

DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

Guy Diehl

September 1 – October 1, 2011

Since the mid-1980s, Diehl has utilized the still life format to make art about art. Rendered in a realist style, each painting takes as its focal point a particular artist, movement, or theme from art history. In his more recent paintings, Diehl has engaged the art historical canon through appropriation; partial facsimiles of works by artists such as Modigliani, Rembrandt, Cezanne, Hopper, and David Park, for example, materialize as postcards or images within open texts. Books frequently appear in conjunction with these visual references, their gilt titles further elucidating the paintings' larger thematic scope. Carefully arranged objects such as shells, fruit, boxes, and glass bottles and jars – signifiers in their own right – bestow the composition with formal unity. Anchored by this internal coherency, Diehl's paintings confidently merge art and life through their allusions to the wider field of cultural production.

Diehl was first exposed to realism via the display of religious paintings rendered with precision in the halls of his Catholic church and elementary school. This early encounter was the catalyst that launched a career dedicated to realism. As a student, Diehl studied under the auspices of renowned realists Mel Ramos, Richard McLean, and Robert Bechtle, amongst others. While Diehl has since moderated his strict adherence to photorealism in favor of a more flexible approach to the style, his paintings nevertheless demonstrate a mastery of his subject matter.

Born in Pittsburgh, PA in 1949, Diehl earned his BA from California State University Hayward in 1973 followed by his MA from San Francisco State University in 1976. In addition to showing nationally and internationally, Diehl's work can be found in the permanent collections of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Oakland Museum of California, and the San Jose Museum of Art. In 2005, Diehl won the Biennial Exhibition Award, Sonoma Valley Museum of Art.