



JENKINS JOHNSON GALLERY

Chris Raecker
A Midnight
Carnival
January 24 – March
1, 2008

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Gallery hours:
Tues-Fri: 10-6
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Chris Raecker *Gym*, 2007, pigment inkjet print, 12 x 18 inches

Jenkins Johnson Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of *Chris Raecker: A Midnight Carnival* in San Francisco Thursday, January 24 with a reception for the artist from 5:30 - 7:30pm. The exhibition will continue through Saturday, March 1, 2008.

In my hometown of Waterloo, Iowa there is an annual fair in mid-September called the Cattle Congress. It has a good-sized midway with all the bizarre contraptions and activities that most of us know and love to see at a fair. Even as a kid with my first SLR camera, I could tell this kind of place was ripe for unraveling.

-Chris Raecker

A Midnight Carnival offers a fanciful escape into a magical, flamboyant land with dreamlike imagery.

Raecker's black and white images present a duality between photography and painting. The artist takes his images at all points of day and works digitally to create their midnight effect. There are suggestions to subjectivism, surrealism, and pictorialism but his interpretation of the carnival is astonishingly innovative. The sky is illustrated as dynamically dramatic, capturing the vast power of nature and articulating Immanuel Kant's feeling of the beautiful and the sublime. Some of the images like *The Recruiting Booth* capture more of the grotesque than the resplendent. They are poetic, tragically beautiful and somewhat comedic. He casts another duality between the life and the afterlife, the illuminated sky representing the heavens and of course the dark bizarre carnival, the snakelike coasters and bumper car creatures, depicting the latter.

Raecker's carnival rides take you to explore the labyrinth of an Egyptian tomb or to experience the exotic dance of the mythical Chinese dragon. His compositions pair larger than life skies with silhouettes of his gargantuan roller coasters that leave a spiraling impression against the looming clouds. Raecker depicts the illuminated signs of rides like *FEAR FACTORY* and *CRAZY BUS* capturing the brave ones that chose to embark on these adventures at the most exhilarating of moments, children riding the coaster at the peak of the trip, at any second they could be catapulted into the sky over the clouds into some other place. Arms stretched in the air, fingers spread out attempting to touch the sky, hair standing at its end; these images are filled with excitement and mystery. The engulfing skies make the viewer wonder as to where these rides make their final destination. *Disk* illustrates a young girl being swung around on a carnival ride hands and feet reaching out in sheer thrill. Evoking a classic experience from any American childhood and alluding to the *Wizard of OZ* before Dorothy is whisked off somewhere over the rainbow.

This will be Chris Raecker's first solo exhibition at Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco. His work has been included in group exhibitions nationally.