



INDUSTRIAL ICON

THE EYE IN THE SKY

Photographer Stephan Zirwes has miraculously discovered beauty in some very ugly places

> Like all artists, photographers are always striving to show us something new. But like so many of our natural resources, we are running out of newness at an alarming rate. Seven years ago, German photographer Stephan Zirwes took a helicopter ride out of curiosity to see how things look from above. And what he found was so magical that he hasn't stopped going back up for more ever since.

Not only has he discovered that

things look different, which anyone who has ever been on a plane could have told him, but that huge, iconic industrial locations lost their grimness and became compelling, even beautiful, when looking down at them. Like this facility (pictured above) at the port of Hamburg, with its hypnotically colourful acreage of neatly aligned lorry containers.

Zirwes takes his pictures by hanging beneath a helicopter in a

safety harness with two 50-megapixel cameras, which enable him to capture details that even a few years ago he could only have dreamt about. His pictures are also affected by the times when he can rent the helicopter, something he has little control over. "Sometimes long shadows are very good at giving something another perspective," says 41-year-old Zirwes. "But it can also destroy the symmetry."

From the air, Zirwes has shot

building sites, ski slopes, warehouses and stockyards, all of which take on an appeal they totally lack when viewed from the ground. "You can find the same thing all around the world," he said at an exhibition recently in the Gulf. "There are huge ports here in Dubai. You can also find them in Europe or America, but nobody ever sees them like this. Nobody sees how beautiful they can be."

See more of Stephan Zirwes' work at www.stephanzirwes.com