



FINE ARTS

Amazing cityscapes by Ben Aronson

By: Murray Paskin | 01/18/12 8:30 PM



The unique and varied richness in “Ben Aronson: Here and Now,” an exhibition of 20 cityscapes at Jenkins Johnson Gallery, is seemingly endless.

At first glance, the works — picturing New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Rome — appear to be photographs. Closer inspection, however, reveals them to be paintings copied from photos, but never literally. The photos serve more as inspirations for the final product, which turns out to be paintings with photographic sensibilities.

The ultimate strength of the work, however, lies in a diversified use of light and color — at times part of a story, at others, an intensity of atmosphere. Bluish coloring, interspersed with white, becomes a theme in itself in “Angel Island from Russian Hill,” a 60-by-60-inch oil on panel.

A deep orange dominates “Late Day Above California and Powell Streets,” a square 24-inch oil on panel. Though the colors appear naturalistic, on closer viewing, they have a dreamlike beauty. With its intensely expressive light and color, the painting is slightly reminiscent of the work of 17th-century Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer.

“Manhattan, 2am” offers yet another use of light and color. Tall, dark buildings surround a tiny area at the bottom of almost blindingly bright, white street light.

“Alchemist II,” a mostly black-and-white oil on panel, provides another aspect of Aronson’s work. In it, a man sits in an office in front of a large window at a cluttered desk drinking a cup of coffee. Though everyday objects are pictured, the focus they are given, and the overall stillness of the piece, make the viewer feel he is looking at something extraordinary.

Aronson has a master’s of fine arts degree in painting from Boston University, where he has taught and exhibited. His work is also in the permanent collections of major galleries, universities and museums in the U.S., including the de Young Museum in The City.

Read more at the San Francisco Examiner: <http://www.sfexaminer.com/entertainment/fine-arts/2012/01/amazing-cityscapes-ben-aronson#ixzz1kVtKLklv>