



www.visionsofthecity.com

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN MYSPACE AND NOSPACE

Kevin Biderman

For Kant space is really just an apparition, a way for us to structure our reality. It is interesting then to note that like other words which get tossed around willy-nilly such as 'freedom' and 'democracy' – space is so instantly understood and pigeonholed and yet so difficult to truly define.

"I need some space," says the cliched commitment phobe in a desperate attempt to flee a relationship. Inside they scream – "I need some space without you in it! I need my own personal space!"

MySpace! - the Murdoch infused multi-participant reality TV show pretending to be a website. The final frontier of space! New and improved space! Cyberspace - cutting straight through the boundaries of space, making physical distance irrelevant. Building networks, connecting people, giving the underdog a chance to market their work, themselves, their talent.

And yet this very personal, very informal space seems to exist at the detriment of other spaces. Recently, a friend of mine told me about his experience on an interview panel. "The first thing we do when we get a CV," he said to me with a wry grin, "is to check the name on MySpace and Facebook." Personal space invaders! I sit back and watch as the wall between work and play slowly melts. Once you buy into this way of living, of existing, there is no turning back. You regulate your MySpace ... you regulate yourself. You regenerate yourself in a new form, a more acceptable form. Your unacceptable form starts to wilt.

For me in London the commonly discarded or rejected space offers the deepest insight into our current climate. Sometimes things are better understood by what they try not to be, by what has been left to wither, by what is being ignored.

While they can seem sad, lonely and forgotten, at the same time the spaces I photograph radically refuse regeneration. There is a stubbornness inherent in their negation of the modern world. Yet there is also a sense of futility to their struggle.

The immediate area around Whitecross Street in London's Clerkenwell offers me a huge source of inspiration. It's an area of intense regeneration. Underlining this is the Catch-22 of the contemporary city – the poorer areas are fed money to regenerate, yet regeneration often pushes the poor into exile. Shopkeepers no longer can afford rents, neither can residents. A community disappears.

The spaces I document are awaiting their re-fit. They stand as cracks in the polished veneer of the affluent city. Their existence reminds us of a silent exodus. Soon these spaces will be glossed over, their value increased, their memory forgotten. Relics of an analogue world soon to be digitised.

Kevin Biderman is a photographer and lecturer living in London. Samples of his work can be found on his website:
www.kbiderman.com

