

T H E L A P I S P R E S S

THE LA BREA MATRIX is a co-published project by The Lapis Press (Culver City, CA) and Schaden.com (Köln, Germany).

This multi-faceted and ambitious project invited six emerging German photographers to Los Angeles to investigate the influence of Stephen Shore and New American Color Photography from the 1970s. The cornerstone of the project is Stephen Shore's now iconic photograph "La Brea Avenue and Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, June 21, 1975", this photograph, is seen as not just a literal intersection but as a metaphoric intersection of the photographic dialog between America and Germany.

The genesis of this dialog dates to 1976 when Bernd and Hilla Becher acquired a print of the image from Shore. When the Bechers returned to Germany, they began showing the photograph to their students at the Düsseldorf Kunstakademie. For years the Bechers promoted Shore's work within the Kunstakademie but to their early students (Höfer, Hütte and Struth) the La Brea image was the first introduction to New American Color Photography. The La Brea image was also shown at Documenta 6 in Kassel, Germany in 1977 (again with the help of Bernd Becher) and was included in Sally Eauclaire's watershed publication *The New Color Photography* in 1981. In 1979, Thomas Struth following his studies with the Bechers, released a series of black and white photographs taken in America, the project was called "Unconscious Places", an obvious nod to Shore's catalog "Uncommon Places" (which includes the La Brea image).

The photographers who were chosen for THE LA BREA MATRIX had each reflected on New American Color Photography with insightful and differing approaches in their work made prior to this project.

The six photographers are:

- JENS LIEBCHEN (Berlin, born in 1970)
- MAX REGENBERG (Köln, born in 1951)
- OLIVER SIEBER (Düsseldorf, born in 1966)
- OLAF UNVERZART (München, born in 1972)
- ROBERT VOIT (München, born in 1969)
- JANKO WOLTERSMANN (Hanover, born in 1967)

Between 2010 and 2011, two portfolios have been released under the moniker THE LA BREA MATRIX.

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The first portfolio consists of photographs taken in Los Angeles (2009 – 2010) by the six photographers during their respective residencies:

- Liebchen looked at Los Angeles with an anthropologist's eye, wanting to see the city as Angelinos do. He chose to take improvised portraits and landscapes from the vantage point of a moving or stationary car as the focus of his project.
- Regenberg found Los Angeles the ideal location to continue working on his continuously evolving project of documenting signage and billboards in public spaces. An outsider, Regenberg originally began working on the project in the late 1970s using large format color film, only to learn after spying a Joel Meyerowitz catalog in the window of the Walter König Bookshop in Köln that he was not alone with his interests in color urban landscape photography.
- Sieber chose to bring his ongoing project "The Imaginary Club" continuing his almost Sander-like documentary photographs of young music fans. In Los Angeles he immersed himself in LA's death metal, psychobilly and rockabilly scene. The project also includes "establishing shots", taken at the locations where he met his subjects.
- Unverzart's photographs seem like mysterious fragments of a larger puzzle. Cool and sophisticated, the images are a bit out-of-time. Incredibly intimate but always accessible, his Los Angeles work seamlessly fits into this oeuvre.
- Voit, well known for his photographs of fake-tree cell phone towers, wanted to explore a new subject in Los Angeles. Continuing his fascination with concealment, he turned his interest to the oil production in Los Angeles County. Using publicly accessible Oil, Gas & Geothermal maps, he tirelessly drove all over the county to take his often-humorous photographs.
- Woltersmann, who is obsessed with Los Angeles, zealously walked through the city and (with incredible compositional precision) took numerous Polaroids. Charming with their mischievous wit, there seems to be a hidden treasure waiting to be discovered within each image.

The second portfolio is a special printing of "La Brea Avenue and Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, June 21, 1975" and "La Brea Avenue and Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, June 22, 1975" by Stephen Shore; the portfolio also includes a recent interview conducted by Dr. Christoph Schaden with Stephen Shore discussing the history and reason why he took the La Brea image and why he felt compelled to return to the same intersection the following day to take a second photograph.

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What follows is the catalog information for the two portfolios:

**JENS LIEBCHEN, MAX REGENBERG, OLIVER SIEBER, OLAF UNVERZART, ROBERT VOIT,
JANKO WOLTERS MANN**

THE LA BREA MATRIX: Six German Photographers and a New Color Icon by Stephen Shore

30 Pigment prints in 6 handmade portfolios with slipcase (Epson UltraChrome K3 ink)

Each print is 11 x 14 inches / 28 x 35.5 cm

Published by Schaden.com and The Lapis Press, 2010

Lapis catalog number: LBM10-02

Edition of 30

STEPHEN SHORE

THE LA BREA MATRIX: Stephen Shore at Beverly and La Brea

Beverly Boulevard and La Brea Avenue, Los Angeles, California, June 21, 1975

Beverly Boulevard and La Brea Avenue, Los Angeles, California, June 22, 1975

2 Pigment prints on Harman Gloss Baryta 320 gsm paper in a handmade portfolio (Epson UltraChrome K3 ink)

Each print is 11 x 14 inches / 28 x 35.5 cm

Published by Schaden.com and The Lapis Press, 2011

Lapis catalog number - LBM11-03

Edition of 30