



SCOTT MARTIN SEE YOU SEE

October 29 – December 13, 2019, Foyer Gallery





When night falls, Scott Martin goes to work.

He is best known for his night photography depicting old buildings, desert spaces and the effects of the human handprint on natural spaces. Martin works in painstaking detail to reveal the interplay of light and shadow on his subjects. Although Martin mostly photographs landscapes and architecture, his images are filled with hidden narratives revealing a human presence in each shot. His work compels us to think about the manner in which we relate to our environments, both man-made and natural.

To capture the perfect image, Martin often goes to extremes, whether that means traveling for miles into vast desert land, or going without sleep for several days at a job site. The results of his work reveal his commitment to his craft and obsession for capturing the beauty of often overlooked spaces.

In one case, Martin reveals he was nearly detained by Border Patrol agents while he was scouting sites in the Texas desert.¹ Sitting in his black Subaru Forester, Martin was suddenly surrounded by two Border Patrol Suburbans.

“Eight agents jumped out, guns drawn,” Martin told the *San Antonio Express-News* in 2012. “I nervously rolled down my window.”

Martin explained himself and he was eventually let go.

But his risk-taking doesn't end there. His curious eye has also led him to abandoned sites and structures and most notably, underneath the century-old Boelher building in San Antonio as it was being lifted off its original foundation for preservation.ⁱⁱ The son of an architect, Martin has no qualms about wearing a hard hat and crawling, climbing or digging his way into whatever position necessary. “From a creative perspective, though, you can't play it safe all the time,” Martin told *The Rivard Report* in 2014. “You've got to push yourself to get the best possible shot you can.”

Martin's eagerness to go the distance has paid off. His time-lapse videos and night photography offer new insight and perspectives on roads less traveled (literally) and sights rarely seen.

In *The Show*, Martin depicts an outdoor movie screen set against a mountainous desert landscape. In the early stages of this video, the movie screen is white like a blank canvas. But as the sun begins to set and the landscape turns dark, the white screen comes to life with color and various moving images. Here, the artificially created urban landscape within the movie screen creates a sharp contrast against the natural environment of the desert. Like much of Martin's work, *The Show* is very much a play on opposites. The images move between night and day, and the natural and unnatural. *The Show* highlights the odd behavior of driving into the desert, underneath a vast open sky, only



to be consumed by a comparably smaller screen for nearly two hours.

Today, drive-ins are mostly a relic from the past as most have been shuttered. But in the mid-twentieth century, drive-ins were a popular form of escapism and entertainment for families and young couples. *The Show* is a nostalgic portrait of the American landscape and popular culture.

In *Brake*, Martin depicts the intersection of a country road and railroad crossing. Dramatic lighting and shadows overtake the space as the video progresses. The railroad tracks mark a disruption in the natural landscape but also a disruption for a driver who might pause for a train's passing. Here, the viewer anticipates the passing of a train, one of the world's oldest modes of transportation to move across the landscape, into our consciousness and perhaps into the future. Much like *The Show*, *Brake* calls for a moment of contemplation and self-reflection, by allowing the viewer permission to exit their immediate surroundings and mental space.

Martin began his career working in the photography department at the Methodist Hospital in Houston.ⁱⁱⁱ He is a graduate of Evergreen State College in Olympia. During his senior year, he interned with the master printmaker Dan Burkholder in San Antonio and even traveled with him to photograph Guatemala. While interning with Burkholder, Martin familiarized himself with the photography community

in Texas and in 1995, he moved to San Antonio permanently. Although Martin has a formal education in the arts, he has publicly stated that his best training has actually been his collaborations with others. Today, Martin teaches night photography workshops around the country.

Martin's interests led to one of his biggest projects to date — photographing the transformation of the Hotel Emma in San Antonio from an abandoned nineteenth-century brewery into a luxury five-star hotel.^{iv} For four years beginning in 2007, Martin visited the site setting up eight cameras and taking over 400,000 still shots. This series of work exemplifies Martin's artistic practice in that it documents the physical transformation of a space; it explores both its history and future potential, and uncovers often forgotten or overlooked details, all this, as a personal contemplation of space and time.

ⁱBennett, Steve. "Photographer captures surreal, even ghostly, visions at night," Mysanantonio.com, September 6, 2012.

ⁱⁱRivard, Robert. "Conversation: Scott Martin, Photographer of the Seldom Seen," Therivardreport.com December 4, 2014.

ⁱⁱⁱGates, Adam Word. "Scott Martin: Chasing the Light," The Architecture Show, buzzsprout.com, October 15, 2018.

^{iv}Hotel Emma, "Doing Time," Interview with Scott Martin, Thehotleemma.com, June 13, 2019.

First two images from left to right: *The Show*, 2014, single channel time-lapse video, 3:08 minutes, music by Simon Duncan. Last three images from left to right: *Brake*, 2012, single channel looped time-lapse video, 3:13 minutes.

The Freedman Gallery at Albright College, named after former Albright trustee and alumna **Doris Chanin Freedman**, is located on the ground floor of the **Center for the Arts**. Since its inception, the gallery focuses primarily on contemporary, living, American artists and hosts approximately twelve exhibitions each year rotating in the Main Gallery, Project Space, and Foyer Gallery. Freedman Gallery is located at 13th & Bern Streets, Reading, PA 19612. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday 1-4 p.m. The gallery is closed on Mondays, holidays, breaks and summer. (See Albright.edu/calendar).

Founded in 1856, Albright College educates creative, curious students to become adaptable, global citizens who discover and reach their full potential. The college's flexible interdisciplinary curriculum encourages students to combine majors and disciplines to create individualized academic programs. Close faculty mentorship, numerous experiential learning options, and a diverse, supportive and nurturing community of scholars and learners help students exceed their own expectations and graduate with a commitment to a lifetime of service and learning. Located in Reading, Pennsylvania, Albright enrolls more than 1,700 full-time undergraduates and 700 adult learners and graduate students.

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Cover image: **Scott Martin**, *The Show, 2014*, single channel time-lapse video, 3:08 minutes. Music by Simon Duncan.