

## SEAN PERRY • Practicing Eternity

If you say that Sean Perry treads the ground and breathes in oxygen and makes a living and feels the wind and hears birdsong like the rest of us, then, okay, I'll believe you. But that he sees things and feels things like the vast majority of us? Nope, not a chance. ■ Perry's photographs start out in the same real world that the rest of us inhabit—standing on the same earth and lit by the same sun—but somewhere in the mix that wondrous process called seeing kicks in and everything else around about him gets transformed. Sam Abell once remarked “taking space and changing it is one of the most satisfying things about photography,” and just one look at Sean's photographs will show you that he instantly agrees with how Sam feels this self same magic. Clouds begin to dance, buildings start to sing, curves embrace infinity, the most commonplace industrial artifacts reveal a cosmic design, and suddenly you begin to really start to sense what Picasso meant when he stated that nothing was more difficult than having to think a line. ■ There is also something Zen-like in the symbolism and poetry of Perry's imagery. Something that exists and yet does not wholly exist, that both reflects light and emanates light itself. Something that Minor White took in with each breath and then spent most of his lifetime trying to get the rest of us to inhale also. There is the concrete world and then there is the spiritual world. And then, for that rare few, there is the concrete world that is forever shaped by the spiritual world—mysterious and yet all too familiar, elegant and yet all too mundane, sensuous but forever prosaic. Most of us can hear the music, name the song, and even hum along—but how many of us can also get lost in the dancing itself? ■ Like Mendelssohn once wrote to Souchay: “The thoughts which are expressed to me by music that I love are not too indefinite to be put into words, but on the contrary, too *definite*.” That is the sort of eloquence that Sean nails with every click of the shutter and each beat of the heart. As each of his rich prints continues to reveal, it is not so much that he understands light—who among us really does?—but rather that he possesses the ceaseless desire to want to understand it. Like the *Tao Te Ching* advises us: “Use your own light and return to the source of light. This is called practicing eternity.” In the case of Sean's photographs, that practice keeps getting us dang close to perfect.

ROY FLUKINGER Research Curator • HRC, The University of Texas at Austin • September, 2006