

## Mary Miss at Senior & Shopmaker

Mary Miss frequently faces a variety of difficulties pursuing her public projects. They take years to complete and involve often unwieldy collaborations with people from different professions. Hence the photo-collages she makes, and which comprised this show, provide her with welcome freedom. Selected from black-and-white photographs taken during her travels throughout the 1990s (although the collages were produced in 2006), the 12 works depict landscapes featuring manmade interruptions of some sort—highway pylons, stadium bleachers, a grotto. Unlike her last show at Senior

& Shopmaker, which focused on spiraling architectural interiors, these collages are panoramic horizontals. Mounted on large sheets of paper—on the average 4 by 7 feet—the images have irregular, often stepped edges. Materials (wood, water, concrete) and motifs (pillings, pergolas, viewing platforms) evident in her own built environments often appear in the collages.

Five of the works on view highlight bodies of water. In one, she presents an array of fish traps so numerous that they fill the pond like a labyrinth. In another, she turns a dilapidated pier into a prostrate Tatlinesque

construction. Inspired by the synthetic structures, Miss disrupts, embellishes and elaborates on what the camera has recorded. In *Untitled (Vermont Fire Tower)*, she reorients several of the lookout post's gridded windowpanes onto the horizontal, disturbing their placid regularity. Some areas form little prismatic pockets. The eye

engages in the complexity of the broken-up pattern. Elsewhere, the phenomenon of perspectival recession is given center stage. In *Untitled (Waterworks)*, the retaining walls of a narrow canal remain distinct as they extend into an unusually deep space.

These photo/drawings do not correspond to Miss's actual constructed projects. Pictorially, they are more complete and resolved than her built work appears in photos. Of course, that is not an accident. Miss intends her outdoor environments to be intimate, best experienced firsthand. The collages, by contrast, foster experimentation and present ideas that often lead to physically untenable, imaginary spaces, reiterating on paper her goal of establishing a relationship among viewer, space and object by intervening in the viewer's expectations.

—Cathy Lebowitz

Mary Miss: *Untitled (Vermont Fire Tower)*, 1996, gelatin silver print collage, 35½ by 60¼ inches; at Senior & Shopmaker.

