



of additional information." Dixcot offers places such as abandoned manors, derelict factories, fully furnished castles, and even a fishing trawler. "A lot of people come to us with their homes, buildings and nightclubs looking for extra income. Nightclubs, for example, are closed during the day, so they could complement their revenues by renting them for shoots."

Sometimes, a location requires additional levels of scouting. "For a job last summer, we had to find rooms of computer servers," says Calverley. "These rooms are very delicate and highly secure. We had to visit the locations, meet with people and negotiate access. It took weeks."

This process is often simplified when the photographer is backed by an agency such as Getty Images' Orchard, which represents a roster of high profile photographers for commissioned shoots. "We cover the whole gamut of location management services for our clients, whether this means that clients come to us for advice for

locations around which they can build a brief, or whether we seek out the perfect tailor-made location for a specific creative," says Sascha Rickerd, a producer at the agency.

"The photographer on each job is invariably the second creative – their vision is key to building towards a successful job – and each photographer has their own idiosyncratic eye," Rickerd adds. "We work hand in hand with the photographer, building towards a full location brief."

Most of the scouting work is done internally, she says. "We have to make sure that we not only find the perfect location that suits everyone involved in the job, but that we can actually gain approval, the relevant permits and source suitable kit within a narrow time frame. This can sometimes be a wee bit tricky."

But, she adds, one of the hardest challenges, especially in London, is sourcing unknown locations that give a unique feel to the job in hand. "The involvement of celebrities [in a portrait shoot] and the travel

constraints this imposes can also be really great fun when looking for an affordable country mansion within a 10 minute cab ride of Soho," she deadpans. "That said, possibly the best part of any location manager or producer's job is when we can present solutions to the more complicated of briefs – whether this means a fish-and-chip shop, golf course or busy London market, all sourced, negotiated and passed by the client for approval within the space of a weekend, or tracking down the perfect road for an elephant and his mahout to wander down, or an area in South Africa that can double for an Afghan village."

But sometimes, says Calverley, the best location can materialise at the turn of a corner. "You get up early, go for a drive, and the best things you find are often surprises you didn't expect. There's an element of luck in all this." *BJP*

[www.juliancalverley.com](http://www.juliancalverley.com)  
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BEST OF

## Top 10 world locations

**Charles Veley's pick** of the world's most photogenic locations

He's the self-styled "world's most travelled man", having long since visited all 193 countries recognised by the UN, and now working his way through a further 678 islands, atolls and protectorates he's listed on his website, [www.mosttraveledpeople.com](http://www.mosttraveledpeople.com). On last count, Charles Veley was up to 815 of the total 871. Having made a bundle with a dot.com business, he retired at the end of the 1990s while still in his mid-thirties and set out on a life of adventure. A good man to ask, therefore, about where in the world are the most spectacular places to photograph. In no particular order:

1. Berner Oberland, Switzerland
2. Angel Falls, Venezuela
3. Na Pali Coast, Kauai
4. Tofino and Environs, Vancouver Island
5. Lemaire Channel, Antarctic Peninsula
6. Bouvetoya, South Atlantic
7. Positano, Italy
8. Anse Victorin, Fregate Island, Seychelles
9. Just about anywhere in India
10. San Francisco, US



**Eugenie Shinkle** is a photographer, writer and senior lecturer in photographic theory and criticism at the University of Westminster. She is currently planning a conference on *Emerging Landscapes*, which reconsiders the idea of landscape by exploring the relationship between space and image. *Emerging Landscapes* will take place from 25-27 June and keynote speakers include photographer Gabriele Basilico and cultural geographer Stephen Daniels.

OPINION

## Lie of the land

**British landscape photography** dropped its "chocolate-box pastoralism" in the early 1980s in favour of a new radical vision exposed by the *New Topographics* exhibition. Eugenie Shinkle explains its continued influence in the era of the "world risk society".

Is there such a thing as contemporary British landscape photography? Looking back over the last 40 years, the question is not as strange as it might seem.

