Across the world here it says 10, 15, 12,000 kilometers or something like that and sort of infrastructure we need to get over here it's fantastic to get a sample of them or a selection of them. So we've done that today for the rest of the room from my expanding sub terra project. Out in the other space here is a new project that hasn't been shown before which David is going to principally talk about today related to the bankers as in Albania? So I'm going to talk mainly about the work in this room the subterra work, and just prior to that, I'm going to just go through a little bit of my background work so you can see where it's perhaps coming from. I started photographing landscape principally in my own country in New Zealand which has had very heavy traditional landscape photography. When the European people settled in New Zealand, it was around the early 1800s and it coincided almost exactly with the invention of photography. So New Zealand got very heavily represented in photographic history, and it was principally either portraits or landscape that professional photographers made. So I'm really just continuing on and interested in looking at the land and spaces that I live among in my own work. So a photograph like this is a typical photograph of mine from an earlier period. This is a bit later but it was a small black and white photo which I still make occasionally. Looking at the way humans modify our landscape because some of you have been waiting for the hobbit to be released in about a week's time I'm sure.
You probably all know that that's filmed in New Zealand and Peter Jackson is from Wellington where I come from and all that sort of thing, and Lord of the Rings that's another series of things. So you'll be familiar with a lot of New Zealand landscape and it's immaculate as a clean green environment but of course, it's not that simple. We've modified our landscape massively since the arrival of both Marie at around about 800 years ago and also Pakeha or Europeans around 200 years ago. So I'm interested in that modification. You can see here especially this one of the most famous 19th Century photographs. I've got a pointer here, isn't it? There we go. Isn't that pic there called Mitapink and that is in a lot of 19th Century photographs and I've re-photographed it but you can see now there's a boardwalk from our conservation department saying, "Please stand here, please look at the view this way." so modified landscapes is really what I'm dealing with all my work.
Here's another new light night new ambiests fall from 1985 and early work and these were based really around American tradition that I was interested in that time called new topographic and any students here I'm sure will know that expression on that tone and that movement in photography. Looking at the human eyes landscape rather than, the subliminal or perfect landscape that we would see on a calendar or something like that.
I guess I built up an interest in a number of bodies of work and projects looking at New Zealand landscape outside of this pristine environment that was marketed throughout the world for tourism and so on, so to get Americans to come and visit us. We still want to do that and there's land like that there but there's also a mixture of modified land, as well.
So because of time, we'll be fairly quick on these and just flip through them.
There you can see, those willows are planted there to control the space, control the river landscape that's being modified and increasingly by things like global warming on my head and humans would collude with nature in some way to whiff it to control the loss of land and the amount of land that has been swept out to sea, in this case, the bush being lost by floods and that type of thing. So that was really what I was looking at, at that time. You can see another photograph.
The flood with a control structure down the middle which is obviously working quite hard to get rid of the water and not working quite as we hoped but there's impact of humans on the landscape.
I did a project which took 3 years in the late 1980s called salt [inaudible] the process landscape and this is my first venture into mines mining. But it was salt mining on the surface. Water was held on these lakes that were bounded by barriers and solar, solar energy with heat would evaporate water and salt would be removed. It was a beautiful, beautiful landscape it was completely artificial and it was particularly popular in the 1980s in New Zealand to photograph this sort of place. So it took me three years to run through the process, another photograph from that.
These were what we called caviar chrome photographs. They came quite small in those days to me. Very, very glossy, artificial looking prints and that's a pile of salt being washed called a hydro cyclone and so almost a land making process going on here, and power stations.
There's a photograph of a power station over here on the wall underground. This one has also got the same shape. This is an above-ground power station modified river the white cattle and again, you can see the marks the human marks the presence on the land the medication the re-diversion of water and so on.
And that's almost like a waterfall but it's an artificial den over flow. So I'm playing there with the idea of a pristine picture view. Again it's like a calendar photograph. Color is like a photograph yes that's a completely artificial environment. Waterfalls were very heavily photographed in New Zealand in the same way that they were in Yosemite and so on in the 19th Century and U.S. Power structures, sort of, simplify modification, really.
We use geothermal energy in this case to make electricity. We're a country that's on fire melting away, exploding away, cracking away with terrible earthquakes in fact recently and that's showing the kind of structures we're building.
In 2000 I came over to Utah here and to the residency Wendover. I don't know if anyone knows Wendover but it's on the border of Utah and Nevada a casino town and I was sort of parked up in Utah there on this little border town for six weeks producing a body of work around the extractive industries in that region and it's the great salt basin. I was working with an organization called Chloe that seemed to relay this interpretation for Los Angeles. And they had a tradition of putting out a scene there and seeing what they come up, with in terms of interpreting the land, and I was fascinated with this photo driving into window because it shows a rail track and huge hill behind but in fact, it's well artificial again the hill is not a hill it's a pile of palings rubbish dumps they call them for mining and then the rail track and it reminded me of early U.S. photographers like Carlton Watkins and Timothy O. Sullivan who photographed the landscape as the rail road's went into it and opened up the west. But they photographed of course, the mountain ranges with the railways.
And this is Bingham canyon. Again, just the connections with mining here because of these underground photos we'll get to shortly. One of the largest excavations on earth could be seen from out of space in the same way that the Great Wall of China can be, which is a fascinating idea.
And I spent three days there photographing the pit and the underground little sinks the explosions that just go on all day to take the ore out drilling and so on.
So these are connecting to this topographic style of photography that still interests me. The great salt basin with the salt is always a common theme in salt. The salt works projects this project and behind there on the wall the green picture with all the filming is an underground salt mine completely surrounded in the salt. So I don't know if it's fascinated with salt I don't know why it's a habit.
And this is extracting the salt from the basin causing quite significant environmental problems. In fact you saw in the previous photograph was monitoring the thickness of the crust and probably telling a whole lot of people a lot more about this than New Zealand that does but the soldiers being relend back onto the basin, onto the salt flakes to thicken it up again, because it's been removed so long so that the fast and so are cracking through and that type of thing. It's a historic site.
