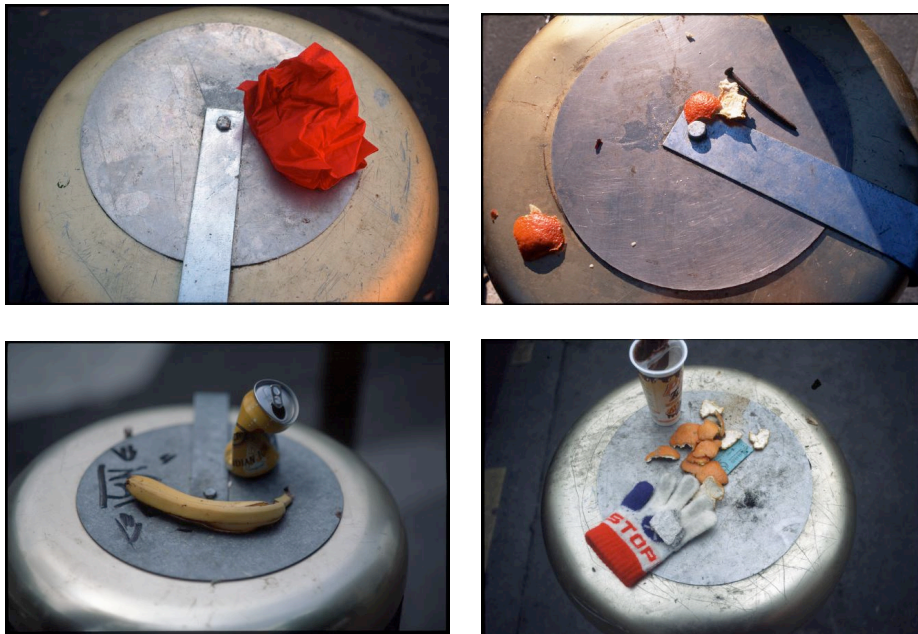


Paris Traces

Photographs by Peter Coles

This body of work in five parts is based on a long-term exploration of anonymous communication between people in the streets of Paris.

Poubelles



Terrorist bombings in Paris in 1995 and 1996 led to all street trashcans (called *poubelles*) being closed off by a metal lid. Although it is common for Parisians to use the gutters for their trash, the more tidy-minded placed their unwanted bits and pieces on these metal lids. This often demanded a certain amount of care and attention. Gradually, and unconsciously, pedestrians were creating installations of metro tickets, tissues, fruit peel and other objects on the *poubelles*. Periodically, these would be removed, and the process would start again. The closed-off trashcans have since been replaced by transparent green plastic bags.

This series contains 80 images.

Shoes



Unlike London, Paris has few charity shops, where people can donate their unwanted clothing and personal effects. In the wealthier districts, Parisians can sell their used, expensive shoes in specialist shops. But, in most of the city, generous Parisians will leave their old shoes on the street, for a passer-by to take - though sometimes with the laces removed. They are usually placed neatly, in a prominent place, and seldom stay there for long. I never rearrange the shoes, and photograph them with whatever camera and lens I happen to have with me at the time. I always get a thrill when I find a new pair, as they are all unique. The shoes themselves speak volumes about the owner, as does the way they are presented.

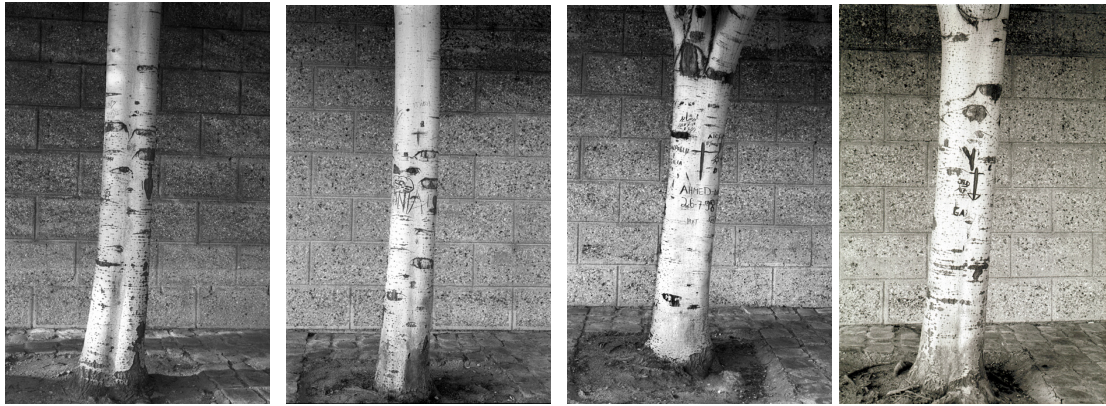
The series currently contains 70 images.

