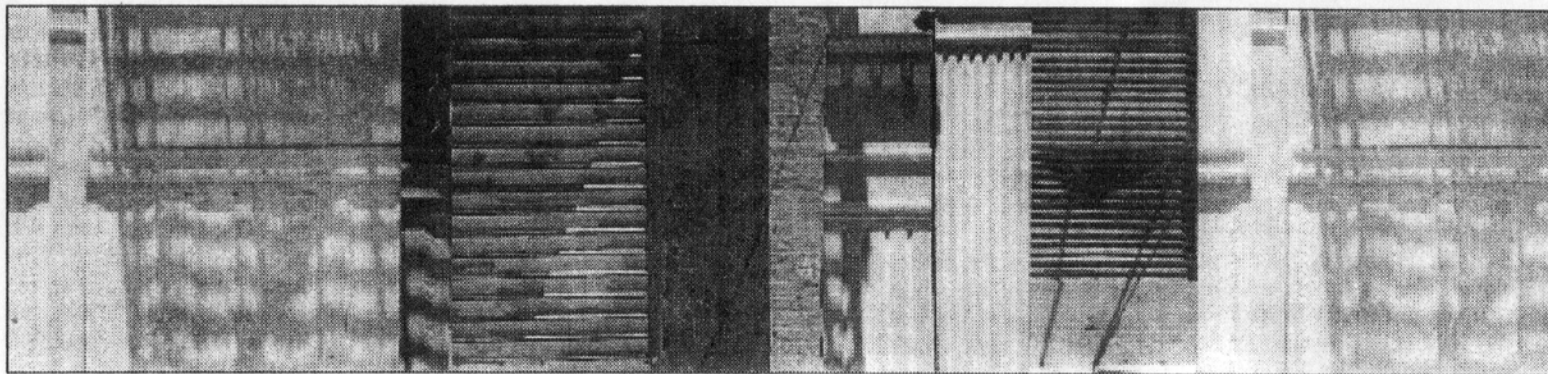


Photographic visions of cities at Pentimenti

PHOTOGRAPHY SEEN

by Helene Ryesky



Catherine Gfeller, "Tangerine Dream."

Random House Webster's College Dictionary: pentimento - the reemergence in a painting of an image that has been painted over.

There are other meanings, but when they opened Pentimenti Gallery in September of 1992, owners Christine and Tom Pfister chose the word "pentimenti" because of its meaning in art.

In a recent conversation, Christine Pfister told me, "Our direction is contemporary work. We specialize in painting. We also like sculpture. Every February we have a photography show. We like to work with emerging artists and also with more established artists. We like bringing in artists from the beginning and helping them grow. That is what a gallery is for. We opened the gallery because we love art."

This February Pentimenti Gallery is exhibiting photography by Catherine Gfeller. Thirty years of age, Catherine Gfeller grew up and was educated during the

beginning of the era of the computer. Her beautiful photographs are influenced by the combination of her passion for painting and photography as well as by her moment in the time of the computer.

The exhibition of photographs in her series, "Urban Friezes," reveals the impact cities have upon her. Upon seeing "N.Y.C.N.Y." at close range, the yellow taxi-cabs seemed predominant, yet when I viewed the photograph from a distance of about five feet, the street leaped out at me. Suddenly I realized that the way Gfeller collaged several of her photographs created a new and different visual experience. The photograph evokes the noisy, fractured sense of being on a busy

street in the city. It serves as the memory of many blinks of an eye.

Careful inspection reveals that Gfeller incorporated parts of several images to create her linear composition. Perhaps she has re-photographed the collage. These days computers have learned to produce layered, collage-like work. Some artists freely divulge how they work. Others do not. In the latter case one can only guess just how a

photograph is made. However, no matter how Gfeller works, her art is in her ability to convey new and different meanings in her work.

Her photographs are beautiful abstract compositions that utilize realistic imagery to evoke time and place and memory.

"Tangerine Dream" is an example of Gfeller's gift for combining images, some nearer, some farther, to create a new experience. She places the pho-

tographic elements as if they were musical notes, causing the viewer's eyes to catch a rhythm. The soft colors, the bricks, the blinds, the shadows and the absence of people all combine to conjure up siesta time in a warm climate.

When Catherine Gfeller stalks a city for images, she sees what others see and takes it a leap beyond. Each frame is destined for a life of its own, either as a single photograph or as part of a complex composition.

She often photographs architectural details of skyscrapers. Sometimes these become single images and sometimes they become elements, a painter's palette for more complex images such as "N.Y.C.N.Y." and "Tangerine Dream."

If you go

Pentimenti Gallery -
"Urban Friezes,"
Photography by
Catherine Gfeller.
Feb. 6 - 28, 1998.
133 No. Third Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.
Hours: Tuesday by
appointment,
Wednesday - Friday,
12 - 6 p.m.,
Saturday 12 - 5
p.m.
Phone: 215-625-
9990.