

# Visions of America:

Jeff Liao & Christoph Morlinghaus

1 May-8 June 2008

Crane Kalman Brighton is pleased to present the work of two young photographers – Jeff Liao and Christoph Morlinghaus – showing for the first time together in the UK. The exhibition entitled '**Visions of America**' looks at the contrasting view of the country adopted as home by two young 'outsiders' to America. The exhibition runs from **1<sup>st</sup> May - 8<sup>th</sup> June 2008**.

Both photographers, who have moved to the US from Taiwan and Germany respectively, have created contrasting series of images of urban landscapes and city scenes that go far beyond traditional documentary photography. Although both artists' work nominally deals with the same theme, they show two very different visions of their adopted homeland.

While Liao's America is full of the rich diversity of different cultures and people - as represented by New York – a vibrant and bustling city in constant motion, Morlinghaus' work takes a very different approach. Instead of the busy streets in Liao's images, his work focuses on the buildings and interiors of the city itself – empty of its people and industry - but an equally representative symbol of America.

**Jeff Chien-Hsing Liao** emigrated to the US from Taiwan in 1999, aged 18. He studied art and photography at the 'School of Visual Arts' and the 'Pratt Institute of Art and Design' in New York. His first major project is '**Habitat 7**' which won first prize in **The New York Times Magazine's 'Capture the Times'** Photography Award. The photographs, taken over a two year period, look at the ethnically diverse communities that have grown up along the IRT7 subway line which runs between Queens and Manhattan.

Having travelled the route for more than seven years, the 7 train became his inspiration, seeing in it a reflection of the rise of early human civilizations in river valleys - a similar pattern of human settlement since the line was first constructed in the early 1900s. The train allowed an improved quality of life for twentieth century immigrants, enabling people to form their own distinct communities on the outskirts of the city.

Using a large format 8 x 10 negative, Liao takes several pictures of the same location over the course of a day. He uses digital technology to combine different elements into images that are at once sweeping in scope, and packed with minute details, allowing him something of the discretion of a painter in composing his pictures. His work has been enthusiastically received critically with exhibitions at **The Queens Museum of Art** and the **Houston Centre of Photography**. Works have been acquired for the **George Eastman House** and **Harvard Business School** collections and a monograph was published by Nazraeli Press in 2007.

**Christoph Morlinghaus** is a German photographer whose work is occupied with large scale pictures of architecture, urban landscape, and their use of space. He cites the great German graphic designer Otl Aicher as a primary influence on his work. Born in 1968 he studied design and photography at the 'Fachhochschule School of Design and Photography' in Dortmund. He started working as a photographer in 1994 and moved to the US in 2002.

His work is primarily focused on the man-made landscapes of his adopted home - neatly defined interior spaces and monument-like structures - environments where people don't seem to exist. The often large scale work mirrors the size of the cities and places that are his subjects, captured in almost intimate detail, giving the familiar an almost surreal, hyper-real feel.

His most recent work concerns itself with 'idle' spaces – motels, roller-coasters, parking lots - specialised architecture constructed with a specific reason to be, but documented out of season and when out of use, in small-town resorts in New Jersey. The images are contact prints from in-camera negatives using a large format camera to provide an incredibly truthful, un-manipulated representation of the subject – almost sharper than the eye can see. Morlinghaus has just been selected as one of the winning photographers to be featured in **AP23 (American Photography 23)** alongside Nan Goldin, Jean Paul Goude and Simon Norfolk.

**Visions of America** will run from **1<sup>st</sup> May to 8<sup>th</sup> June 2008** at Crane Kalman Brighton, 38 Kensington Gardens, Brighton BN1 4AL - [www.cranekalmanbrighton.com](http://www.cranekalmanbrighton.com)