

THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

May 21 - June 15, 1984 ■ One Market Plaza, One Market Street, SF

This is the key of the kingdom:
 In that kingdom there is a city.
 In that city there is a town.
 In that town there is a street.
 In that street there is a lane.
 In that lane there is a yard.
 In that yard there is a house.
 In that house there is a room.
 In that room there is a bed.
 On that bed there is a basket.
 In that basket there are some flowers . . .



DAN RICE, Honeymoon Over the Golden Gate, 1981

A traveler approaching a city by land, air or water sees the urban landscape in totality: its density, its geometry of building shapes, its coloration, and its overall beauty or drabness. From afar, San Francisco is a rare cityscape surrounded by blue ocean, skyline perched on hills, mystical fog moving across it daily and decorative bridges connecting it to more planar urban areas. Once inside, the city is attractive in some areas and frightening in others. It bustles with people and traffic during the daylight and at night it empties with most activity occurring inside vehicles or buildings or residences. The fifteen artists in this exhibition expose the many visual and concrete aspects of THE URBAN LANDSCAPE; taking us above it by day or night, placing us at street level in dense downtowns or vacant avenues, involving us in traffic jams on freeways and bridges—rendering in every

medium the urban aesthetic we might easily gloss over on a day to day basis.

WAYNE THIEBAUD, ROBERT BECHTLE, MARY BOYD ELLIS and WILLARD DIXON take us to quiet vantage points. Thiebaud's extreme perspective of a San Francisco hill makes the neighborhood he's describing inaccessible due to the steep and almost perilous incline. Bechtle's view is exactly opposite, creating a flat and formal composition from middle class surroundings. The straight avenue, unpopulated, flooded with California light, broken up with tree and phone pole components, creates a serene viewpoint. Mary Boyd Ellis finds the embarcadero at pre-dawn her interest, and focuses on the shape and color of freeway skeletons in combination with empty streets. She reveals the city's structural beauty devoid of human interference. Willard Dixon places us high on a hill overlooking the

sprawling Eastbay. It is a pastoral impression because he highlights the flora and fauna of the neighborhood and buries the industry in the dim distance.

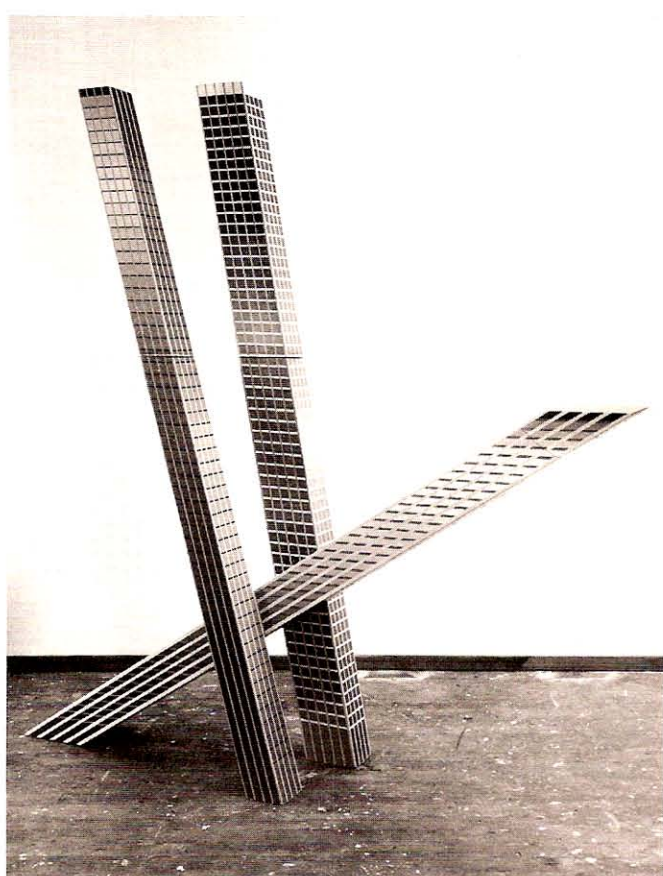
RICHARD ESTES and BARBARA THOMASON portray the inner-city: street level glitter of sunlight on crowded store windows, flashy auto paint, and myriad reflections produced by light on glass and chrome. Estes is challenged by mirrored images: the downtown against store front panes, or parked car windshields. Thomason uses a camera to capture dense images, projects them and paints them. For her a jewelry store window crowded with merchandise and lights or other such commercial viewpoints tap her inspiration.

Birds-eye views intrigue BERYL LANDAU and YVONNE JACQUETTE elevating us far above the frantic metropolis. Landau's paintings are almost like photographs in their pristine represen-

