

SIMON ROBERTS PIERDOM



Teignmouth Grand Pier, Devon, July 2011, Fujicolour Crystal Archive Print, 122 x 152 cm / 48 x 60 inch

10 September - 12 October 2013

Private View Tuesday 10 September 6 - 8pm

Flowers Gallery 82 Kingsland Road
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British photographer Simon Roberts has spent the past three years creating *Pierdom*, a comprehensive survey of Britain's piers. Predominantly constructed during the 19th Century in the context of expanding Victorian seaside resorts and railways, these structures were often erected as landing docks for pleasure steamers and other sea craft. Growing to accommodate the needs of day-trippers escaping the smog of the city, engineers began to incorporate bandstands, cafes and music halls into their designs, embracing the growing notion of 'pleasure seeking' by the seaside.

Pierdom addresses the historical significance of these architectural structures placed in comparison with their modern interpretation and functionality. Roberts' photographs of ruinous piers such as *Birnbeck Pier* (2012) are in contrast with those such as *Ryde Pier* (2012) in which the local community and everyday usage of the landscape is represented by a skate boarding park which dominates the composition. It is this socio-cultural element of the landscape that has sustained Roberts' interest, revealing a deep fascination with the way humans interact with their environment, and in eccentric British pastimes.

At the turn of the century the British coastline boasted over 100 piers, some modest and functional, others elegant, exotic Victorian structures thrusting out into the sea. Now under half remain, the others destroyed by fierce weather and fires, with many dismantled during the 2nd World War to prevent German landings. Britain's piers have become cultural landmarks, tracing history, national identity and economic fortunes from Victorian industrialism to the post-war boom, and finally now to the recent economic downturn.

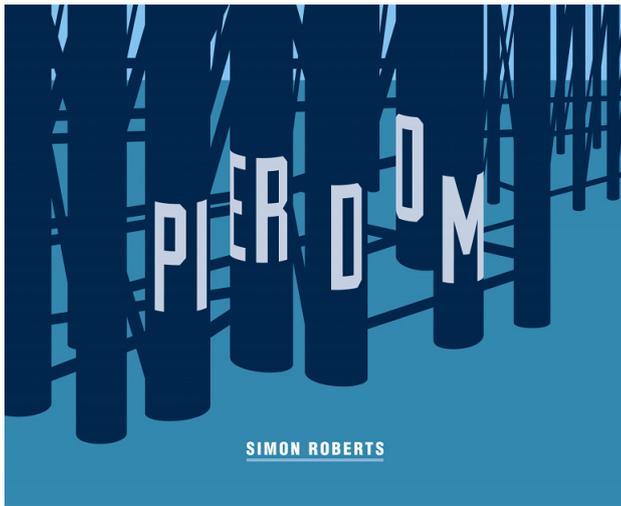
Roberts' large format photographs are taken with great technical precision, often from elevated positions incorporating peripheral details and the elements, thus enriching the viewing experience of each print. Through formal devices associated with the picturesque; perspective, asymmetry and juxtaposition, the photographs engage us with contemporary issues about our uneasy and fragile relationship to both nature, and our urban environments. The series is at once factual yet warm, a broad architectural and anthropological study of our coastline as a microcosm of British society.

Simon Roberts (b.1974) is based in Brighton, UK. He studied a BA Hons Degree in Human Geography at the University of Sheffield (1996), a subject which has informed much of his photographic practice. He has exhibited widely with solo shows at the National Media Museum, Bradford, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai. His work has been included in numerous group exhibitions, including *Landmark: Fields of Photography* at Somerset House, London, and resides in major public and private collections, including the George Eastman House, Deutsche Börse Art Collection and Wilson Centre for Photography. In 2010 he was selected as the official Election Artist by the UK Parliament. He has published two monographs, *Motherland* (Chris Boot, 2007) and *We English* (Chris Boot, 2009).

For further information and images please contact Ceri Stock on 020 7920 7777 or email ceri@flowersgallery.com

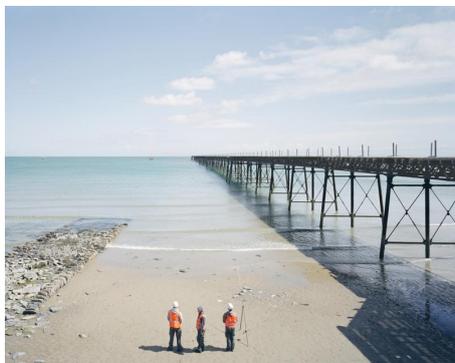
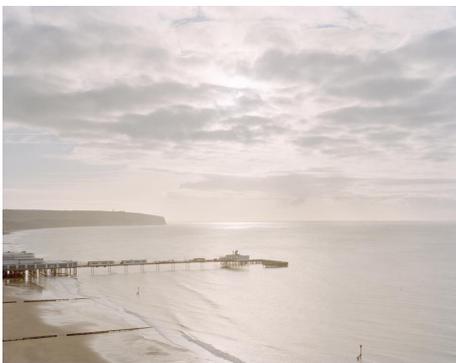
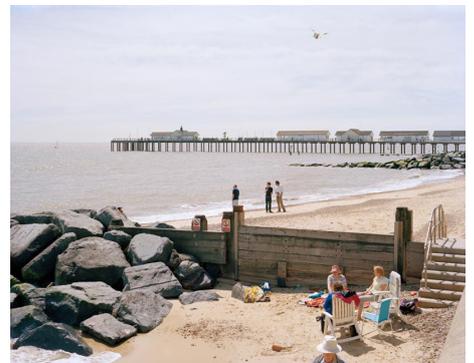
www.flowersgallery.com

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The exhibition will be accompanied by the release of the monograph *Pierdom*, published by Dewi Lewis Publishing. The publication, designed by FUEL, contains a map identifying locations of all piers, an introductory essay by photography critic Francis Hodgson and an appendix containing a potted history of each pier.

Retail price: £35
ISBN: 978-1-907893-40-7
Publication: September 2013
Binding: Hardback
Extent: 160 pages
Size: 246mm x 305mm
Photographs: 81 Colour



Bangor Garth Pier, North Wales, 2011

Clevedon Pier, Somerset, 2011

Sandown Culver Pier, Isle of Wight, 2012

Weston-Super-Mare Birnbeck Pier, Somerset, 2012

Lowestoft Claremont Pier, Suffolk, 2012

Ramsey Queens Pier, Isle of Man, 2013

Boscombe Pier, Dorset, 2011

Southwold Pier, Suffolk 2012

Worthing Pier, West Sussex, 2013

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