

# PROJECT 25

## Thomas Demand

### 2012

*The Dailies*

23 March - 22 April 2012

Commercial Travellers' Association, MLC Centre Sydney City

## BIOGRAPHY

German artist Thomas Demand is known for his life-size recreations of environments made entirely from paper and card that he photographs and then destroys. Often using imagery taken from the mass media, Demand's re-created environments—always devoid of figures yet often displaying evidence of recent human activity – achieve a disquieting balance between the convincingly real and strangely artificial. The effect of these uncanny reconstructions is to destabilise our understanding of the sites, which we 'know' so well through reproduction.

## FACTS

- The Commercial Travellers Lodge, the site for Project 25, was created for the Commercial Travellers' Association in the mid 1970s, by Austrian-born Australian architect Harry Seidler.
- *The Dailies* occupied an entire hotel floor of the CTA club building.
- The works were displayed across the 16 bedrooms that extended in pairs from small passageways along a circular corridor, creating a labyrinthine experience for the visitor.
- Positioned on the wall above each single bed, the transient scenes of *The Dailies* captured insignificant moments and objects, suspended in time like the environment around them.
- Demand's carefully formed paper and card sculptures are photographed and then destroyed. In Project 25, they took the shape of small details from the everyday environments of modern life, indoors and out.
- *The Dailies* were relatively intimate in scale with a semi-matte finish. They were printed using the slow and labour intensive dye-transfer process.
- The selection of images and stories included fabricated memories, histories and philosophies.

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#### PROJECT OVERVIEW

For the 25th Kaldor Public Art Project, Thomas Demand presented a new series of images, *The Dailies*, within the unique environment of the Commercial Travellers' Association (CTA) club, part of the MLC Centre designed by celebrated Australian architect Harry Seidler in the mid 1970s. Demand, known for his full-scale recreations of environments made entirely from paper and card that he photographs and later destroys, so that they remain only as images, occupied an entire hotel floor on the CTA building's level 4. His installation, displayed throughout the bedrooms that extend out from a circular corridor, had a disorientating effect.

In recent years, Demand has begun to move beyond traditional exhibition models for his work by transforming the gallery spaces, with carefully designed wallpaper for his exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery in London (2006), or with a complex installation of curtains as a background for his works at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin (2009-2010). His Kaldor Public Art Project extended out to a totally new environment, exploring an extraordinary architectural setting for his works, a first for the artist and a unique experience for Sydney.

The series of works that Demand presented for this project, *The Dailies*, capture everyday moments and objects, their title referring to the daily rushes from film, and the leftover images from the cutting room floor. Demand likens them to Japanese Haiku poetry, simple fragments strung together to inspire reflection. Appearing like simple, instantaneous moments, *The Dailies* series are crafted with the utmost care and are printed using the labour-intensive dye-transfer technique that only a handful of specialists in the world can achieve. Dye-transfer printing is one of the oldest colour photographic processes, peerless for its richness, depth and fidelity and Demand has used some of the last remaining papers and materials of their kind to print his works via this rare technique, a method that will be soon unavailable for future generations of artists.

The installation, *The Dailies*, also included collaborations with Miuccia Prada and US author Louis Begley (whose novels include *Wartime Lies*, *The Man Who Was Late* and *About Schmidt*).

Kaldor Public Art  
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Photo: Anna McKay



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Photo: Paul Green

