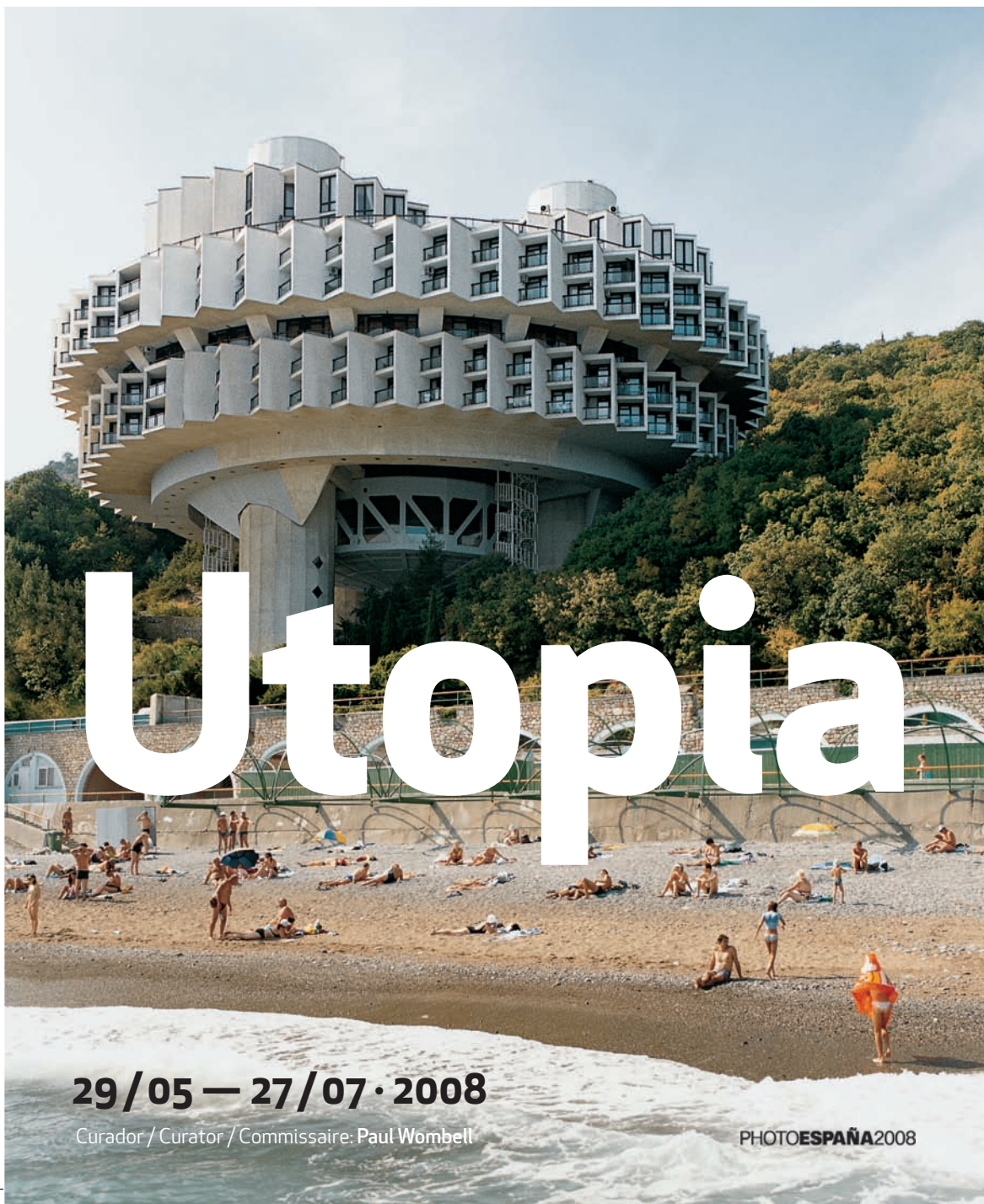


EXPOSIÇÃO TEMPORÁRIA / TEMPORARY EXHIBITION / EXPOSITION TEMPORAIRE



PISO -1 / LEVEL -1 / ÉTAGE -1

MUSEU COLEÇÃO BERARDO



# Utopia

**29/05 — 27/07 · 2008**

Curador / Curator / Commissaire: Paul Wornbell

PHOTOESPAÑA2008

# Utopia / Utopie

Frederic Chaubin / Tacita Dean / Arni Haraldsson / Gayle Chong Kwan / Wiebke Loeper / Mathieu Pernot / John Riddy / Alec Soth / Stuart Whipps / Amir Zaki

