

Renato D'Agostin: Tokyo Untitled

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By [Melissa Stern](#)

Viewing the photographs of Renato D'Agostin is like stepping backwards in photographic history. In fact, I was convinced that it was a show of vintage prints, until the gallery told me that is a completely contemporary show.

It is a show of works about Tokyo, capturing those fleeting moments of observation and composition that were a benchmark of photography in the 1970s. Partial views of the body, architecture and the all-defining role of light combine to make these prints exquisite jewels.

The silver prints glow like photographs used to glow. The photographs are composed and printed with a care and craft that we see all too rarely these days. Each one, hand printed, helps you remember the luscious tones that "old school" photography conveys. It was not a surprise to discover that D'Agostin is a protégé of Ralph Gibson, whose influence is obvious in the younger man's work. The presence of the mentor, however, is in no way a bad thing. It used to be that young photographers would work for a master, absorb their influence and then set off on their own. D'Agostin has done this, and while there is homage to the master, he has forged ahead with an entirely personal vision.

Describing these photos is challenging because they are at once deceptively simple and complex. "Number 8," for example is a fuzzy partial view of a man's head in profile, a stretch of empty white and then a bird flying out of the picture frame. The image captures a simultaneous sense of motion and stillness. The man and the bird are each dynamic, moving in opposite directions out of the picture frame, and yet each is caught in a moment of elegant, eloquent stillness.

This is a very special exhibition for anyone interested in photography. Contemporary, yet reminiscent of the past. Perhaps the proper word is timeless.

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Through July 3, [Randall Scott Gallery](#), 111 Front St., Ste. 204, Brooklyn, 212-796-2190.