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新视觉

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秋冬关键风格预览

最美和最隐秘的西西里

iPhone创意游乐园

Maison Martin Margiela 纪念日明信片

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THE INVISIBLE PARIS

看不见的巴黎

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世界正一点点变得透明起来。网络，这个让人又爱又恨的玩意儿，不断拉伸着人与人之间的物理距离。与此同时，它还提供了一个又一个近距离窥看陌生人的通道和权利，我们的好奇心获得了空前的满足。从2008年开始，在香港生活了16年的摄影师Michael Wolf将他的注意力从香港密密匝匝的建筑上暂时撤离，他来到了巴黎。与日新月异的亚洲城市不同，这座仿佛自19世纪以来就已停止生长的博物馆之城让人不由得心生厌倦，当代生活的痕迹被其沉重的历史积淀所遮盖，不论是建筑还是摄影都是“标志性”的，这无疑成为了艺术家创作的一个障碍。你如何能够在一座每个角落、每间咖啡馆的露台甚至是大门都已经被Eugene Atget、Henri Cartier-Bresson、Robert Doisneau、Willy Ronis等摄影泰斗们拍摄过的城市里，拍出一张与众不同的照片呢？“我想要寻找一个新的方式去描绘巴黎。”Wolf说。就这样，谷歌街景系列应运而生。他从巴黎出发，捕捉城市里幽默、美丽、亲密甚至是荒谬的瞬间，同时也对于公共隐私权问题提出质疑。他以从谷歌庞大的图像数据库中筛选和剪切，透过街景车杂乱无章且机械一般的眼睛，令一个你不曾看见的巴黎逐渐显影，同时也创造出了属于当代的“决定性瞬间”。