Bullets lots of bullets I don't see that in New Zealand but there's lots of bullet shells moving around these are targets in the middle of nowhere and the refrigerators with hundreds of bullets.
And the casino we know if you haven't been there let's find out what Wendover looks like. There's these casinos swimming through the landscape they're fantastic. It's very much there because of its location I guess near Utah.
All right, and then just concluding this section this is a New Zealand river that's been modified for power and it's lost all its quantity. If you look down there, there's a little trickier what used to be a quite major river and it's been diverted. It comes out of the other side of the North Island at the top of the country which is strange in its own right. You can see the station, the power structure here at the den. There's a little tunnel running underground there. You get right into the tunnel and it goes down the power station house past the little ladder running down. I was fascinated with the idea of underground space from that photograph but I didn't do anything about it. It was hard getting in there, but it was at the back of my mind as I moved to this other project.
Now moving into the subterra project itself this part of the work was actually photographed in Australia in a small town in the outback, right in the middle of Australia. It's about halfway between Adelaide and Uluru the springs area, and it's in the outback so it's a place where they filmed Mad Max, Red Planet, a whole lot of other quite terrible films. I think great to see great films but some quite good ones, Priscilla -- Queen of the Desert I think was filmed partly there and the film until the end of the world was partly shot there, as well. So it's a classic film location because of its weirdness and the reason it's weird is because many, many people live underground in these dug outs. If you look at that that's a window so it's going into a hole and there's a house behind there. You see some kids riding their bikes outside their front yard basically. So I photographed and I've been to two trips there and the second trip I got a film location scout to get me around and I hide him to get him around because you can't knock on anyone's door here. There's no street signs, there's, you know, can't find anybody apart from wondering around. So let's have a look at Coober Pedy, it's a fascinating.
This is an underground teenage bidden with a little biscuit house there everyone's favorite bend at the time and a drum kit and a whole lot of baseball caps. It looks like blink right at the top there and there's a whole lot of bricks or blocks here. So this is underground it's curved down to the mined space that's it's an opal mining area. So people take space out to look for opal mines. It's a small operating, single person or small family operations. It's not a big company and when you build your house you can't actually opals. They're very, very valuable and what happens is you're not allowed in Coober Pedy to build anymore, rather to have any more opal mines right in the town, but there's still a lot of opal there. So a lot of young men have five or six bidden houses and in the process of digging out the bidden they might find quite valuable veins of opal, because it's the best place in the region to find opal. So this person has found this. This is actually a house that's well and truly used. It's got a family and the bricks usually mean you've accidentally gone to the neighbor's house, so it's closed off.
There's one there you can see a house. Now the top real estate in Coober Pedy is underground. It gets up to 45 50 degrees centigrade during the day. Now that's the day I don't know about 32 double it's hot very, very hot, 45, ridiculously hot. I've never experienced temperatures like that but it's scorching. So these places stay at around about 20, 18, 20 degrees C constantly. That's around 70 degrees, 68 degrees Fahrenheit constantly. The humidity is nice and dry. It's a very pleasant place to live. It's very quiet; you got a good night sleep and all that sorts of things. So that's why people build there and this house you can see there's a lounge suite in the back there. It's quite wonderful space to live in.
This house here it's built by an English couple and you can see that on the Fred Flintstone kind of style, they've gone through all the curves. A lovely curved house and that's a typical really but machined out now the first house in Coober Pedy were the actual mined out spaces that the miners made, and a lot of Australian and some New Zealand miners came back from world war I back to Australia broke no work winter places like Coober Pedy and looked for opals. Because they had spent quite a bit of time underground in trenches and so on they thought, "This ain't so bad. It's nice and cool. I'll just put a kitchen in here." And so on. So that's how it started to develop into a suburban community fantastic suburban community.
This guy has his house covered in graffiti and this house was actually in the Venus film until the end of the world. This is a guy by the name of Crocodile Harry and he used to kill crocodiles in the northern territory. There's a photo of him up there with a spear up at the top there and he was about 80 something when we visited and he drunk quite a bit and he wasn't that healthy when we saw him and he since passed away and his whole house is covered in graffiti the people have left there as they've gone through and you walk into his bedroom and there's that.
Around nearby you can see these are open field's piles of dirt. This is a new church with its connections to the outside world and the reference to Paul's friend's photograph white picket fence any historians who know that photograph, underground museum for underground histories.
This is we figure there's a stand in it was a stand in beautiful diorama in an underground museum. So everything in Coober Pedy that's interesting really is underground.
The building start as a line a topographic line drilled in dug out by either pecks or machines into the rock or the red rock.
You see when the earth curved I met quite a few people who said that they're partners or themselves they were builders and they couldn't' stand the idea of curved building inside. They liked 90-degree angles in their houses just like, you know, studs and things that you have at a normal wooden timber framed house. So they go to great extremes to keep it consistent.
And here's a typical one of these extra bedrooms, this is a guy that had five bedrooms. He worked in the bank and he shoves out a bed, a mattress. I don't know whether that makes it legal or something and a wood derived from a store. I don't know what you have here but we have one from Mitta team which is fairly cheap. Cheap wardrobes and things they used to put them in there, curved a hole out and it goes and so on.
And that’s his bedroom of his huge DVD screen at the end of his bed.
This is actually an underground catholic church says so from the cross and this is still used you can see the chairs there, just like here the chairs are put out on Sunday for services and that's a typically early Coober Pedy construction you can see it's been done by hand flicks. So all the wall here is just curved out and the [inaudible] to put something have a shelf then you can just craze it. The window is going around with the mine. Every time you'd enter somebody's house you'd say, "Oh gee, I really like that idea. I'm going to have that when I go home." So everyone's kind of a designer in these houses.
They design their own structure their own space, underground car port with a jaguar by the looks of it.
Car there in that shaft of light and there’s a phantom in Coober Pedy you can imagine if that was in Sydney Australia down the road that would be a fairly typically suburban area in Sydney with a frontage like that, so very similar to just an ordinary normalized space. So these underground places are normalized by design if you like so that you feel like you’re in an ordinary community and this is a pattern I found with all the photography.
