. It testifies to the *being* or existence of something that

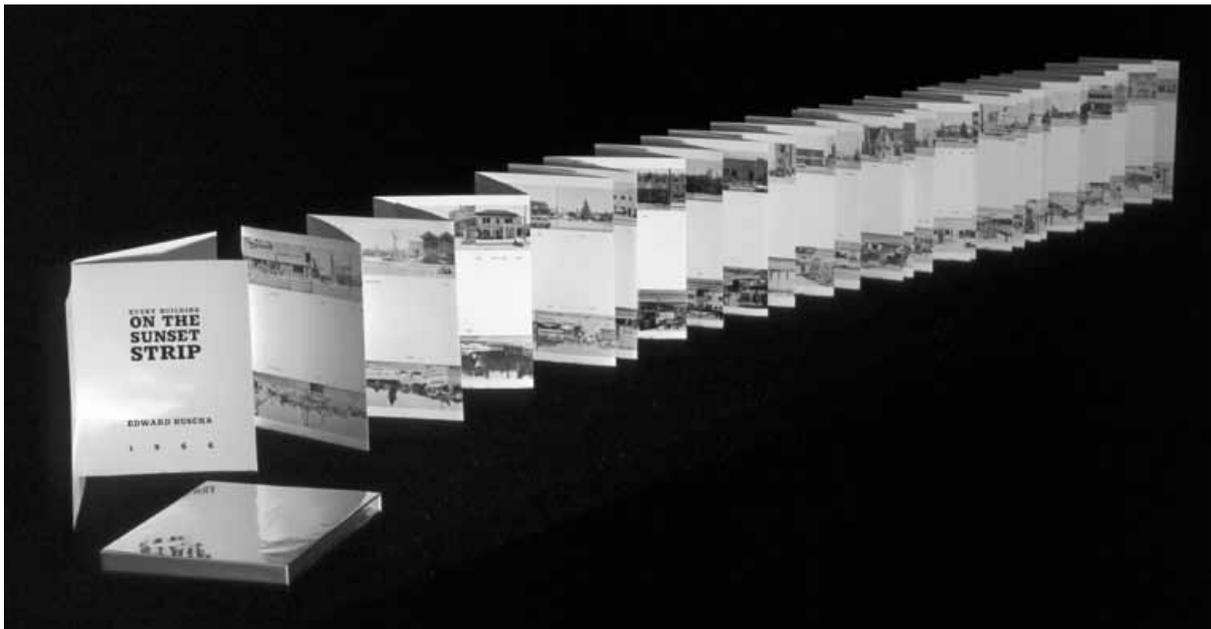


Figure 1. Ed Ruscha, *Every Building on Sunset Strip*, 1966. Cover.
©Ed Ruscha. Courtesy Gagosian Gallery, New York.

was one before the camera ... digital photographs can also be indexes in both a technical way and ... in how they are received and valued (Wells, 2004: 331-332).

The point that needs to be emphasised, and that Well's also identifies, is that despite the persisting on indexicality, photography is also a performed practice (Hainge, 2008). It is the emphasis on the performative, how Ruscha enacts a sense of the spatial and material environment of the Strip and also constructs a representation of the street through the photographic image and its presentation in the book-format, and how this constructs a sense of place that is of concern in this paper rather than issues of realism and the indexical per se.

The experience of the streetscape that is presented in Ruscha's work is defined by an everyday, repetitious and non-hierarchical representation of the built environment. Augé defines the spaces of freeways as non-spaces due to their generic everywhere-the-sameness and some of Ruscha's work can be fit within this description. While Los Angeles's Sunset Strip is a street and not a freeway, the repetition of the building facades and the lack of explicit individuation amongst the built environment create a sense of the non-place. It is also inscribed with the common and familiar signs of the modern urban consumer landscape, such as street signs and shop fronts. Even the view from the road expresses the experience of driving in a car at that time. These elements make the work highly site-specific (Buchloh, 1990). Art historian Benjamin Buchloh (1990) highlights that the presentation of vernacular architecture in a non-hierarchical manner—as ordinary fact photographed in a style constructed to appear anonymous and amateur—and the links to commercial production echo the rise of cheap, mass-produced housing and material consumerism in 1960s American suburbia. Los Angeles was a city of urban sprawl and constant change as new buildings quickly appeared. Ruscha's work captures that experience, dominated by images related to reoccurring urban typologies: gas stations, parking lots and street facades.

