

globes filled with glass shards rise like strings of pearls or evanescent bubbles from a bed of crystals. "Origin" (2002), a series of smaller sculptures, investigates several variants on a simple construction: two elegant wineglasses suspended one over another. Some are colored—vivid red, faint yellow, deep blue—and others brim with *groisil*, the chunks of crystal and shards of raw glass that are remade into new glass. A set of these glasses placed side by side suggests a play on the symbol for infinity. In the large sculpture *Alive* (2005), metal cables festooned with crystals run through an industrial pulley and plunge toward a reflective plate on the floor that suggests a pool of water. The work seems light and vulnerable, yet creates a powerful feeling of tension and immobility.

Nahon's interpretation of life's ephemeral beauty continued in the drawing series "LéHaïm Haïah" ("To Life," in Hebrew this time). The 45 gestural works related to her sculptures but often presented more literal depictions of plants and flowers. It is in her sculpture, especially the larger installations, however, that Nahon's theme of life as precarious and precious, brittle but regenerative, shone through most clearly.

—Laurie Hurwitz

Robert Frank

Fotomuseum Winterthur
Winterthur, Switzerland

Robert Frank established himself as a legendary photographer in the decade leading up to the publication of his pivotal book *Les Américaines* (1958), and, as this exhibition proves, he produced his best work during those early years. With more than 150 photographs, this retrospective delved deeply into 12 different series that Frank made between 1948 and 1958 but just sampled work from his later nonfiction films and narrative collages. Curators Vicente Todolí, director of Tate Modern, and Philip Brookman, of the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., thus focused attention on the works that most deserved it. Co-produced by the Fotostiftung Schweiz and Tate Modern, the show was also a celebration of a native son, though Frank has lived in Nova Scotia for more than three decades.

Frank's loosely composed photos showed an eye for the telling detail. Witness the bone-white teacup, shining bright as a new moon when clasped

between the soot-saturated fingers of mineworker Ben James, from the "Wales" series (1953). Equally arresting are his 1951–52 images of London, which function as a taxonomy of British class: bankers with top hats and priggish postures stand in stark contrast to the



Robert Frank, *City of London*, 1952, gelatin silver print, 13" x 7".
Fotomuseum Winterthur.

city's slouching working-class kids, prepubescent smokers milling about the city's dirty streets.

Clearly, Frank had an acute sense for precisely when to raise his lens. As could be seen here on the rarely shown contact sheets, many of his signature images were chosen from among only two or three snapped shots. Frank captures whole dynamics in a single frame. *Movie Premiere* (1955–56), for example, lays bare the nature of Hollywood celebrity: the flawless starlet is a hazy foreground face, a tabula rasa; the fans behind her are crystalline, seemingly brought to life by her presence.

By 1959, the year *The Americans* debuted Stateside, where the sometimes bleak book drew mixed notices, Frank had refocused his attention on experimental non-fiction film. Though he has returned in recent years to working with montages that use Polaroids and photographic negatives, among other elements, he has never achieved the same level of excellence. Here Frank's later work suffered from being exhibited side by side with his immortal efforts to plumb the depths of modern society with a Leica.

—Marc Spiegler

Nina Fandler

Jürgen Kalthoff

Essen

Nina Fandler's glistening, large-format canvases presented tightly composed and surprisingly sensuous views of the urban landscape. Her subject matter ranges from automobiles and buses to the telephone booths and revolving doors of the urban streetscape to the interiors of public buildings. Rarely, however, does the viewer see more than a fragment of the whole, so individual details, such as the door of a streetcar, are virtually life-size.

The dominant colors are intense reds, oranges, yellows, and greens, which lend urgency and vividness to the scenes. Because the oils are reworked while still damp, there is a soft-focus effect that at times suggests a light rain. Elsewhere, Fandler's skillful manipulation of paint gives a flicker to the light reflected from damp streets or bus windows. At times, the buses and cars appear to be propelled out of the picture by their own energy. Even stationary subjects, like the banks of yellow plastic seats in a sports stadium, are portrayed in such a tight frame that they seem to push against the four sides of the canvas.

Fandler's environments are mostly unpeopled, and when humans do appear, they appear in outline or fade behind some reflective surface. *Woyton* (2005), for instance, depicts five shadowy figures in a cafeteria. Whether we are looking at



Nina Fandler, *Untitled (Dream)*, 2004, acrylic on canvas, 7'3" x 9'10". Jürgen Kalthoff.

them from outside or whether they are reflections seen from inside the space is only one of several mysteries in the picture. Along with the blurred, somewhat watery atmosphere, what connects this piece to the other paintings is the sense of having seized a fleeting, half-defined moment from the urban flux.

—David Galloway