

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Benjamin Genocchio, "Robert Bechtle," *The New York Times*, December 22, 2006.

## ROBERT BECHTLE

By BENJAMIN GENOCCHIO

Published: December 22, 2006

Robert Bechtle's new exhibition of paintings and drawings at the Gladstone Gallery in Chelsea wrestles with the art-historical ghost of Edward Hopper. Exquisite, refined photorealist street scenes denuded of people and eerily gloomy interiors populated by a lonely, sad-looking male figure (Mr. Bechtle himself) are basically the norm. They are sometimes creepy but at other times overload the emotions to such a degree that you want to step into the picture and give the old guy a hug. Several marvelous, subtly toned charcoal-on-paper studies for the larger oil paintings in the main gallery fill out the side rooms, and in some ways steal the show: Mr. Bechtle's various weaknesses as a colorist and painter of skies are less noticeable here, where everything is pretty much a pale shade of gray. All the drawings are masterfully realized, though a group depicting wide street intersections in San Francisco (including "Potrero Intersection -- De Haro and Southern Heights," above) possess a cinematic sweep, reminiscent of the opening scenes from that great 1970s television detective series "The Streets of San Francisco." More introspective than some of his previous exhibitions, these paintings and drawings nonetheless have tremendous appeal. (Gladstone Gallery, 515 West 24th Street, Chelsea, 212-206-9300, [gladstonegallery.com](http://gladstonegallery.com), through Jan. 6.) BENJAMIN GENOCCHIO