Ruscha follows the photo-documentary style of other 1960s photographers, such as Bernd and Hilla Becher's visual presentation of the disappearing forms of industrialisation, in which place was a located geographic site. It was an aesthetic defined by a systematic approach to consistently photographing the structures from a frontal view and keeping detailed written records about the structure (Andre, 1972). In particular, the grid format draws attention to both the homogeneity and heterogeneity of these vernacular structures. The emphasis was on similarity and organisational patterns between sites and structures. Similarly, the emphasis in Ruscha's work is on using repetition

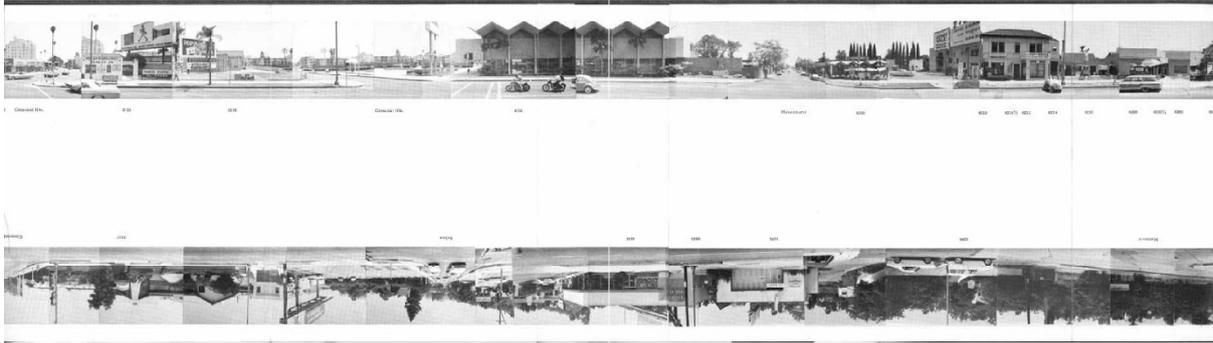


Figure 2. Ed Ruscha, *Every Building on Sunset Strip*, 1966, pp. 3 and 4.
©Ed Ruscha. Courtesy Gagosian Gallery, New York.

and seriality to create a sense of commonality. Ruscha creates a strong sense of the standardisation of the built environment through repetition and matter-of-fact presentation. The framing and layout of the photographs, through the frontal view, consistent lighting and scale, creates a sense of uniformity. The street numbers form a strip beneath the photographs, which supports the reading of the buildings as a sequence of numbers. It presents the street as being comprised of a series of objects, rather than as social spaces: a feeling that is further emphasised by the lack of people on the street. This enhances a sense of order and pattern and similitude rather than difference, reinforced by the viewpoint that emphasises the flat facades of the buildings. The sequence of the images does not establish any sense of narrative journey or spatial development beyond the consistent linear movement up and down the street. Rather, the uniformity encourages a scanning of the surface of the images (Whiting, 2006: 95).

Following Jean Baudrillard's interpretation of seriality, this type of repetition and uniformity can also be used to draw attention to the differences within the series, in effect heightening difference (Foster, 1999: 66) or "variety within type" (Whiting: 93). This becomes evident in Ruscha's work where the heterogeneity of the environment is allowed to emerge. Subtle points of disjuncture introduced through the documentation of temporal experience come to the fore (Figure 2). Parked cars do not match up and the adjoining streets create a sense of spatial disruption by receding (95). By subtly irritating the standardised view of the streetscape and interrupting surface scanning Ruscha develops a sense of encounter and experience by realising variations in the topography. This could be understood to heighten, rather than diminish, the sense of site specificity.

Furthermore, despite this homogenous surface, the documentary style and numbering of the buildings in the book clearly situate the work as a description of Sunset Strip Boulevard in Los Angeles at a particular time. Furthermore, the experience of driving and the view of the vernacular built environment central to the images are characteristic of Los Angeles in the 1960s—a city designed to be experienced from the car (Banham, 1972). This also makes Ruscha's work different from other photographic investigations of streetscapes, such as that of American photographer Walker Evans, who lived from 1903 to 1975 and was best known for his documentary work of the Great Depression, and French photographer Eugène Atget, 1857 to 1927, whose architectural and streetscapes of old Paris captured a somewhat nostalgic perspective of a vanishing urban world. Their images of the city are created from the perspective of the pedestrian not the driver.

