

Vincent Johnson Artist Statement: Photography

My base is Los Angeles, which has an exceptional amount of interesting architectural artifacts from the First World War period onwards. Many portions of the Los Angeles that I depict come into existence when New York was attempting to wrest the thorn crown of painting from Paris and succeeded. In the course of producing my photographic archive, I have employed strategies of production such as those used by the flaneur and the derive, in day and at night, by car and on foot, primarily in a stark and challenging urban territory, the Anti-City that is Los Angeles. Similarly, I have also allowed myself to merely wander through this world as the American artist that I am, and fall into pictures and spaces that call for documentation.

It is my experience that driving a car in Los Angeles and seeing the world through its windows is a complex real-time cinematic event. There is a temporary encounter and an enduring intimacy through memory via the photographed subject – this produces the photograph, as versus a sustained relationship with a single but ever-changing street scene. Through auto travel one is given the privileged observer position of moving through the world as a real-time unedited film, a cinema-state; to take a number of photographs of it afterwards. Often, when I drive I look about and “remember” key images, photographs of urban sites from the mid-century and earlier that I will take pictures of in the future.

Vincent Johnson Artist Statement: Painting

In this work I have always sought to reach for and produce imagery that lends itself to a serious consideration of the ideas that come to the mind when approaching the image. For me these works seek to substantiate themselves in the world, to be both evocative and provocative, beautiful and remarkable in both concept and realization. As these works are fully developed I will continue to record the journey I am taking with them until they are complete.

Painting makes me see beyond my own being.

The most recently completed work is The October Paintings suite. I was listening to an audiotape on German art history while making the work. This painting challenged me over and again against earlier selves. I continued to add additional layers and work the canvas, forcing it to meld and produce most remarkable bands of color.

The works are visceral, visually rich, emotively engaging.