

The Paisano



Fotoseptiembre: Susan Burnstine

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Imagine the city of San Antonio set in a deep fog, where dark clouds engulf the Tower of the Americas. The entire city has vanished in this haze. The air is so still that it creates a curtain over the area. If every crevice of the city were covered in this type of smoke screen, it could create the feeling of abandonment. This is an idea that is present in the work of Susan Burnstine's Fotoseptiembre exhibit respectfully titled, "Absence of Being."

In her captivating images, Burnstine has painted the town gray, portraying a blurred existence. Her portraits seek the possibility of an unsustainable human environment.



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A photographer from Los Angeles, Burnstine is known for creating pinhole cameras from household items, which she uses for her original black-and-white film compositions. As a part of the annual photography festival, Fotoseptiembre, Burnstine's exhibit is composed of various landscape models in which the emphasis is placed on an urban structure in focus while the rest of the area is blurred away, creating a haze that seems to convey a cryptic message.

In each of these landscapes, iconic structures from different cities are stylized to create a dream effect, which gives the illusion of an uninhabited city. Burnstine's desolate environments are left purely for the viewer to interpret. In one of her images, a giant Ferris wheel drifts in the cloudy gloom of Coney Island. It's easy for someone to get sucked into this eerie setting by concentrating on the picture closely. From a glance, a viewer can imagine the ride creaking as the wind sways the empty carts back and forth.

One of the major themes from the exhibit is the human destruction of the earth. Burnstine's ideas stand as a fearful reminder that life is not guaranteed. Human consumption and wastefulness is another theme that is dominant in the seemingly murky photos. The tone can be described as ominous due to Burnstine's grayscale.

Susan Burnstine is one of the many artists featured at Fotoseptiembre this month in San Antonio. Currently, the exhibit will be showcased exclusively at the Instituto Cultural De Mexico at Hemisphere Park until Oct. 24. For more details on the event you can visit .