As stated, the book format presents the two sides of the street in a mirror image that mimics the experience of the car passenger moving down the street and looking out the side windows. The automobile view that Ruscha re-creates can be characterised as a practising of space. This becomes a performed experience in which the experience of the incidental (driving down the familiar street, looking through the frames of the windows) is actualised. *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* is a mapping of Ruscha's experience of the space. While he re-presents it in a way different from that normally experienced in the car by creating static images of the street, the view is not directly from the driver position because Ruscha mounted his motorised camera onto the back of his vehicle

(Media Art Net, 2009). Yet it is not just the view that is imaged. The photographing of Sunset Strip took the same amount of time as driving up and down the strip; yet, the considerations and constructions involved in compiling the images into the book format took nine months (Phillpot, 1999: 67). What this suggests is that it is the process of re-constructing the experience that is important and not just the direct visual recording of the site.

Ruscha emphasises the horizontal structure through the landscape format of the book and the arrangement of the images side by side, following the physical topography of Sunset Strip. The horizontal structure, reinforced by the line of addresses below the images, tends to create a sense of stability and fixity; Whiting argues that Ruscha's works "still the transitory moments of the urban landscape—both the haphazard transformation of buildings themselves and the mobile gaze of the driver" (2006: 89). However, while he is able to create a sense of a new experience of the street through the static image, Ruscha is also able to reintroduce a sense of movement through the book format. Viewing the numerous pages creates a sense of mobility through the space. This movement is further constructed through the format of the book, which is like a sculptural object. Ruscha has spoken of his interest in the three-dimensional sculptural qualities of books and the relationship between this and the idea of the flat surface, which is created through the graphic marks of the texts numbering and emphasis on the facades of the buildings: "I even perceived [my books] as bits of sculpture, in a way. They were three-dimensional, they were thick" (Phillpot, 1999: 67). This tangible physicality of the book structure is quite critical in understanding Ruscha's process of translation from representing the image of a place to articulating the experience of driving, of moving along a road, in a place.

The work of Ruscha, insofar as it performs lived experience through visualisation rather than following the conventions of official discursive representations of Sunset Strip, such as maps, building plans and aerial photography, can be understood as a representation place, as in Lefebvre's definition. Place, that is enacted through driving past and recording, through naming (titling the book and listing the numbers of the buildings), and through imaging—presenting the city as a series of repetitive surfaces. By presenting views of Los Angeles that are vernacular and ordinary Ruscha also offered an alternate view to iconic Los Angeles landmarks.

With *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, Ruscha offers a new experience of the habitual. In a Brechtian gesture of de-familiarising the popular format, Ruscha makes the familiar late 1960s urban streetscape unfamiliar and new. The slight moments of irruption, provided by the temporal gaps and overlaps between the images in horizontal sequences, reveal the process of production, through which the viewer is made aware of the deliberate constructing of the scene. The incidental mode of looking at Sunset Strip, as a series of ordinary views and seemingly repetitive structures, also demonstrates an attachment to place. Through this, Ruscha's work moves beyond the representation of formal structures and sense of detachment, which in such ordinary urban spaces might be felt to articulate a sense of the particular. He also presents an experience where incidental looking may be considered part of the everyday habit involved in driving through the vernacular environment. It is this type of looking which does not necessarily become detached, but can construct a sense of identification of place and attachment to place. In doing so, Ruscha offers a re-experience of this landscape, which can in turn produce new ideas and identities about that place.

Everywhere and nowhere: Andreas Gursky

Similar to Ruscha's work, Andreas Gursky's series of photographs of hotel atriums, *Atlanta* (1996), *Times Square* (1997) and *Shanghai* (2000) (see <http://tiny.cc/mlv9r> and <http://tiny.cc/6llob>), sit ambiguously between highly detailed representations that emphasise the spectacular experience of these spaces and interior views that appear as regularised, homogenous surfaces that are almost prosaic. They also have a similar sense of the non-populated space, where the emphasis is on the order and patterning of the built environment. However, unlike Ruscha's highly specific naming of

the geographic site of Sunset Strip, Gursky's works remain generically titled according to city, or even locales in the city, rather than the actual hotel site. Thus, the sites remain as relatively nameless locations.

