

# The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

VISUAL ARTS

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## Harmony, complexity through a lens

By JERRY CULLUM  
For the Journal-Constitution

Sometimes the best photography makes us see things we've seen before and forgotten.

Most people have stared up at the interiors of the domes of public buildings. Few people remember their extraordinary geometry. Even fewer make other people see it deeply.

David Stephenson, however, has observed the sublime built into architecture and sets out to show it. His square-format color photos of the domes of Russian and western European cathedrals, plus an array of mosques and synagogues, give us a kaleidoscopic view of sacred geometry. Circles appear inscribed inside squares and octagons, sometimes with saints painted on the cupola walls, sometimes with the abstract adornment demanded by a religion that prohibits images. They fairly beg for commentary, but Stephenson gives us just what meets the informed eye.

This much-traveled Australia-based American creates balanced images that, at first glance, resemble Buddhist mandalas. Eventually we notice that the images are not



quite as symmetrical as they seem: there is always a chandelier, or a differently shaped column, to throw things a little bit out of kilter.

Nevertheless, the overall impression is one of exquisite

harmony. Stephenson makes the beauty of past centuries startle us, and that's a mark of innovative photography.

Rocky Schenck's show in Jackson Fine Art's front gallery appears to function at the opposite extreme, being relentlessly contemporary and usually composed with emotionally charged complexity. Schenck's genius is his ability to make whatever catches his eye take on the dimensions of dream: the dark sepia tones of this Texas-born Los Angeles photographer turn both Atlanta's High Museum and Las Vegas' "Girls of Glitter Gulch" signage into objects of modest mystery.

Left: Rocky Schenck's "Atlanta" has his signature element-of-dream quality. Below left: David Stephenson's photographs of old-world domes, paeans to geometry, include "Kladruby."

### REVIEW

"David Stephenson: Dome Photographs 2000-2003"

"Rocky Schenck: After Dark"

Through June 26. \$1,800-\$3,000.  
10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
Tuesdays-Saturdays.  
Jackson Fine Art, 3115 E.  
Shadowlawn Ave., Atlanta.  
404-233-3739.  
[www.jacksonfineart.com](http://www.jacksonfineart.com).

**The verdict:** Two splendidly complementary views of sublimity.

The mystery is more pronounced in some images. Flowers in London's Holland Park fairly glow in Schenck's exposure, as do roses by a Mississippi mansion. These scenes of spring or summer contrast with Schenck's preferred season, which seems to be a singularly foggy winter. Although this may just be the result of when discount tickets are available, it lends a delectably romantic air to his travel photography of the unconscious mind.