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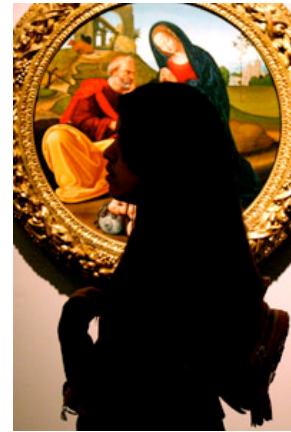
September 10, 2008

Review: Scott Martin at Bismarck Studios



(Courtesy Bismarck Studios)

Scott Martin's "Travertine Hot Springs" was made with a 16-minute exposure at night.



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"Night and Day"

Bismarck Studios**930 Proton, Suite 202****(210) 314-7747, www.bismarckstudios.com****Through Sept. 30**

Scott Martin likes to take photographs by moonlight. His large-scale landscapes, each measuring an astonishing 5-by-7 feet, were all made at night, often using exposures of 15 minutes or more.

"I'm fascinated by what the camera can see that the human eye can't," Martin said. "I like being in national parks after all the lights have gone out and people are in bed. You have the place all to your self, and it gives you a real spiritual feeling."

Martin made most of the images in national parks, generally along the border of California and Nevada, while conducting workshops as part of his digital photography consulting business, Onsite. The realistic, though ghostly, landscapes are a departure from the purely abstract images he showed at the RC Gallery in 2003. This show is part of [Fotoseptiembre USA](#).

A hot seam of lava appears to run through the "Travertine Hot Springs, Nevada," although Martin said he actually "painted" the crevasse to look like it was glowing using a regular flashlight. While the camera was set to take a 16-minute exposure, Martin walked up and down the crack in the earth using the flashlight beam to add highlights. Taken shortly after a full moon, the image has shadows that make it almost look like mid-day, but there are clues that it was actually about 3 a.m. and extremely cold.

"I leave some of the little mistakes in so people will know the images weren't made during the day," Martin said. "For example, you can see light flares where I pointed the flashlight wrong, and you can see a ghost of my silhouette where I stood for too long."

"Olmsted Point," a dramatic tree and boulder on the side of a mountain, was made in the eastern Sierras. Martin used a flashlight to highlight the contrasting forms against the rugged backdrop. The first rays of dawn light up the underside of a rock arch in "Mesa Arch Detail," resembling a luminous abstract painting. The last light of day provides a twilight glow to the otherworldly "Tufa Towers."

The only black-and-white image features a blooming "Ocotillo" plant in Big Bend.

The long exposure reveals the circular tracks of stars around Polaris. Martin said the star trails grow longer when shooting into the sky opposite Polaris, which you can see in "Mercury Exhaust," an abstract study of the huge smokestacks of an abandoned West Texas mercury smelting plant.

The enormous digital prints fit comfortably in the spacious gallery located in an industrial complex behind the Waterford shopping center, one block off the access road just west of the intersection of U.S. 281 and Loop 1604. Owner Christa Brothers, who does architectural faux painting, moved her gallery from the Blue Star Arts Complex to be closer to the many clients she's found in the Stone Oak area.

"I've been here since last spring, and business has been good," Brothers said. "People are realizing that San Antonio has a real dynamic contemporary art community. You don't have to go to New York to buy good art; you can do it right here. I want to do real cutting-edge contemporary art. I usually have an opening on the First Thursday of each month."

—Dan R. Goddard


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