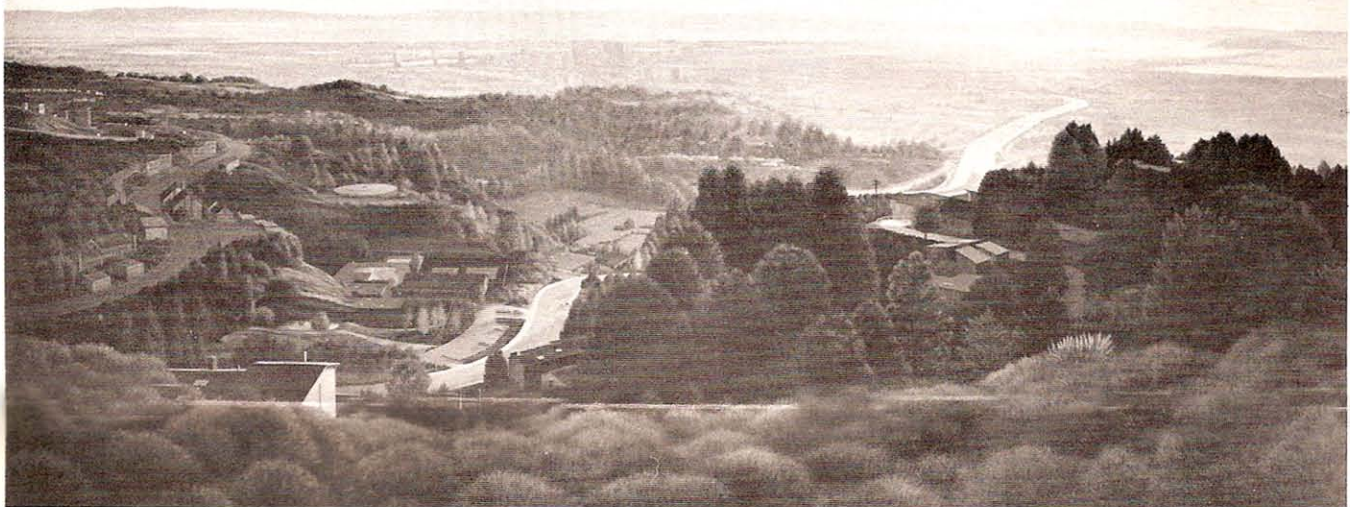
tation of skyscraper tops silhouetted against blue sky. Jacquette is challenged by the urban night where images are reduced to points of light and strips of white lines.

DAN RICE's oversize, shaped paintings portray the mechanical energy a city pulsates with at peak commute hours. Dense streams of traffic crowd the Golden Gate Bridge or actually form the loops of freeways. He brings humor to this frustrating experience by having people slide down the bridge cables or sell flowers in the midst of it all.

Sculptors LOUISE LIEBER, MARTIN MYER and DON GRANT isolate the architecture of a cityscape. Lieber is concerned with exterior and interior spaces of buildings. Her tall, slender latticed structures of milled wood effectively capture and control light and space. Myer makes trompe l'oeil skyscrapers which rise narrowly into space with grids of



MARTIN MYERS, Lucille, 1979



WILLARD DIXON, East Bay, 1979

windows colored and shaded by an imaginary source of sunlight. He enriches a basic rectangle, asserting his opinion that architecture is above all a social art form requiring immeasurable cultural responsibility. Grant's buildings are more mysterious, such as those in empty alleys—curving stairways leading to unknown rooms, or windows not transparent enough to peer

through.

CLAY JENSEN welds steel slabs, painting their surface silhouetted houses juxtaposed against bright colored skies. The solidity of metal material combined with simple building shapes effectively suggest urban density at sunrise or sunset.

ROLAND REISS creates three-dimensional tableaus which he calls "paintings in-the-round." His

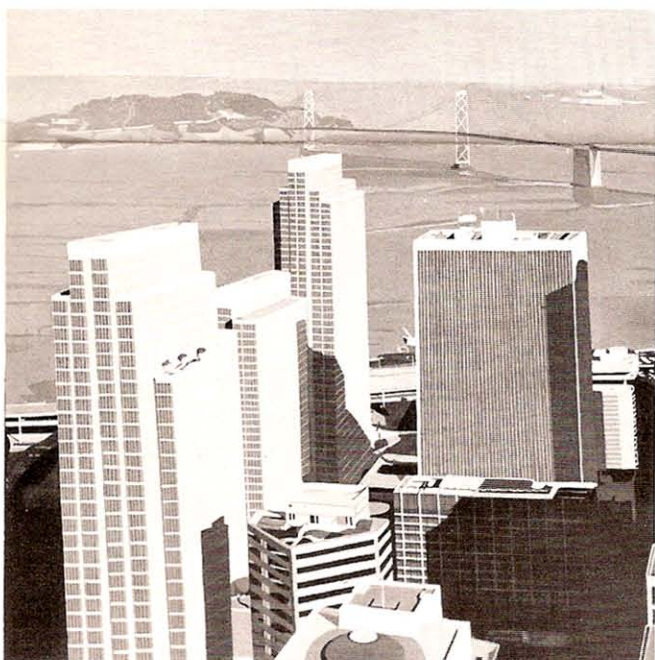
is a social commentary on working relationships in big city life. Each assemblage is intended as an exercise in self-awareness, asking us to look at behaviors and environments we've witnessed or participated in.

LEE ROY CHAMPAGNE utilizes the familiar urban element of neon in every work of art. His sculpture inevitably carries a message about our internal or

exterior 'quality of life.' In this particular piece, he juxtaposes street-found objects with an innocent babe and uses neon tubing to symbolize our recognition of this dichotomy.

Whatever the medium, subject or perspective, we are grateful to these artists for enhancing our appreciation of the complex urban landscape.

—Michele Bell



BERYL LANDAU, Modern Times, 1983

... Flowers in a basket.
 Basket in the bed.
 Bed in the room.
 Room in the house.
 House in the yard.
 Yard in the lane.
 Lane in the street.
 Street in the town.
 Town in the city.
 City in the kingdom.
 Of the kingdom this is the key.
 Anon

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

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