

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Howard Halle, "Robert Bechtle," *Time Out New York*, February 6, 2014, p. 31.

Robert Bechtle

★★★★★

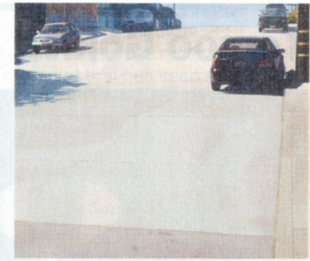
Gladstone Gallery, through Feb 15
(see Chelsea)

As styles go, Photorealism has had a huge impact since it emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. However, the art world has been inconsistent in bestowing love upon the form's practitioners, lavishing it on some of the deserving (Vija Celmins, Chuck Close, Gerhard Richter), but not on others (Robert Cottingham, Audrey Flack, Ralph Goings). This may have something to do with the suspicion that rendering photos in paint can devolve into gimmickry, despite the skill involved—or, perhaps, because of it.

Another artist associated with the genre, Robert Bechtle, was often consigned to the later group, until his 2005 retrospective at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The show revealed what was



Bob's Sebring, right. Six Cars on 20th Street, top left. Clay Street, Alameda



always evident about his work: that it's never been Photorealism in the conventional sense.

Instead, Bechtle focuses on that moment when the quotidian becomes sublime, an alchemy much in evidence in this show of recent watercolors and drawings. The subjects are taken

from the artist's San Francisco neighborhood, with its steep hills, mission-style homes, carefully tended shrubs and above all, cars—parked in the driveway or out on the street, shrouded, sometimes, like mummies in weatherproof coverings. Caught in the midday sun, these

talismans of the American Dream seem to dissolve into a finer reverie, occasioned by the transient qualities of light. —Howard Halle

THE BOTTOM LINE Bechtle transforms his neighborhood into a vision.