

# “ S O T T O V O C E ”

a t S o h o P h o t o G a l l e r y

February 7 – March 4, 2006

This February 2006, SoHo Photo presents “Sotto Voce,” an exhibition of works by a group of like-minded photographers whose approach to image-making is an embrace of the understated. In today's art world where larger-than-life images in saturated colors abound, these photographers present a collection of works where much is said, very softly.

The works in this exhibition (whose title, *small voice*, refers to an operatic term for the subtle underscore to a main melody) reflect an enduring commitment to a more intimate photographic language. Through small-scale prints and a subtlety of means, these artists say more with less, both about themselves and the way in which their work should be viewed.

The prints on view invite visitors to become engaged with images, and to reflect on the way in which these images came into being. It is through this prolonged engagement that the artists' intentions are most deeply felt, and the soft chorus of this art world undercurrent comes roaring to life.

Dwight Primiano's images hold personal meanings that remain unexplained and thus open to discovery. Patience before these works is rewarded with access to soft-spoken truths, as if one is straining to pick out a melody playing somewhere nearby. Photographer Paul Stetzer uses a 5x5” format to explore a variety of subjects ranging from abandoned buildings to the natural world, as if he too is uncovering a deeper meaning. These works magnify daily events that typically go unnoticed (a cluster of overgrown grasses or a WPA building in disrepair), documenting the corrosive effects of the passage of time.

Larry Davis' prints speak in a similarly understated voice implied by their diminutive size--each only a few inches high. Here scale proves deceptive, as each work vocalizes intensely personal encounters from the artist's journey back in time to childhood places steeped in emotional significance. A series of graphic duotones by Martin Rich offer a convincing visual and conceptual metaphor for the exhibition. The very nature of their creation--a process of draining color from a digital image and leaving behind shades of gray--embodies the *less-is-more* mantra, where images with restricted visual means become bold and resonant artistic statements.

Guest photographer Meryl Salzinger presents a suite of painterly abstractions that also seem to defy instant interpretation. Through the use of skillful developing techniques, Ms. Salzinger creates artful distortions that stand apart from their original sources in nature, demanding to be known on their own terms through firsthand experience.

Since its invention, photography has enabled artists to render fleeting moments timeless and magnify the smallest detail into something monumental before our very eyes. In the hands of a skilled photographer, the versatility of the medium holds endless potential to inspire. So too with this exhibition are we made to marvel at the simplicity of the images put before us and their ability to sing to us if we let them.

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