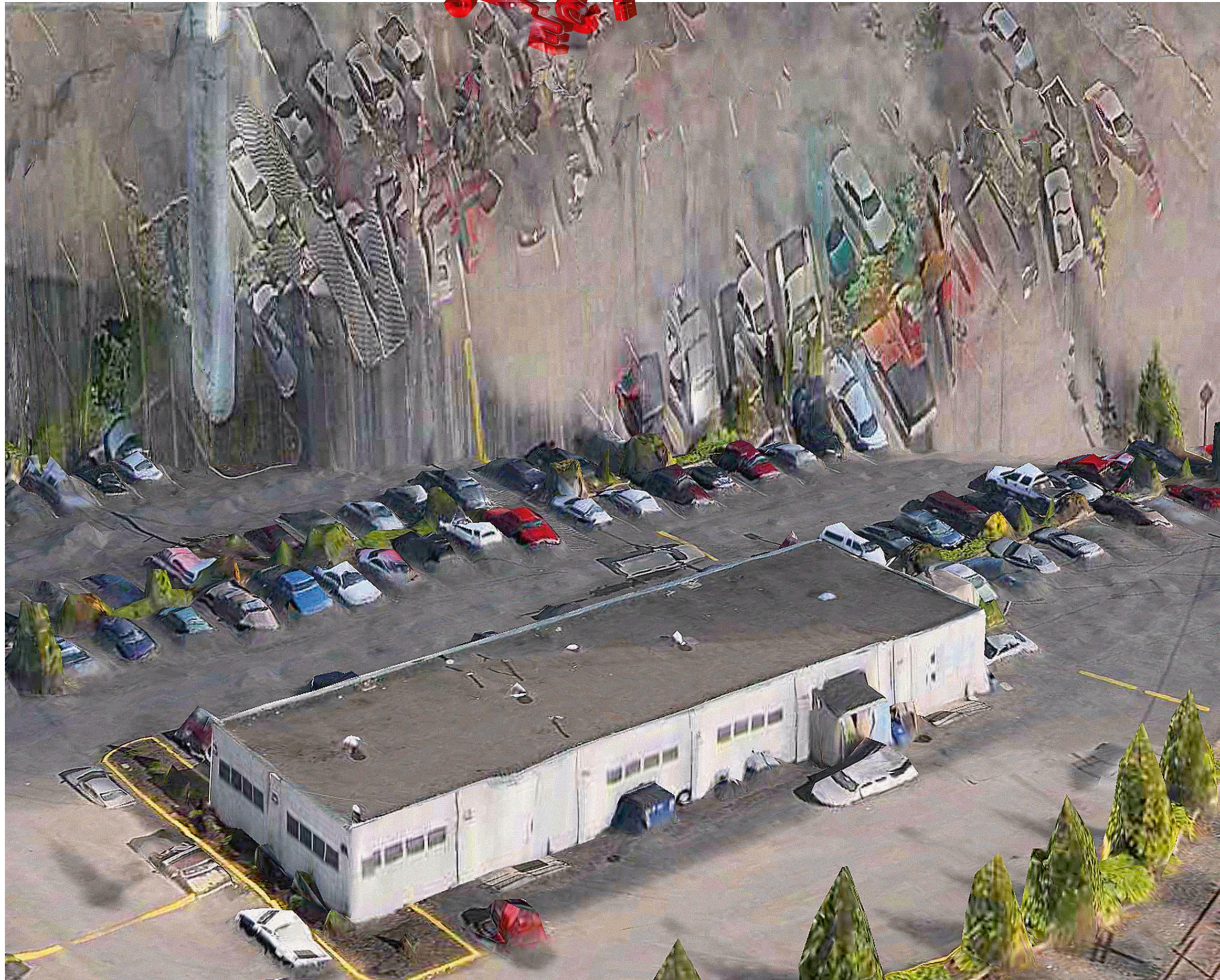


THE RENDERING EYE **SUBJECT**



THE RENDERING EYE: *Urban America Revisited* presents 3D screenshots of the urban U.S. as they appear in Apple Maps. Streets melt into buildings, cars and boats turn into shadows, trees into sculptures, containers into wax. Although the software's algorithms trace the contours of the world with mimetic precision, the spooky universe of Apple Maps is baffled by reality. The software, originally developed for seeker missiles, was declassified a few years ago. It creates 3D color models from aerial photography, and it's accurate up to a range of six inches. Yet because of glitches, the images it now produces look more like the dystopian metropolises of *Blade Runner*, the Expressionist architecture in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, or Camille Pissarro's Impressionist boulevards than real life.

The images artist Regula Bochsler has compiled for the publication are abstract, machine-generated, and cold. However, not least because of their "mistakes," they are also poetic and painterly. Bochsler and historian Philipp Sarasin explore the implications of these algorithmic cityscapes, emphasizing the impact of this technologically advanced rendering of our "new world" on photography and the media.

