

THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

Vermont Quarterly

FALL 2006



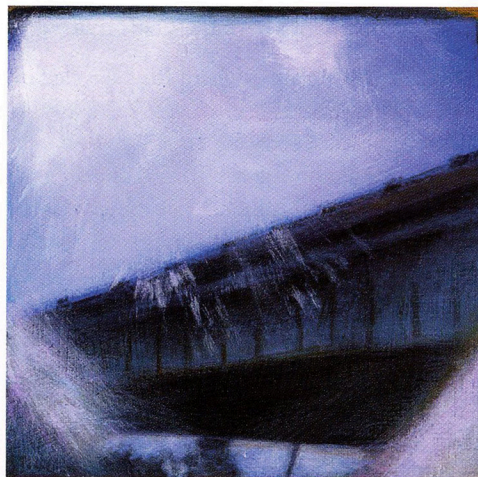
ARTISTS AT **work**

looking in on five alumni

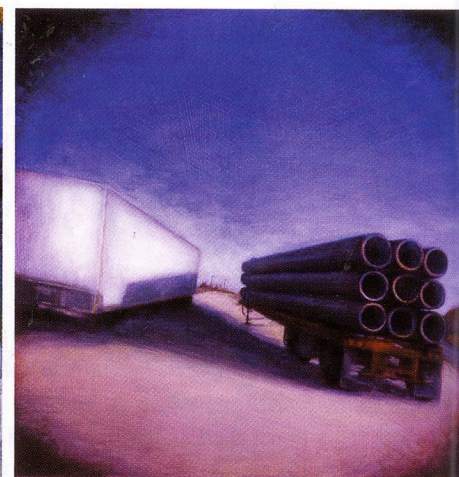
Saving Sotheby's
75 years at the Fleming



Left:
LA Freeway II,
2006,
acrylic on
panel,
4.5" X 5"

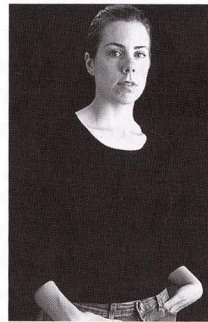


Middle:
Overpass I,
2006,
acrylic on
panel,
4.5" X 5"



Right:
Roadside I,
2006,
acrylic on
panel,
12" X 12"

INSTANT GRATIFICATION Inspiration for the current direction in Kate Davis Caldwell's work, primarily landscapes painted on a small scale, comes from the look and spontaneity of Polaroid pictures. "They provide instant gratification," Caldwell says. "There's a painterly quality to the imperfections, and they can really act as little studies when I get back to the studio." The "unexpected and irregular"



KATE DAVIS
CALDWELL '98
Painter
Stockton, New Jersey

images that arise in pictures taken with digital cameras or cell phones also intrigue the artist. This new path in Caldwell's work, which will be on display in a November show at Philadelphia's Bridgette Mayer Gallery, took form in August 2005 when she did a residency at the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson. Surrounded by fellow visual artists and writers, Caldwell was reinvigorated. "It shakes you up a little bit, gets you out of your environment," she says.

PLANET WAVES Caldwell's painting career launched swiftly as a UVM undergrad. After Stephen Doll, curator of Burlington's Doll-Anstadt Gallery, spotted her work hanging at the Daily Planet restaurant, he organized a solo show that sold out. In retrospect, Caldwell says she isn't sure she realized just how important that fast start was. "It really propelled me," she says. "Without that to give me hope, I'm not sure I would have had the courage to start on a career as an artist." Art Professor Frank Owen was also a major source of support and inspiration as the then English major began finding herself taking more and more art classes. "Frank stressed finding your voice and style, being open to everything," Caldwell says. For her that meant abstract and boldly graphic work that combined painting and collage. Though that direction proved successful for years, she was ready for a change as her interest in Polaroid-inspired images began to emerge. "You get to a point where you have faith that everything evolves and gets better and better. I'm never satisfied that this body of work is *the* body of work."

DOWN TO WORK Home is in Stockton, New Jersey; the studio, in nearby Lambertville. Caldwell says that she finds getting in the studio early and often is the best way to build creative energy. "It all has to do with momentum," she says. "The earlier I get there, the better. If I haven't been in the studio for a while, the apprehension just builds up. Working spurs more creativity." That said, the artist has learned to recognize the moments when she's better off turning up the radio and turning to more mundane tasks like cutting mats or cleaning the studio. With a laugh, she says, "Sometimes it's best to walk away before things go up in flames."

See more:
www.mayerartconsultants.com/artist_davis