

ARTIST STATEMENT

Vincent David Feldman

Memento Mori is a series in which I have worked on and off again over the past ten years as a creative release to a much larger and more documentary project, *City Abandoned*. This is my first exhibit to encompass this work. When I started photographing these details of funerary architecture the images were visualized as platinum/palladium prints on artist paper. Within a couple years I had forgone that path as I sought greater presence in scale and a wider color palette within the means of the "black and white" photograph.

In 1990, I stumbled on the churchyards of Edinburgh and was aghast to discover the most phantasmagoric architectural details I could ever imagined. My prints, however, paled in capturing any of the sense of awe I had felt when I first viewed these places; they had become to me simply dry documents. In 1995, I returned to make a new set of photographs that would capture the detail I needed for the large-scale gelatin silver prints I was beginning to produce.

These updated prints from Scotland helped to introduce me to a much freer form of darkroom printing. The paper is taken through several levels of transformation by utilizing a little known and understood photographic phenomena called Chromoskedasic Painting, (first described in *Scientific American*, Nov. 1991). The Chromoskedasic phenomena describes the molecular silver structure that gives black and white paper its specific color, generally warm or cool. Through bleaching and redeveloping, layers of color and texture techniques are built up and enmeshed with the subjects and paper texture. The results produce the visual affects that capture a greater sense of the emotional impact of discovering and remembering these architectural details within a representational medium.

Site and context are eliminated; it is not my intention for viewers of this work to enter the gallery as if they were entering a cemetery. I am interested in the distillation of architecture in general; I am searching for an understanding of the civilization that fashioned these buildings of stone and how these objects of permanence weathered the decades and centuries. These ideas seem to me all the more interesting when the architecture in question confronts and serves our own impermanence.