By the 1970s, landscape photography in Britain had moved away from the chocolate-box pastoralism that had come to prominence during the inter-war years, refashioning itself after the highly crafted, spiritualist work of American photographer Minor White. Drawing on the transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, White's approach was rooted in a philosophical tradition that had little relevance for the late 20th Century British consciousness. Even so, his work – along with that of other American photographers such as Harry Callahan, Ansel Adams and Wynn Bullock – was seen as a welcome departure from a moribund European landscape tradition.

By the early 1980s, though, critics were targeting White's British disciples, condemning their approach as old-fashioned and derivative and calling for a landscape photography *Page 86* ➔

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underpinned by more contemporary concerns. Once again, this transformation was outsourced to America, with photographers and critics turning to the radical vision of landscape presented in the 1975 *New Topographics* exhibition at the George Eastman House [now touring again, and featured in last month's *BJP*].

Acknowledged as the first exhibition of "critical" landscape photography, *New Topographics* was not primarily about landscape as such – curator William Jenkins intended it as a statement about the documentary style. But the housing developments, strip malls and industrial spaces photographed by Lewis Baltz, Robert Adams, Joe Deal and others emerged in a period of renewed interest in the built environment. The generic spaces of capitalism they shot were universally familiar in a changing world, in which communion with nature was less of a concern than the growing influence of industry and infrastructure on the shaping of the land.

### Deadpan neutrality

This radical new approach turned out to be even less distinctively British than the work inspired by White. In the catalogue essay to the 1981 Arnolfini Gallery exhibition of a selection of the *New Topographics* work, Paul Highnam remarked on the difficulty of locating the images, both conceptually and geographically. Their deadpan neutrality was an ideal platform for articulating social, political, and environmental concerns that transcended ties to a particular place, and despite their specifically American context, the spaces they depicted were instantly recognisable as simply "Western". Within a decade of the exhibition, the work of Baltz, Adams, Deal and their colleagues had come to stand for a generalised "New Topographics" aesthetic – shorthand for a critically engaged landscape photography that eschewed pictorial concerns in favour of more pressing issues.

This approach continues to this day, in the UK and beyond. The *New Topographics* aesthetic has been embraced by photographers all over the world, speaking to a cultural imagination that now goes beyond the local and the national. In the 35



*New Topographics Mobile Homes, Jefferson County, Colorado, 1973 (above), © Robert Adams, and Jamboree Road between Beckman and Richter Avenues, looking northwest (top) © Lewis Baltz, both featured in the influential George Eastman House exhibition of 1975, which is now touring the US and Europe again. Both pictures from George Eastman House collections, courtesy of Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.*

years since the exhibition, the global landscape has been profoundly transformed by the advent of new media technologies, a major restructuring of nation states, and the collapse of easy distinctions between urban and rural, human and natural agency. In an era of digitally enabled, simultaneous histories, unstable financial markets and shifting geopolitical realities, landscape has changed its nature.

The *New Topographics* exhibition not only signalled a shift away from national landscape imagery, it marked the end of the belief in an external nature beyond humanity's reach. Contemporary critical landscape photographers are faced

with different and more complex concerns – environments marred by conflict, industry and ecological upheaval, places linked together by complex infrastructural networks and spaces shaped by the movement of global capital. Concerns around nature and identity have given way to different issues, many of them now articulated around the key question of global risk. The idea of a "world risk society" – a society reconfigured by pervasive political, financial, ecological and technological risk scenarios – has emerged as an important way of imagining global consciousness.

Drawing on the visual and political syntax of the *New Topographics* work, but also informed by a resurgence of interest in metaphor and allegory, today's critical landscape photographers approach the representation of space and place through the broad themes of global risk and loss of terroir. Focusing on the familiar rather than the exotic, the environments they depict could be around the corner, or on the other side of the planet. Today, landscape photography is grounded in a newly global sense of place, and in a desire to incorporate both the near and the distant into our collective sense of place, belonging, and identity. *BJP*

[www.emerginglandscapes.org.uk](http://www.emerginglandscapes.org.uk)  
[www.eastmanhouse.org](http://www.eastmanhouse.org)