Canivaux



The French word *canivaux* means the gutter. In Paris, every day, street sweepers (wielding green plastic versions of the witch's 'besom' broom) block off the gutters near to drains, using carefully crafted mini dams made of rolled up carpet tied with string. They turn on the water from a hydrant further up the street and let the water sluice all the trash down towards the 'dam'. They then turn off the water and scoop up the rubbish into their carts. I began photographing first the exotic rolled up carpet-dams, then the content of the gutters themselves.

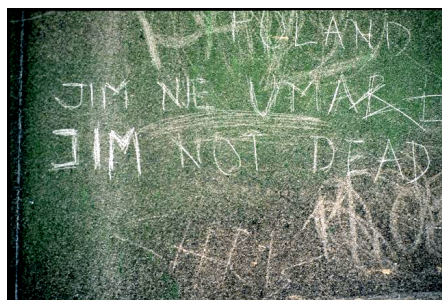
Quai du Louvre



On Saturday 20 May, 2000 on the Quai du Louvre, in Paris, between the Pont du Carrousel and the Pont des Arts on the right bank of the Seine, there were 35 silver birch trees. There should have been 41. The others had been blown down by the hurricane of 26 December, 1999. Most of the trees are decorated with graffiti, etched into the bark by tourists, lovers, people just hanging out. This is a snapshot of the trees and graffiti on one day. Since then, new trees have been planted, while the graffiti has evolved.

This series is presented as a continuous strip of images, in the exact order in which the trees appear to someone walking upstream from the Pont du Carrousel. A maquette presents this series as a 'concertina' book, with postcard-sized images that open out to several metres in length.

jim@père_lachaise.fr



Jim Morrison, the late lead singer with The Doors, died in 1971 and is buried in the famous Père Lachaise cemetery in the 20^e arrondissement of Paris. In the early years after Jim Morrison's death, fans made his tomb a shrine, daubing adjacent tombs with graffiti, while decorating his with flowers, poems, letters, drawings, cigarettes and gifts. Fans used to climb the railings of the cemetery after dark and hang out by the tomb, smoking pot, drinking, and playing guitars. When the authorities realised what was happening, they posted guards and scrubbed off the graffiti. Only the gifts and flowers are now tolerated – and a procession of visitors every day of the week, all year round.

But Jim's grave is hard to find. There is a map, but the uninitiated still get lost. So graffiti has sprung up all over the cemetery, pointing the way. In some places, the graffiti is a veritable eulogy to the late Jim.

This series contains 47 images.

Peter Coles

Biography

After completing a doctorate in psychology from Wolfson College, Oxford, Peter carried out research and teaching at universities in the UK and Switzerland. In 1987 he moved to Paris, working as a design research consultant, journalist and photographer, carrying out many international assignments on science, the environment and development. During this time he completed a major body of photographs of abandoned objects, called *Paris Traces*, which has been exhibited in Paris, New York, London and Rome and has featured in several magazines. He now lives and works in London as a journalist, editor and fine art photographer. He is completing a book on ancient urban trees and socio-geographical change. Since 2007 Peter has been a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Urban and Community Research, Goldsmiths, University of London, where he also teaches on the M.A. in Photography and Urban Cultures, with a special focus on the relationship between built and natural environments. He is a tutor on the International Urban Photography Summer School and one of the original members of the Urban Photographers Association.

