

THE GUIDE to LIVING WITH STYLE

domino

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decorating art

art-school photography

Master of Fine Arts programs are an unsung resource for high-quality and relatively low-cost images. San Francisco-based curator Natasha Boas zooms in on star pupils and teaches us how to find them.

Today's Master of Fine Arts students (MFAs) could be creating tomorrow's collectibles. A lot of current art stars are graduates—Gregory Crewdson went to Yale, Larry Sultan attended the San Francisco Art Institute. So it's entirely possible that by shopping the classroom, you may unearth the next big names. But even if you don't, as long as you buy what you love, you won't be disappointed.

The merits of graduate-level art are a no-brainer: Most schools are highly competitive, so those enrolled have made the grade by virtue of being accepted, and their work is generally of strong quality. As these programs are labs for new ideas, the results tend to be experimental (note: sometimes too experimental—this is school, after all!). And though the art world is waking up to this talent pool, there are still fantastic deals to be had.

So how do you find these emerging artists? Attending the shows that all schools with MFA programs hold throughout the year is undoubtedly the best way to view and purchase work. It's not the only way, however. Today's students explore alternative venues to exhibit before getting a degree: in graduate-school online galleries, on personal websites and in college art galleries, all of which anyone can access (see sidebar on page 73 for tips on viewing and buying). It can take some tenacity to track down the art you want: Students don't have intermediaries who handle their work, and some are more professional than others. But you'll be rewarded with well-priced treasures.

I spent hours online clicking through graduate-school galleries and artists' own websites in search of heads of the class at top photography schools around the country. I sought out pieces in an array of styles that are striking and provocative but not self-consciously edgy—pieces that I believe could be future classics.



Matthew Porter, ICP-BARD PROGRAM IN ADVANCED PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIES

Overshot Archival ink-jet print mounted on Plexiglas with matte laminate, 24" x 20"

Matthew Porter, who hails from Bellefonte, PA, combines a tongue-in-cheek obsession with '60s and '70s road movies and action shows with more traditional forms of landscape, portrait and still life. \$1,500 MATTHEWPORTERPHOTO.COM





**Matthew Porter, ICP-BARD PROGRAM IN
ADVANCED PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIES**

**Rookie #2 | Archival Ink-jet print
mounted on Plexiglas, 17" x 14"**

All of Porter's images go through Photoshop, primarily for color and contrast control, and while most are taken with a 4x5 camera, here he used a digital so the race-car driver appears more manipulated, less real. **\$1,000 MATTHEWPORTERPHOTO.COM**

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