From Australia I then go fascinated with the idea of what happens to mines themselves when they're finished because what do you do? Do you just cape them off, do you close them up, do you resuscitate or renovate them or whatever, and I was just researching on the internet and so on looking at whatever publications I could find and I found Kansas City was the place I really wanted to go to and Kansas, generally Kansas, and Missouri and this is a large underground space called sub Tripoli’s and it's an underground industrial park, huge it's got hundreds of acres, and the thing in mind and stall being mined all around the inside of this is limestone. A lot of the other mines are mining salt they look very similar. So as the limestone is made taken out it brings blocks or whatever I don't know what you call them here in the U.S. blocks or whatever you want to call them, and they create a building space an interior and these are used for all sorts of company business.
This is the headquarters of the company Hunt Midwest Lamar Hunt owned it at that time and he also owned the stadium for them I can never remember this. The football team Kansas City, and he owned the real estate above and that got me thinking about what do we actually own in terms of underground space. We own a house in Wellington in New Zealand how far do I own it down under the ground? How far do you own your house? Do you know how far you own it? Can you build under there or is someone burrowing underneath? I hadn’t even thought about that. So those ideas of spatial dimension started emerging with this project for me anyway. But this owns the real estate above and below, this area in Kansas.
And nearby was another fantastic site called the space center and this is ATP, a company that makes the lids for railway carriages anyway. And next there board room. I love that fact that it was just a completely translated drop down stairs almost. There's no conversion to the reality of the underground. The corporate look remains the same and I always think of McDonald's if we had a McDonald's underground it would probably look exactly like the McDonald's above ground except that it would be bulged out from the sides of these big slabs.
Nearby the underground stuff café of the Archive and Records Administration under U.S. National Archives. I wasn't allowed to photograph any records but I was allowed to photograph the cafeteria, and I thought that sounds good to me, because I had lots of photographs and boxes of things. The cafeteria was interesting but what's interesting on this photo and this is a pattern that emerges on the photos around the wall too. You'll see there's a wall there that's clearly underground space and then the rest of the space is all finished area it's just it's like any other building and it seems to be that when people design these spaces they leave a little bit of the underground signifier there just to remind us of where we are.
Unlike this office here where somebody's office there they go to work each day and you can see there's a light shaft coming down it's quite exotic.
Park University has its university underground we'll see a fair bit of it, not all of it, and it also rents out space underground. This is their extra mural distance education center.
You can see again these little pillars and little bit of a ceiling exposed and here again, this cavern pattern of underground design leaving the pillar in there for psychological reasons -- I believe as much as anything, and then the rest of the office looks like it could be anywhere.
Usages for underground space are exotic and varied. So you have things like paint ball underground paint ball, fields this is paint ball here what a great thing to have underground. There's all sorts of weird shapes. You can make a mess, nobody's going to care and so on.
But most of it is storage. So, people are storing things underground on racks and so on.
One of the other interesting areas with this one in Pennsylvania and this looks like it's a building but in fact it's a poly old set for day of the dead which David could probably tell us more about in this interesting film, but a Romero zombie film and it was shot in this space underground and a lot of these underground spaces are used for exotic film locations as I mentioned earlier.
The mines themselves are still operating around these areas so the real estate if you like is expanding constantly as the mine gets developed and there's more and more of a space to commodity.
Vehicle storage is quite common too because it's cheap, it's very, very dry again and you get these weird sort of very old almost archives of cars with flat tires, and RVs with flat tires, and boats that have been there sometimes for many, many years for people just don't want to throw their stuff out. It's a kind of archiving thing. You keep making more and more stuff and it needs to go underground now, really.
Whereas this site here was a lead mine that's been turned into a dive site. So the water's coming in to the site and it's taking out at the same rate when it comes in and it goes to a certain height and you can see there's a floating ramp here, and you can learn how to dive in that water. It's absolutely crystal clear because it's spring water coming into the mine. It's got one fisher net, and you have to feed it when it comes up and you feed it with these pallets. Chloroform pallets and it sort of gobbles them down but it always lives near the surface I didn't see it so I think it's a bit of a myth, but it doesn't get any oxygen because there's no oxygen in the water because it's spring water. It doesn't stir up or anything.
Salt mines themselves are the other type of mine and this is down a shaft. So instead of driving into a mountain the other type of mine goes down a shaft and then it opens. When I went down this mine I went into a little lift and it goes all black and you stand on a pallet lift which is one pallet wood a meter by a meter, or three and a half feet square or something and it rattles down it goes dark and you feel a bit of salt go down the back of your neck, and then a door opens and somebody was there in an office offering me cold water and I think over 100 people were working down there and obviously on the surface there was a whole lot of parked cars in the work place. That's in Hutchinson, Kansas and that's what they're doing down there.
They're storing film mainly and restoring valuable early films from this history of film that we're creating. So this is some strange format I don't know it's not typical film format. It's probably two years of filming or something that's stored down in this volt.
That's about 400 feet underground so it's not very deep it's quite a shallow end. Mushroom fans there's a number of the world's biggest mushroom fans are in Pennsylvania. These are Meadow Lee Mushrooms I think meadow pack, meadow lee and it's a great place to grow mushrooms because it's dark you can make it dump by taking water in there, and it's very smelly when you're down there.
But I didn't spend a lot of time down there, but I did photograph their water supply and for those that are interested in the photography I'm using a medium format camera that's a six by nine centimeter camera, with film on a tripod, and in this case there was no lights other than on the front of a little scooter little like golf cart that we drive around on. So I just pointed the beam of the light in there and lift the exposure open for around about 30 minutes, and I talked to the cat that I was with for 30 minutes about fishing, and with the camera open and that exposed the film to give me this photograph. So the only light there is what you take down. We're getting close now.
So just to briefly go through some of these final ones. I wanted to first have a look at the mines themselves. I got fascinated with the mines themselves.
So, not what was happening to the mines after they were completed but during the process of the mine.
