

That Must Be One Shiny Door: John Vias Wins Another Award for Night Photography

By John Vias

Dated: Jul 23, 2008

For the second year in a row, John Vias earned a Juror Award in the Joyce Gordon Gallery's "Glimpses in Time: International Juried Photography Exhibition." The exhibition of 82 photos runs August 1-30, with a reception on August 1st.

OAKLAND, CA -- "Shiny Door," a night photograph by John Vias, earned a Juror Award in the Joyce Gordon Gallery's "Glimpses in Time" exhibition. This is the second year in a row Vias has won a Juror Award in the "Glimpses in Time" exhibition. This year's show drew almost 400 entries from 29 states and nine countries. Only 82 images were chosen by juror Stephen Wirtz, founder of San Francisco's prestigious Stephen Wirtz Gallery.

A reception will be held Friday, August 1, 2008, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The public is invited and Vias plans to attend.

The Joyce Gordon Gallery is located at 406 14th St, Oakland, CA 94612, convenient to BART. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Friday, noon to 7:00 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

"Glimpses in Time: An International Juried Photography Exhibition in Honor of James Van Der Zee" recognizes the late artist for his significant accomplishments as a photographer. For decades, he helped document the Harlem Renaissance, including such notable figures as Marcus Garvey and Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. Multiple exposures and retouched negatives helped him create his idealized images.

"Shiny Door" was captured in West Berkeley, California. In this photograph, a large, textured, metallic silver door appears in the blue, corrugated metal wall of a public building. A green door, blue mailbox, shadows, and light add interest to this intriguing night-time image.

On his website, Vias quotes Confucius: "Everything has its beauty but not everyone sees it." Vias explains, "a central focus of my work is to reveal the beauty in ordinary things." His photographs often feature common objects: a drinking fountain, a highway overpass, park benches. But in his photos, these mundane objects take on a surreal beauty.

Vias's home and studio are located in Ocean View, a West Berkeley neighborhood. He describes the area as "a wide variety of potential subjects, including a marina, foundry, factories, stores, restaurants, apartments, and houses." The locale supplies much of the subject matter for his work. "Strong lines and unusual shapes draw my eye," Vias said. "The ambiguity of purpose, content, and history of these structures intrigues me."

He captures his night photographs on film with the aid of exposures as long as twenty minutes. Of the surreal colors in some of his images, Vias explains, "they occur through the intersection of film, long exposures, and available light."

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John Vias wanders around in the dark taking pictures. His award-winning night photography is recognized in competitions, reprinted in the press, and hangs in collections in the US and abroad. He lives and works in Berkeley, California.

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