

Paul Ferman



Shelter



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King Street Gallery  
on William

10am – 6pm Tuesday – Saturday

177 William St Darlinghurst NSW 2010 Australia

T: 61 2 9360 9727 [kingst@bigpond.com](mailto:kingst@bigpond.com)

[www.kingstreetgallery.com.au](http://www.kingstreetgallery.com.au)

Directors: Robert Linnegar and Randi Linnegar

member of  
**acga** australian commercial  
galleries association

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Registered Valuer with the Australian Government Taxations Incentives for the Arts Scheme

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*Shelter* 330 Lamda print 100 x 200cm Edition of 7 2008

# Paul Ferman

## Shelter (2008)

### The Immolation of the Followers of St Motorino (2009)

by Jonathan Turner

The ten panoramic photographs which make up Paul Ferman's Shelter series reveal a fractured sense of time and space. The initial imagery was completed during different train trips, in 2005 and 2007, from London to Paris and from France to Germany, during which the artist sat by the window with his camera and photographed road bridges from below as the trains hurtled to their destinations. Later in his Sydney studio, Ferman created new diptyches from these photographs, manipulating the colours, reversing the imagery, creating mirrored compositions from similar-looking railway bridges in different countries.

The bridge has long been used as a metaphor, but instead Ferman focuses on the disparity of usage, specifically the hidden spaces below bridges. This is the underbelly of contemporary engineering, looking at the negative spaces aligned to transport and commerce. These are non-spaces, used by people forced to the edges of society and at the margins of architecture.

Ferman's is a social comment, in which nothing is presented as real, where the colours are exaggerated to signify a surreal vision of nature and unhinged space.

"The real idea is how our idea of space and real estate changes, from a time when an overhanging rock or a cave was seen as first-class accommodation at the early stages of man's development, to a time when similar structures in the urban landscape - the under sides of bridges - have become shelters for the homeless and the fringes of society, spaces used for semi-legitimate reasons, for drugs and prostitution" says Ferman. "The sheer scale of the bridges and the brutality of the shapes, the black concrete masses next to tiny trees, pylons, cables, metal stanchions and dark, threatening spaces, create an almost prison-like atmosphere."

Shelter is characterised by strong diagonals and parallel power-lines.

The camera captures many spatial planes - flares on the glass, reflections of the lights inside the carriage, sunlight, skies and shadows blurred by speed. Some colours seem to be solarising and blowing out, with the pink and yellow clouds purposely referencing the paintings of Tintoretto, as a historic link to the Renaissance scenes of moral upheaval beneath turbulent skies.

"When traveling at 350 kilometres an hour, forms outside the windows are elongated and distorted. The incredible sense of visual pace changes what is recognizable. It is similar to the way in which many people view the homeless - you don't see them even though they are there."

This exhibition, Ferman's second solo at the King Street Galleries, also presents three works from his recent series, The Immolation of the Followers of St Motorino, conceived in Rome. In these statuesque portraits, Ferman mixes the sacred with the profane, contrasting faith with fable. The works are inspired by the myth of the virginal nymph Daphne fleeing the lustful advances of Apollo. Out of pity, the gods turned her into a laurel tree at the last moment. Virtue is a woody prize. The remnants of what Ferman sees as a wholly implausible fate can be seen in his manipulated photographs.

