

Market for

Architectural Art

Mesmerizing works that blend the worlds of art and architecture prove profitable for savvy galleries.

On the Rise

BY KEITH PANDOLFI
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As photographer Frank Relle thumbed through yet another magazine article detailing Hurricane Katrina's destruction of his hometown of New Orleans, one thought ran through his head, "They got it all wrong."

The articles themselves were accurate enough, but the accompanying photographs of the city's fallen Creole cottage and shotgun-style houses were grossly misleading. The problem, Relle thought, was that they were bathed in sunlight, making them look somehow OK—like a snapshot of an ailing man sipping Mai Thais on a sunny beach in Aruba. The kind of photograph that the man's friends would look at and say, "Well, he doesn't look sick."

"After the hurricane, New Orleans experienced some uncannily beautiful weather," Rely recalls. "And shooting these destroyed houses with some uncannily beautiful weather," Relle recalls. "And shooting these destroyed houses with the sun shining—and these big, white, puffy clouds—didn't quite capture the mood."

Just as Renaissance artists were prone to become architects, architects can also prove to be more than sufficient with the brush and palette. After spending 37 years as a design partner with an architectural firm, Chris Wiseman is making a name for himself using digital imaging software (he was inspired by Pop artist/icon, Andy Warhol) to depict some of the country's most beautiful small town structures.

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SOURCES

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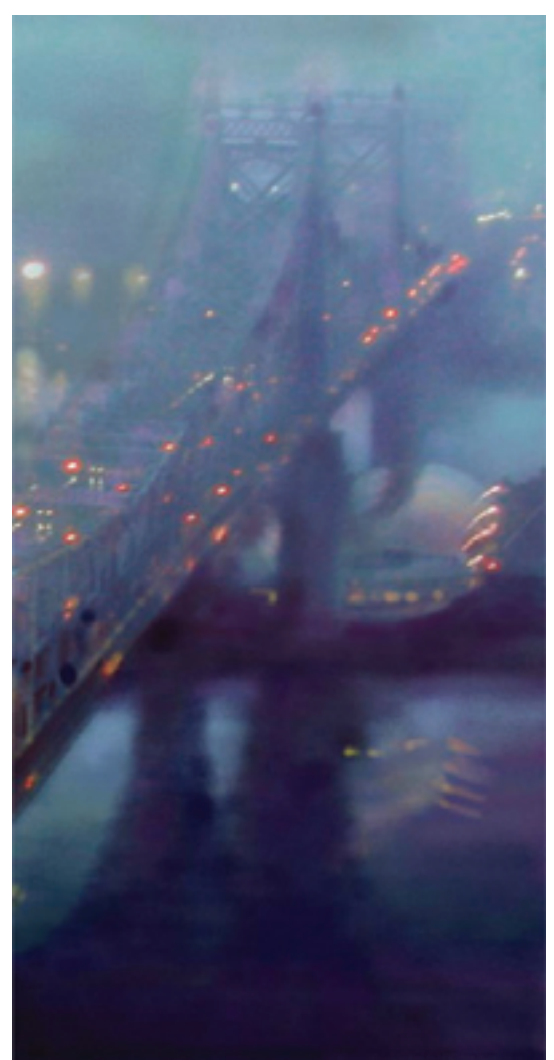
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“I summer in the Berkshires,” Wiseman explains, “and I’ve become fascinated with these wonderful New England towns—their old Victorian homes, and their beautiful landscapes.”

Wiseman compares his work with another talented artist who derived inspiration from the Berkshires—Norman Rockwell. “But while Rockwell’s illustrations evoke a great sense of nostalgia, my work evokes more of an architectural nostalgia,” he says. “It uses a

historic preservation standpoint that lets people recognize how great these old houses are, and that it is better to renovate them than to tear them down.” Wiseman, whose work has been shown throughout western Massachusetts and New York City, also creates depictions of more intricate architectural forms, namely bridges. An exhibition of those works is scheduled to open at the New York Museum of Science in January.



▲ Architect-turned-artist Chris Wiseman employs digital imaging software to document America’s vanishing Victorians through his studies of old houses in Western Massachusetts. Shown above is “General Store.” Wiseman also captures the intricate architecture of New York’s bridges. Shown at right are two images of the Queensboro Bridge.