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Pier 24, San Francisco

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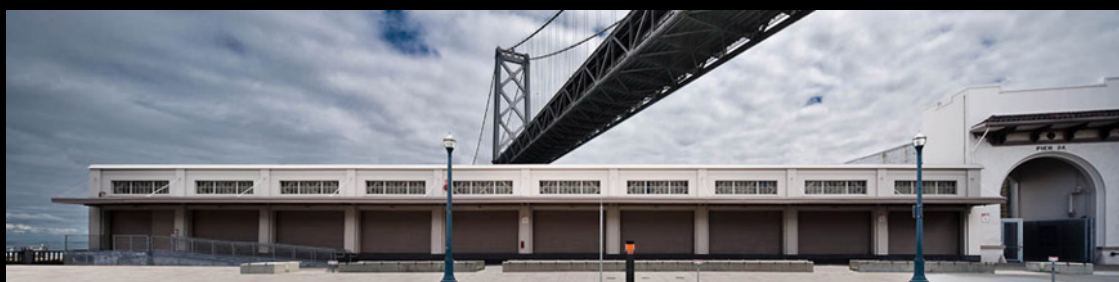


Photo: Tom O'Conner, courtesy of Pier 24

Not only has San Francisco maintained a reputation for being innovative and progressive, it has done so in a way that is consistently unique. So it should come as no surprise that San Francisco native, Andrew Pilara took it upon himself to create a photo space that defies all odds.

On paper, the idea seems kind of crazy. 28,000 square feet dedicated solely to photography and artists working in the photographic medium. And to boot, these 28,000 square feet sit on top of the most unlikely of places, the waters of the San Francisco Bay. Additionally, Pier 24 blurs the line between a traditional gallery or museum by neither charging admission nor offering any works for sale. Calling itself a “place to view and think about photography,” Pier 24 succeeds in devoting the attention and respect to photography that the rest of the fine art world has enjoyed for centuries.

The experience of walking through the many galleries within Pier 24 is one of overwhelming discovery. There are rooms that seem to appear out of no where, rooms that both contain you completely or that are left without ceilings, exposing the clerestory. It may also come as a surprise to know that none of the images exhibited is accompanied by wall text. This very intentional choice was made in efforts to invite viewers to have an immersive experience of the photographs, uninterrupted by textual information. In an article with the New Yorker, director Christopher McCall said “by not having text, we invite the viewer to be more engaged with the work—to consider the juxtaposition of images, or the visual experience of the images together.”

Visitors can also indulge in the rare treat of viewing the works with few or no other people in the gallery. This very personal and contemplative experience is accomplished by allowing no more than 20 people in the space at a time during any of the two-hour appointment slots.

The current exhibition, *From the Randi and Bob Fisher Collection*, includes over 500 works of primarily 20th century American black & white photographers. While it may seem like a daunting task to view and experience some 500 photographs, the show was curated in such a way to ensure that each piece is allowed the space it needs to fully resonate with the viewer. And as if all of this wasn't enough, the all-star list of photographers whose works are included will surely knock you off your feet. Some of whom are: Edward Weston, Walker Evans, William Eggleston, Garry Winogrand, Lee Friedlander, Diane Arbus, Hilla and Bernd Becher, Man Ray, Harry Callahan, Andreas Gursky and others.

In short, we've died and gone to photo-heaven.

For more information regarding the building, exhibitions and how to make an appointment, visit www.pier24.org

Written by Amelia Sechman



From the Collection of Randi and Bob Fisher, installation view. Courtesy of Randi and Bob Fisher and Pier 24, San Francisco. Photo: Tom O'Conner.