

# Paintings and Photographs by Nick Freeman

## St Charles Public Library · March 2009

Painting has been a long time pursuit, inspired by a deep appreciation for the great masters and an abiding interest in capturing the moods and customs of modern society.

Traditional techniques and media, primarily oil on canvas, serve as the foundation. Modern technology has entered into the process as well. Photography is usually called into play once an idea is formulated, with Photoshop often used as a compositional tool. Traditional drawing follows as an integral step in translating the visual “data” into its pictorial form. The drawing is then transferred to the canvas, often via digital printer (much easier than scaling by hand), and paint is applied through a series of underpainting and layering in keeping with time-tested, classical method. The result is a sort of modern genre painting that attempts to record often-overlooked aspects of American society, along with subject matter ranging from local landscapes to portraiture.

Photography has been a casual interest of the artist, documenting family life and capturing local scenery. It was only with the advent of the digital revolution that new channels seemed to open up, enabling the recording of urban details that might otherwise have been deemed “a waste of good film.”

Since then a prime focus has been signs, specifically those that reflect the individuality and sensibility of the establishments that once proliferated across Chicago and across America. The pursuit of these artifacts has taken the artist to other parts of the country that retain remnants of their neon past, including Santa Monica, CA, Wildwood, NJ and many other points in between. The focus of this show, and of the book-length collection currently under development with Lake Claremont Press, is signage in the Chicagoland area. The remaining signs are disappearing fast, adding urgency to the thrill of the hunt.



Northgate, detail

