

BEN SCHWAB

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ARTIST STATEMENT

During my time as a painter, I have been motivated by a fascination with construction, space and change. Existing within the history and vitality of a city, and observing it as an artist, has become a great passion of mine. My recent paintings of urban landscapes reflect this passion, as well as my interest in the representation and visual construction of space and time on a two-dimensional surface. Our cities have experienced a profound amount of growth and change, and I am interested in how this has affected us, both positively and negatively. Within my work, my desire is to express this idea of expansion and growth, and to question its impact on our urban environments. This desire is present both in the paintings I create and in the way I work with the paint to create a sense of action and change.

Through my urban landscapes, I am dealing with the fundamental creation and evolution of our cities, which become a direct reflection or manifestation of our society compressed into an orthogonal grid or abstract linear configuration. I believe that our environments and surroundings reflect who we are and what we are motivated by as a civilization. My work expresses ideas of expansion and contraction related to construction in urban and suburban environments, often connected to overcrowding populations and existential dissociation. Working with these ideas enables me to gain a better understanding of people, the environment, and myself.

While my work is representational in nature, I do not replicate the situation that I am trying to present. I adopt techniques such as punctuating certain objects, moving or changing the scale of a building and altering a shadow or an angle of perspective. I do all of this to better serve the needs of the composition. As buildings are torn down and new buildings have been constructed in their place, I work with this element of change in the way that I paint. I focus on creating a 'sense of place' by depicting the feeling of the situation I am trying to present. This is done by carefully examining and capturing the surface, the sense of light, and the atmosphere. By using repetition and variation of form, color and light, I am able to create connections and relationships. These connections and relationships then form a natural reading throughout each piece, helping to present a particular idea.