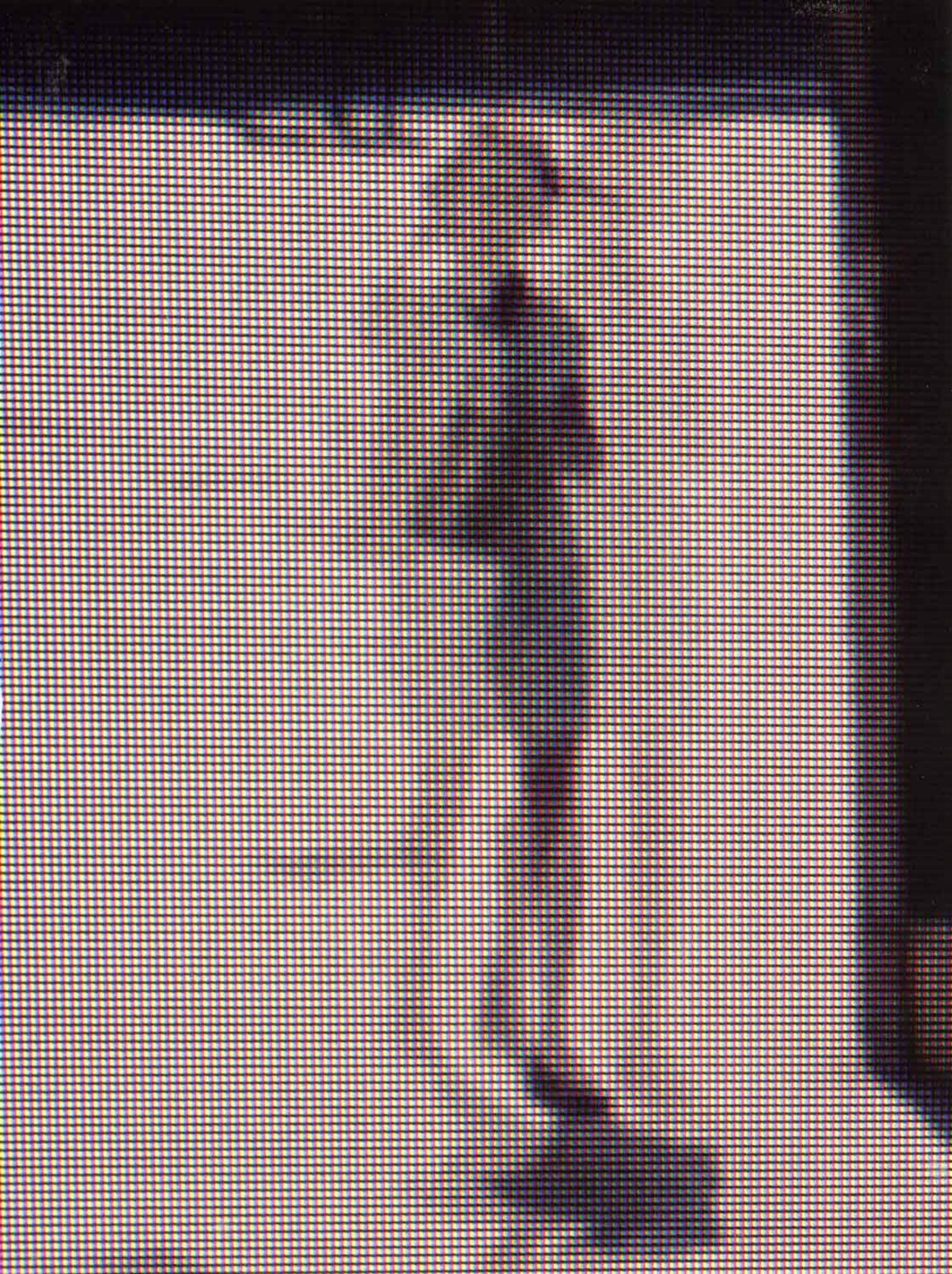














PHOTO:THE INVISIBLE PARIS

Planning_Peng&Chen Editor_Pinko Image_Michael wolf Translate_Hu Wei

1. How does it occur to you to use Google street view in your art creation? You used to create serious subject matter, how does this change happened?

The reason that I began to use Google street view is because my wife moved to Paris, so I come to Paris quite often. But the problem is I don't like Paris, because it's a very boring city. Asia is very vibrant and constantly changing. But Paris an old city and hasn't changed in over a century.

In Paris I don't know what to do. Of course you can go to museums but it's not exciting, not "re nao" to many people. So I decided to look on Google, and explore the city on my screen. I found the idea intriguing. Suddenly I became interested in Paris again but not through the reality, but through looking at it on my screen, a totally new way of looking at Paris. It's two dimensional; it has a totally different ascetic quality, and it's new. If you do art, always try to discover new ways to see. If you copy what other people do, it gets boring, and it's not original. Millions of people have photographed Paris. Then when I discovered Google street view, I discovered a new way of photographing Paris. That was the background.

2. Your former works, for example Hong Kong 100x100 seems a little bit serious, but this time Google street view is more relaxed, how this change happed?

It's not really more relaxed. Of course some pictures in street views are amusing even funny, but street view project is very serious because it talks a lot about art. I'm interpreting other's photos. I'm making something new out of something which is already finished and re-interpreting it. It's a statement about art. When I photograph Google street view, I'm looking to expose these privacy issues. For instance, Google always says that you can never recognize a face, because we blur the face. But many faces are not blurred. The software may blur 95%, but 5% of the people can be seen. I can see people kissing, I can see prostitutes. I can see many things which I think should be private but are not. So Google is very controversial in today's society because it's everywhere.

3. What's the feeling of capturing the street scenes of Paris when you are in Hong Kong?

I photograph Paris when I'm in HK, but I also photograph Paris when I'm in Shanghai. But the more interesting thing is when I'm in Paris; I'm looking also at Paris but on my monitor. Sometimes I'm looking at it for nine hours a day in a dark room with a camera on a tripod, and I'm going through the city picture by picture. Outside it's real world. When I finish work at five o'clock, it's a beautiful day. Sunny, warm and dry. When I go outside I feel like a deep-sea diver coming up from underneath the ocean and being able to breathe the air. It's a wonderful feeling to see reality. Because in the end, life on monitor is very limited and two-dimensional. Then I realize how horrible this video game culture. It's actually a poor way of living life. It can never replace reality.

4. You've mentioned the beauty of reality; do you like loitering in the streets and taking some pictures in daily life?

Most places where I go, I always photograph many things, esp. in HK, because it's one of my major topics. I have many projects in HK so I can always be working. But in Paris I don't see many things that I would like to photograph.

5. How long does it take you to creat Google street view?

In 2008 I began with Paris. For 18 months or so. 100 hours in front of the computer.

