

Parrish Art Museum Opens “From Lens To Eye To Hand: Photorealism 1969 To Today”

August 4, 2017

by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

The Parrish Art Museum opens its next major exhibition this weekend with “From Lens to Eye To Hand: Photorealism 1969 to Today.” The show opens to the public on Sunday, August 6, 2017 and continues on view through January 21, 2018. The exhibition presents a survey of artists who embrace Photorealism and its unique way of interpreting and depicting the world around them.

The show features 73 artworks from 35 artists that spans from Photorealism’s early adopters to second and third generation artists working in the Photorealist tradition. Taken together, the show demonstrates an art movement that continues to have strength, longevity and manifests as a conceptually coherent genre, according to the Parrish. “From Lens to Eye To Hand: Photorealism 1969 to Today” brings together, for the first time in the United States, important paintings from public and private collections along with series of watercolors and works on paper that have never been exhibited previously in an American museum, according to the Hamptons art museum.

The exhibition features 40 paintings and 33 works on paper. Exhibiting artists include Photorealism’s founding artists [Richard Estes](#), [Chuck Close](#), [Robert Bechtle](#) and [Ralph Goings](#), whose 1969 painting *Jeep 40 809B (Safway Jeep)*, sets the stage for the art show. Bookending “[From Lens to Eye to Hand](#)” are hyper-realistic works by later generations of Photorealists including [Yigal Ozeri](#), [Raphaella Spence](#), [Bertrand Meniel](#) and [Anthony Brunelli](#), who demonstrate the ways current technological advances in digital image-making and computers impact the painterly gesture.

“‘From Lens to Eye to Hand’ offers audiences an opportunity to see and experience photorealist masterworks, including spectacular paintings—*Wheel of Fortune* by [Audrey Flack](#) and *Candy Kane Rainbow* by [Charles Bell](#)—from the Parrish collection,” stated Terrie Sultan, Parrish Art Museum Director and exhibition organizer, in the exhibition announcement. “I am especially thrilled that the museum will have the opportunity to show more than 30 watercolors and works on paper. These exquisite little paintings shed new light on the creativity and dexterity of these artists.”



“Hotel Empire” by Richard Estes, 1987. Oil on canvas, 37 1/2 x 87 inches.
Courtesy of The Parrish Art Museum.

From its beginnings in California and New York in the late 1960s, Photorealism (a term coined by gallerist and author [Louis Meisel](#) in 1969) was denounced as a fad in reaction to Pop, Minimalism, Land Art and Performance Art, explained the museum. It gained recognition in the 1970s and continued to prompt exploration through the decades as contemporary artists returned to representation as valid and valuable.

The title of the exhibition, “From Lens to Eye to Hand,” reveals the process that begins with film or digital photographs that freeze a moment and provide a flat, sharp focus 2-D image as the foundation of virtuosic painterly expression, according to the Parrish.

“We know and cannot unknow the fact that the labored-over painting is the end product of a nearly instantaneous mechanical process—a sixtieth of a second stretched out over months and months,” wrote artist and writer [Richard Kalina](#) in his exhibition catalogue essay. “This discontinuity works against the smooth comprehension that we quite rightly apply to normal life and leaves us with the sense that something else is afoot.”

Providing contrast to the large-scale paintings are small watercolor or acrylic on paper works that reveal a new viewpoint on the Photorealist creative approach.

“Luminosity, intimacy, and immediacy are the defining motivations for the Photorealists’ works on paper,” wrote Sultan in her essay. “While a large to medium scale painting might take the artist months to complete, an intimately-scaled watercolor offers a pathway to experimentation, and more important perhaps, a way to express a sense of light and air that is not obtainable with oil-on-canvas.”

“From Lens to Eye to Hand” presents subject matter favored by Photorealists, such as the classic cars, motorcycles, and trucks depicted in Bechtle’s straightforward and uninflected California street

scenes such as *'71 Buick*, and in paintings by [Tom Blackwell](#), [Don Eddy](#), and [Ron Kleemann](#). Panoramic views are depicted in works by modern practitioners Brunelli, Meniel, and Spence that forge a link with pioneer Richard Estes, who often combined several photographs to create wide-angle views where metal, windows, and glass heightened the visual intensity, as in *Hotel Empire*, 1987.

Nostalgia—particularly classic American diner exteriors and interiors—was explored by [John Baeder](#), [Robert Gniewek](#), and Goings; Charles Bell focused on the bright color and hard shapes of children's toys like marbles and tin figures, and penny candy as in *Gumball No. 10 - Sugar Daddy*, 1975. [Audrey Flack](#) added magical elements and to her staged still-lives such as *Wheel of Fortune*, 1977-78, with its mystical narrative of tarot cards, skulls, an hourglass with red sand, and mirrors reflecting mirrors. Works in the exhibition by [Chuck Close](#), [Hilo Chen](#), [John Kacere](#), and Ozeri explore portraiture and the human figure.

The exhibition is accompanied by a 120-page catalogue with 90 color illustrations. It is published by the Parrish Art Museum and distributed by DelMonico Books • Prestel and features essays by Terrie Sultan and Richard Kalina.

BASIC FACTS: “From Lens to Eye to Hand” is on view August 6, 2017 to January 21, 2018 at the [Parrish Art Museum](#). A museum members reception and panel discussion takes place on Sunday, August 6 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free for members. Reservations required and can be made by clicking [here](#). [The Parrish Art Museum](#) is located at 279 Montauk Highway, Water Mill, NY 11976. www.parrishart.org.

Copyright 2017 Hamptons Art Hub LLC. All rights reserved.