



Birds

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Visions* by Rick Fatica
Where: Beyond Arts Gallery, 114 North A Street, Harlingen
When: Through Feb 18. Hours are Wed-Fri: 1pm-5pm,
Sat: 10am -5pm
Contact: (956) 230-2859

A Photographic Dialogue

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

By Nancy Moyer

"Photography is a powerful medium because it is so believable," professed Fatica, "and when I make a photograph of a landscape it becomes therapeutic. I feel better and become connected with the mystic power of nature. This helps me to reflect and to connect to a power greater than myself, putting life into perspective."

Coming from a background as a professional photographer, Rick Fatica has developed an interest in documenting both inner and outer landscapes. In his new exhibit, *Visions*, now on display at Beyond Arts Gallery, he uses his camera and his imagination to document both of these worlds. Fatica considers photojournalism to be an outer dialogue that the photographer has with the world, but in these works he takes outer world images and filters them through his mind and computer, stirring in emotions, dreams, and points of view to make visible his own inner dialogue.

Fatica was influenced by the Spanish Surrealist, Salvador Dali. "When Dali talked about his work," reflected Fatica, "he called it hand-painted dreams; they're actually oil paintings, but he called them photographs. Mine are photographs, but they're actually about dreams and inner thoughts." Connecting with Dali's use of distant space for a surrealistic effect, "Road" succeeds well with its classic dreamlike quality. A sunset with a sky

celebrating a saturated palette of orange, blue, and teal is interrupted by what could be a billboard, except that its image, the giant electronic screen, presents another sunset. As happens in most of Fatica's prints, there is pure beauty tying itself to the state of spiritual peace, a very pleasurable viewer experience. Fatica definitely has a dialogue with nature that allows for the concept of the outer beauty and inner peace to blur. This becomes evident in his print, "Birds", where the subject has taken on symbolic and empathetic meaning. Fatica describes it as finding inner peace, and it calls to mind a dreamlike state. Three objects/images have been placed together; one with the birds, one with the sunset, and a self-portrait under water.

We also see self-portraits in several other prints. "Face" speaks of a personal affirmation of nature with the photographer's face as part of the natural landscape, inwardly and outwardly. Although he often uses his own image in his prints, he views this practice philosophically. "When you're using photographs," he said, "even when you're photographing somebody else, it's an expression of yourself."

His images of hands reference biblical healing pools representing restorative healing. "I have so many things that I focus on - birds are hope, or abundance or love, or brother. if you love your brother, you will not stumble. It's these inner things that keep me going. And stay positive. And stay grounded.

Fatica is a lecturer at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley at Brownsville, with an MFA in photography from Ohio University and a BFA from California Institute of the Arts.

Nancy Moyer, Professor Emerita of Art from UTRGV, is an art critic for The Monitor. She may be reached at nmoyer@rgv.rr.com