A ideia da utopia como um paraíso na Terra tem pairado de forma persistente sobre o pensamento ocidental, século após século. Os relatos escritos sobre utopias imaginárias não só foram utilizados para criticar as relações sociais existentes, como também para sugerir um modo de vida diferente – e melhor. O poder destes registos produziu consequências reais que ultrapassam a mera literatura. No século XX, a ideia de uma sociedade utópica impeliu grandes movimentos políticos. Transversal a diferentes fronteiras ideológicas, a utopia tem sido o ponto de partida para operar mudanças políticas e sociais. A sociedade perfeita, um local de harmonia, paz e igualdade para todos: este não era apenas um projecto imaginário, mas algo que podia ser construído.

Atualmente, as consequências mais tangíveis do ideário utópico têm sido guerras e revoluções. É precisamente este um dos paradoxos dos projectos utópicos: somente através da violência será possível alcançar o futuro perfeito. Só a destruição do antigo poderá permitir o nascimento do novo. Uma outra grande manifestação dos projectos utópicos foi a construção de edifícios. O novo mundo era um espaço social totalmente diferente – aberto, transitório, em altura, leve e construído a partir de materiais como o betão, o aço e o vidro. Era este o mundo moderno, um mundo que seria criado por arquitectos.

Actualmente, à distância de meio século, uma nova geração de artistas e fotógrafos observa os projectos utópicos do século XX. Não celebram o que poderiam ter sido, as suas inquietações têm uma vertente mais próxima do documentário, mas, no processo de criação do seu trabalho, referem outras preocupações e ideias relacionadas com o futuro. O interesse no legado do modernismo reflecte-se na abordagem recorrente do tema dos edifícios modernistas erigidos entre os anos de 1950 e 70. Este apreço por estas relíquias do modernismo revela-se na utilização dos próprios edifícios como pano de fundo para outras preocupações, como a memória, ou num interesse mais directo pela arquitectura e o urbanismo. Muitos desses edifícios – construídos há mais de 50 anos – estão actualmente degradados ou à beira da demolição, conferindo a algumas obras de arte contemporâneas um tom melancólico muito particular.

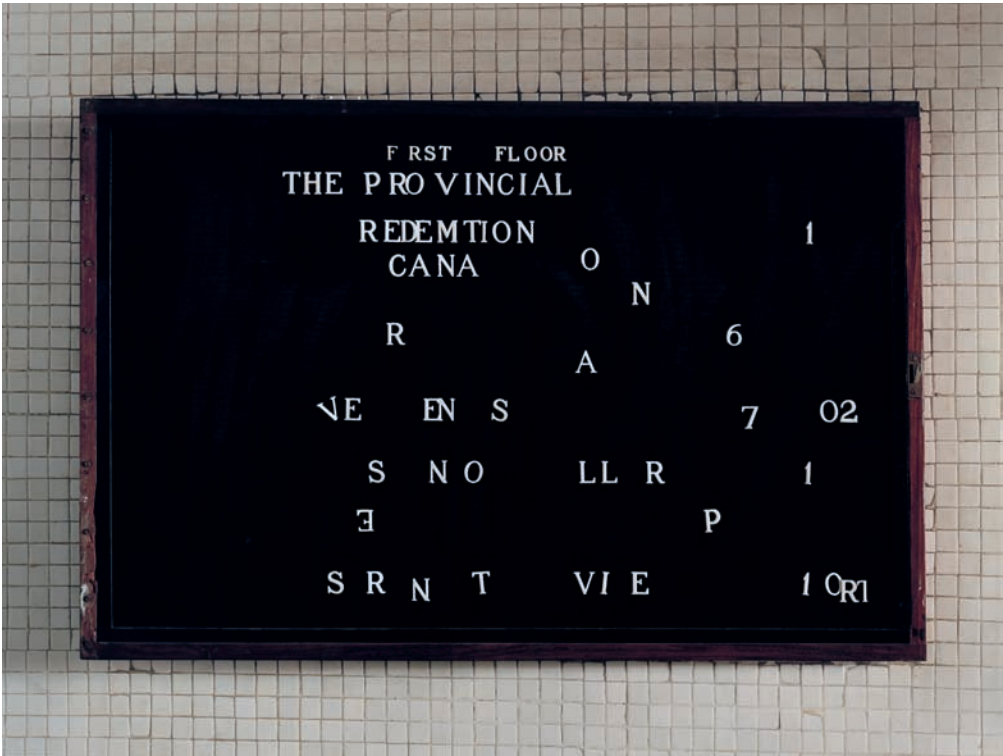
Este interesse nos edifícios do período modernista evidencia também a visão utópica subjacente à concepção e construção destes edifícios. Esta visão foi partilhada por várias ideologias políticas divergentes e conflituosas. Tanto o Capitalismo como o Comunismo adoptaram aspectos do sonho modernista para reconstruir os seus próprios “mundos novos”. Mais recentemente, uma visão utópica neoconservadora vê o mundo a caminhar em direcção a uma forma única de governo e a um só sistema económico, com uma democracia universal e mercados abertos. Há já algum tempo que as limitações destas diferentes visões utópicas se tornaram evidentes e a perspectiva utópica neoconservadora para o futuro do mundo chegou ao fim da linha com o Iraque.



