

IMAGE GALLERY

Time Mirrored: Reflecting Around the Surrey Canal

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Burgess Park (Camberwell, South London) still retains some clues of its layered formation and the previous existence of the site as a bustling industrial quarter. Nonetheless, most of its open green spaces and recently renovated facilities stand in the absence of old houses and factories. On the morning of Friday 13 October 2013 I went to that park and photographed one of these cleared parts with a digital camera.

Using the pictures taken that morning I composed the two images presented here.

Each consists of 18 photographs focusing at the same focal point located in today's Burgess Park. They were taken from different positions, defining a track around that focal point.

I digitally superimposed the photographs following the order in which they were taken. This correlative sequence going onwards formed the layered image on the left – I started with the first photograph as the background and consecutively superimposed the rest upon it. For the image on the right, I started with the last photograph as the background, layering the images in reverse sequence. The inverted

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arrangements that constitute both composite images indicate a symmetry in terms of time, while the degree of transparency of each of their constitutive photographs—or layers—allows them all to be present simultaneously.

The point that every photograph focuses on corresponds to the position from which a single photograph was taken in 1925, which is available in the Southwark Local History Library and Archive. It portrays a couple of barges floating on the disappeared Surrey

Canal on a foggy day, with St George's Church barely visible in the background.

The layered nature of Burgess Park is reflected in a different way through these compositions, revealing its depth in time and evoking the qualities of a place as it was 88 years before. If we bear in mind that the word 'photography' etymologically means 'writing of light' we can further understand these compositions as 'palimpsests of light' through which the memory of a place and its absent times can be explored and recreated.

How to cite this article: Lanuza, F 2014 Time Mirrored: Reflecting Around the Surrey Canal. *Opticon1826*, (16): 13, pp. 1-2, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/opt.cd>

Published: 28 August 2014

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