Now this here is a crib an Australian mine called Mount Isa, and it's one of the world's great seven great mines. It's about seven years old and this is over a mile underground, this cavity, and you've seen me sitting in there and it's all refrigerated down and it's very, very hot because as you go to the earth it gets hot. I didn't realize it got so hot so quick. So if you touch the side of the rock it's quite warm so they have to take ventilation shafts there and lots of water and this is a crib it's a photo you can have a look at closer. If you look there's also funny little things that I noticed when I took the photograph little bits and kicks and so on.
Here's another crib room. I got fascinated with this typology these crib rooms and what they look like when they were shown in groups.
You see the big ear shaft going in the mean almost in there and there's orange jump suites there hitting the lunch or afternoon tea.
This photo is quite a useful one to me because it shows this idea of inside outside. I think of these photographs and landscapes, and these are landscape photographs and an architect would say no they're buildings because we constructed them underground as phases. I've had a mixed audience of landscape architects and architects, but landscape architects they know the landscape and the architects they know the buildings but here you can set his idea of an inside office inside and inside space. A rail track said to me that rail track in the building creates a landscape rather than the building itself, if that makes sense.
That one’s on the wall there I won’t say too much about that but you can see the jam movies and very 19th Century looking very rich and industrial places.
The mining is often done now with remote television screens so you [inaudible] need to be the actual face itself. So the machine's working away motorized. You go around the corner and there's a guy sitting on a TV set like a video game who's got a weird.
In New Zealand crib room they’re a bit smaller here. It's the same contained a can off it. The place people go they're a place making kind of signifier though. They go ahead and have their lunch and put the graffiti there and so on.
Beam of light no light there. You have to take it down my head lamps, the miners head lamps going past creating almost sharks of tubes of light again, about a ten to fifteen minute exposure and they're walking past me as I'm talking to somebody with the exposure going on.
I photographed this underground nuclear facility in New Mexico called WIPP, the West Side Installation Pilot Project, which stores cold war waste from the nuclear witness program.
I was surprised to get in there to think I was a foreign alien as I was called, but I did and I appreciated the fact that I was able to do that and go there and so on. And you can see the shafts drive the waste into the pure salt and this is completely constructive site. It's not a converted mine.
Underground power station in New Zealand, one thing about the Zion underground if it's made in the 1960s, it stays like a time warp a freeze frame. Underground space never gets tidied up or reconditioned or refurbished it just stays in that kind of period which is fascinating too.
Again another underground one in New Zealand. We'll go through these fairly quick because they're on the wall, and another one on the wall.
This is under a national park. You can't see anything above the ground except for beautiful pristine native bush and forest but here it's all underground site.
And there’s a colonization of the environment and people bring seeds on their feet they comment on the ferns and things grow again under light bulbs. If there’s no light bulb you don’t get to grow them and you can see another one there.
The person showing me around here said that they only got that green slime growing when they changed the brand of the light bulbs because they were at a different frequency and so on. This is a huge underground power station in New Zealand. Again it's under a lake a terrific looking lake.
You can see here this whirl is looking clean I think, this again, this indicator of the fact that you're underground. It could be anywhere out here except for this little signifying line saying, this is a special place. This is underground and don't forget it I guess.
One title photo in the book not in the project there are some photographs of street county names and city names in New Zealand. This is in France this was a sight that was constructed by New Zealand soldiers below the town of Eres in France in World War I and they tunneled out a number of chalk mines and joined them together so that troops could be stored in there and they'll emerge up into this town and fight the Germans and that's in fact what they did do. So the New Zealand tunnelers had quite of a reputation being a pretty tough breed like moved away from New Zealand to France. Tunneled it all these chalk mines together and they laid it out to look like New Zealand. So all the place names were North South of the Islands and Black was at the bottom and Oakland was at the top and Wellington was in the middle and they had street rather directions to New Zealand town. So it's a fascinating place for a New Zealand to visit in France and they welcomed me there very natural open hands because we were seen as people that went there to help them be liberated so I think it was a fascinating trip. I think that will be it.
That's the lead in for David Albania arrives with the banker, thank you.
And you also say otherwise and I think you'll notice that there are a couple of slides that are not banes everything else are pictures from Albania. Some of them were in the other room some of them were not, and mostly using them for illustration all the apologies Wayne. At the end I will talk about them a little bit in more detail. The presentation is part of a longer essay that I've written for a company in the Albania photographs that came from a trip that Wayne and I took with our families a year ago. We got some last summer and they're also and this explains why besides the fact that -- I'm reading my text, as opposed to, having that classic PowerPoint. So apologies for those of you who'd rather hear people speak from notes and this is part of a larger project that I'm working on as Sarah mentioned called the Banker Fantasy which addresses two basic questions or at least is obsessed with two basic questions that have sort of been gnawing at me for a while. The first of them is what happens to build environments that are made to be indestructible when they become obsolete which is basically what happens with the cold war architecture. What happens when -- and there's the post-apocalyptic part of the talk. What happens when you have the apocalypse does come? Which happens in science fiction or when it doesn't come, but in a sense you're living in a space where it was supposed to have happened. So where you don't need this stuff anymore but you can't rid of it. The second question is what is so compelling about these phases? Why do we build them when for the most part they are proven to be totally useless and why do we visit them after the fact?
The bunker tourism and battle field tourism are growing industries and so I'm fascinated by this idea of what's so compelling about them and in particular I called the banker fantasy because what's interesting especially is we know all about the negative attached to this, but what are the positive desires that are activated by these what seem to be completely negative spaces and I'm continuing to try to figure out why people these phases and I think it's not purely negative stuff there's also positive stuff tied into them and that's the background of the talk -- which I will now begin. Much as its brutally predictable about the legacy of corruption, instability or succession of further territorial leaders but in 1999, 14 years after the death of Albania's leader Andre Bujar and eight years after the end of his nearly 50 year-long regime, two unexpected facts came to light about this most lasting and visible legacy. At the height of the Kosovo war the bankers with which he had blanketed the country were for the first time ever actually put to use. As shelter for ethnic Albanian refugees, as shelter from Sorbian shelves for Albanian villagers living near the northern border and especially as defensive fortifications for a different time the course of the then liberation army and the Albanian army. As one villager put it, "We blamed everything on Bujar, but now theses' bunkers are saving our lives." However when naval forces mistakenly bombed Albanian bunkers instead of the Sorbian ones a kilometer away another myth about Bujar's was exploded literally and it may not have been as useless as it always been thought but neither were they as indestructible as advertised they were blown to pieces. Yes they provided shelter against Sorbian shells and sniper fire but they were not match for the bunker busting fire power of the west.
