



Press release:

Building the Unthinkable

curated by:
Christian Stayner

Sep 8 - Oct 9, 2004

Opening reception: Wed, Sep 8, 6-8 pm

Artists:

- The Center for Land Use Interpretation / Culver City, CA
- Gregory Green / New York
- Michael Light / San Francisco
- Andreas Magdanz / Aachen
- Peter Marlow / Liverpool
- Dominic McGill / London and New York
- Beryl Korot and Steve Reich / New York
- World Power Systems / Los Angeles
- Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries / Seoul



Andreas Magdanz, *Präsidentenamt Bauwerk Ost/Ost*, Plan Nr. 22, [photograph of former government bunker in the Ahr Valley, Germany]

Wed, Sep 15, 6:30 pm

gallery talk: *Testing the Desert:* Alessandra Ponte in conversation with Christian Stayner

Wed, Sep 22, 6:30 pm

gallery talk: with artists from the exhibition

The bomb is back. In the past twelve months, the world’s stockpile of 22,000 nuclear warheads has re-emerged on the network news, in political rhetoric, and in debates worldwide. With the discovery earlier this year of a complex but hidden nuclear geography involving Libya, Pakistan, Iran, North Korea and other unknown players, the global concern has become one of distribution rather than traditional proliferation. In the spirit of Paul Virilio’s 1975 exhibit *Bunker Archaeology—Building the Unthinkable* investigates the impact of the nuclear age on contemporary spatial practices.

Drawing on recent photographic and filmic production, sculpture, music and digital media, *Building the Unthinkable* marks a shift in our understanding of the bomb. In the sixty years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the promise of nuclear technology—in war and in peace—has moved from the sublime to the everyday, the visual to the spatial, the polarizing to the nearly forgotten. The bomb as *deus ex machina* at once transformed the twentieth century global political landscape and altered perceptions of power and of scale. Destruction has become domesticated, a single atom is able to level a city, and the infrastructural networks that promised the end of the world have provided the infrastructure for contemporary society.

Building the Unthinkable brings together recent works by artists, researchers, documentarians and musicians who examine, respond to and occasionally manipulate this invisible landscape of power. The approach is analytic rather than activist, more geographic than aesthetic. The exhibition examines the subtle ways in which ultimate power has, over time, changed the spaces we inhabit. Collectively, the works included provide a reflection on history’s bearing on the present and a reinterpretation of history—a consideration of both the construction and the destruction brought by the nuclear age.

A full color brochure containing an essay by Christian Stayner will be available free of charge. Please contact **apexart** for further information. *Gallery hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 11-6.*

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