**Amir Zaki** *Sem Título/Untitled (Spring Through Winter)*, 2005  
© o artista/the artist/l'artiste



**Arni Haraldsson** *West façade, Unité d'habitation*, 1999 © o artista / the artist / l'artiste



**Stuart Whipps** *Johannesburg, The Provincial Building*, 2007 © o artista / the artist / l'artiste

Assim sendo, porque escolhem os artistas e fotógrafos o momento actual para rever o passado recente? Aparentemente, estes edifícios modernistas, criados e construídos para tornar novamente o mundo num local mais aprazível para se viver, são metáforas de uma preocupação mais abrangente da sociedade ocidental acerca do futuro. As suas imagens representam o fim da cidade, a cidade definida pelos princípios modernistas da vida urbana. O futuro não parece nada utópico, com as alterações climáticas e a escassez de recursos para alimentar o mundo. Actualmente, não podemos pensar que qualquer visão do mundo poderá solucionar as complexas questões que temos de enfrentar. Este interesse renovado no último período de confiança nos valores ocidentais, que afirmavam a tecnologia, os edifícios e o progresso social como forma de resolver os problemas do mundo, terminou. É por este motivo que o trabalho destes artistas e fotógrafos assume uma tão grande importância. O declínio dos edifícios do período modernista poderá estar a dizer-nos algo mais profundo sobre o nosso futuro.  
—Paul Wombell

The idea of utopia as heaven on earth has loomed large in western thought for centuries. Written accounts on imaginary utopias have been used both to criticise existing social relationships and to suggest a different and better way of living. The power of such writing has had real consequences beyond the pages of literature. The idea of a utopian society is one that has propelled large political movements during the twentieth century. Across different ideological boundaries, utopia has been the rallying cry for political and social change. The perfect society, a place of harmony, peace and equality for all: this was not just an imagery project, but also a place that could be built.

But the tangible results of utopian ideas have been wars and revolutions. It is one of the paradoxes of utopian projects that only by violent means will the perfect future be achieved. Only by destroying the old will the new appear. The other main result from utopian projects has been buildings. The new world was a different type of social space, open, transient, high, light and made from materials like concrete, steel and glass. This was the modern world, and this world was to be designed by architects.

Now, from the distance of half a century, a new generation of artists and photographers are looking at the utopian projects of the twentieth century. They do not celebrate what might have been, their concerns are more documentary in style, but in the process of making their work they allude to other concerns and ideas regarding the future. This interest in the legacy of modernism is reflected in the recurring theme of the modernist buildings built between the 1950s and 1970s. These relics of modernism can be seen either by the buildings being used as a backdrop to other concerns like memory, or a more direct interest in architecture and urbanism. That many of these buildings – constructed more than fifty years ago – are now in disrepair or being demolished, has given some contemporary artwork a particular quality of melancholy.

This interest in the buildings of the modernist period also brings into focus the utopian vision that underlines why these buildings were designed and built. This vision was shared across different and conflicting political ideologies. Both capitalism and communism took aspects of the modernist dream to re-construct their own "new worlds". More recently a neo-conservative utopian vision that has been promoted sees the world developing towards one form of government and economic system with universal democracy and open markets. The limitations of these different utopian visions have been apparent for sometime, and the neo-conservative utopian future for the world has come to an end in Iraq.