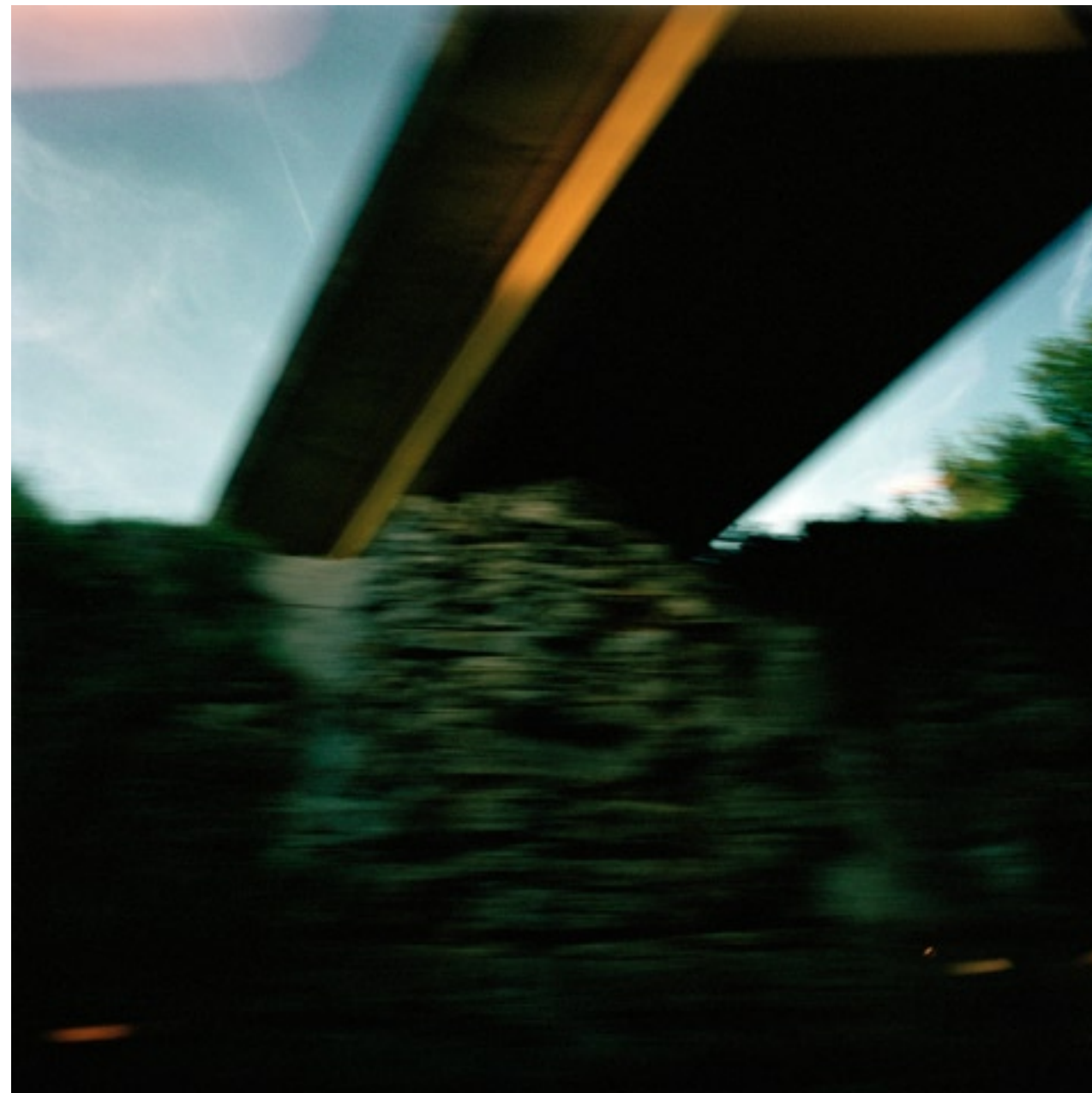
The white marble statues guarding the bridge leading to the Roman fortress of the Castel Sant'Angelo have been morphed with the burnt remains of a group of torched Vespas he photographed in Piazza Farnese. Just as in mythology when Daphne was transformed into a tree, as represented by the famous early 17th Century sculpture by Bernini from the Borghese Collection, in Ferman's religious iconography, his mock saint is posed on a pedestal made from the burnt relics of his fervent followers. Their "charred bones" (in reality scorched brake coils, mudguards and gas-tanks) slowly merge with the draped clothes and feathers of the angels, soft forms represented in hard stone.

Each angel holds a piece of pivotal evidence directly related to the Crucifixion - a nail from the cross, the shroud of Jesus, the crown of thorns. In an ode to transformation, mythical beings, sacrificed believers and religious messengers meld into a single form. In this way, just as in his Shelter series, Ferman seamlessly blends several social hierarchies and forms of representation. His is a world simultaneously capturing the ancient and the contemporary, the angelic and the violent, the dichotomy of faith and myth.

