



Marine Contemporary

018

Robert Minervini  
Until Tomorrow  
Comes



# Nightfall

## Mary Anne Kluth

Artist Robert Minervini drove across America for the first time recently, travelling to the Bemis Center for the Arts in Omaha, Nebraska to participate in their distinguished residency program, and then driving back home to San Francisco. The American West, with its sublime landscapes such as the Grand Canyon, the Rocky Mountains, and the Mojave Desert, made a considerable impression on him. Raised in Philadelphia, with American and Italian citizenship, the artist grew up listening to punk music, painting murals and skateboarding in urban areas. The sweeping vistas and heroic mythos of the West were a new experience for him, inspiring the painter to work even larger than he had in the past, and to do something else he had never done before: to consider nine of the paintings in *Until Tomorrow Comes*, his second solo exhibition at Marine Contemporary, as one continuous panoramic work.

Composed to specifically to wrap entirely around the gallery space, *Parts I* through *IX*, (all 2013) do more than engulf viewers in a fully conceived world, depicting liminal spaces on the boundaries between civilization and wilderness. As imagery flows from one piece to the next, the

paintings work like frames in a cinematic storyboard, taking on an intuitive narrative, and implying the passage of time. An incandescent yellow sunset in *Part I* turns to hazy pink by *Part III*, and slips into an indigo twilight by *Part VIII*. Minervini depicts these gorgeous, expansive skies through the framework of highway infrastructure, corporate architecture, and surrounding shoreline, greenery, and open spaces. Those familiar with the Bay Area's distinctive overpasses and developments all over California are bound to recognize the Modernist architecture and as well as the signs of creation and decay that Minervini weaves throughout his compositions, such as construction scaffolding and highway rubble, or abandoned billboards and new shoots of grass.

This holistic interest in the transformation of landscape from wilderness to civilization is one Minervini shares with many historical landscape painters, such as British Romantic Thomas Cole, or American Luminist Albert Bierstadt. Western painter and illustrator Frederick Remington also used cool, citrus yellows to capture the glow and temperature of dusk in the same way Minervini does. But while sundown in Remington's work seemed to metaphorically signal the end of the rough and tumble cowboy era and the closing of the frontier, the metaphor of Minervini's nightfall is more complicated. The boom times have passed, and it's not clear whether man-made structures are taking over his landscapes, or if the shrubs and tides are reclaiming their territories, just as the wilderness reclaims ancient Rome in Cole's blockbuster series *The Course of Empire* (1833-36).

The paintings in *Until Tomorrow Comes* are forward-looking as much as they are influenced by history. Minervini cites Buckminster Fuller and his utopian geodesic domes as an important topic of research. Part III features a glowing blue

grid overlaid on the entire right portion of the composition, evoking sci-fi movie effects and suggesting an ethereal network made visible. *Part VI* includes intricate spray silhouettes of palm trees, similarly suggesting a digital or electronic displacement, a ghostly and futuristic effect. His spaces are complex. The atmospheres are dreamy, but not sweet. The graffiti in the underpasses is fresh but not menacing. There aren't people in his pictures, so viewers must take on that role themselves. These and other aesthetic tactics allow Minervini to present a vision of a potential future, a possible America that may result from our past and current nationalist mythos. He shows us how disconnected our land, our country could become from the ideals we once held, but presents this possibility without judgment, inviting his audience to explore for themselves.

Working in this way, Minervini is participating in a global dialog with other contemporary painters. Neo Rausch also famously balances abstraction and representational elements in his compositions. Another Leipzig School artist David Schnell also uses inventive mark-making techniques to simultaneously create and thwart the illusion of space in his works. Japanese digital artist Chiho Aoshima shares Minervini's lyrical color sensibility and his thematic interest in dystopian architecture at odds with nature. But Minervini's artistic voice is ultimately unique. As *Until Tomorrow Comes* demonstrates, his paintings are finely tuned negotiations between opposing forces: wilderness and civilization, day and night, creation and destruction, and illusion and painterly abstraction, to name a cursory few. His underlying message is as complex as the environmental issues facing America now and in the future, but his vision is so seductive that viewers are bound to consider them anyway.

## Robert Minervini

Robert Minervini (b. 1981, Secaucus, New Jersey, USA) is an artist who examines spatial environments and notions of utopia in large-scale, multi-layered acrylic works. Through dystopian cityscapes, landscapes, and floral still life arrangements, his work addresses the ecological impact of humanity on the landscape.

