

Drive-by Shooting: April Greiman Digital Photography

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On Sunday, October 8th, I attended the closing event for Drive-by Shooting: April Greiman Digital Photography, at the Pasadena Museum of California Art. This spectacular exhibition – whose works speak directly to the primal subconscious artist residing in all of us – offers an astonishing amalgam of photography, painting, graphic design, and digital composition. The works presented in Drive-by Shooting began life as photographs – low-res digital images. By a series of remarkable transformations, the finished products have the strongest resemblance to paintings. And, it's very easy for you to think you're looking at artworks created with paint, rather than with light and a reflecting mirror in a camera-box.

April Greiman's compositions in Drive-by Shooting are BIG – 42 x 60 inches, 42 x 80 inches, 42 x 102 inches. And, ingeniously, they're not hung on the walls, but rather they're suspended in space, cantilevered away from the walls, or lying on the floor. In this way, you're confronted with the images – an active, rather than a passive, interaction is established. A very personal relationship is thus created, almost an immersive experience.

I was reminded forcefully of psychedelic experiences – viewing these vivid, kinetic, cinematic digital images, I felt as if all my creative faucets were thrown open to full, and the widest possible range of relationships, and ideas, and interconnections were free to interact.

By introducing such vast scales of enlargement, particularly when the original capture was low-res, wonderful unanticipated shifts in composition and palette are created. This is similar to emergent phenomena, well-known in complex systems. Human intelligence, for example, is such an emergent property. I'm also reminded of quantum physics, where physical properties are closely related to dimensions of scale. You can get a sense of the power of April Greiman's work.

"Mile Marker" is a boundary-less sea of summertime greens, yellows, and reddish browns, centering on a curious white rectangle. As you realize you have no idea what it is you're looking at, you become free to make stuff up, to create your own interactive experience. You become free to dream side-by-side with the artist. Free to create a new world of seeing.

"Yellow Bus" is certainly yellow, but a lemony Wonderland yellow rather than the yellow of the sun. Streaky rectangles of azure blue and ferrous red oscillate the image and you stand there, your brain vibrating, feeling the deep kinesthetics of the visual movement, right down to your muscle memories of riding on that dreamscape bus.

Every image in this magical show conveyed similar mind-expanding power.

I found I didn't want to leave the enhanced, augmented reality of Drive-by Shooting.