

ARTPULSE

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TIME-FOLDING IN CONTEMPORARY ART

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Robert Minervini, *Until Tomorrow Comes (Part III)*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 52" x 72." Courtesy of Marine Contemporary.

ROBERT MINERVINI: UNTIL TOMORROW COMES

Marine Contemporary – Venice, CA

By Megan Abrahams

Robert Minervini's exhibition, "Until Tomorrow Comes," might be thought of as an installation, rather than a group of works evolving from a theme. Conceived specifically for this gallery space, the nine canvases are deliberate but subtle continuations of one another, intended to be viewed as a panorama.

With his background as a muralist, it was a natural progression to translate a large-scale sensibility into a series of images connected in an unfolding scene. What makes the series even more inventive is the premise of linking the paintings sequentially—in a flowing time line from dawn to night.

With subtle gradations from one image to the next, as day metamorphoses to night, the artist captures the essence of the shifting light. Minervini may be categorized as a landscape painter, but he also could be considered a documentarian of light.

The artist is also a fine draftsman. The dominant subjects are architectural structures rendered with geometric precision. Modernist buildings and freeway ramps and overpasses—in various, often incongruous, settings—convey an austere futuristic vision.

The first of the panoramic series, *Until Tomorrow Comes (Part I)*, (2013) portrays what might be construed as islands on the edge of civilization, at the periphery of morning. In the middle ground, Minervini interweaves fading yellow light with a hard edge blue

grid, the characteristic linear framework recurring in this series. An outcropping of rocks in the foreground adds another point of focus and texture.

In the third image, *Until Tomorrow Comes (Part III)*, (2013) two freeway ramps intersect in muted rose and yellow tones, fading to blue. The San Francisco-based artist renders the hard structural elements of an urban landscape with a softness that makes the utilitarian references less cold. A curtain of delicate leaves cascades across the foreground—a screen through which the scene is viewed.

Minervini employs an arsenal of techniques to achieve varied texture and layering. Leaves, rocks and other forms are composed of cut pieces of paint, collaged onto the canvas with acrylic medium. He uses stencils to create the ghost-like outlines of the palm trees in *Until Tomorrow Comes (Part VI)* (2013).

Each composition stands alone, a glimpse into an imagined world with clues we recognize but cannot quite place. Only subtle details link one painting to the next—a pink line, a freeway ramp, grid patterns—offering continuity.

In the last work in the series, *Until Tomorrow Comes (Part IX)* (2013) a glowing moon and infinitesimal stars illuminate a subdued midnight blue skyscape with undulating blue mountains on the horizon line. An office building dominates the middle ground.

An air of mystery, almost a foreboding, pervades these scenes. Minervini's panoramic vista is populated by the vestiges of contemporary civilization, haunted by the absence of figures. The shifting light and infused mystique conjure a profound narrative resonance with resounding impact. ■

(December 14, 2013 - January 25, 2014)