He received his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2009, and his BFA from Tyler School of Art in 2005. His work has been exhibited nationally, including solo shows with ElectricWorks, Eleanor Harwood Gallery, a two-person exhibition with Johansson Projects, and group exhibitions with Waterhouse and Dodd, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, the Bedford Gallery, The Brooklyn Historical Society, and the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery. He is a recipient of the Murphy and Cadogan Fellowship by the San Francisco Foundation, the Edwin Austin Abbey Mural Fellowship by the National Academy of Fine Arts, and the Carmela Corso Scholarship by Tyler School of Art. He has been a resident artist at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Kala Art Institute, the Headlands Center of the Arts, the Vermont Studio Center, and the Root Division Studio Program. His art has been published in *New American Paintings* (No. 91 and No. 109), *Beautiful Decay*, and *Mural Art: Large Scale Art from Walls around the World*. Minervini's work has been reviewed in *Modern Painters*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *art ltd.*, and featured in *ArtWeek LA*, *7x7 Magazine*, and *The Huffington Post*. His work *The Fruitful Lands of Multitudes of Worlds (Behind the Surface of a Mirror)* was acquired by the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego in 2012. In 2013, he was selected by the San Francisco Arts Commission for the Art on Market Street public art project. He currently lives and works in San Francisco.

## Recent Solo Exhibitions include:

2013

- *Until Tomorrow Comes*, Marine Contemporary, Venice, CA
- *As the Wick Burns*, Electric Works, San Francisco, CA

2012

- *On the Nature of Things*, Marine Contemporary, Venice, CA

2011

- *Sunken Dream*, Gallery Hijinks, San Francisco, CA

2009

- *A Means to an End*, Eleanor Harwood Gallery, San Francisco, CA

## Two Person Exhibitions

2012

- *Hymns to the Moon*, Johansson Projects, Oakland, CA

2011

- *Mythic Futures*, Eggman and Walrus, Santa Fe, NM

## Recent Group Exhibitions include:

2014

- *Home*, Schneider Museum of Art, Ashland, OR

2013

- *Home*, the Bedford Gallery, Walnut Creek, CA
- *Alumni Exhibition*, Diego Rivera Gallery, San Francisco Art Institute, S.F., CA
- *[In]finite Gardens*, Delicious Spectacle, Washington D.C.
- *Art Pad*, Art Fair, Electric Works Gallery Booth, San Francisco, CA

2012

- *The Day on Fire*, Slocumb Gallery, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN
- *Alternative Landscapes*, Art Source Consulting, 101 California, San Francisco, CA

2011

- *Bay Area Now 6*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA
- *ROY G BIV*, Waterhouse & Dodd, New York City, NY

2011

- *Unreal World*, Southern Exposure, San Francisco, CA
- *Incognito*, Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, CA
- *Salon No. 8, Works 248 – 269*, Marine Contemporary Art Salon, Santa Monica, CA
- *Call & Response*, Root Division, San Francisco, CA (Curated and Participated)
- *Art Platform with Marine Contemporary*, Los Angeles, CA

2010

- *Hi-Tide*, Aqua Art Fair Miami, Art Slant, Miami Beach, FL
- *Highly Contagious*, Gallery Hijinks, San Francisco, CA
- *A New Beginning*, 941 Geary, San Francisco, CA
- *Salon No. 5*, Marine Contemporary Art Salon, Santa Monica, CA
- *Magic Window*, Verge Gallery, Sacramento, CA

2009

- *Brooklyn Utopias*, Brooklyn Historical Society, Brooklyn, NY
- *Introductions*, Root Division, San Francisco, CA, Juried by Glen Helfand, Eleanor Harwood, and Meg Shiffler
- *The Space Between Us*, We Art Space, Oakland, CA
- *Master Pieces*, Manifest Gallery, Cincinnati, OH, Juried international (Catalogue)
- *Vernissage*, MFA Graduate Exhibition, Herbst Pavilion, San Francisco, CA (Catalogue)

2008

- *Twilight*, Diego Rivera Gallery, The San Francisco Art Institute, S.F., CA
- *The Immediate Future*, The San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, S.F., CA
- *Edwin Austin Abbey Mural Fellowship Exhibition*, The National Academy of Fine Arts, New York, NY





