

weighty material was wonderful to see and one of the many rewards of this show. —**Barbara Pollack**

## 'The Figure in the Landscape'

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Every so often, it is refreshing to see artwork not in a white-cube gallery but in a homier setting like this apartment, where many delights and surprises could be found. The show never lived up to its promise of "100 years of photography," as it was subtitled, but it did include a 1912 Eugène Atget print. Many of the works dated from the past decade. And, as for the exhibition's title, "The Figure in the Landscape," only a few of the varied images depicted people in a natural environment. But that aside, there was much to enjoy.

One photographer who deserves to be better known is Rebecca Soderholm, who contributed three pictures that thoroughly fulfilled the premise of the exhibition. In *Mary Beth and Asa, Keene Valley, NY* (2005), a mother struggles to put shoes on a naked boy wiggling awkwardly in her arms in a suburban backyard. Laura Heyman captures a woman in a pink dress walking through high grass in *Untitled (from "The Photographer's Wife" series)*, 2006. And British photographer Lucy Levene introduced a more urban interpretation of landscape with her 2009 "L.A. Stories" series, including one mysterious photograph of two men waiting outside a theater with a stack of crates marked "imported."

The best works, however, were those offering a new interpretation of the figure or the landscape. For example, Benjamin Faga, based in London, traveled to Andore, India, to shoot his portrait series, "On the Way to Chroma Green" (2011), showing each villager in front of a homemade green screen in an improvised outdoor photo studio. Best was Barcelona photographer Anna Ferrer's *Untitled* (2003–4), an image of an ancient church dwarfed by the gigantic faces of cosmetic models on a towering billboard advertising L'Oréal.

These two pictures offered a postmodern take on the figure as a subject of photography and brought this show into the 21st century. —**Barbara Pollack**

### UP NOW

## 'Peripheral Visions'

**Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery at Hunter College  
Through April 28**

Guidebooks and travel magazines are filled with photographs of Italy's grand Roman ruins and picturesque countryside. But the images of Italy in this incisive exhibition, subtitled "Italian Photography in Context, 1950s–Present," are sites—housing projects, suburban sprawl, highway exits—off the tourist track. Curated by Hunter College art-history professor Maria Antonella Pelizzari, the show gathers together major figures in Italian photography and examines how they looked at their homeland from the margins, discovering a postwar, postmodern territory, described here as "the periphery."

There are grand

views of areas at the edge of cities, as in Gabriele Basilico's ominous *Napoli* (2004), a vast industrial landscape with



Gabriele Basilico, *Napoli*, 2004, gelatin silver print, 46 1/2" x 60 1/2".  
Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery at Hunter College.

ugly housing blocks in the foreground and Mount Vesuvius nearly clouded by smog on the horizon. Patterns of satellite disks punctuate the rooftops in *Milan* (2004) by Vincenzo Castella, while parked cars and buses, abandoned in deep grass by a highway, spread from one photograph to the next in Walter Niedermayr's series "Artefakte 8" (1999).

"Peripheral Visions" also refers to a way of looking at the world, shifting focus from the obvious and monumental to nooks and crannies that are rarely photographed. The pioneer of this approach was Luigi Ghirri, a leading conceptual artist, who homed in on surrealistic moments that usually go unnoticed, as in *Modena* (1976), where a carnival game booth is topped by a painted billboard of a skyline, the latter looking more real than the former. Working in a more contemporary vein, Marina Ballo Charmet offers 33 images of street-corner curbs shown in a video loop, in *Con la coda dell'ocula* (With The Corner of the Eye, 1993–94).

Clips from movies by Pasolini, Fellini, and Antonioni, among others, accompany the show and demonstrate just how widely the notion of marginal landscape has pervaded contemporary Italian culture. Overall, this exhibition takes a complex approach to a new way of mapping the country. Its implications are at once social and political, and its images marked by moments of beauty.

—**Barbara Pollack**



Lucy Levene, *Untitled (from the "L.A. Stories" series)*, 2009, C-print, 20" x 24". 511.