032c spoke to Bochsler about her fascination with the images.

What attracted you to these images?

REGULA BOCHSLER: I had never seen such pictures of the world – the mixture of hyperrealism and surrealism as well as the gloomy, almost post-apocalyptic ambiance.

Is there something seductive for you in the fact that the technology's glitches are so apparent?

The glitches are what fascinated me. It seems as if the machine had become an artist, altering the world according to its gusto and inspiration. I began searching for images like a photographer wanders across a city with a camera, choosing frames and skewing contortions, manipulating the angle of vision that the program forces upon its users.

Can you explain the technology developed to render these images and its relationship to the military?

Apple is secretive, so little is known about the technology. What we do know is that it was originally developed by Saab's military technology division in Sweden and that it involves declassified technologies for target-seeking rockets and missiles. As a spin-off from Saab, the firm C3 Technologies further developed the software for civilian applications, and it was acquired by Apple in 2011. The aerial pictures used for Apple Maps are captured from airplanes that carry a specially designed set of cameras that take overlapping pictures of the ground, comparable to Google's street-view cameras. The images are used to calculate the 3D shape and size of the terrain, buildings, bridges, etc.

Is that something that interests you, the fact that it's not civilian technology?

If we follow the dictum of the late German media theorist Friedrich Kittler that all media is the "misuse of military equipment," it should come as no surprise that Apple Maps's renderings are closely related to military technologies. At the same time, the sight of our world



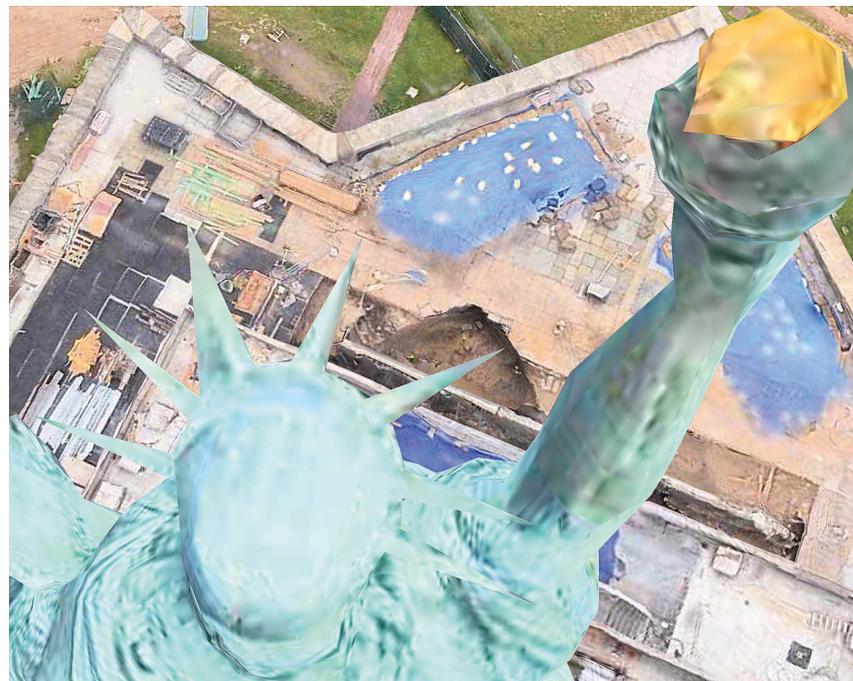
from the air has been a fascination for us since they built the first balloon. Apple Maps's Flyover App is the cheapest and most comfortable way to fly and view the world from above. On my "discovery flights," I tend to forget that this program has been developed for military use. I almost get drunk off its visual appearance. Maybe it's comparable to when

Félix Nadar, the French photographer and balloon pioneer, took the first aerial view in the history of photography. But unlike Nadar, who risked life and limb and whose wife was severely injured in a balloon accident, I do this while comfortably sitting on my sofa.

