



UPCOMING SHOW PREVIEW / NEW YORK, NY
March 3-April 2, 2016

Bernarducci.Meisel.Gallery

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RAPHAELLA SPENCE

Saints and sinners



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The Umbrian countryside is dotted with churches from the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi with its frescoes by Giotto and Cimabue to humble and decaying chapels in the middle of fields. Raphaella Spence, who is known for her extraordinarily complex photorealistic paintings of large cities, lives in Todi, a small town in Umbria, and has recently focused on some of those small churches.

Chiesa di San Martino, 2015, was built of stone with skill and devotion and has stood for centuries—a broken electrical fixture above the door attesting to its use in the not too distant past. Spence's painting is more than documentation. It is a representation of her "experience of the moment."

She explains, "When I find an interesting subject, I try to capture that moment and express my feelings. It depends on the feeling that I get from the subject;

it doesn't matter whether it is Las Vegas or New York or a tiny church lost in the Italian countryside. With the church paintings I found a great mystic sensation."

Her recent paintings of Umbrian churches and scenes of Rome and Las Vegas will be shown at Bernarducci.Meisel.Gallery in New York, March 3 through April 2. The title of the exhibition is *Saints and Sinners*.

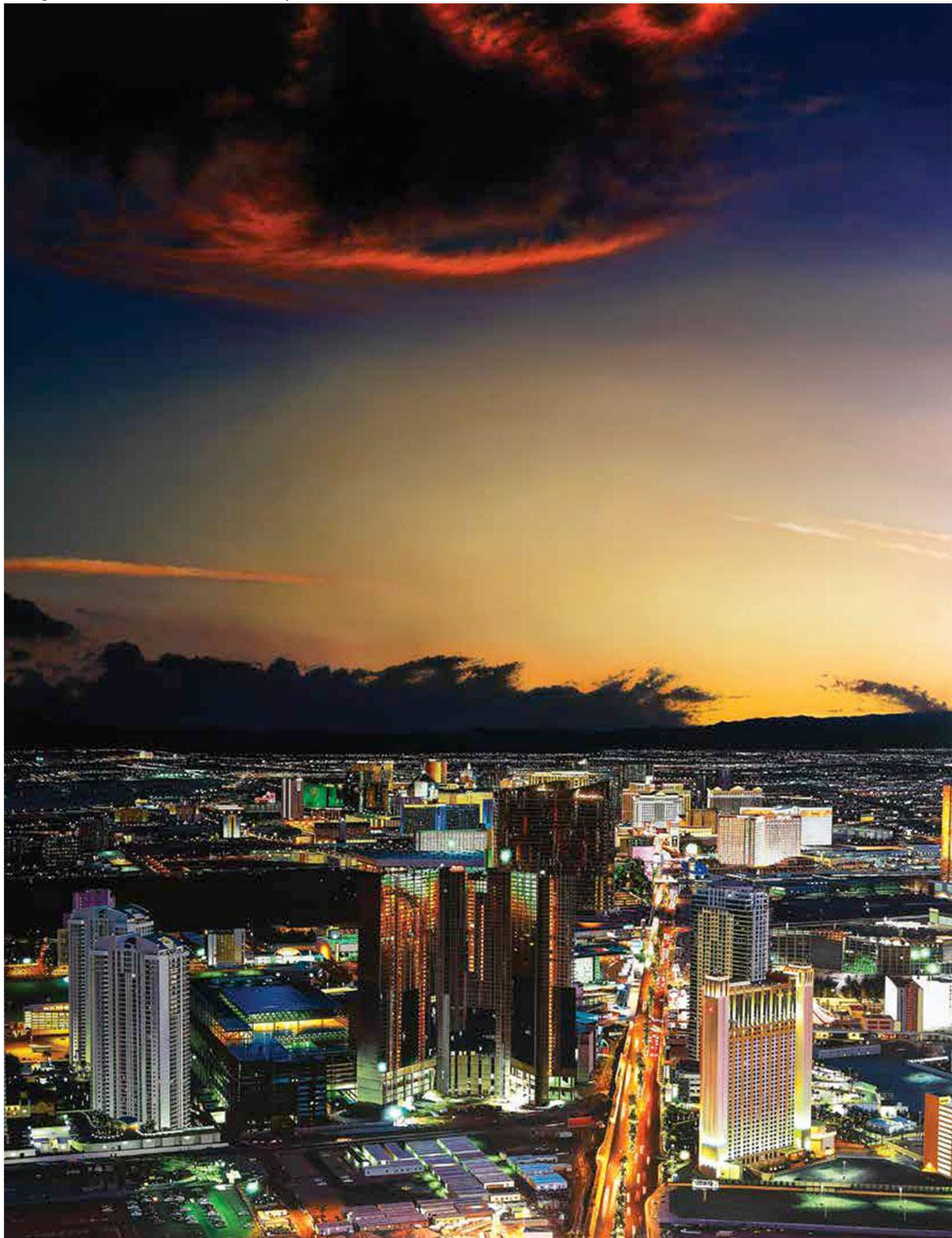
Among the Rome paintings is *Tramonto su Roma*, 2015, in which the ominous shadows suggest the alternate meanings of *tramonto* in Italian. Other than "sunset," the word can mean "fading" and "decline." The dome of St. Peter's stands out against the dark clouds as the shadows slowly encroach from the foreground.

Spence uses digital photographs for reference and paints traditionally in oils on gessoed canvas. "When I photograph on site I capture the image that will

1
Tramonto su Roma,
oil on canvas, 31¼ x 55¼"

2
The Strip, oil on canvas,
55¼ x 43½"

2





3
Roma dal Gianicolo,
oil on canvas, 55½ x 70¾"

4
Flamingo, oil on canvas,
30 x 40"

5
La Chiesa di Ponte Naia,
oil on canvas, 63 x 63"





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become the painting. Through the process of painting this image I incorporate into the painting all the experiences, sensations and feelings of my personal experience of living in this place when capturing this image. I use the photograph in the same way as an artist used a sketch in the past," she continues. "For me the photograph is missing so much information as did a sketch for an artist in the past. In the painting,

I try and transmit the missing messages, which are in my head, which I experienced while taking the photograph. Paradoxically, the end result is not a copy of the photograph or of the original scene, but a scene that is more real than real, the painting has emotions and tells a story with colors that are so vibrant that they seem almost unreal. The painting itself tells a story, which is full of emotion and sensations." ●

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Chiesa di San Martino,
oil on canvas, 55 x 47½"

Images courtesy the
artist and Bernarducci
Meisel.Gallery.

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