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MoCP

Museum of
Contemporary Photography

COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO
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Sarah Pickering: Incident Control
April 9 – June 20, 2010



Geissler/Sann: the real estate
April 9 – May 23, 2010

Chicago — The Museum of Contemporary Photography (MoCP) is pleased to announce two exhibitions opening in April 2010: *Sarah Pickering: Incident Control* and *Geissler/Sann: the real estate*.

Incident Control is a monographic exhibition featuring the work of British artist **Sarah Pickering**. While appearing to exist between reality and illusion, Pickering's images are actually documents of simulation. The exhibition will present photographs from four recent series of Pickering's work, spanning from 2002 to the present: *Explosions*, *Fire Scene*, *Incident*, and *Public Order*.

"Sarah Pickering's photographs jar our sense of security and illuminate the ways in which we cope with traumatic events that are beyond our control," says MoCP curator Karen Irvine. "Her pictures depict environments and events crafted for the purpose of training policemen, firemen, and soldiers for calamities such as terrorism, civil unrest, fire, and war. By exposing the absurdity and controlled nature of these environments, Pickering's images reveal our predilection to deflect

fear by trying to anticipate and plan for it—and our tendency to process it by turning it into narrative."

The photographic series **the real estate** (2008/2009), by Chicago-based artists **Beate Geissler and Oliver Sann**, depicts homes in foreclosure, evoking the absence and loss of former homeowners with unembellished portraits of empty living space. Oliver Sann and Beate Geissler moved to Chicago from Germany in 2008 just as the economic downturn hit and home foreclosures became widespread across the economic spectrum. Sann and Geissler document homes in Chicago, usually after they have been vacated, in a straightforward manner, capturing both the stark emptiness and the traces of human occupation, from structural architecture to decorating choices. The homes they photograph range from those worth a few thousand dollars to 3.5 million-dollar mansions. Sann and Geissler install *the real estate* as a long row of images that are divided by frames, but connected by compositional elements defined by the architecture of the spaces depicted. In this way they invite the viewer to connect distinct spaces and different types of homes in a gesture that reflects the far-reaching effects of the current economic crisis.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Sarah Pickering (b. 1972) is a London based, British photographer who graduated from the Royal College of Art with a MA in Photography in 2005. She has been the recipient of several awards including the Photographers Gallery Graduate Award and a Jerwood Award. Pickering has exhibited internationally and in the UK where her work was part of *How We Are: Photographing Britain*, at Tate Britain. Her photographs are featured in the Phaidon anthology on contemporary photography *Vitamin Ph*. Pickering is a recently appointed Teaching Fellow at the Slade School of Art, London. Gallery representation is with Meessen de Clercq, Brussels. Her monograph *Sarah Pickering: Explosions, Fires, and Public Order* was published by Aperture and the MoCP in 2010.

Beate Geissler (b 1970) and Oliver Sann (b 1968) are a Chicago-based collaborative artist team. Geissler graduated with an MFA from Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung, Karlsruhe, Germany, in 2000, and Sann graduated with an MFA from Academy for Media Arts, Cologne, Germany, in 2000. Their work has been included in numerous group exhibitions in Europe and the United States, including *Several Silences* at the Renaissance Society in 2009; and the solo exhibition *the real estate* at Gallery Ftc in Berlin. Geissler is an Assistant Professor of Photography at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Their monograph *Personal Kill* will be published by Verlag für Moderne Kunst Nürnberg in 2010.

MoCP SPONSORS

The exhibitions, presentations, and related programs of the MoCP are sponsored in part by After School Matters; the Terra Foundation for American Art; the Lannan Foundation; the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; the National Endowment for the Arts; the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Arts; the Mayer and Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; The Kristyna M. Driehaus Foundation; U.S. Bank; American Airlines, the official airline of the MoCP; and our members.

Support for the exhibition and publication *Sarah Pickering: Incident Control* is provided by The Lannan Foundation and the British Council. Support for the exhibition *Geissler/Sann: the real estate* is provided by the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Chicago.

ABOUT MOCP

The Museum of Contemporary Photography (MoCP), a resident organization of Columbia College Chicago, is the only museum in the Midwest with an exclusive commitment to the medium of photography. By presenting projects and exhibitions that embrace a wide range of contemporary aesthetics and technologies, the MoCP strives to communicate the value and significance of photographic images as expressions of human thought, imagination, and creativity.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Karen Irvine is the curator of the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago. She has organized numerous exhibitions including: *Audible Imagery: Sound and Photography*; *Anthony Goicolea*; *Tracey Baran*; *Scott Fortino*; *Shirana Shahbazi: Goftare Nik/Good Words*; *Jason Salavon*; *Jin Lee*; *Paul Shambroom: Evidence of Democracy*; *Alec Soth: Sleeping by the Mississippi*; *The Furtive Gaze*; and *Camera/Action: Performance and Photography*, among others. She is a part-time instructor of photography at Columbia College Chicago. She received her MFA in photography from FAMU, Prague and her MA in art history from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

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IMAGES:

Sarah Pickering, *Makeshift Cooking*, 2007, courtesy of the artist and Meessen de Clercq, Brussels
Geissler/Sann, *Untitled*, from *the real estate*, 2008-2009, courtesy of the artists and Gallery Ftc, Berlin