

March 2010  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



# MoCP

Museum of  
Contemporary Photography

COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO  
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## ***Public Works***

April 29 - July 17, 2011

### **Featuring the work of:**

Berenice Abbott  
Harold Allen  
Stephen Alvarez  
Alejandro Cartagena  
Bruce Davidson  
Center for Land Use  
Interpretation  
Chen Qiulin  
Barbara Ciurej and  
Lindsay Lochman  
Tim Davis  
Mitch Epstein  
Terry Evans  
Walker Evans  
Robert Frank  
Lee Friedlander  
Ron Gordon  
Eirik Johnson  
Kenneth Josephson  
Jay King

David Avison  
Tom Bamberger  
Hubert Blanz  
Viktor Kolář  
Dorothea Lange  
Russell Lee  
Gina LeVay  
O. Winston Link  
Armin Linke  
Vera Lutter  
Danny Lyon  
Rhondal McKinney  
David Maisel  
Tyagan Miller  
Richard Misrach  
Martin Parr  
John Pfahl  
David Plowden  
Merle Porter  
James Rotz

Andrew Borowiec  
Frank Breuer  
Mary Ellen Carroll  
Victoria Sambubaris  
Daniel Shea  
Toshiro Shibata  
Stephen Shore  
Mark Slankard  
Michael A. Smith  
Jamey Stillings  
Stan Strebicki  
Bob Thall  
Sze Tsung Leong  
Catherine Wagner  
Andy Warhol  
Jay Wolke  
Thomas Weinberger  
Xu Xixian and Xu Jianrong

**Chicago – The Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College Chicago is proud to present the group exhibition *Public Works*, which examines geographically and chronologically diverse examples of the built infrastructure captured through the lenses of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary artists. This exhibition includes photographs and videos**

by over 50 international artists from the Museum of Contemporary Photography's permanent collection and Midwest Photographers Project along with loans from other institutions and private collections.

Robust infrastructure has become a defining characteristic of modern civilizations. It enables the economic productivity that drives prosperity and confers the public safety that citizens of the developed world have come to expect. Indeed, a state's (or regime's) legitimacy and competence are often measured in large part by the sophistication of its infrastructure, as the manifestation of a government's efficacy. Modern infrastructure shares with photography a peculiar history, as the medium is particularly well suited to documenting the grandeur of large public works.

Martin Parr's *Lanfweilige Postkarten* (Boring Postcards) collection and Merle Porter's 1950s postcards of the Dwight D. Eisenhower interstate highway system draw our attention to how public infrastructure became tourist spectacle in the postwar era. Frank Breuer's photographs of tangled and antiquated, but still essential, urban power lines in US cities—along with Tyagan Miller's astute observations of trees that have been pruned or dramatically truncated to avoid the telephone and power lines—stand in striking contrast to prevailing assumptions about this country's technological sophistication. Video and performance artist Chen Qiulin makes poetic films of the chaotic dismantling of cities for the construction of the Three Gorges Dam and of the effects of modernization on the multiple generations living in the Sichuan province of southwestern China. Armin Linke has photographed major infrastructure projects all over the world, including the workers on a prayer break at the Ghazi Barotha hydroelectric plant in Hattian, Pakistan. Tim Davis photographs the desks of Washington's political insiders, who are often the decision-makers for public-funded infrastructure projects. The Center for Land Use Interpretation, a research organization based in Culver City, California, has filmed the Houston Petrochemical Corridor, whose massive petroleum refineries and shipping yards inspire contemplation. And adventurous artists expose the public to hidden infrastructure systems that most people take for granted, as Gina LeVay goes 800 feet below Manhattan to document Sandhogs—the miners tunneling bedrock to create the 60-mile-long city water tunnel that will provide fresh water to New Yorkers. Generally regarded as profoundly boring, infrastructure, we see through this work, has complex political, economic, and social dimensions.

These examples are just a few of the artworks on view in *Public Works*. Visit the MoCP website at [mocp.org](http://mocp.org) for expanded information as well as more information about events produced in conjunction with this exhibition.

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**OPENING RECEPTION**

**Friday, April 29, 2011**

5-7 pm

**CURATOR'S TOUR**

**Natasha Egan**

**Wednesday, May 4, 2011**

12:30 pm

@ MoCP

**LECTURE**

**Matthew Coolidge, Center for Land Use Interpretation**

**Thursday, May 26, 2011**

6 pm

@ MoCP

Presented in cooperation with the Graham Foundation, Matthew Coolidge, founder and director of the Center for Land Use Interpretation, Culver City, CA, will discuss innovative projects impacting the American landscape and built environment, followed by questions from Sarah Herda, director of the Graham Foundation.

## RECEPTION AND DISCUSSION

**Bruce Mau and Armin Linke**

**Tuesday, June 7, 2011**

5:30 pm: reception | 6:15 pm: program

@ MoCP

Presented in cooperation with The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, the MoCP will host a reception and welcome Bruce Mau,

Chief Creative Officer of Bruce Mau Design, and exhibiting artist Armin Linke for a conversation about how city designs of the future can innovatively incorporate or replace existing infrastructure. For more information and to register, please visit [thechicagocouncil.org](http://thechicagocouncil.org). The cost is \$10 for both members and non-members.

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## 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; American Airlines, the official airline of the MoCP; and our members.

The exhibition *Public Works* is supported by a grant from the David C. and Sarajeon Ruttenberg Arts Foundation.

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## 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.

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## IMAGE:

Unknown Artist, GERMANY. *Grenzuebersichtspunkt Parkplatz "Schwarzes Moor" (Hochrhon). Blick zum Erdbunker und Beobachtungsturm (DDR). Number 145*, © Martin Parr collection / Magnum Photos