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Small, Constance Victory. "Postcard Paintings: A Panoramic View of William Wegman's World."
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AFTER NYNE



With a meritorious career that traverses as many decades as it does artistic mediums, William Wegman is one of the foremost conceptual artists of the 21st century. Wegman's name is synonymous with iconic images of Weimeraner dogs in humanized settings, and the prowess of his genius has masterfully permeated the realms of painting, film, fashion and art photography.

This month, downtown New York's Sperone Westwater Gallery unveils Postcard Paintings-- a series of mixed media paintings that articulate the artist's affection for vintage postcards, scenic landscapes, and some of the most monumental and inspiring movements in art history. Contemporaneous with his sixth solo exhibiton at the gallery is the publication of *William Wegman: Paintings* (Abrams, 2016), a monograph that includes essays by Bob Elliott, Martin Filler, Amy Hempel, Robert Krulwich, and Susan Orlean.

Postcard Paintings is a series of 25 compositions that invariably reconstitute Wegman's proficiency in architectural perspective, while punctuating the brilliance of his imagination. Nestled within the panoramic landscapes of each painting lie one—or several—vintage postcard(s) whose parameters are impeccably and imaginatively reinvented and extended to the borders of the customized wooden canvas. As Wegman

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seamlessly threads disparate landscapes to create a cohesive setting, the viewer is unwittingly guided on an illusory visual voyage.

Among the most affecting works to be presented is *All Over* (2016), a carefully curated composition of postcards that include printed paintings of the *Two Tahitian Women* by Gauguin, *Portrait of Paul Helleu* by John Singer Sargent, and a vintage photo of Old Aviles Street in the Spanish Quarter of St. Augustine, Florida, amongst others. All of the cards are repurposed to create a brilliantly balanced ecosystem comprised of contradictory settings. The affect is as poignant as it is personal. Viewing the *Two Tahitian Women* conjures memories of early morning art history lectures at university, while the illustriously recreated extension of Old Alviles Street renders a uniquely soothing effect, as it triggers the nostalgia of a family holiday on the island of Barbados. As a cohesive composition, the piece is arresting; the juxtaposition of embellished landscapes and surrealistic street scenes create a dreamlike habitat. Conversely, when each scene is compartmentalized, it scintillates with an unparalleled kind of painterly pragmatism.

Whether it be repurposed postcard paintings, or photos of trench coat clad Weimeraners, Wegman's creative genius tirelessly thrusts the human mind into transformative explorations. Simply stated, each painting awakens one's audacious inner, summoning him to surpass imagined limitations and brazenly expand on the beauty of life's canvas. As my eyes gently glided with each brushstroke, my mind sailed an surrealistic journey anchored by fond souvenirs of past places and imagined spaces.

As an internationally celebrated artist, the range of Wegman's repertoire has been exhibited worldwide and is currently in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the International Museum of Photography in Rochester, New York, the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, the Carnegie Institute and Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Los Angeles Co Museum of Art, in addition to many others.