

Kantonen: 'Cities beginning to look the same'

21 February, 2014 By Rakesh Ramchurn

Photographer Minna Kantonen says the lack of diversity in new green spaces will have same effect as Starbucks or MacDonald's had on the high street

Kantonen's photographic work explores fauna in large cities and is currently being shown in an exhibition called Urban Vistas at The Foundry Gallery in London. She said that she wanted to explore urban connections with nature and to start a conversation about how we design our green spaces.

Kantonen, who grew up in Finland but moved to London 16 years ago said: 'There is a lot of new build, and every time we do a new build, we plant a group of trees, which is obviously good for the environment. But these "lollipop" trees feel out of place, and they don't seem to grow or change from year to year.'

She added: 'The old tradition of tree-lined streets saw different trees used. But now things are beginning to look very similar. We use the same trees, planted in the same manner. Everything is low maintenance, rather than chosen for diversity.'

'Cities are beginning to look the same. So it's not just that they all have a Starbucks or a MacDonald's, but they all have similar trees too. You almost can't tell if it's London, Berlin, Paris or Helsinki.'

Kantonen said: 'I would like to see more diversity in green spaces, and spaces that allow for more interaction, rather than just decorative spaces.'

'Most people now live in cities, and our connection to nature is something we should be investing in.'



Urban Vistas (Paris). Photo: Minna Kantonen.

Urban Vistas

The Foundry Gallery, 39 Old Church Street, London SW3 5BS

Until 27 March 2014

Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm

Admission: Free