So why now at this moment are artists and photographers reviewing the recent past? It would seem that these modernist buildings designed and built to re-make the world a better place to live, are metaphors for a wider concern in western society about the future. Their images signify the end of the city, the city defined by modernist principles of urban living. The future does not look anything like utopian with climate change and limited resources to feed the world. We cannot think today that any one vision for the world can solve the complex problems we are facing. This renewed interest in the last period of confidence of western values, which stated that technology, buildings and social progress could solve the problems of the world has come to the end. This is why the work of these artists and photographers is of such importance. The decay of buildings of the modernist period might well be telling us something more profound about our future.

—Paul Wombell

Pendant des siècles, l'utopie d'un paradis sur terre a fortement influencé la pensée occidentale. Des écrits sur des utopies imaginées ont été utilisés tant pour critiquer les rapports sociaux existants que pour suggérer un mode de vie meilleur et différent. La force de ces écrits a d'ailleurs eu de fortes répercussions bien au-delà de la littérature. Au cours du vingtième siècle, l'idée d'une société utopiste a motivé des mouvements politiques de grande ampleur. Au-delà des différentes frontières idéologiques, l'utopie a été le cri de ralliement des changements politiques et sociaux. L'idée d'une société parfaite, d'un lieu d'harmonie, de paix et d'égalité pour tous n'était pas qu'un projet imaginaire, c'était également un lieu que l'on pouvait construire.

Cependant, les idées utopiques n'ont eu pour résultats tangibles que guerres et révolutions. Il s'agit là de l'un des paradoxes des projets utopiques, selon lequel seule la violence permettra d'aboutir à un avenir parfait. Ce n'est qu'en détruisant le vieux que l'on verra naître le neuf. L'autre résultat principal des projets utopiques a été la construction de bâtiments. Le nouveau monde était un type d'espace social différent, ouvert, éphémère, élevé, léger et bâti à partir de matériaux tels que le béton, l'acier et le verre. Le monde moderne était ainsi, et ce monde devait être conçu par des architectes.

Actuellement, près d'un demi-siècle plus tard, une nouvelle génération d'artistes et de photographes tourne son regard vers les projets utopiques du vingtième siècle. Ils ne se soucient pas de commémorer ce qui aurait pu être, mais plutôt d'informer en matière de style: leur travail laisse entrevoir d'autres inquiétudes et d'autres idées par rapport à l'avenir. Cet intérêt pour le légat du modernisme est bien visible

dans l'abordage récurrent au thème des bâtiments modernistes, érigés dans les années 1950 à 70. Il est possible de voir ces reliques du modernisme comme toile de fond de certaines évocations telles que le passé, ou comme intérêt plus direct pour l'architecture ou l'urbanisme. Le fait que grand nombre de ces bâtiments, construits il y a plus de cinquante ans, soient actuellement en ruines ou démolis a rajouté une touche de mélancolie à certaines de ces œuvres d'art contemporaines.

Cet intérêt pour les édifices de la période moderniste permet également de mettre en évidence la vision utopiste, qui souligne la raison pour laquelle ces bâtiments étaient conçus et édifiés et qui était partagée par les adeptes de diverses idéologies politiques contradictoires. Le capitalisme et le communisme ont tous deux copié certains aspects du rêve moderniste afin de réédifier leurs propres "mondes nouveaux". Une vision utopiste néoconservatrice promue plus récemment est celle d'un monde qui s'acheminerait vers une forme unique de gouvernement et de système économique, avec une démocratie universelle et des marchés ouverts. Depuis quelque temps, les limites de ces différentes visions utopistes sont devenues évidentes et l'avenir utopiste et néoconservateur du monde a pris fin en Irak.

Alors pourquoi, aujourd'hui, des artistes et des photographes passent-ils en revue le passé récent ? Il semblerait que ces bâtiments modernistes, conçus et édifiés en vue de refaire un monde meilleur, ne soient que les métaphores d'une plus grande inquiétude de la société occidentale par rapport à l'avenir. Leurs images signifient la fin de la cité, de la cité définie par les principes modernistes de la vie urbaine. Les changements climatiques et le manque de ressources pour nourrir la population mondiale laissent entrevoir un futur qui n'a rien d'utopiste. Aujourd'hui, il est impossible de penser qu'une quelconque vision du monde puisse résoudre les problèmes complexes auxquels nous devons faire face. Cet intérêt renouvelé pour la dernière période de confiance des valeurs occidentales, qui affirmait que la technologie, les bâtiments et le progrès social pourraient résoudre les problèmes du monde, a touché à sa fin. C'est la raison pour laquelle le travail de ces artistes et de ces photographes revêt une telle importance. La décrépitude des bâtiments datant de la période moderniste pourrait bien présager quelque chose de plus profond pour notre avenir.