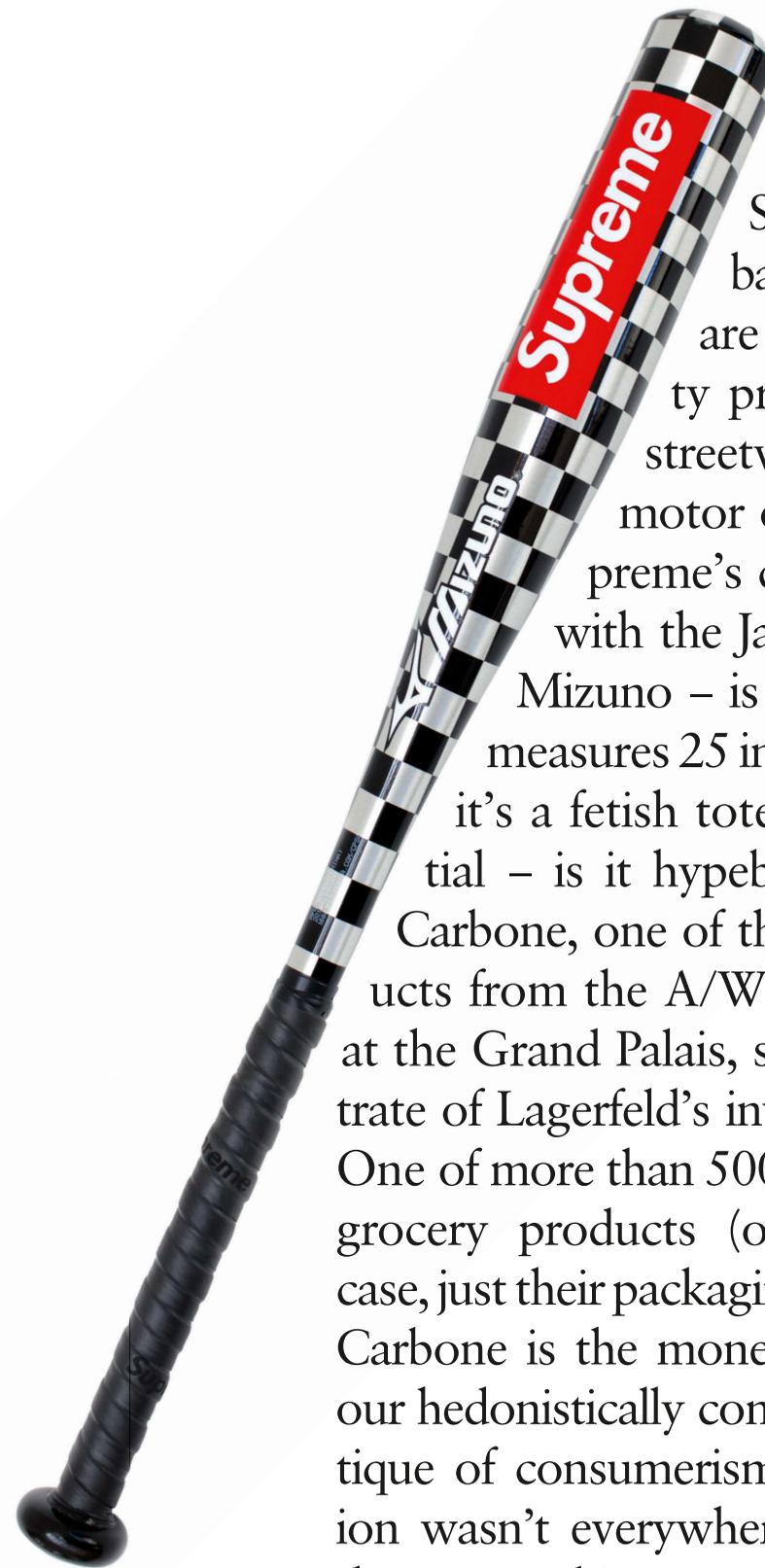
The subtitle of the book is "Urban America Revisited." How have these images altered your perception or understanding of America?

Knowing and seeing are not the same thing for me. Although I knew that American cities have been laid out for private transportation – that is, cars – I was stunned to see how it had actually influenced the layout of its cities. I also discovered city fringes, all the places where no visitor ever sets sail – the waste dumps, the crumbling factories, the purification plants, the car mortuaries, the scrap yards, and the wastelands. I developed a kind of morbid fascination for the dark side of our civilization. In many ways, these places are terrible, but visually they are thrilling.

The Rendering Eye: Urban America Revisited is published by Edition Patrick Frey (Zurich, 2014). www.editionpatrickfrey.com



SWEET



SUPREME's aluminum baseball bat and CHANEL's Coco Carbone are this season's statement specialty products. Clever yet sinister, the streetwear slugger and (bogus) luxury motor oil are ambiguously fashion. Supreme's checkered metal bat – produced with the Japanese sports-equipment brand Mizuno – is useful in a little-league game (it measures 25 inches [63 cm] long) but for adults it's a fetish totem full of miscellaneous potential – is it hypebeast of headstrong? The Coco Carbone, one of the most cherished one-off products from the A/W 2014 Chanel Shopping Center at the Grand Palais, suggests the black-lube concentrate of Lagerfeld's inversion of high and low culture. One of more than 500 branded grocery products (or in this case, just their packaging), Coco Carbone is the money shot in our hedonistically common critique of consumerism. If fashion wasn't everywhere before, these two objects signal its BP-spill and the ovation of the crowd cheering.



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