

JOHN CHIARA

Crestmont at Coral

April 12 - May 26, 2012

Haines Gallery is pleased to announce its first solo exhibition with newly represented artist, John Chiara. *Crestmont at Coral* presents recent photographic works emblematic of Chiara's distinctive process. Working with hand-built cameras of various sizes, he diligently peruses his landscape, producing pictures that could not be made through traditional photographic methods.

The exhibited works were primarily shot in San Francisco's Potrero Hill, Excelsior, Diamond Heights and Mission districts using his 34 x 28 inch camera, which he tows around the city on a trailer. Chiara captures quiet vignettes of urban life – juxtaposing views of streets and buildings with more scenic vistas that only subtly nod to their city surroundings. As if physical manifestations of one's memory of the landscape, the pictures are evocative, meditative and brooding.

Chiara's singular approach combines shooting and darkroom processing, printing directly onto positive color photographic paper known as Ilfochrome; as such, they are unique works that cannot be reproduced. He affixes the paper to the camera using tape, vestiges of which often mark the picture's surface to varying effect. Chiara controls the exposure time instinctively, using his



Vermont End (North), 2012, Dye Destruction Process, Unique Photograph, Frame: 41 x 36 inches / Image: 33 x 27 inches



Vermont End (West), 2012, Dye Destruction Process, Unique Photograph, Frame: 41 x 36 inches / Image: 33 x 28 inches

hand to dodge and burn the image. Due to their large scale, the prints are developed in capped PVC pipes, a process in which the chemicals are blindly agitated across the paper, leaving behind their ethereal, almost painterly traces on the images. The resulting pictures reflect a sophisticated balance between Chiara's dexterity with his tools and the serendipity intrinsic to his treatment of materials and process. While they act at once as a fresh interpretation of landscape photography's continued potential, they are also distinctly object-like due to the paper's exceptionally glossy surface, uneven shape and three-dimensional presence on the wall.

Chiara's work has been featured in a number of publications including *Artforum*, *The New Yorker*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Washington Post*. In 2011, the Pilara Foundation commissioned Chiara to produce portraits of the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges for its permanent collection. He was awarded artist residencies at the Headlands Center for the Arts (2010) and Crown Point Press (2006). His work is also currently included in the exhibition *In Conversation – June Schwartz and John Chiara*, on view at the Richmond Art Center through June 2, 2012.