It is commonly remarked (Lee, 2003; Syring, 1998) that Gursky's technique displaces a sense of site specificity and resists readings of the particular through his technique. By employing chromogenic processes, high-viewpoints and using a wide format camera so that the details become dense patterns within the frame, Gursky introduces a new perspective on the space that seems to create a detached sense of place through the emphasis on surface (Leffingwell, 2001). By digitally manipulating his images the amount of information seems to increase exponentially in Gursky's work, saturating the surface of the image. In the atrium series, Gursky digitally stitches together two views, allowing for more detail and clarity when the image is enlarged (83). However, rather than heightening the sense of the particular through the emphasis on extreme detail, the large-scale format of the works seems to increase the sense of all-over homogeneity. Gursky states, "[I am] working against the medium of photography that asks for a certain moment in time" (cited in Tomkins, 2001: 69). The generalised titles of the work, named after cities rather than the specific hotel sites, further support the resistance of place, suggesting more generically familiar rather than specific geographic sites. The hotel atriums then easily fit within the aesthetic of homogeneity that defines Lippard's sense of "placelessness".

Like Augé's identification of the proliferation of the non-place in supermodernity, there have been a number of scholars who discuss the idea of the "placeless" spaces of contemporary consumer society and identify these as shallow and banal (Harvey, 1990; Jameson, 1991). These places are often sites designed for consumption; sites that Jameson identifies as the homogenising placelessness of late capitalism. Gursky's subject matter and his treatment of it could thus be understood to articulate the effects and processes of global capitalism, as well as the practices of mass consumption that rely on visual spectacle (Crombie, 2008). This sense is further enhanced through the way the bird's eye view of the image creates a sense that all the micro-action is being laid out as a fascinating spectacle for consumption.

Gursky's photographs could, in fact, be yet more objects to consume in the restless devouring of the products produced, albeit fascinatingly, by our capitalist world. What differs, however, is that in this visual exchange Gursky uses scale, detail and the pleasure of the spectacle to slow down the process of 'consumption', inviting us to stop and reconsider the terms by which we approach his art and, perhaps, life itself (303).

Similar to Ruscha's rearticulating of the experience of the street through irruptions to the sequence of images, making static the motion of the car, and then recreating the journey through the long foldout dimensions of the book, Gursky "slows down" the process of consumption, of looking at the spectacle. This is achieved through the large-scale format of the images, where the point of view continually shifts between the macro bird's eye view and the micro-scale of detail.

For the international traveller hotels are often defined by their generic banality. These are Augé's non-places of transit, an example of the mobility of contemporary globalism. One of the features of the non-place according to Augé is how the experience of non-places, particularly the spaces of transit, tends to emphasise anonymity because the experience of them is one characterised by solitude and similitude (Augé, 1995: 103). A similar feature has also been identified in Gursky's works: "beneath the seductive spectacle of his almost hypnotically detailed and monumentally scaled works, there is ... an unsettling feeling. It could be the impression of being perpetually at a remove; the emphasis is on the mass rather than the individual ..." (Crombie, 2008: 297). These are anonymous places, but marked by a shared identity by those that inhabit them: "Alone, but one of many" (Augé, 1995: 101). Non-places can also be highly familiar and comforting rather than alienating: "A paradox of non-place: a foreigner lost in a country he does not know (a 'passing stranger') can feel at home there only in the anonymity of ... hotel chains" (106). In this way, these spaces of transit can be critical for individuals constructing and playing with their identity

(Augé, 1995: 103-4). For Augé, however, there is still a sense of detached or anonymous interaction about non-places because a large percentage of interactions between people in these places are mediated by screens, signs and texts (94). Yet, even these screen spaces can be conduits for attachment. It is through use, experience and imagining that spaces, even ordinary, banal or transitory ones, can acquire a symbolism and history and sense of attachment (Merriman, 2004: 147). Even boredom and familiarity can be bound up in the identification with place and so they acquire complex histories (153). Non-places can, therefore, be important sites for creating attachment and identification.

