Exploring Community Memory and Multiple Understandings of Landscape: Activating UCLA's Dept. of Geography Air Photo Archives

Westwood Business Village & UCLA campus, 1929.
Spence Air Photos Collection, UCLA Air Photo Archives

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Applying archival theory to visual resources

Photographs as visual records in the art historical “continuum”
Aerial survey photographs placed in context with bird’s-eye views & contemporary landscape and art photography

“Activating” visual resources to engage shared cultural memory and promote collection use
Site-specific presentations as outreach opportunities to inspire research, reflection, conversation, and activism
UCLA Department of Geography
Benjamin and Gladys Thomas Air Photo Archives

*80,000+ prints and over 130,000 negatives on glass & film, spanning years 1918-1978
Coverage of nearly every state, with an emphasis on California and New York

New York City, 1931
Fairchild Aerial Surveys Collection, UCLA Air Photo Archives

Golden Gate, San Francisco, 1934
Fairchild Aerial Surveys Collection, UCLA Air Photo Archives
“Recordkeeping processes fix the content and structure of records and link them to ever-widening layers of rich metadata about their multiple contexts of creation and use...this enables them to be accessed, used and interpreted in other spacetimes...Records can never be set aside from spacetime as they exist in and through different spacetimes.”

Sue McKemmish, “Recordkeeping in the Continuum.”

Fairchild pilots and camera equipment, circa 1920s
Fairchild Aerial Surveys Collection, UCLA Air Photo Archives

Rudolph Ackermann, 1829.
Detail from aquatint *Bird's Eye View from the Staircase & the Upper Part of the Pavilion in the Colosseum, Regent's Park.*

Ocean Park Pier – Santa Monica, CA, 1926
Spence Air Photos Collection, UCLA Air Photo Archives
Edward Burtynsky, *Oil Fields #19ab, Belridge, California, USA*, 2013.

© Edward Burtynsky, courtesy Metivier Gallery, Toronto/Flowers Gallery, London.

Baldwin Hills Oil Field, with Heinz 57 advertisement in concrete, Los Angeles, 1925.

William Cross Collection, UCLA Air Photo Archives
Cities are artifacts...there is nothing inevitable about streets and buildings, parks and squares. They are made by people, and their particular arrangements represents our limitations—and our dreams.” Witold Rybczynski, *Cities From the Sky*

Drive-in theater at Westwood and Pico Blvds., Los Angeles, 1938

Spence Air Photos Collection, UCLA Air Photo Archives
Detail from untitled camera test, Pico Boulevard at 4th Avenue, Los Angeles, c. 1940, and same corner in 2015 Google Street View image.

Spence Air Photos Collection, UCLA Air Photo Archives; Google Maps.
Center for Land Use Interpretation bus tour of the Puente Hills landfill, Los Angeles, 2008.
CLUI photo, http://clui.org/

Echo Park Film Center Filmmobile screening on Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, 2016
http://www.echoparkfilmcenter.org
Central Business District, New Orleans, 1937

Fairchild Aerial Surveys Collection, UCLA Air Photo Archives
Union Passenger Terminal, New Orleans, 1953

Fairchild Aerial Surveys Collection, UCLA Air Photo Archives
Higgins Oil Company, New Orleans, 1952

Fairchild Aerial Surveys Collection, UCLA Air Photo Archives