

## **Cool Climate**

**By Mike Landry**



Ken Webb's "Perfect Street."

“*Cool Climate* refers to not only climate change but also a cooling of our economy. So I thought it was important to have this show and have the name coincide with events that were happening, whether they actually pertained to the work or not.”

Designed as triptychs, Calgary’s [Ken Webb](#), combines digitally manipulated photographs, painted surfaces and perforated graphic elements that obscure his most recent work, [Cool Climate](#). Although Webb has always made work that’s cool and formal, even the exhibition’s title could be detached from a particular meaning.

The photographs at the centre of the new works are predominately black and white mirror images. Combining these “cool” images with graphic elements and paint textures, Webb is seeking to work out the oddness of the graphic elements.

Playing with formal elements, the photograph acts as a window with the other elements as curtains. He’s used horizon lines and other reference points as measures to define and construct the graphic elements. Something he admits is sometime silly, but at the same time intuitive.

“It’s like a Rorschach pattern. You get this equal sided thing that looks very kind of comforting, but I look at these images and some of them look pretty peculiar.”

The combination of elements also turns Webb’s personal photos into mediated images. As someone who is always looking at mediated images rather than the real thing, it only makes sense to highlight this detachment.

“Part of the reason I do this is to make them false,” speaking about the photographic elements in the work. “Some of the images can be really clichéd. I’ve made some and at the end of the day I’ll sit down with a glass of wine and look at them and just piss myself laughing”

And while overt political themes aren’t apparent in the work, the theme of detachment does speak to Webb’s political side. Just as he’s constantly fighting traffic and environmental issues in his community, in *Cool Climate* Webb once again takes up another fight with pragmatism.

***Cool Climate* will be on display until Sat May 2 at Calgary’s Herring Kiss Gallery.**