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Transitory: The Abstract review chad hanna

"It's not something I make; it's something I'm a part of," Sean Perry explains of his photography. "To me these images are Austin. I'll be driving or walking around and see these different places, and then for a moment something changes, perhaps the gradient of light-- I don't know. But in that moment, the thing blooms and it becomes more about how it feels than how it looks. The place is somehow reduced to it's true nature. This moment doesn't last very long. It's not unlike when two people try to understand one another, and in the middle of all this contention finally there is a moment when the two understand what it is each is trying to say to the other, thought they inevitably fall back to the struggle of understanding."

Perry reduces his images to the essentials, the point at which removing any one of the remaining elements would collapse the whole. Perry's minimalist elegance coheres with his seemingly three-dimensional use of light into a subterranean transfixion of your daily world. This is Austin: abstract architecture, concrete environments, and electrical landscapes rendered in gelatin silver prints, bleached and toned in various combinations of sepia, selenium, and gold. The Stephen L. Clark Gallery will display these photographs through October 19th.

Not so much books as art objects, only 87 copies of Sean Perry's *Transitory: The Abstract* exist; of those, 75 remain available for sale. Book artist Jace Graf, of Cloverleaf Press, has hand-sewn each book from golden Japanese fabric, hand-bound the leather spine, and enclosed each book in it's own blind-stamped slipcase. Typeset by letterpress, each book has ten tipped-in carbon pigment ink plates and one laid-in platinum/palladium print signed by Sean Perry. The ten plates are abstract architecture pieces, while the eleventh platinum print "Pulse," is an industrial landscape. Perry hopes to do two more volumes with Graf, eventually publishing all thirty-three images, eleven in each of the three contexts.

The dreamlike gravity of Sean Perry's photography entranced me the first time I experienced it. It was as if I could keep looking deeper and deeper into each image. It's not something he makes; it's something he's a part of. Likewise it's not something you view; it's something you become a part of. After learning about Perry's aesthetic sensibilities and studying his photography, I've found myself seeking these transient revelations in the secret life of our city. I've discovered a few, and those discoveries have altered the way I relate to Austin. Perry's liminal images populate the interval between illusion and reality, between perception and fact, but rather than bridge this chasm, he widens it-- that's the watermark of brilliant art.