

The Lapis Press



STEVEN STEINMAN

Fly-Bys and Drive-Bys, 2025

When you first lay eyes on one of the drawn, painted, or photographed works by Steven Steinman you are not immediately certain what you are looking at. The surface resembles a *Wirrwar* of intersecting lines and patterns that are parting in various directions. But slowly the eye settles on one detail and the composition itself unfolds.

Although most of Steinman's pieces seem abstract, they reveal scenes or instants of our daily life that go by too often without noticing: a crack on a wall, the grey asphalt on the street that people walk or drive over without giving it much thought, electric power lines, the shadow that rescinds with the bright sunlight.

At the core of Steinman's artistic practice lies a sense of curiosity that is equally a trait of his personality. His vivid observation reveals a capacity to wonder and marvel at the world, a capacity that many of us lose as we get absorbed by the everyday routine. It reverberates in his work through a quasi-obsessiveness in capturing what surrounds us. This is what fuels Steinman's practice and gives him not only infinite source material but also a constant challenge to reveal the concealed parts to others through his compositions.

In *Fly-Bys* and *Drive-Bys*, two new sets of unique hand-painted prints published by The Lapis Press in 2025, the same attention is given to the mundane as the works illustrate a moment captured and taken out of the forgotten to be impressed on paper. Both bodies of prints exemplify how Steinman's photographic practice deeply informs his paintings and drawings. Going back to images that he photographed years ago, he connects the past with the present, creating images that exist out of time. Steinman calls them "photographic notes to [...] use in the future either to integrate into drawings or paintings, or as photographs themselves¹."

¹ Email conversation with the author, December 3, 2024.

A picture taken in the moment, then forgotten and only rediscovered years later, was the origin of the *Fly-Bys* print series. The works are based on condensation photos taken during a trip from Los Angeles to New York City in 2012. Steinman captured drops outside the plane window with his phone, intrigued by the strange beauty of the encounter between water and light. The liquid beads outside the windows reflect the sunlight, revealing a prism of colors. Enlarging the image gave place to further experiments with the pixelized surface, triggering a painterly manipulation. Steinman enhanced the apparent colors and contours by painting on each of the many bubbles, highlighting the effects of light and shadow. Through this process he turned the transparency of the liquid into something that is both material and immaterial, making perceptible something that is at the periphery of vision.



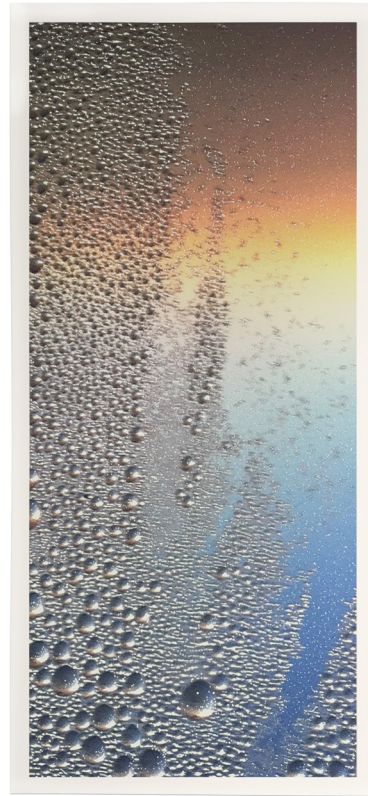
Steven Steinman

Fly-By I, 2025

Archival pigmented ink print on paper with hand applied titanium white acrylic ink

31-1/2 x 14-1/2 inches

Edition of 10 monoprints



Steven Steinman

Fly-By II, 2025

Archival pigmented ink print on paper with hand applied titanium white acrylic ink

31-1/2 x 14-1/2 inches

Edition of 10 monoprints

The different editions of *Drive-Bys* demonstrate Steinman's fascination with urban life that has informed various bodies of work. The physical and emotional experience of cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Berlin, all metropolises that he lived in, has led Steinman to look for traces beyond or beneath the obvious. He has turned to frottage in past works, rubbing drawing material over paper or fabric to reveal the structure underneath.

Here, the asphalt of the streets in Los Angeles caught his attention. He created unique prints "with scratches in the surface of the paper, silver/white powdered pigment on the crosswalks and black acrylic ink painted individually on all of the tar marks from the cuts in the street for the wires [and] the black ink is raised up on the paper as if there were actually tar on there."²

² Email conversation with the author, December 3, 2024.



Steven Steinman

Drive-By I, 2025

Pigmented ink print on paper with hand applied carbon black acrylic ink, powdered pigment and sgraffito

21-1/2 x 16-1/2 inches

Edition of 10 mono print



Steven Steinman

Drive-By II, 2025

Pigmented ink print on paper with hand applied carbon black acrylic ink, powdered pigment and sgraffito

21-1/2 x 16-1/2 inches

Edition of 10 monoprints



Steven Steinman

Drive-By III, 2025

Pigmented ink print on paper with hand applied carbon black acrylic ink, powdered pigment and sgraffito

21-1/2 x 16-1/2 inches

Edition of 10 monoprints



Steven Steinman

Drive-By IV, 2025

Pigmented ink print on paper with hand applied carbon black acrylic ink, powdered pigment and sgraffito

21-1/2 x 16-1/2 inches

Edition of 10 monoprints

These prints illustrate how his camera captures fleeting, transitory moments of daily life, such as crossing a street or being on a plane. Each piece tells a story and embodies memories of places and people, revealing hidden patterns made visible through the juxtaposition of light and shadow. And despite their abstract character, the title of each set of prints gives us a lead, as Steinman cheekily draws our attention to the action that is implied in the work: we fly by, we drive by....

Frauke V. Josenhans

Curator at the Moody Center for the Arts

Steven Steinman was born in Los Angeles, CA, in 1951. He received a BFA from California State University, Northridge, and then worked as a studio assistant for Ed Ruscha and Joe Goode in Los Angeles as well as Robert Rauschenberg in New York City. He has exhibited in the United States and Europe since the 1980s and his work is included in the permanent collections of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; LACMA, Los Angeles, CA; San Diego Museum of Art, CA; Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven CT; National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.; Albertina, Vienna, Austria; Kunsthaus Zurich, Switzerland; among others.



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