

Portraits of Places

November 2-December 22, 2017

Barbara Mathes Gallery is pleased to announce Portraits of Places. This exhibition will present works that engage with specific places, exploring how we understand and represent history, memory, and experience through the physical world. This exhibition will include works by Etel Adnan, Billy Al Bengston, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Pizzi Cannella, Allan D’Arcangelo, Jan Dibbets, Damien Hirst, Joe Goode, Karen Kilimnik, and Mario Schifano.

In Jan Dibbets’s *Orvieto* (1989) a photograph of the rose window of Orvieto’s 13th century Cathedral is shot at an angle and stripped of its original context. Presented on a dark, monochrome background, the photographed window becomes an utterly unfamiliar, floating, near-abstraction.

In contrast, Damien Hirst’s 2007 work of the same title presents the same historic place—Orvieto’s Duomo—as an evocative concept. Using meticulously arranged butterfly wings as material, Hirst’s composition recalls elaborate cathedral windows while his fragile, ephemeral material reinforces ideas of transience and mortality.

Rather than public, historic places, Billy Al Bengston, Allan D’Arcangelo, and Etel Adnan evoke places with personal significance to the artists. Billy Al Bengston’s *Venice* (1974) is named after the Los Angeles neighborhood where the artist lives and works. Bengston’s work features an iris appropriated from the Iris sugar brand logo which reminded Bengston of the fluttering, animated mass used in old Dracula films. While Bengston’s work does not ‘represent’ Venice, the conflation of an everyday consumer image with the iconography of Hollywood has a distinctly West Coast flair.

Allan D’Arcangelo’s *Double Overpass #2* (1960) explores the difference between the appearance of a place and the experience of it: D’Arcangelo contrasts an aerial postcard photograph of a highway interchange in the vicinity of Buffalo, NY—where he was born—with a driver’s view of the horizon and lines of grass in graphite that suggest a glance at the landscape passing by.

Experience and observation inform Etel Adnan’s *Untitled* (2014), an abstract composition whose sensitively balanced geometry evokes the area surrounding Mount Tamalpais near the artist’s home in California, an ongoing preoccupation of Adnan’s which she has compared to Cezanne’s relationship with Mont Sainte-Victoire.

In their varied approaches to the representation of place, the artists in this exhibit explore places as repositories of history and knowledge, place as metaphor, and place as the locus of personal and private memory and experience.

Contact Information:

Barbara Mathes Gallery is located at 22 East 80th Street. The gallery is open Monday through Friday, 10AM to 6PM and Saturday by appointment. For more information or images, please contact the gallery at 212-570-4190 or art@barbaramathesgallery.com.