

GAGE OPDENBROUW:
SILENCE AND DISTANCE, NEW PAINTINGS
October 20-November 24, 2007

Charles Campbell Gallery
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Gage Opdenbrouw's oils on canvas —seascapes, landscapes, cityscapes— are traditional in form, and generously communicative and assured amid the welter of anxious objects we're used to encountering. They fuse scrupulous observation and a subdued Romantic subjectivity, distilling light, color and atmosphere into visual poetry. "Painting is a means for closer observation of the world, and of one's self," says Opdenbrouw. "I try to paint the exterior world in such a way as to evoke the mysterious richness & vastness of the interior world each of us carries within."

Several paintings depict, unsurprisingly, the infinite sea, "deeply hypnotic, ... soothing and threatening, ... massive and impenetrable," and they reflect the influence of poetic realists Turner and Friedrich and their descendants, spiritual abstractionists Rothko and Newman. Silence and distance are seen here as intrinsic to human life— as metaphors for impermanence; this artist is "keenly aware that nothing lasts," and he "find[s] great beauty and sadness in being attentive." In *Pacific #2* and *Sea at Big Sur #5*, the oceanic masses of somber color relieved by fading light at the horizon convey darkness, depth and mystery. In *White Light 2*, the hazy radiance of the overcast sun dissolves the horizon line and seems to send pulses of light shoreward to us in gently lapping waves.

Others works depict San Francisco and other scenic locales, either illuminated by the Bay Area's famous crystalline white light, or shrouded and blurred by fog or haze. *From Masonic #1* depicts local architectural landmarks, but the real subject is the light reflected from our ubiquitous anonymous beige and pastel-colored buildings as the morning fog burns off. *From Coit Tower* looks west toward the Pacific, the incandescently sunlit buildings of North Beach interspersed with bursts of glowing verdant foliage. *Hugo Street* lets us peek into the warmly lit bay windows of a Haight Victorian as night falls and fog melts architectural geometry. Finally, *Friedrich's Moon in My Backyard* pays homage to the mystical German landscapist; it's a smoky, red-skied nocturne: reflected radiance shed on sublunary trees and houses.

DeWitt Cheng