What is most striking about this episode is the fact that for the first time in their existence Bujar bankers were experienced solely in terms of their function as shelter and fortification momentarily short of the ideological weight that they had born since construction that began in the mid '70s. Whether embodying the bunker mentality of an isolated nation building itself deceased on all sides. The ruin is folly of a paranoid leader for the renewed energy of an irrepressible feature. The bankers had always been in metonymy of the nation. For a brief moment here they were the functional infrastructure of a state at war. There could be worse entry points and do a meditation on this the world's most extreme manifestation of the bunker fantasy, a moment that simultaneously realized and shuttered Bujar's vision of a self-sufficient nation.
Soon after this climactic moment of the Kosovo war miniature bankers began to appear for the first time around Albania -- and you see that there, and that's my snap shot the others are Wayne's. ashtrays and pen holders in alabaster clay originally highly sort after by journalists and eventually to become a stable and souvenirs stalls alongside figurings of Mother Teresa, artisan traditional peasant garb and snow gloves enclosing the figure of the Ottoman-bashing national heroes [inaudible]. The bankers have become part of the national myth and as it fits any myth there is much that is uncertain about them. For one thing nobody will ever know exactly how many were built. We can pretty reliably say that Bujar planned 750 thousand of them, about one for every four of the countries inhabitance in the late '70s. Estimates about how many were built range from around 100,000 to the full three quarters of a million. They were made in three sizes and the first size here. Single fire bunkers [inaudible] notice codices or concrete mushrooms. These are fill [inaudible] bunkers just big enough for a single person with a gun, shaped like an igloo, and made of granite filled concrete reinforced with 13 layers of steel, and then fire points down here globally known as horinges. Artillery bunkers large enough to hold maybe a dozen individuals and assembled out of concrete wedges gathered together into a dome. Nicely orange name, and larger specialty bunkers in the mountains used to store ammunitions and house large numbers of forces and often connected by tunnels. All told, billions of dollars were spent two or three times the raw materials used in Francis line were consumed. Factories around the country were devoted full time to the project for over 10 years.
The entire citizenry was charged with the maintenance of the bunkers and the country was bankrupted. It was a national project modeled on miles cultural revolution and retaining its utter disregard for practical concerns. Never the less despite its ideological affinity to China Bujar bunker fantasy more closely resembles the United States in the early ’60s when every family in the country was urged to build a fallout shelter in its back yard, but while president Kennedy chose against legislating construction and relied on the persuasive power of ideology and market forces he apparently had long debates about whether or not he should require the bunkers to be built and decided that Americans would be more likely to do it out of patriotism. Bujar forcibly mobilized the entire country to carry out an equally implausible and futile endeavor.
Like the Maginot line, however, the bunkers were designed for the content of a previous error. There was a reasonable strategy to their placement all around the border regions as here, overlooking mountain passes and river crossings guarding the entrances to cities towns and villages but that strategy was never going to protect Albania from either of the two super powers. As cultural critics Lever Jijec has argued the role of this bunkers was neither real. As a means of military defense they were worthless or imaginary. They were certainly not built with a pleasurable experience of those trained to use them mind but for purely symbolic reasons. They were certainly not built with the pleasurable experience of those trained to use them in mind but for purely symbolic reasons. The services sign about Albania’s determination to defend itself at all costs. Although [inaudible] is right to a degree, he is articulating the common place regarding the bunkers as an image of Albania. I would argue that their function was both real as shown by the events if 1999. They did provide a certain kind of shelter and imaginary, for the fantasy that they mobilized is a powerful one despite the devastating cost of building and maintaining the bunkers. For not only does the bunker mentality of Albania like that of its mountainous near neighbor, Switzerland, have roots within the national -- far deeper than Hoxha's era. But that same fantasy is what drives the fascination of every visitor to -- and writer about that country who also has to mention the bunkers when talking about Albania, who cannot resist temptation as they try to make sense of Albania’s unique position within Europe.
there is no question that the bunkers encourage a compelling fascination on the viewer and there's a perverse pride even among Albanians in having succeeded in dotting the landscape with over half-a-million in concrete mushrooms or "turds" as another writer less charitably or perhaps more accurately terms them. but even more, there is the bazaar fact that these bunkers as much as the regularly beautiful landscape that they blight and which would otherwise constitute some of the most unspoiled natural landscape in Europe form a common bond between Albanians and the outside world. Just as they were built to mediate the impossibility of communication to block out the outside world, now the bunkers mediate the relationship with outsiders and to a certain degree stand in for the insurmountable [inaudible] experience born to the country's decade long isolation. You will never see an Albanian sitting on top of one of these painted bunkers, at least an older one as this English tourist is doing. This is a hitchhiker that we picked up who sent me this photograph later. That many Albanians are aware of this year's fascination with the unique fact of the bunkers is clear from the makeshift conversations. On the seashore like this one and to restaurants and bars catering primarily to foreigners and while I can perhaps accept that tourists might the Borsh seaside hamburger joint in business -- Borsh is a big seaside resort, it's harder to believe that the clientele of Bunkerei -- which is up here, a bar and club built around an artillery bunker in Bilsht 10 kilometers outside of Korçe [microphone noise], way off the European tourists' path in the country's southeast corner, hence, it's solely of outsiders. This is got to be made for locals. The fantasy of the Hoxha bunkers is in fact composed of a blend of homegrown paranoia and imported forms and that's the role it continues to play in the country [microphone sounds].