Until Tomorrow Comes (Part I)  
Acrylic on canvas  
52" x 72", 2013



Until Tomorrow Comes (Part II)  
Acrylic on canvas  
52" x 72", 2013

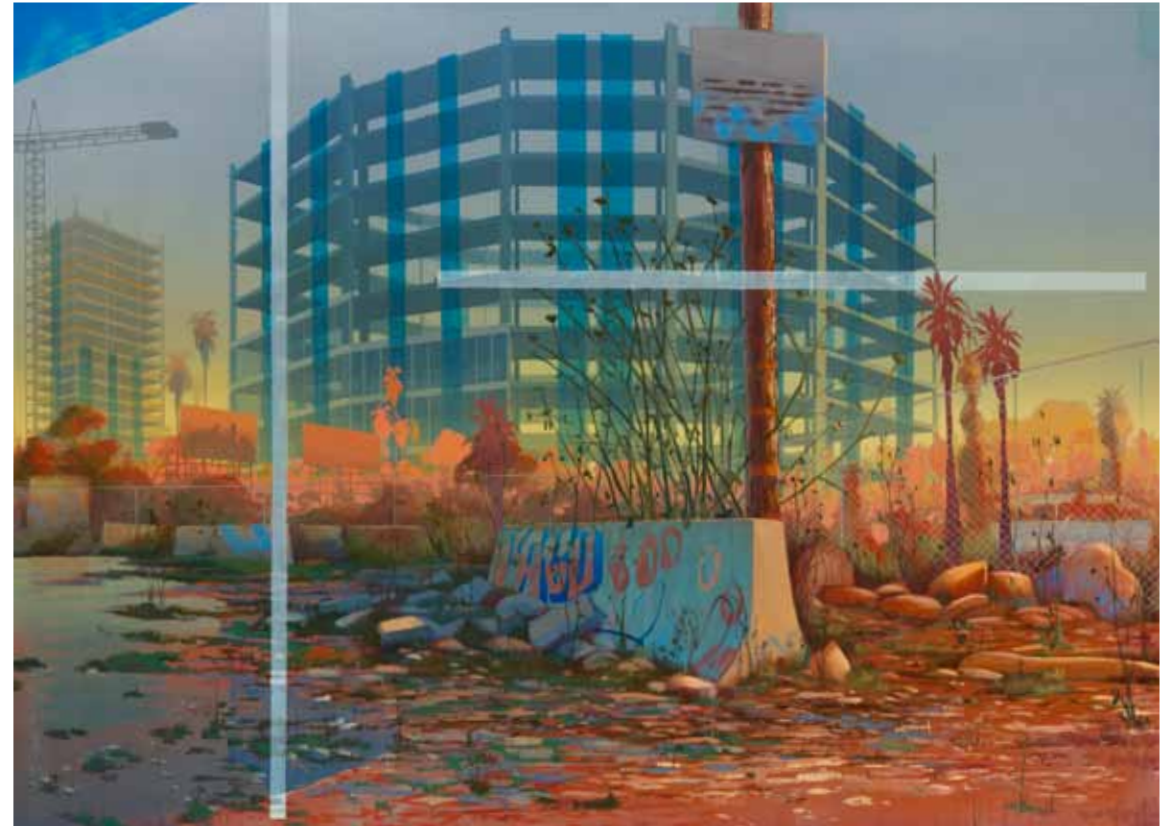


Until Tomorrow Comes (Part III)  
Acrylic on canvas  
52" x 72", 2013



Until Tomorrow Comes (Part IV)  
Acrylic on canvas  
52" x 72", 2013





Until Tomorrow Comes (Part V)  
Acrylic on canvas  
52" x 72", 2013



Until Tomorrow Comes (Part VI)  
Acrylic on canvas  
52" x 72", 2013



Until Tomorrow Comes (Part VII)  
Acrylic on canvas  
52" x 72", 2013



Until Tomorrow Comes (VIII)  
Acrylic on canvas  
52" x 72", 2013



Until Tomorrow Comes (Part IX)  
Acrylic on canvas  
52" x 72", 2013



Day for Night  
Acrylic canvas over panel,  
30" x 46", 2013



Night for Day  
Acrylic canvas over panel,  
30" x 46", 2013



Until Tomorrow Comes  
Installation



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