

AROUND THE GALLERIES

Giving Substance to a Virtual World

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by David Pagel

Dimitri Kozyrev's new paintings leave the freeways and back roads of the Western United States that his previous works toured for more vertiginous trips on the information superhighway. At Cirrus Gallery, three new diptychs and four single canvases take viewers around the world as fast as a computer can download images.

On one side of each diptych is a still image that could have been made with a camera. These depict a ruined bunker in Finland, a detail of a Dutch interior in a Vermeer painting and a roomful of monochromes by Malevich, in what appears to be a Russian palace that has been inexpensively converted into an art gallery. Things change. Often faster than we want them to.

On the other sides are dozens of sharply angled planes resembling shattered glass. Each shard depicts a bit of landscape, urban and country. Fragments of factories, freeways and fields pile up alongside unidentifiable splinters and abstract detritus. Imagine the interior of your computer's wastebasket - filtered through Cubism's dizzying deconstruction of the tactile world. Volumes flatten, things fall apart and chaos reigns.

Kozyrev's single-panel paintings organize this visual junkyard into sweeping compositions that suggest the giddy weightlessness of flight - of soaring, diving and swooping through the air without the burden of a plane or even a jetpack. Giving fleshy substance to the virtual world, the paintings by the Russia-born, Santa Barbara-based artist take viewers on flights of fancy filled with melancholic memories yet still optimistic about prospects.

Cirrus Gallery, 542 S. Alameda St., (213) 680-3473, through July 1. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.cirrusgallery.com.