Time Out
New York

June 11–17, 2009

Andrew Bush, "Vector Portraits"

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Yossi Milo Gallery, through June 27
+ **Julie Saul Gallery**, through July 3
(both, see Chelsea)

A century ago, the first affordable, mass-produced automobile rolled off assembly lines: the Model T. Sensing it would spark a social revolution, its creator, Henry Ford, proclaimed, "We shall solve the city problem by leaving the city." By "problem" he meant not just urban congestion, but the increasingly intrusive presence of Eastern European Jews (Ford was a notorious anti-Semite), and more alarmingly, blacks escaping the Jim Crow South. By "leaving" he meant fleeing for the suburbs and their promise of an ideal—which is to say white and Christian—America.

The resulting car culture befouled our environment and poisoned our politics; Rush Limbaugh's popularity wouldn't have been possible without legions of angry listeners stuck in traffic. But if this unsustainable mode of living may finally be going the way of the dodo, it still deserves an iconic visual representation. For that honor, I'd nominate Andrew Bush's "Vector Portraits."

Bush created the series between 1989 and 1994, using his own car, with a medium-format camera pointed out the passenger side, as a rolling studio. Cruising around California and the Southwest, he'd pull up alongside another vehicle, matching its speed before remotely tripping the shutter.

Usually, Bush caught his subjects unawares, or, if facing the lens, looking peevish or puzzled or mildly amused. They seem to be heading everywhere and nowhere, caught between the point A of autonomy and the point B of alienation. Occasionally, Bush's flash can be seen reflected in the driver's door, glinting like sunlight off armor. Together, these images from the cusp of the '90s create a portrait of a country focused on the road—and oblivious to where it was going.
—*Howard Halle*

Man traveling southeast on US Route 101 at approximately 71 mph somewhere around Camarillo, California, on a summer evening in 1994