



Portfolio: Skyscraper Serenity in Architecture Portraits by Mike McLaughlin

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by Dakota Arkin Cafourek

Photography by Mike McLaughlin may bring to mind images of potato trucks on cultivated farmlands, solitary houses perched on the edge of a stretch of natural farmscape, a clutch of vibrant sunflowers, or seascapes with romantic skies atop waters that seem to solely exist to reflect the changing light cast from the sun.

McLaughlin, who divides his time between the North Fork and New York City, turned his attention towards the beauty found in his urban escape. An admirer of clean lines and simplicity, he set upon creating portraits of modern architecture that extract the design from the bustle of the city. [Click here](#) to read a profile on his art.

His latest series, “Architectural Extractions,” represents a distinct departure from both his North Fork photography series and his New York City work. Dakota Arkin Cafourek of Hamptons Art Hub caught up with Mike McLaughlin via email to explore his art, the changes this new series represents and “Architectural Extractions” in detail.

Dakota Arkin Cafourek: What is your inspiration for your art?

Mike McLaughlin: The inspiration for my art is my love of architecture and the desire to create a representation of it that allows for a greater appreciation of a structure’s design. I see my building portraits as odes to the individual forms and homages to the architects who designed them. What I’m endeavoring to create is what those architects might recognize as their conceptual, drawing board vision.

In my new “Architectural Extractions” series, an added element of background replacement focuses the viewer’s attention while also suggesting a building’s imposing, playful, or even eccentric “personality.”



“Sky Garage” by Mike McLaughlin, 2018. Photograph, 12 x 12 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

DC: Why photography versus another medium?

MM: Photography is the ideal medium for the creation of the kinds of images in my mind's eye. I feel that my creative talent is in image composition while my skills are mostly technical in nature. This combination lends itself naturally to photography, where in the field the ability to frame a scene is of paramount importance while during processing an aptitude for digital darkroom techniques is required to convert the raw capture into the desired end result.



"30 Rock" by Mike McLaughlin, 2018. Photograph, 12 x 12 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

DC: How did this series begin?

MM: In my building portraits, I've aspired to present the subject in as clean and uncluttered an environment as possible. There are some buildings in New York that lend themselves naturally to this but in many cases the visual background noise needs to be subdued through creative composition and selective lighting. This series began when I wanted to highlight the beauty of the "Hotel Lincoln" building but the visual cacophony of Times Square was too much to overcome. Ultimately, I decided to replace the entire background with a soothing shade of blue and was pleased by how the majesty of the structure immediately became more apparent.



"Hotel Lincoln" by Mike McLaughlin, 2018. Photograph, 12 x 12 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

DC: How did making this body of work impact you as an artist?

MM: I have always made adjustments to my raw captures but historically these have been limited to refinements in tone and color, perspective correction, and some retouching. The goal of these adjustments was always to make the scene as realistic as possible, if perhaps a little cleaner than in real life. The "Architectural Extractions" series has opened me up to new ways of thinking about how I use my photography to depict the world.



"VIA 57" by Mike McLaughlin, 2018. Photograph, 12 x 12 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

MM: Currently my favorite piece is *Maritime Hotel*. I've always loved this building and the quirkiness of the porthole windows, two-tone façade, and rooftop flags. I've tried to capture it in the past but was never satisfied with the result. It ended up being the perfect subject for an architectural extraction as in this series I think the true idiosyncratic personality of the building comes through. I have a list of many other structures that may be good subjects for this technique and am looking forward to creating new favorites soon.



"Maritime Hotel" by Mike McLaughlin, 2018. Photograph, 12 x 12 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Mike McLaughlin's photography can be viewed at www.mikemclaughlinphoto.com. A feature story on his art can be found at Hamptons Art Hub by [clicking here](#).

BASIC FACTS: Selections from Mike McLaughlin's "Architectural Extractions" series are on view in the group show "Urbanesque Exhibition" through September 16, 2018 at Alex Ferrone Gallery, 25425 Main Road, Cutchogue, New York 11935. www.alexherronegallery.com.

Selections from the series will also be exhibited on Long Island from October 13 - 28, 2018 in "Eclecticism - Alex Ferrone Gallery presents Fifteen Artists" at the Art League of Long Island's Jeanie Tengelsen Gallery. The Art League of Long Island is located at 107 E Deer Park Rd, Dix Hills, NY 11746. www.artleagueli.net.

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