

Maureen Mullarkey June 24, 2004



Alex Katz, 'Rollins and John' (1981).

ELIZABETH HARRIS GALLE

Elizabeth Harris closes the season with a lively sampler of New York nightscapes by 16 painters and photographers. Ron Milewicz brings to his nocturne high pictorial agility and interpretive finesse. "Blackout" (2004), created for this show, views the Manhattan skyline from an industrial lot in Long Island City. Its pitch-perfect color and clever use of lateral perspective knock the lights out. One painting that holds its own against it is Richard Bosman's dramatic "Cityscape" (1997–98), anchored by the Twin Towers and their reflection in the East River. The brooding coloration of Mr. Bosman's skyline supports the elegiac quality history has lent it.

Yvonne Jacquette's trademark motif is here: "Above Times Square" (2003), an intricate composition rendered with a slight unsteadiness that suits the dizzying vantage point. Simon Gaon's rollicking "Times Square Night" (1998), on the other hand, seems oddly quaint; Times Square has straightened up since Mr. Gaon set it rocking.

Alex Katz cheats a bit on the theme, but he is allowed: His "Rollins and John" (1981), a double-headshot,

frames one man against a darkened window. Christine Ray's offbeat take on a blackened subway entrance has a stark chill that feels just right. And Doug Martin's "Night Pearl" (2003) provides a graceful study of darkened buildings, lit from below by unseen streetlights.

Paul Chojnowski's scorched drawing, "Twilight in the City" (2003), is burned into wet paper with a torch. An unsettling image suggesting conflagration, it is eerily beautiful. In "Frozen Brooklyn" (2004), Daina Higgins's hieratic treatment of a desolate Williamsburg street, the artist has sprayed paint through a series of stencils over each color area, eliminating brush marks. If the process is tedious, the result is elegant.

Among photographers, Peter Hendrick's luminous C-print, mounted on aluminum, distinguishes itself by its painterliness. A square format enhances the abstract loveliness of spare buildings framing a clear sky just before nightfall.