6. How much time you spend online per day?

About three hours. Of course when i do Google street view I'm online nine hours a day. If I'm not doing this, then three hours online is a lot for me. I read the New York Times

every morning, I read The Wall Street Journal. There may be ten photography blogs and three or four art blogs which i look at. So for me I touch base with many places just to inform myself. I usually get up at six and i'm online till seven thirty looking at these, and reading newspapers, doing things like that. Then in the evening after my family goes to bed I'll be online for another hour and a half or two. It's mainly reading things. Internet is such a wonderful tool for gathering information.

7. What's the moment you think you have to capture?

It's many different things which I'm looking for. You can treat street view like reality. I can just look for fashion, or architecture, or interesting street scenes. I like finding serious moments, I like looking for shadows, or I like to look at people disappearing behind trees, or I like looking at women's nice shoes. There are many different things one can look for and it changes with me.

8. Have you ever met the "street view cars" in the street?

Once I was in Berlin a few months ago in an evening, and there was a google car parked across the street. That was the only time i've ever seen it.

It would be great to be part of the google street view then i photography myself. I'm looking at google street view and suddenly i see myself walking down the street. I think you can recognize yourself. It'll be scary. "That's me, look at me!"

9. What's the difference between your creation and the real street photography?

The whole element of time is missing, because the stream is two dimensional. People have talked about my google work saying it's a new type of street photography. It's very contemporary, it's interpreting Google, and it's art you know, and I'm an artist. So what i do is art in picture. When you see them, they are very beautiful and sensual. All the textures in images. I think everything is valid in art, as long as it's good.

10. You did a large exhibition in the streets of Amsterdam 2010, and the large size photos are placed in the street, how does this idea occur to you? What's the reaction of the pedestrians?

Director of Foam magazine has an idea that brings the street view images back to the street. And i think it's a wonderful idea. The reaction was incredible. The posters were extremely big, much bigger than life size. People at first didn't know what's going on, but looking at the picture you suddenly realize they are from the screen. Because I have the arrow fromt the mouse there. It was a wonderful idea and it worked very well.

11. When you capture in the streets, what you record is the present moment occurrence, and you are in it, however, when you goole street view, for some technical reasons, you will find what you see is not what happens now, it may be a few months ago, or even a year ago, and you have a considerable distance to observe. What do you think about the difference of the two ?

It's not an issue for me. I find what's more interesting is when I'm on street view, I think about the magnificence of Google has done. Google is very controversial but I think the idea of documenting every major or smaller city is very comprehensive and valuable. Imagine going back 100 years and looking at these pictures how much information you can get: how people dress, how architecture looks, how the cars look, what life was like, etc. If you think how important for us the photos of old China, or the documentation of America in the 1930s by Walker Evans, or of Paris 100 years ago, we love these photos, because they show us so much about life at that time. Now 100 years later Google goes, and does a more comprehensive documentation, so I think it's an important idea. For me this one year difference between Google doing it and my doing it is a short time actually. Then I think in 50 years or 100 years, it'll be really strange, because imagine how changes it'll be. Everything will be different. It'll be like going to the museum.

12. Network and information technology more and more impact our lives in-depth, how do you see photography of this era?

I think it's not only photography, I think art is always reflecting the present time. Art is always changing and going forward, because artists are always thinking about what's going on. You'll find many interesting projects using contemporary techniques like Internet. I think art not only photography is always reflecting the development of technical culture and all culture. That's one of the great things about art.

13. What do you think about the privacy issues?

I think every person has the right to know what information is thwarted about us. As to Google street view, it's relatively harmless. But there are for instance many prostitutes you can see. I think there is certain danger involved in what they are doing. You also don't know exactly what they are doing with these pictures.

14. Have you ever encountered any trouble in this project?

I hope not. But I think there is a potential for trouble. Google can say I'm breaking their copyright. If you look closely, you'll see a copyright Google sign on every screenshot. It's an interesting dilemma, because I'm photographing Google pictures without asking for permission, but Google is photographing the world without asking the world permission. They should ask every one on the street or put up a big sign.

15. Can you speak Mandarin or Cantonese? If China also has Google street view service in the future, will you be concerned about the streets of China?

Of course I will! I speak a little Cantonese but in HK every one speaks English so it's difficult to practice. Many of my friends who lived in Shanghai or Beijing speak perfect Putonghua. Sometime I really regret not being able to talk more in greater detail because whenever you have interpreter you lose 50%. But my mind is so full of ideas I think I'm quite happy with my life.