



"Nature's Mortes,' No. 5 (Red)" by Jeffrey E. Warmouth.

News photo: Larry E. Wright

Post-modern classics from Warmouth

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Irrepressibly post-modern in its visual sensibilities, Jeffrey E. Warmouth's color photography is actually as classically crafted as any post-modern art could possibly get.

Warmouth's work, while eschewing strict boundaries of spatial depth, nonetheless uses planes of perspective that harken back to classicizing principles. Indeed, his explorations indicate that the post-modernist's cam-

paign to compress time and space in art may ironically be analogous to the modernist's circular attempt to flatten the visual plane.

As such, Warmouth's photography uses a variety of formal tricks to submerge the sense of aesthetic space through a clever juxtaposition of multiple perspectives. Through the use of screens, overlapping slides and filters — while rigorously avoiding electronic manipulation or multiple exposures — Warmouth creates otherworldly images that betray as much a literary inspiration as they do a visual interpretation.

The complexity of his photography is an endless fascination of esoteric mood and closed-form. It is only through successive conceptual unpeelings, that his photographs reveal themselves to be as much visual poems as they are concretized poetry.

Warmouth's display is comprised of artworks drawn from three series — "Crossover: Text/Image," "Compressions" and "Death Masks." These three series in turn emphasize the differing conceptual approaches he takes to his art.

The "Crossover: Text/Image" series has been crafted through the service of two poems: "Nature's Mortes," a 1914 poem by Blaise Cendrars, and "In Your Dreams, Buddy," a 1992 poem by Charles Roberts.

"Nature's Mortes,' No. 5 (Red)," taken from the "Crossover: Text/Image" series, is constructed in three distinct visual planes that incorporate a slide illustration of crimson red lips against a transparency projection of lines from the poem and a foreground carafe of wine on a table.

Fusing these disparate media together, Warmouth has crafted a seamless whole from photographic projection, photographic compression, and photographic space. This juxtaposition of elements has created in turn a subdued and dramatic cross-narrative epiphany in shades of blood.

Warmouth's "Compression" and "Death Masks" series only differ in their appearance to the degree that the "Death Masks" artwork on display in this exhibit is less abstract than the four handsomely composed, yet ultimately hermetic, "Compressions."

His "Bird-Woman," taken from the "Death Masks" series pulls back slightly from the mysterious "Compression" forms. In this photo, Warmouth's compressed space and cleverly textured composition is as faithful to a pure photographic technique as any classicist's work would be. Yet he also layers the palette of his model's image in such a fashion as to rework the basic assumptions of these conventions.

From a blend of red hues to blue, and contrasting these primary colors against her warm flesh tone, Warmouth's "Bird-Woman" smiles alluringly from behind her cage. We need only wonder what "Death Mask" she actually represents.

GALLERY OPENINGS

Photographs by Jeffrey E. Warmouth

The show continues through September 12 at the Del Rio. Exhibit hours: Monday-Friday 11:30 a.m. - 2 a.m.; Saturday noon-2 a.m., Sunday 5:30 p.m.-2 a.m. For information, call 761-2530.