



"MAN DRIFTING NEAR THE SHOULDER AT 61 MPH ON INTERSTATE 405 AROUND THE GETTY DRIVE EXIT AT 4:01PM ON A TUESDAY IN SEPTEMBER," 1992

Andrew Bush, DIGITAL C-PRINT
PHOTO: COURTESY M+B GALLERY

LOS ANGELES

Andrew Bush: "Vector Portraits" at M + B

"Vector Portraits" is composed of 19 large-scale chromogenic prints by Los Angeles-based photographer Andrew Bush, and appears to tell the narrative of Americans and their love affair with the automobile. By turning his own car into a tripod, Bush rigged a medium format camera to the exterior of his car, while a strobe light placed on the passenger's seat operated as a flash. Driving alongside motorists from Oklahoma to California, Bush manages to frame drivers in a uniform manner and transforms the unpredictable speeds of the highway into a controlled environment suited for portraiture. The motorists always appear at the center of the composition—if their speed increases, their white knuckles clinch the top of the steering wheel, while others have their left shoulder bent out the window. Despite this, the photographs never extend beyond the hood of the car. The road ahead is of no consequence to Bush; rather he is captivated by the lull that creeps over drivers which sends them into near-possessed trance where they are ambivalent to the world outside of their vehicular haven. This curious state of being causes many of the drivers to miss the camera's flash while others take notice, like "woman heading west at 71 mph on Interstate 44 outside Rolla, Missouri, at 11:43 am in January 1991." The woman appears to have temporarily taken her eyes off the road to confront the camera with her gaze. The flash illuminates the forest green sedan and its driver in a halo.

As gathered for display at M+B, the photographs feel more like voyeuristic snapshots into the insular and private world of their cars, rather than portraits. In many cases, Bush's subjects had no idea they were being photographed or where the photographs would appear. The first component of the title "Vector" refers to "one who carries," and in physics refers to the distance between point A and point B. In the case of Andrew Bush's work, the vector is the car as it literally carries the passenger from one point to the next. Andrew Bush indicates that he is not concerned with where they are traveling from, or where they are heading to, rather that they intersected with his camera at a particular moment in time on a given stretch of road somewhere in the United States.

—A. MORET