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THE BOOK BENCH

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The Chase

A selection of Andrew Bush's portraits of people in their cars, from his book "Drive," are currently on display in two separate galleries in Chelsea, Yossi Milo and Julie Saul. At Yossi Milo the other night, Bush's photographs seemed to speed past me along the gallery walls, all facing the same direction, as if they were on the 5 heading north toward San Francisco.

The lines and angles of each shot emphasize the surfaces of the cars, the scratches and flaws that give the "shells," as Bush refers to them, the patina of experience. The eye is drawn, though, to the cars' inhabitants, into their personal space. Bush certainly found a clever way of letting us in: he set up a camera on a tripod in the passenger seat of his own car, and drove alongside his subjects. They seem caught in a moment of quietude, lost not in thought, but in motion.

The series, like much of Bush's work, which you can find on his delightfully labyrinthine Web site, seems concerned with the often hair-thin gap between the public and the private. In "Woman Waiting to Proceed South at Sunset and Highland Boulevards, Los Angeles, at Approximately 11:59 A.M. One Day in February 1997," a woman reminiscent of a Barbie doll, in a bubblegum-pink sports car, stares into the camera. It's amusing to learn that she is Angeline, a minor California celebrity whose wealthy husband used to buy space on billboards for her picture. Her unflinching gaze suggests that for her, perhaps, the public and the private exist in perfect unison. In 2008, Bush ran into her again. She was sporting a new car: a pink Corvette.



Woman gliding southeast at 64 mph on U.S. Route 101 near Santa Barbara at 4:39 p.m. sometime in March 1990

(Images: Courtesy Andrew Bush and Yossi Milo Gallery)

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