

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Will Heinrich, "What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week," *The New York Times*, March 29, 2018.

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ART & DESIGN

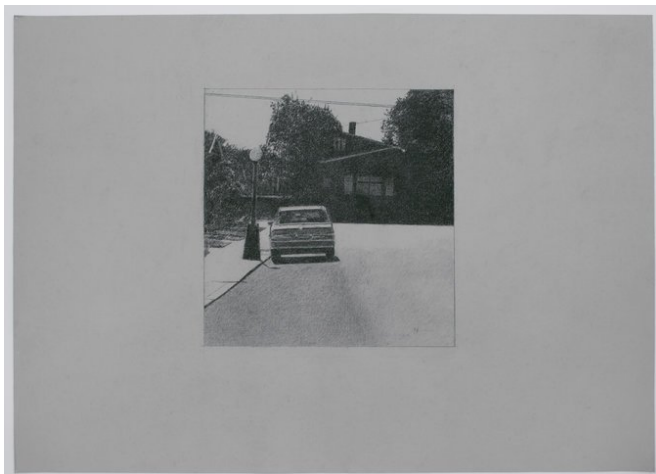
What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

By ROBERTA SMITH, WILL HEINRICH, MARTHA SCHWENDENER and JASON FARAGO MARCH 29, 2018



Robert Bechtle

Through April 21. Gladstone 64, 130 East 64th Street, Manhattan; 212-753-2200, gladstone64.com.



Robert Bechtle's charcoal drawing "Alameda Light," from 2017.
Courtesy the artist and Gladstone Gallery

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Each of the 12 new charcoal drawings in the pioneering photorealist Robert Bechtle's [latest show](#) is a meticulously rendered view of an empty suburban street in Northern California. Boxy parked cars, single-story houses, and low-hanging power lines crowd together inside modest squares on warm gray paper.

The occasional small overlap or gap in the thin lines that circumscribe the squares are almost the only uncontrolled expressiveness in pictures as studiously devoid of spontaneous gestures as an engineering diagram. Things like the lush foliage in "Alameda Light" or the wrinkled tarp thrown over a car in "Dogpatch Wrap" might seem to offer the artist more occasion to let himself go, but in fact he records those less regular objects with the same straight-faced fidelity he applies to the shifting gray-tone planes of a sidewalk or wall.

But well-placed details like those gaps, or like the little dots of white with which Mr. Bechtle heightens streetlights and shiny fenders, can have disproportionate effects. In this case they make the drawings feel as thrillingly precarious as a high-wire act. They also imbue empty cars and opaque windows, which might otherwise read simply as easy metaphors for loneliness and alienation, with a real, if mysterious, presence.

In the show's strangest and most memorable drawing, "Covered Car, San Francisco," the 85-year-old Mr. Bechtle confronts that ambiguous presence directly, picturing it as a sleek, almost unbroken black silhouette divided from its own shadow by only a thin white speck.

WILL HEINRICH