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3 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

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Matthew Porter

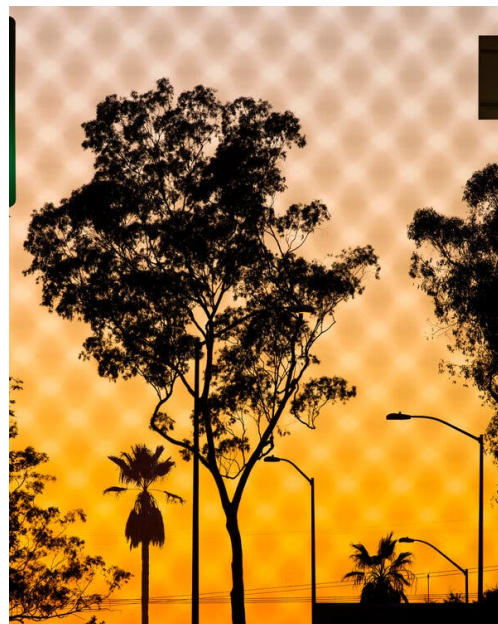
Through Oct. 30. Danziger Gallery, 980 Madison Avenue, third floor, Manhattan; 212 629-6778, danzigersgallery.com



The inward-looking focus of much contemporary photography takes on a different air when the insularity becomes a necessity, not a choice. Matthew Porter made a splash at the “After Photoshop” exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2012-13, with images of airborne cars that he composed by digitally combining photographs of toy models and streetscapes. But like the chase scenes they replicated, those were stunts.

While some of Mr. Porter’s new photographs in the show “This Is How It Ends,” made during the coronavirus pandemic, also involve digital manipulation, the overarching mood is more “oh no” than “gee whiz.” Fronds of Los Angeles palm trees bristle as dangerously as barbed wire. In one photograph, the silhouettes of trees against a jaundiced sky are backed with the lattice pattern of a chain-link fence. Another bilious yellow sky, this time in New York, adds to the ominous portent of a helicopter hovering over the 30 Hudson Yards tower. In a gorgeously post-apocalyptic picture, two birds — cordoned off graphically by an open parallelogram of electrical wires — rejoice on a streetlamp that hangs above arboreal foliage as beautiful as the Martinique banana-leaf wallpaper at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

Finding a Baudelairean beauty in polluted sunsets and wire coils, Mr. Porter gives us an up-to-date report on the natural world that was recorded a half-century ago by his grandfather, the eminent photographer Eliot Porter. The traffic signals in several of his pictures glow an admonitory red or orange. *ARTHUR LUBOW*



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