

GLADSTONE GALLERY

R. C. Baker, "Robert Bechtle Finds Essential Beauty From the Banal Muddle of Urban Landscape," *The Village Voice*, February 5, 2014.

Robert Bechtle Finds Essential Beauty From the Banal Muddle of Urban Landscape

By R. C. Baker Wednesday, Feb 5 2014



Courtesy Gladstone Gallery

Down Arkansas Street (2013)

Robert Bechtle appears a tad sheepish, standing beside his snazzy convertible in *Bob's Sebring* (2011). The car's rear end bulges in this 3 1/2 x 5 foot oil painting, perhaps a slight fish-eye effect from a photographic source, but the contrasting textures of smooth metal, Bechtle's comfy khakis, and rough garage shingles draw the eye in for treats well beyond any photorealist detailing.

You'll never find skills like Bechtle's at the App Store. The compositional alchemy of his exploring eye, interpreting mind, and agile hand becomes manifest both in the way the gathering folds of his pants pockets echo the arc of reflections on that silver car's fender and in the subtle tints across the white garage doors, a mini color-field painting.

GLADSTONE GALLERY

R. C. Baker, "Robert Bechtle Finds Essential Beauty From the Banal Muddle of Urban Landscape," *The Village Voice*, February 5, 2014.

Bechtle's sensitivity to cropping and his masterful technique results in granular, geometric shadows in a charcoal drawing of San Francisco's Arkansas Street, while a watercolor version extends upward to reveal a graceful cat's cradle of electrical wires bowing through sun-scoured skies. Through patient, determined observation Bechtle discovers abstract lucidity in such instances as cars under protective tarps and reflective strips encircling telephone poles — a distillation of essential beauty from the banal muddle of urban landscape.