

PORTFOLIO

## Jade Doskow: Lost Utopias

By Jean Dykstra





Above: ©Jade Duskow, *St. Louis 1904 World's Fair, Louisiana Purchase Exposition, Flight Cage, View 2*, 2013. Courtesy Tracey Morgan Gallery/ Previous spread: ©Jade Duskow, *Montreal 1967 World's Fair, Man and His World, Buckminster Fuller's Geodesic Dome with Solar Experimental House*, 2012. Courtesy Tracey Morgan Gallery



©Jade Duskow, *New York 1964 World's Fair, "Peace Through Understanding," New York State Pavilion (Fresh Paint)*, 2017. Courtesy Tracey Morgan Gallery

During their heyday in the 19th and early 20th centuries, World's Fairs were grand, ambitious events that introduced throngs of visitors to a utopian future with exhibits and architectural wonders meant to suggest "the world of tomorrow," as the 1939 World's Fair in Flushing, Queens, promised. Little thought was given, though, to what would become of those monuments once the fairs were over, and they were often left to the forces of weather and neglect.

Photographer Jade Duskow has spent more than a decade photographing the remains of those fairs around the world – the Atomium in Brussels, Buckminster Fuller's Geodesic Dome in Montreal, the Unisphere

in Queens, and Seattle's Space Needle, to name just a few. On view through July 28 at the Tracey Morgan Gallery in Asheville, N.C., *Lost Utopias* is also the name of her book, published in 2016 by Black Dog Publishing in London.

Duskow has been drawn to buildings that exist in a kind of limbo – "architecture that has outlived its original intention," as she puts it – since she lived in Red Hook, Brooklyn, where gentrification has transformed the once-gritty industrial neighborhood over the last decade. In 2006, Fairway brought organic produce and Indonesian Sulawesi coffee to the warehouses along the waterfront and two years later, Ikea arrived. Dos-

kow photographed buildings and vacant lots in Red Hook, finding beauty in architectural eyesores. Inspired by Robert Adams and some of the New Topographics photographers from the 1970s who redefined landscape photography, she was also influenced by photographers like Andrew Moore and Robert Polidori, whose large color architectural photographs she came to admire when she worked at LTI/Lightside Photographic Services while an undergraduate at NYU.

But her interest in World's Fair sites began in 2004, when she was traveling in Spain and came across the site of the 1992 Expo in Seville – "just acres and acres of half-abandoned postmodern pavilions," as

she puts it. "It was quite bizarre and captivating." She began searching out fair sites around the world, making well-composed, faintly melancholy photographs that often accentuate their surreal aspects. The Atomium in Brussels, for instance, was constructed in 1958 to depict an atom of Iron Ore magnified 165 billion times; in her 2007 photograph, it looms up behind a faux Dutch building that holds a Pizza Hut. In her 2014 photograph of Flushing Meadows, Queens, a rusty model of an airplane from the 1964 World's Fair perches diffidently on top of a shrub, a bit of anthropological evidence inviting us to contemplate what past peoples dreamed the future might hold.



©Jade Duskow, *Brussel's 1958 World Fair, A World View: A New Humanism, Atomium at Night*, 2008.  
Courtesy Tracey Morgan Gallery