



**C.A.P.**

China Art Projects  
中国艺术项目

**UNSEEN**

Kate Anderson  
凯特·安德森



I, Venice



II, Venice



III, Venice



IV, Venice



V, Venice



VI, Venice



VII, Venice



VIII, Venice



IX, Venice



X, Venice

## Kate Anderson – in search of the unseen

For some time now Australian artist Kate Anderson has been photographing street scenes in locations around the globe. Her latest body of work, presented in the exhibition 'Unseen' is an exploration of two ancient centres, Beijing and Venice. In the arena of contemporary visual culture these capitals of East and West possess, in their own inimitable fashion, a steadfast mystique. One is host to the greatest of art biennales, the other is home to a voracious art scene. Each has a complex history and each are wrestling with unparalleled social and physical changes. It is here, at these epicentres of visual spectacle that Anderson has gone in search of the unseen.

Along the Venetian avenues her observations of weathered and rusting balustrades bring into play a Ruskinian sense of the sublime. Ruskin, whose 'Stones of Venice' ushered in a romantic vision of culture fused with nature, has cast a shadow felt even today. But where Ruskin was a man of western sentiment, Anderson is as much at home in Venice as a bustling Asian metropolis. Immediately however, when we examine her Beijing scenes, some differences spring to mind. Where Venice is all elegant decay, these Chinese streets speak of steadfast practicality, of making do and of beauty in the most unlikely of places. Flowers bloom on dilapidated sills, a tea ceremony is casually enacted, life goes on amidst the general *mêlée*.

At first glance – East/West, China/Venice - the disparities are obvious. Philosophically however, each has their preoccupations with the way of nature as a path to spiritual fulfilment: Romanticism's capitulation to its splendour, Taoism's abandoning path of non-action. These are separate traditions but undeniably their similarities are compelling; temptingly we might see a common point of intent.

For Anderson however, her investigations have already moved on, looking now to her home town of Sydney, where a new series titled 'Insight' has taken shape. Focusing still on run down parts of the city, forms gleaned from the landscape are here composed in an increasingly abstracted and reductive manner. Calligraphic graffiti, made with spray paint and spirit markers, is shown as if midway between written and natural forms. As many of the marks are haphazardly scrawled across the windows of buses and public places, a sense of layering is inventively brought into play. Through manipulating the camera's depth of field settings, the marks, in a bid towards a new spaciousness, float at a distance from the existing landscape. Contrasting markedly with the time honoured surfaces of Venice and Beijing, here the process seems a recent occurrence. 'Insight' therefore, might be seen as insight into the processes by which our urban environments acquire their distinctive characteristics or simply that which is in our field of vision. It is however the images of Kate Anderson that beggar a considered response and it is through these that the subtle actions of nature and the means through which our cultures take issue with its entropic force, that is brought here to light.

Damian Smith, November 2009