

Grace Hopkins Makes You Look

Grace Hopkins's photographs at Berta Walker Gallery (208 Bradford St., Provincetown), on view through Sept. 17, tease the viewer to figure out the source of her close-up images. We're used to thinking of photography as a medium that conveys an objective representation of the world, even if photography never really does that. The mystery of Hopkins's work is that we have no idea what she is photographing. Glimpses of texture and shadow provide clues, but the "real" world remains elusive.



Grace Hopkins, Rhode Island 04. (Photo courtesy Berta Walker Gallery)

Hopkins makes us approach photography as we would abstract painting, where an actual reference is beside the point. There is minimal depth in these pictures: Hopkins uses photography to create flat compositions that are stubbornly two-dimensional.

The photos are tightly composed, with space divided into dynamic juxtapositions between bright synthetic colors and hard-edged geometric shapes. They make us aware of the rich variety of compositions and painterly gestures that exist in the urban landscape — things that we tend to ignore because of their ubiquity, or because they're part of something else. Perhaps there really is something objective in Hopkins's photographs after all. —

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