Pace/MacGill Gallery is pleased to present “Where in the World?,” a group exhibition featuring photographs by Diane Arbus, Bill Brandt, Richard Benson, Harry Callahan, William Christenberry, Robert Frank, Paul Graham, Mark Klett, Duane Michals, Richard Misrach, Nicholas Nixon, Robert Rauschenberg, Michal Rovner, Lucas Samaras, Frederick Sommer, Hiroshi Sugimoto, and Garry Winogrand. The work on view explores photography’s particular ability to describe and convey a sense of place. Whether referencing an immediately identifiable location or one that is conceptual and abstract, each photograph encourages the viewer to contemplate – or decipher – the physical context in which the picture was taken.

Numerous photographs present a travelogue of foreign locales: Richard Benson captures the classical architecture of Italy, Duane Michals constructs his own pyramid in Egypt, and Fazal Sheikh transports viewers to the sacred Hindu pilgrimage town of Vrindavan, India. Alternatively, otherwise commonplace settings become extraordinary: Lucas Samaras metamorphosizes the domestic interiors of his New York City apartment into a hallucinatory, technicolor realm and Richard Misrach transforms rocky outcroppings along the Oregon coast into glowing glaciers. Emmet Gowin’s aerial photographs initially appear to be biomorphic, abstract compositions, but soon reveal alarming views of the earth’s surface degraded by harmful irrigation practices. Avoiding traditional compositional devices, Frederick Sommer and Nicholas Nixon also present unorthodox landscape views: Sommer captures the rocks and cacti populating a horizonless Arizona desert and Nixon’s beloved Longwood Mall in Brookline, Massachusetts is represented by a lush close-up of grasses and clover.

Certain images provide such an oblique reference to place (save for their titles), that the viewer is left to imagine and reconstruct the picture’s specific coordinates. Harry Callahan and Hiroshi Sugimoto’s vast expanses of sand and sea present unobstructed views of Cape Cod and the Bay of Sagami. Michal Rovner’s archetypal house is an abandoned Bedouin residence in the Israeli desert, and William Christenberry’s colorful buildings are windows into rural Alabamian life. Furthermore, many of the settings in which figures are posed remain stubbornly elusive: Bill Brandt’s subject recedes into the shadows of an enigmatic London interior and Harry Callahan’s portrait of his wife, Eleanor, is framed by an impenetrable darkness.