



JIM MCHUGH, THE ORPHEUM THEATER, LOS ANGELES—2008

Jim McHugh

FOR COLLECTORS OF FINE PHOTOGRAPHY

COLOR

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HISTORY OF COLOR
PHOTOGRAPHY

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Jim McHugh (b. 1948), who is a successful commercial and fine art photographer, has embraced the transition from analog to digital with all of its benefits and pitfalls. His images of historic Los Angeles landmarks evoke the mood of that city's past. The imperfections and happenstance that his collection of old cameras and lenses give to his images, and the unpredictable nature of his stockpiled—and now extinct—Polaroid films, which give a distinctive patina to his work, have an unmistakable impact on his vision. "The surface of the original has a character



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all its own," he says. "I'm interested in the creation of the object, not just the image." McHugh is mindful of preserving the presence of the Polaroid's surface texture in the final print. But with the original Polaroid in hand (curing sometimes up to a year before proceeding), the process to the finished print is singularly digital. After scanning his originals in-house, his personal interpretation of each image in Photoshop evolves over days and weeks of experimentation and consideration. Subtleties of tone and color are explored and combined as the image takes shape, layering a depth into the images that recalls the most revered fine-art printmakers. Stacks of hard drives, multiple monitors and computers, along with "darkroom" skills acquired through late nights of creative, and sometimes frustrating, computer work,

attest to the presence of the digital influence. Eventually the finished image glows on screen. And different from his commercial process of assignment shooting, for which film was delivered to the client for publication, he has added large-format printing to his studio to maintain hands-on control of his images through to the final presentation.