The domed form of the bunker has deep roots in Albanian culture. The tortoise nickname for the pillbox bunker derived from the nektonic shape of the eastern Herman's tortoise, a common sight in the scrubby fields of the high central valleys. It equal features in the local style of icon painting which following the byzantine tradition places a nativity scene in a domed cave rather than the manger. Similarly, the dome echoes through rather spacial forums especially the haystacks the dot the countryside often alongside ruined bunkers being used for storage and livestock but also in painted mosques and even in arches over at Turenne Service Stations. The tortoise and the nativity cave, with their ancient symbolism of autonomy and of shelter synchronized perfectly with Hodge's conception of the bunkers. The bunker mentality has equally deep roots in Albania's history which recounts in nearly constant sequence of invasions and occupations notably by the ancient Greeks, the ancient Romans, the Bulgarians, the Venetians, the Ottomans, and Mussolini's Italy. The landscape itself criss-crossed from border to border by mountain ranges running roughly north to south reinforces this sense of isolationism. Albania has been a country [static] of castles and fortifications for millennia. The bunkers are only the latest manifestation of a fortress mentality getting back to the ancient Illyrians. At the same time, the very forms of this fortress architecture derived from constant invasion. The mountain passes form a crucial trade road from east to west and between Europe and Asia while also concentrating populations and commerce in key strategic sites. This isolationist people has also always been a hospitable and welcoming one just as the bunker’s presence testifies to the openness of the country as much as to its desire to be closed.
Consequently, while the form and the ideology of the bunker are indebted to an extensive local history, they equally participate in the global post-war bunker fantasy of the Cold War both spatially in the way they're put together and ideologically. I think this is directly related to the deep ties first with the Soviet Union. I was a lifelong admirer of Stalin and later with China. From the former came the containment strategy of the Iron Curtain which was a bunker fortified boundary line as well as a metaphor across Europe with the Berlin Wall, its western outpost and most visible symbol. From the Chinese came the elimination of all army ranks and the basis of Civil Defense and civilian partisans who were responsible for the upkeep of the bunkers and were mobilized annually for training drills. The Chinese also left their physical mark on the system of fortifications, excavating massive Air Force tunnels into the mountainside with camouflage doorways able to swing back to allow their planes hypothetically to intersect NATO or Soviet bombers, sort of James Bond version of the bunker fantasy. And neither of us, I think, found these pictures of them but supposedly they exist. I have seen photos in magazines.
Their equally strong resemblances to the Swiss Civil Defense Systems. As also to the American campaign to build fallout shelters in the '60s, like Hoxha's system, the Swiss mobilized their entire citizenry for the construction and maintenance of their shelter system. Rather than industrialized, however, the system was legally mandated within the construction industry. No building in Switzerland is allowed to be built without facilities for sheltering 110% of the population of that building. The near total participation in both these schemes distinguishes Albania and Switzerland from the American prototype. This is an entrance to their extensive Civil Defense system in the Alps and I was told when somebody found me photographing, told me I could be arrested for actually taking the photographs. Interesting. I think he also told me to destroy them but as you can see I ignored that part. Nevertheless, one could argue that the post-war U.S. construction of the interstate system, and a vast network of secret nuclear facilities demonstrated an investment in infrastructural security on an analogous scale. The difference is that the U.S. model wholly separated the government system from the private one. Still they shared an ideology of the bunker fantasy that participation in the security initiative would not only provide individual peace of mind but unite the nation on behalf of a single cause.
And while these are archival photos from the early '60s and while the material expression of that initiative in the U.S. was predominantly the missile defense system, it's ideological emblem was indubitably the individual shelter which brilliantly melted the consumerist nuclear family of the '50s with the Cold War rhetoric of total mobilization and constant alert and a survivalist strand of classic American individualism.
If the example of Switzerland demonstrates a degree to which the bunker fantasy exceeds the mechanism of domination -- as which it so often served, the equally extreme example of Albania lays fair the destructive lunacy of this fantasy. As Albanian novelist Ishmail Kadare put it in his allegorical tale, "The Pyramid," the construction of the Egyptian pyramids was an exercise in political domination, quote "Spawning not thousands but hundreds of thousands of little pyramids." They were called bunkers and each of them, however tiny it may have been in comparison, transmitted all the terror that the mother of all pyramids inspired, and all the madness too. 

The construction of the Egyptian pyramids was an exercise in political domination, "spawn[ing] not thousands, but hundreds of thousands of little [pyramids]. They were called bunkers, and each of them, however tiny it may have been in comparison, transmitted all the terror that the mother of all pyramids had inspired, and all the madness too."


As tourists, reporters, and travel writers cross the newly-opened frontier in the late '90s, their fascination of the bunkers gave rise quickly to restaurant and bar and to the soon ubiquitous souvenirs -- as I mentioned. But it was not until the new millennium that forward-looking projects began to represent the bunker as a resource to be put to use, rather than, merely a blight to be ignored whenever possible. The bunkers thus mediated not only the Albanians' reckoning with their own past, but also the encounter between Albanians and the long-separated world around them.
We can distinguish four forms in which the bunkers persist as a spatial phenomenon in Albania. As ruins in the landscape, as lift spaces put to local use, as spaces converted to new uses proper to the consumption of the bunker fantasy and finally and this is not Wayne's photograph. I'll talk more about this one later. As spaces converted to reflection of the bunker fantasy and on bunkarization as such,
Once you recover from the initial shock of brutal concrete in a natural landscape, the bunkers do have the potential to be an aesthetic experience all their own. The shapes echo the courage of the hills or the seaside rocks worn smooth by the waves or clefts in the mountains, exposed to decades of rain, snow and wind, the granite [inaudible] concrete takes on the patina of natural stone. Toppled over or cracked open, the ruin shelters lizards or [turning pages] fill with water to provide habitat for frogs -- as you can see in one of the photos in there. Not that you would ever mistake them for natural constructions, the shape is too artificially symmetrical and the rusted [inaudible] [static] pieces together are too prominent. But especially far from habitation, many of the bunkers have become what the philosopher Theodor Adorno termed, "Culture Lanschot," ruined constructions returning to nature. As such we can view them as aesthetic objects in nature just as the romantics viewed the gothic ruins around them. Like the ruins are in Aristocracia Empire in the 18th and 19th Century, the faded and vandalized bunkers testify to the reminiscence of once mighty institutions. If we think longer on this, they may also remind us that the seemingly pristine nature surrounding them is equally traces with human enterprise and labor as Wayne was discussing earlier and especially in Comstock, New Zealand, the trees are reforested, the mountain passages are seen with trails, every path leading into a neighboring country has been fortified and guarded for a millennium. And of course, enormous Schuman effort and engineering skill have been required in order for the bunkers to have been sited so remotely in the first place. In fact the further they are, remotely in nature, the more human effort was required to put them there. The ruined bunker does not discard its message of human domination, rather it reminds us that while individual empires or regimes may fall to ruin, their meaningful traces persist. Few of the remote
bunkers are anything other than Culture Lanschot in this sense.
