Recoding Cities

Luca M. Damiani
Luca Damiani Art, Tate and
London College of Communication
(UAL)
London, UK
luca@lucadamiani-art.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The series *Recoding Cities* is a 're-coded' vision of urban areas through bringing together aspects of photography, art-technology and graphic design. This short paper explains the relation between the concept and process of this artistic development.

2. PROCESSING AND DESIGNING

Using layers of analogue and digital photographic methods, experimenting with a mix of photography and printing techniques (Bendandi 2015), the city is re-interpreted. The concept is to create a new and 're-coded' vision of urban spaces that are part of daily life, creating a sense of both the familiar and unfamiliar, the old and the new.

The process of creating these images is one of sequence and layers. Every "Recoded City" image holds the weight of this layered progression, and each part of the process holds an element of the concept behind each image. There is an intertwined approach between concept and method; each impacts and influences the other at each stage throughout the process, continuously reconsidering various areas of technology and contemporary digital art.

Therefore it is important to lay out this process that is undertaken to produce each image in the series. The principle tool in the first part of the process is a mobile phone; the choice to use a device that is so immediate is intended to reflect that these pieces of technology have become commonplace in our urban daily lives, and so often used to snap and capture multiple images and passing scenes often casually, even nonchalantly. Once the image is taken, using varying post-production techniques, a digital negative is created. The negative is then printed on acetate, two or three prints of its kind. The prints are then manually cut, remixed, rebuilt and repositioned. These rough compositions are then put through a process of cyanotype printing, which uses the sunlight to reproduce new distinct images. These non-technological and non-digital cyanotype prints are then processed in a darkroom, where various elements and details of the layered image are also manipulated further. The result of this digital-analogue-chemical process is then scanned back to a digital format, returning it to its original form but with a new identity.

The next part of the image's journey is for it to be 'glitched' through the corruption of image-code and a directed pixilation (Moradi 2009). This play with the 'fabric' of the image questions the meaning of digital images purely as complex binary code combinations, also hinting at representing the pixel, the technological textile and ingredient of the photographic representation itself. The digital image is then finally printed on different kinds of paper, often watercolour or cartridge; this adds additional dimensions of different textures that are not usually associated with photographic or technological methods.

And so this final 'photographic' image is an over-layered composition that connects the digital and the analogue, technology and human endeavour. This process also reflects different areas of the transformation of photography as a discipline, which in turn reflects the ever flowing and changing of urban spaces as the subject. The process, complex and lengthy, produces images that reflect the complexity held in each moment, each scene, and each image we experience; serene yet multifaceted. They are contemplative, holding something familiar yet something new, something broken, yet reconstructed.

3. REFERENCES

Bendandi, L. (2015) *Experimental Photography: A Handbook of Techniques*. Thames and Hudson.

Moradi, I. (2009) *Glitch: Designing Imperfection*. Mark Batty Publisher.

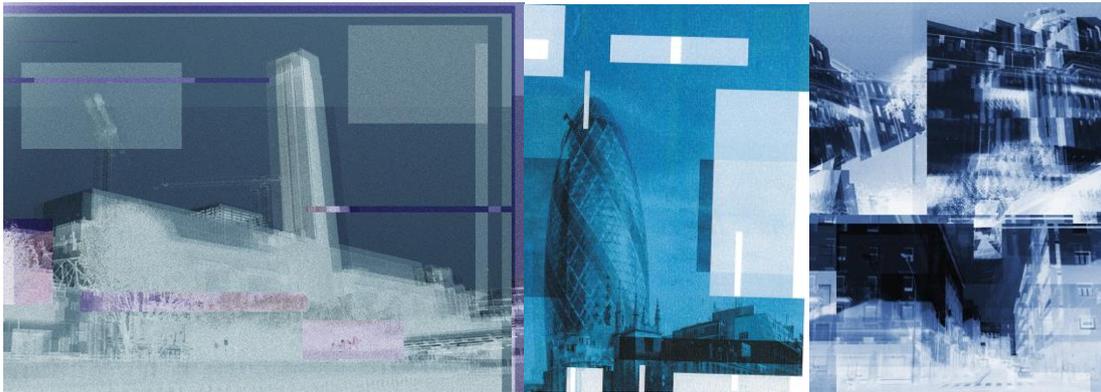**Figure 1:** *Recoding Cities – Remixed Composition – London and Chicago – 2015*

Figure 2: *Recoding Cities – London and Cagliari –2015/2016*

Figure 3: *Recoding Cities – London – 2015*