[www.paulferman.com](http://www.paulferman.com)



*Shelter 339* Lamda print 100 x 100cm Edition of 7 2008



*Shelter 335* Lamda print 100 x 100cm Edition of 7 2008



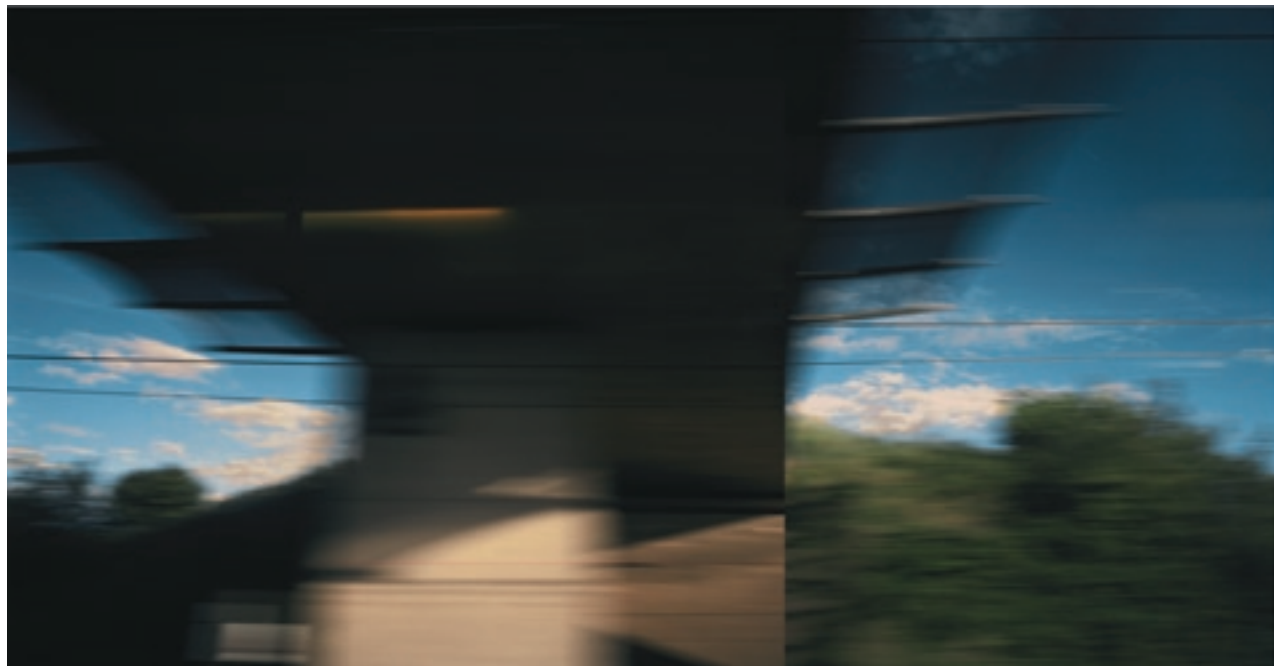


*Shelter 332* Lamda print 100 x 185cm Edition of 7 2008



*Shelter 331* Lamda print 100 x 200cm Edition of 7 2008





*Shelter 333* Lamda print 100 x 160cm Edition of 7 2008



*Shelter 338* Lamda print 100 x 145cm Edition of 7 2008









*Shelter* 336 Lamda print 100 x 180cm Edition of 7 2008

## John Ferman

### Born

1948 Born Hamburg, Germany  
 1950 Arrived in Australia  
 Presently living and working in Sydney, Australia

### Education

Fine Arts Degree, University of Sydney

### Solo exhibitions

2010 *Shelter*, King Street Gallery on William  
 2008 *Necessary Illusions*, Galleria InternoVentidue, Roma  
*Surface*, King St Gallery on William, Sydney  
 2007 *Necessary Illusions*, M.O.P. Gallery, Sydney  
*Proximity & Abstract Particulars*, Depot 2 Gallery, Sydney  
*Abstract Particulars*, Il Ponte Contemporanea, Roma  
*Trance, Surface, Civilise*, Span Gallery, Melbourne  
 2006 *Civilise*, M.O.P. Gallery, Sydney  
*Domestic Sculpture*, Span Gallery, Melbourne  
*Mapping Mother & Surface*, Depot Gallery, Sydney  
 2005 *Domestic Sculpture (The All Australian Show)*, Il Ponte Contemporanea, Roma  
*Of Uncertain Nature*, Bencivart Gallery, Pesaro, Italy  
*Tube Talk*, Room 35, Gitte Weise Gallery, Sydney  
 2004 *Survey*, Front Room Gallery, Singapore  
 2003 *Proximity*, Il Ponte Contemporanea, Roma  
 2002 *Palimpsest*, Il Ponte Contemporanea, Roma  
*Palimpsest*, Galleria Dina Carola, Napoli, Italy  
 2001 *Untitled*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney  
 1999 *Mitosis – meiosis*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney  
*Mitosis – meiosis*, New Zone, Ortona, Italy  
*Mitosis – meiosis*, Studio d'Arte Contemporanea Pino Casagrande, Spoleto, Italy  
 1998 *Mitosis – meiosis*, Studio d'Arte, Contemporanea Pino Casagrande, Spoleto, Italy  
 1996 *Untitled*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney  
*Untitled*, OPTS Gallery, San Francisco  
 1995 *Untitled*, Studio d'Arte Contemporanea Pino Casagrande, Roma  
 1994 *Untitled*, Gallerie Anita Neugebauer, Basel, Switzerland  
