

For Immediate Release  
June 19th to July 24th, 2004  
Taxter & Spengemann present Anna Schachte  
Opening reception, Saturday, June 19th, from 6 to 8 pm  
Please note our new summer hours are Tuesday to Friday, 11-6

By Kelly Taxter

Anna Schachte's paintings suck you in and spit you out. There's no chance for a foothold amidst the drips and drabs of paint at once composing a stretch of solid land and quickly pooling into a murky pond. Scenes and scenarios simultaneously coexist depicting outdoor music festivals, strip malls, paparazzi, glass houses, hotels, couples lounging in Jacuzzis, soldiers in battle, the ocean, and above it all luminescent skies that could be gorgeous sunsets, or just as feasibly, raging fires. All of these elements are variously strewn across impossibly constructed landscapes that have neither vanishing nor orienting points that would allow a sense of rational space or time.

Schachte maximizes painting's ability to subtly suggest the passing of time by exploiting the viscous physicality and kineticity of paint. She elaborates discrete worlds upon worlds by blending, stacking, and bleeding one kind of landscape into and on top of another, conflating space and time to create a distinctly American vision of contemporary life. In *Viewfinder*, a female is seen from behind, holding her digital camera up to a split vista that is on one side an oceanfront hotel-strip complete with palm trees, and on the other an idyllic mountainside lake. The ocean and lake merge, allowing the photographer to be in two places at once. The whole scene is reflected in the viewfinder of the camera. The artist refers to this as a kind of "double duty," wherein the painting's elements gracefully operate as double agents.

One gets the sense that within each painting a precarious balance is struck between positive and negative elements. The glowing orange sky in *Wildfire* envelopes a Californian desert-scape dotted with iconic Modernist architecture. The sky is either a brilliant sunset or hotly illuminated as brushfires rip across the arid region. The spindly brush strokes that compose the severe glass and steel houses imply the fragility of not only the structures themselves but also the entire Modernist project.

This ambiguity threads its way through all of her works, particularly *Freedom Festival Plaza Parkinglot*. It looks like a rock show and military operation are happening at the same time, with a helicopter looming on the horizon that could be carrying either members of the band or of the battalion. It seems Schachte wants to play both champion and foe to all of the conflicting facets of contemporary life. Her work reflects moments of idealism where contradictions thrive in order to produce new alternatives, a way for problems and answers to co-exist, collaborate, and corroborate each other.