Gursky's work seems to move between an apparent indifference and detachment to place, reinforced by the non-descript titles, and a microscopic treatment of visualising the site that creates an iconicity that intensifies its site-specificity. The large-scale of Gursky's photographs, with their overload of intricately detailed information, continually move between points of realism and points of hyperrealism—never entirely remaining fixed in either position. The process of digitally enhancing the work, the intense detail, the large-format compositions and the high-viewpoint make them appear as something more than just images recording a site. Using digital technology Gursky can remove distracting details. His intention is to enhance the sense of order and structure of the overall composition. This creates a sense of the "hyperreal" about the spaces. These are not the spaces as they might be experienced in situ. Yet these spaces have an air of familiarity about them and they are photographs of real places: interiorscapes of the hotel rendered with the actuality of crisp detail. The microcosmic detail in Gursky's work creates a sense of connection of specificity about the place, rather than dislocation. It relocates the work out of banality, surface consumption and placelessness, which the macro scale of the images tends to create, and allows for new connections and identifications to be established.

The approach to technique and presentation of place is what highlights the differences between Gursky and Ruscha, and, in particular, how they can be usefully understood in relation to Augé's ideas about place. Ruscha's works are highly planned and yet the emphasis is on ordinary spaces, and arguably, emphasising that ordinary-ness through the regularised and detached format of presentation. That is, Ruscha presents the street as it was experienced, and in doing so could be said to be revelling in its everyday qualities and that of driving. This sense of detached view and presentation, and the emphasis on the banal in the urban environment, appears to anticipate what Augé examines almost thirty-years later in defining non-place. Yet, Ruscha's works are also highly site-specific and thus this sense of non-place is not really sustained.

Ruscha's work also presents a way of a way of experiencing and knowing the city that usefully demonstrates Lefebvre's emphasis on lived experience as defining "representational space". The sense of lived experience, which is performed through driving, is then able to assist with identification with the street space. Following Leach's ideas on attachment, it is through Ruscha's imaging of the streetscape and structuring of the book that a sense of mobility and time is enacted, creating a sense of attachment to this otherwise detached representation.

In contrast to Ruscha, Gursky's subject matter seems to be more paradigmatic of Augé's descriptions of the non-places of supermodernity. His work spectacularises the seemingly perfect material surfaces, which can be found in contemporary urban spaces. Yet, his digital re-treatment of these images and in his compositional framing of the spaces photographed, which emphasises the repetitive rhythm of the architectural structures, seems to lift them beyond a documenting of physical environment and into a new space of representation. In doing so, he offers a transformed experience of these sites and recreates them as iconic spaces. In a sense he is drawing attention to the aesthetics of these non-places and bringing them into focus. He is in effect creating a place from the non-place, but like Ruscha his work does not safely stay in either of these spaces but continually changes.

The photographs of Ruscha and Gursky present a way of experiencing and knowing the city that offers a way to understand the interaction between place and non-place. The identity of these

spaces represented in the work of Ruscha and Gursky, streetscapes and hotels are often easily categorised as unimportant or un-iconic, in that they are considered placeless spaces, or non-spaces, that are part of the general experience of contemporary urban mobility. Ruscha and Gursky also give lived experience visibility, creating a locus of identification for place through the act of recording, naming and representing these places. The photographs construct representational images of cities but they also enact experiences of city spaces. This type of performativity is not just about physical activity, such as driving along a street; it also concerns modes of perceptions. The gaze can be a site where the identification with place is enacted (Leach, 2005: 307). Yet in ordering this experience, making the built structures into visual spectacles, they are also transforming them: Ruscha through the physical format of the book and Gursky through digital enhancement. While it can be argued that in aestheticising the built environment in this way they are merely creating another image to consumer, their work also has the potential to transform how those spaces are experienced or visually engaged. They have the potential to create new ways of knowing these spaces. The photographic image of place can frame how we experience urban space and not only the specific sites that these images present.

Their works also offer a way to re-consider how we know and represent the contemporary city in an era characterised by both mobility and place. Without erasing either placelessness or place, their images shift in and out of a located focus. Ultimately, while they are site specific, they oscillate in and out of being non-places. As such, the works simultaneously articulate the actual and the anywhere.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the generosity of Ed Ruscha, courtesy of Gagosian Gallery, New York, for giving permission to reproduce images of his work in this paper, and the assistance of James McKee.

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