The closer to human habitation, they’ve been put to more diverse uses. Farmers have requisitioned the bunkers scattered around village and town boundaries as impromptu stables for sheep and cows. Climate controlled and sheltered from the elements, the bunkers make useful storage and stabling facilities like smaller versions of the salt mines. Tipped into the sea, their solid mass makes for excellent jetties and breakwaters. More individualized appropriations also manifest themselves. Along the post, bunkers have been painted with the bright colors and designs beloved of beach bums everywhere. Along the highways, bunkers sport graffiti, painted advertisements, and stenciled political slogans, although I confess, I have not had this one translated yet in my Albanian [inaudible]. While the steady flow of global capital into urban centers and resorts such as Tirana, Durres, and Borsh has brought enough financial incentives to remove most of the mushrooms from them and the rest of the country, the slower and more uneven pace of development has made appropriation the rule of the day. What was always useful about the bunkers, their strength and durability, their circular shape, their shelter, and security is appropriated for the contemporary for the Albanians. Like much else about their lives, there is not much beauty in them, but there is use value.
Perhaps the most consistently aesthetic appropriations of the bunkers are found along the seaside. This is not only in the painted ones, as I showed you earlier which is just both an appreciation of their strange morphology and otherwise unwelcome presence and a desire to make them somehow more befitting a space of leisure and pleasure. Submerged in the water and overgrown [inaudible] greenery, their shapes echo the stones around them and their odd spaces create niches and seats for swimmers and divers. These seem more accidental appropriations than conscious conversions but they do testify to a positive potential inherent in the legacy of Hoxha's follies. These conversations recognize the practicality of adapting a pre-existent structure and the potential associations of the bunkers with pleasure and local quaintness, the folly or oddity typical of the strategies used by resort attractions to set themselves apart from the competition. While they are certainly appropriating Albania's history as part of their intents to attract custom, there's nothing necessarily self-conscious or reflective about that appropriation. In the beaches as on the farm, the local inhabitants are making use of what the work provides them whether it's a distinctive flourish or as a practical space.
Recently however, evidence has begun appearing that Albanians along with foreign visitors are also consciously appreciating the creative potential offered by the sheer number of remaining bunkers. The concrete mushroom projects may give you four of their transformation photo montages, possibilities of what to do with the bunkers. Regards to bunkers and their physical visibility as a way of calling attention more broadly to what they call questions of territorial transformations and development strategies, as Albania becomes ever more reincorporated into the rest of Europe and subject to the pressures of outside capital. Concrete mushrooms originated as a thesis project by two Albanian graduate students, Elian Stefa and Gyler Mydyti, studying in Milan. Noting the preponderance of bunkers and locations favored by tourists, mountains, beaches, urban outskirts and the attraction they hold for those tourists, Stepha and Mydyti proposed converting them into a nationwide infrastructure for promoting and supporting tourism. Depending on size and location, they could be readily and cheaply converted to everything from information points, news and souvenir kiosks to B and Bs and cafes or even public toilets as down here, sanitizing an already ubiquitous practice. For a younger generation visiting from abroad or seeking ways to network with the rest of Europe and revitalizing reinterpret their own country’s heritage, the bunkers are the perfect emblem of a new relationship between past and future. On the one hand, they provide an opportunity to grasp the meaning of a traumatic period of recent history which left deep scars, not only on the landscape and the economy, but in the psyche of anyone in the country over 40 and which many Albanians still prefer not to discuss directly..
On the other hand, they constitute a unique opportunity not only for global branding but for infrastructural development. If the country is full of half a million turds is undeniable and it is undeniable that there's a kind of a shunned Freudian tourist fascination with the mites staring at road kill as you roar past in a fast car. But the bunker fantasy is a more complex emotion than merely this kind of shunned Freudia. The fantasy of total mobilization for self-determination and the reorganization of a social space is never exclusively negative no matter how devastating its consequences might be. The tourists recognize the utopian element far more easily since they are spared having to reckon with the initial costs. After the younger generation who've experienced the trauma only second hand, reconciliation with the physical traces of the trauma is one path toward emotional and psychological reconciliation, with the trauma itself
The other component of the new project is their economic realism. They're not only symbolic gestures or memorials but projects aimed at sustainable development. Stepha and Mydyti are not proposing memorials; they're proposing a comprehensive tourism infrastructure. It is as grand a utopian as Hodge's original impulse, perhaps, but it also makes intuitive sense and partly because the project never quite loses the absurdist quality of a situationist joke summed up by the iconic photo of their model bunker hostel, a white bed clad in pristine linens looking out of a concrete bunker window into mountain landscape. But it seems to work perfectly. Are they merely dressing up the desiccated excrementive totalitarianism in pretty new capitalist ornaments as the situationist probably would have argued or are they proposing a genuinely novel appropriation of a landscape of trauma?