 1993 *Untitled*, Michael Nagy Fine Art, Sydney  
 1989 *Untitled*, D.C. Art, Sydney

**Selected group exhibitions**

2009	<i>In Paradise</i> , Manly Art Museum
2008	<i>MiArt 08</i> , Milano, Italy
2007	<i>BaTTiTi</i> , Scuola S.Vitale, Ostuni, Italy Bologna Art Fair - Il Ponte Contemporanea
2006	<i>Exquisite Corpse</i> , Peleton Gallery, Sydney <i>Transfigure</i> , Melbourne Art Fair
2005	<i>Twenty</i> , Wessell + O'Connor Gallery, New York <i>Felons</i> , Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin <i>Riparte XI</i> , Roma <i>Tripod</i> , Spazio ex Deco, Teramo, Italy <i>The All Australian Show</i> , Galleria Lipanjepuntin, Trieste, Italy Room 35 - 8th Birthday, Gitte Weise Gallery, Sydney <i>Cologne Art Fair</i> , Bencivart Gallery
2004	<i>Riparte X</i> , Roma <i>Ether</i> , Il Ponte Contemporanea, Melbourne Art Fair
2003	<i>Celebrate</i> , Il Ponte Contemporanea, Roma
2002	<i>Welcome - 02</i> , Palazzo delle Esposizione, Roma
2001	<i>Welcome - 01</i> , Palazzo delle Esposizione, Roma
1999	<i>Simbiosi</i> , Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Gallese, Viterbo, Italy
1998	Wessell + O'Connor Gallery, New York <i>Uomo Ambiente Territorio</i> , Vasto Museum, Italy
1997	<i>Riparte III</i> , Roma <i>Globe-Trotter</i> , Il Ponte Contemporanea, Roma
1996	<i>Art Amsterdam</i> , Westergasfabriek, Amsterdam <i>Riparte II</i> , Roma <i>Click</i> , Contemporary Photography, Ripa Residence, Roma <i>John, Paul, Annie + Maree</i> , Il Ponte Contemporanea, Roma
1995	<i>Riparte I</i> , Roma
1990	Hallmark Photographic Awards, National Gallery of Victoria, (touring exhibition)
1988	Hasselblad Masters, Sydney
1987	Hasselblad Masters, Sydney

**Collections**

Macquarie Bank, Sydney  
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris  
Michael Shapiro Gallery, San Francisco  
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney  
Galerie Montenay, Paris  
Galerie Serieuze Zaken, Amsterdam  
Chartwell Collection, Christchurch, New Zealand  
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

**Awards**

2007	Ulrik-Schubert Photographic Award Gold Coast City Art Gallery Pat Corrigan Acquistive Award, Center of Contemporary Photography, Melbourne
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