Selected photography exhibitions

Solo exhibitions:

- ✚ *Walking the Dog*, Kaleidoscope, Dornfell St, London (April 2012)
- ✚ *Watercolours*, Patricia Laligant, New York. 2001.
- ✚ *Watercolours, Poubelles, Shoes*, Artazart, Paris, France 2000
- ✚ *Temps de Pause*, Atelier Demi-Teinte, Paris, France 2000
- ✚ *L'objet abandonné*, Sala Uno, Rome, Italy 1998
- ✚ *Objets abandonnés*, Conquest Hospital, Bexhill, UK 1997
- ✚ *Earplugs*, 5 Dryden Street Gallery, London, UK 1977

Group exhibitions:

- ✚ *Streetopolis*, Urban Photographers Association, 71a Gallery, London, 2015
- ✚ *Streetopolis*, Urban Photographers Association, The Folio Club, Barcelona, 2015
- ✚ *Streetopolis*, Urban Photographers Association, W83 Gallery, New York, 2015
- ✚ *Eighth Greenwich Annuale*, Greenwich Gallery, London, 2015
- ✚ *Movement*, Urban Photographers Association, Silverprint Gallery, London, 2014
- ✚ *Seventh Greenwich Annuale*, Greenwich Gallery, London, 2014
- ✚ *Sixth Greenwich Annuale*, Greenwich Gallery, London, 2013
- ✚ *Paris Traces: Catford Blockbuster*. Platform-7, Catford. June 20, 2012.
- ✚ *Six Photographes*. Hélios Gallery. Rouen (France). February-May. 2012.
- ✚ *10 Years, 47 Artists*, A Retrospective Celebrating A Studio in the Woods' 10th Anniversary, Carroll Gallery, Tulane University, New Orleans (USA), October 6 – 27, 2011.
- ✚ *Urban Trees: Paris and London*. Crossing Lines, Goldsmiths, 2010.
- ✚ *The Urban Edge*, Goldsmiths, 2010
- ✚ Invited artist, Gallery 1839, London Photographic Association, 2008
- ✚ *Entrez en matiere* L'Ecu de France, Viroflay, France 2002
- ✚ *ArtKanal 10*, Paris, France 2001
- ✚ *Transparence*, L'Ecu de France, Viroflay, France 2000
- ✚ *New York Photography Fair*, 1999, represented by Patricia Laligant
- ✚ *Photobis*, Espace Nesle, Paris, 1997

Awards:

- ✚ First prize, *Scientists at Work* category, Novartis/Daily Telegraph *Visions of Science* awards 2004
- ✚ Artist in Residence, *A Studio in the Woods*, New Orleans, February, 2006

Selected Publications/conference papers:

- ✚ *Fountain Court: refuge from the Bain de multitude*, Literary London, Institute of English Studies, London, August 2015
- ✚ *John Evelyn's Mulberry (and other stories)*. Literary London, Institute of English Studies, University of London, 20-22 July 2011.
- ✚ *The Urban Arboreal* (with Susan Trangmar). Street Trees Conference. UCL. 12 May 2010.
- ✚ *-London-Luton: a commented photographic essay on the Lea Valley* (with Gesche Wuerfel). Literary London, July 2009 (published in *EnterText* (8) Spring, 2010)
- ✚ *Paris Traces*, StreetSigns, September, 2008
- ✚ *Urban Blitz*, London Independent Photography, September 2008
- ✚ *Incognito* by Susan Freddi (Paris, 2005) – photography
- ✚ Monthly features for *UNESCO Courier* and *Sources* magazines 2001-2004 (e.g. urban nature in New York and Cape Town; culture and education in Vanuatu, etc);
- ✚ Weekly column for *Nature* 1987- 1992 and special features on Antarctica, science in Finland, France and former Yugoslavia;
- ✚ Commissioned features for *New Scientist* (on Mali and Rajasthan), *Science* magazine and others 1992-2001
- ✚ Photography for *Independent on Sunday*;
- ✚ *Arts in Hospitals*, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, London, 1980;
- ✚ Commissioned chapters in *Art for Architecture*, ed. D Petherbridge. London, HMSO, 1987
- ✚ Poetry collection, *Paris-Atlantic*, Paris, 1993 (12).