—Paul Wombell



## **UTOPIA**

**MUSEU COLECÇÃO BERARDO, LISBON MAY 29 – JULY 27**

CURATOR - PAUL WOMBELL

The works of the UTOPIA collective photograph exhibition reflects about a common point – the architecture of the 50's and 60's. In those two decades, several architects, spreaded by the four corners of the globe, projected constructs buildings for a "utopian" and visionary world.

These worlds opened doors to a new kind of social space: open, transitory, elevated, light, carried out with new materials as the cement, the steel and the glass. All of this was the modern world and he would be designed by the architects that believed to be able to resolve, thanks to the technology of the steel and the cement, the distinct contemporary needs.

Nowadays, the future it's not looking utopian. Currently, nobody believes that some ideology can solve the complex problems with which we are confronted.

UTOPIA is a co-production of Museu Colecção Berardo and PhotoEspaña 2008 (XI International Festival of Photograph and Visual Arts). In the exhibition we find represented the following artists: Mathieu Pernot, Frédéric Chaubin, John Riddy, Stuart Whipps, Alec Soth, Gayle Chong Kwan, Wiebke Loeper, Arni Haraldsson, Tacita Dean and Amir Zaki.

UTOPIA will be on view in Lisbon from May 29 until July 27, at the Museu Colecção Berardo, in Belém, with free entrance.



## INTRODUCTION

The idea of utopia as heaven on earth has loomed large in western thought for centuries. Written accounts on imaginary utopias have been used both to criticise existing social relationships and to suggest a different and better way of living. The power of such writing has had real consequences beyond the pages of literature. The idea of a utopian society is one that has propelled large political movements during the twentieth century. Across different ideological boundaries, utopia has been the rallying cry for political and social change. The perfect society, a place of harmony, peace and equality for all: this was not just an imagery project, but also a place that could be built.

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**PAUL WOMBELL**  
**CURATOR**



**ARTIST REPRESENTED IN THE EXHIBITION:**

Mathieu Pernot  
France  
*Implosions*

Frédéric Chaubin  
France  
*Modernism on Eastern Europe*

Stuart Whipps  
United Kingdom  
*Johannesburg*

Gayle Chong Kwan  
United Kingdom  
*Cockaigne Island*

Wiebke Loeper  
Germany  
*Moll 31*

Tacita Dean  
United Kingdom  
*Fernsehturm (film 16 mm)*

John Riddy  
United Kingdom  
*Le Corbusier. Chandigarh, India*

Arni Haraldsson  
Canada  
*Chandigarh / Jerusalem*

Amir Zaki  
USA  
*Spring Through Winter*

Alec Soth  
United States of America  
*Utopia, Texas*



**AMIR ZAKI**

(United States of America)

Southern California is known for the modernist homes that were built during the 1950s and 1960s. In his series Spring Through Winter, Amir Zaki revisits some of these icons of modern living.

Using the visual conventions of early modernist photography – such as taking photographs from unusual angles - he has created a more unsettling view of modern living. Looking up at these homes perched precariously on the hillside cantilevering over the viewer, seemingly without foundations or support.

Looking down into the outdoor swimming pools, some in use, some needing repairs and some without water. These are images of uncertainty about the present and the limitations of what was seen to be possible fifty years ago.





**FOR FUTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

Diana Ralha / Liliana Roque Silva

Cunha Vaz & Associados

E-mail: [dr@cunhavaz.com](mailto:dr@cunhavaz.com); [ls@cunhavaz.com](mailto:ls@cunhavaz.com)

Mobil: +351 93 213 54 57 / +351 93 974 31 11

**Museu Coleção Berardo**  
**Arte Moderna e Contemporânea**  
**Praça do Império - 1449-003 Lisboa**  
**Telf: 213612913**  
**Fax: 213612570**

**OPENING HOURS**

Open every day:

10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (last entrance: 6:30 p.m.);

Fridays: 10h00 - 22h00 (última entrada: 21h30)

**ACCESS | TRANSPORTS**

**Buses-** 28 \ 714 \ 727 \ 729 \ 751

**Tram** - 15E

**Train-** Cais do Sodré – Cascais - Belém Station

**Boat-** Belém

**Car Park** – Every Day > 8h30 – 21h45