Although early infrastructure conversion projects tended to focus on the redevelopment of factories into art galleries, come shopping malls in generally abandoned urban neighborhoods during the '70s and '80s, more recent projects have been framed either as park space like the Promenade Plantia atop the viajar de Zar in Eastern Paris, Manhattan's High-Line, or the Poughkeepsie Railway Bridge over the Hudson River or as museums and galleries like Munich's House der Kuntz which was built by the Nazis to exhibit the decadent art of the Weimar Republic and included an extensive bunker system underground. It's now a big gallery space or Trento's La Galleria -- which I show you two images from here. Where Jeffrey Schnapp and Elisabetta Terragni converted a pair of 1,000 foot long tunnels cut through the Dolomite Mountains into a multimedia history of the province focusing on the working class and the experience of World War One. They currently have a project to convert a submarine tunnel built by the Soviets into a museum in Albania.
In his work, Wayne Barrar makes it clear that the act of photography is also a form of intervention into the landscape as he put in discussion of expanding some terra project imaging any landscape including any spaces, his imaging a contested space in some way. All photography planned is essentially political.
Wayne's Albania photos are expressly adept at capturing the ruined bunkers as mediating spaces between nature and technology. In one photo, the shape of the foreground bunker echoes both the line of cloud covered mountains rising behind it and the gas station down the road to the left. Half of the bunker roof sprouts clods of turf and it shelters wild flowers while the other half exposes crumbling semantic kin to the scattered gravel of the road that leads back into town.
In another of the fore grounded iron brackets of mushroom bunkers so remote as to escape vandalism, effortlessly summing up the political history of a cleft in the distant mountains leading to the border with Greece.
Other photos testify to the quotidian presence of the bunkers. The rectangular headlights of an old Audi, Albania’s full of luxury cars from northern Europe that mysteriously made their way southward during the height of political chaos and organized crime in the '90s. They repeat the empty gaze of the bunker to us right now as the way to make the same connection as we were talking about the exhibit. Although the Audi gets they both are wrapped in canvas or connected to canvas, although the Audi does get the nice additional touch of the colored blanket. Exposed wires, a clothesline strung across the tiny patio and a satellite dish complete the picture of a typically confused snapshot of global capitalism in a developing country. The bunker as always is both perfectly at home and utterly out of place, reminding us about everything in this picture that we shouldn’t be taking for granted.
Or finally, there's the hardworking man on the sea sided doors with his café loading rubble into a wheelbarrow in preparation for a forever unknown task. The pile of rubble has settled by the laws of physics and the zeal of the photographer's eye into a temporary shape of a mushroom bunker. We can imagine this gradual disappearance from the scene as the worker transforms into something new off screen. Meanwhile, the frame is dominated by a complex and labyrinth in construction which holds at its center just visible there, the shape of an artillery bunker that apparently has determined the shape of the layers of and stucco and wood that have accreted around it as the result presumably of the same man's prior abor. A satellite dish tucked away in the corner suggests he's getting by okay while a tidy fence and well tended flowering shrubs flow with pride and a home built around a bunker.
Wayne’s photos beautifully capture the ambivalence that surrounds these and other examples of the bunker fantasy and appropriates of this used infrastructure. An ingenious compromise between preservationist and commercial interests, infrastructural redevelopment has become a significant force in the 21st Century landscape. Albania may perhaps be an extreme case of the contradictory emotions and motivations of the bunker fantasy, but like Wayne’s photographs today has much to tell us about the global [loud bang] pull toward the 21st Century. [Applause]

Now we have time for questions or comments about the show or about the two presentations.

**Audience:** Thanks so much. It’s just fascinating and I guess I would be curious to know as to how you were both drawn into this. When you talked, you showed us a sort of biography of images. But I’m wondering kind of what was in your mind and then you also have kind of a trajectory of working with underground spaces. But I wonder if you might say a little bit about the bunkers in particular why that was sort of a logical next step for both of you.

**Speaker:** Well, for me, I was sort of dealing with this converted mind idea and this restoration regeneration of land and so on. But I went to a conference in Manchester and -- an organization called SRF -- I think it was called, wasn’t it? It stood for something like Sustainable Renewable Future or something like that. And it was at Manchester University and David was speaking.
I read a little bit of David’s writing quite a bit. I was really keen to meet him because I really liked his take on analysis of contemporary and historical underground space. And that of the two of us I guess was the sort of initiation of some of the over letting things we’ve done. But since the first stage of that kind of meeting and discussing the bunker because of Albania and David a very much unique stage of writing. So for me it was fascinating to be exposed to these by David because I’ve never come across the Albanian bunkers before. Once he got me onto them, it was whoa. We’ve got to go there.

**Speaker:** We decided that we’d invite him to New Zealand to the opening of the exhibit and to contribute an article to the catalogue and I think that’s when we started thinking about this trip. But I can’t remember where I happened upon them but I, you know, sort of surfed the internet all the time looking for weird underground spaces and different ones. I picked out that nation and the bunker comes from Indian the previous books on the underground, I was talking mostly about how in the 19th Century, a new kind of underground replaced the older, sort of underworld, organic and more sort of cave-like associations, or hell-like associations with what was supposed to be this pristine, pure, inorganic space like the space of a bunker which is sealed off from the elements, sealed off from everything and especially sealed off for any kind of -- any kind of nature.
But it's also in a sense, always the same and what fascinates me about bunker architecture in particular is it is almost always identical. It's all made of molded concrete. Bunkers look pretty much the same everywhere. The Albanian ones have a slight peculiarity because of the mushroom but there's still something endlessly reproducible about them and yet they also accrue specific meanings in different parts of the world where they get put down and I've been trying to figure out how to think about, I suppose the contemporary built environment as embodying somehow this paradox between endlessly reproducible architecture. So much of our architecture looks the same. I mean if you just think of some your recent university buildings. I mean some of them could only be here; others could be on any campus in the country. And yet, they are both alien that way. But they also become part of the campus and there's a weird tension there which I think somehow the bunkers captures. And I've resisted assuming that the lived part, the part that we associate with the spaces locally is the only good part and that the monolithic endlessly reproducible part is the bad part imposed by the evil, you know, whoever built them and had no thought for humanity which is the modernist reading. So what I'm partly trying to figure out is what are the sort of subjective desires brought into making something that looks totally non-subjective and how can we be compelled by that idea.