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Gallery

SCENE

Gallery Sur
"Ocean Series"
by Winston Swift Boyer

A Matter of Photographic Perception

Winston Swift Boyer Offers His Vision
of Realism and Abstract Scenes

BY MICHAEL CHATFIELD

"I consider myself a straight shooter," says fine art photographer Winston Swift Boyer. He's not referring to his tendency toward being honest—he is that—but rather to the fact that in his work he depicts the real world around us, as opposed to fantasy. Even his abstract pieces (the current "Ocean" series) are composed of images reproduced pretty much how they appeared in his viewfinder, sans Photoshop. "I endeavor not to add, not to subtract," he adds, "I merely give the viewer a new perspective."

That's particularly true in his "Views" series. These are sweeping, panoramic photographs of city and landscapes that have been compressed and enhanced in the computer, becoming a sort of enhanced reality. "He presents a new perspective on what's familiar," says Rohana LoSchiavo, director of Gallery Sur. His dramatic "Twin Peaks, San Francisco, 2010," presents a vision of the city that straddles the realistic and the surreal. It's a massive work, in terms both of physical size and the staggering amount of information it contains. The piece is both soothing and vaguely unsettling; it's familiar...yet it's not. It's evocative of the thematic thread of Boyer's work, about presenting us with new perspectives on familiar scenes.

"In terms of perspective, technique and diversity," says Gallery Sur owner David Potigian, "Winston is one of the most unique and powerful

photographers I've ever come across." Potigian would know: In addition to being a businessman, he's an accomplished and well-regarded fine art photographer in his own right.

Indeed, Boyer's oeuvre has encompassed several distinct phases. There's the "Mask" series of the 1980s, comprising still-life scenes of early 20th century French pantomime masks; "Vertigo," dizzying depictions of hilly San Francisco architecture inspired by painters Richard Dibenkorn and Wayne Thiebaud and the cinematography of Alfred Hitchcock; and "Paradise Lost," studies of Lower Manhattan graffiti juxtaposed with buildings and other elements. The latest, the aforementioned "Ocean" series, is at first blush a radical departure from his previous work.

Abstract, yes. But with a twist. "The 'Ocean' series is abstract," says LoSchiavo, "but it's not threatening because there's a reference for the viewer's mind—it's nature." This series presents painterly views of sunset skies over the Pacific, shot from Boyer's home atop Garrapata Ridge. The pieces remind many of the work of mid-century Abstract Expressionist painter Mark Rothko. "I didn't see that at first until I started sending it out and people said 'Hey, that reminds me of Rothko,'" Boyer says. The photographer was of course familiar with Rothko's work, as one of many



"I have always photographed in a painterly manner," Boyer says, "and consciously thinking that way." That statement is highly evident in his current "Ocean" series.





artists whose style and technique he had studied and admired. "I immerse myself in art I like," he muses, "and it eventually bubbles up in my work."

Although this latest series is relatively untouched by digital manipulation, others, especially "Views," couldn't have been limned any other way. "Everything I do is things I could have potentially done in the darkroom," Boyer says. "Of course in Photoshop you have much more sophisticated tools." Regardless of how it's processed later, a work of photographic art comes down to what was initially captured in the moment—it's still established by the artist's eye. "I have always photographed in a painterly manner," the photographer says, "and I consciously think that way."

"Winston is an artist who has such diversity in his style," Potigian says, "and he's constantly bringing new perspectives to us." "It's exciting to represent an artist who's constantly evolving," adds LoSchiavo.

Winston Swift Boyer is represented exclusively in Carmel at Gallery Sur on 6th Avenue between Dolores and Lincoln. 831/626-2615. Visit www.gallerysur.com.



"Winston is an artist with an amazing diversity of style," says Gallery Sur owner David Potigian. Boyer's photos now grace permanent collections at museums such as the Chicago Art Institute and the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.