



January 14, 2010

“Meet Market: Portraits of the Street”

Street Art

By Michael Leaverton



Jonathan Burstein, *Tattoo Artist*, 50.25 x 34 inches, unframed, 2009.

Jonathan Burstein’s portraits are exactly the sort of thing we like to see from the Art on Market Street Kiosk Poster Series: Stuff that makes us stop – walking, running, acting like a loser in public, whatever – and reflect. In Burstein’s case, we reflect on what an awesome artist he is, and how innovatively his work fits into the venue. From across the street, the work in “Meet Market: Portraits of the Street” looks nearly realistic. Get a bit closer, say when you’re running after a bus, and you’ll see a vibrating, squiggly palate, nudging the work closer to colorful impressionism. Get up right up on one, though, and the sidewalk drops out: These are collages. Further, they’re collages made up of the very street you’re standing on, pictures the artist took of the people, the signage, and the general civic instability of Market. How you get from photo-scrap of a street to realistic portraits (Burstein did a bike messenger, a tattoo artist, a cab driver, and so on) is well beyond our powers of observation -- realistic collage is a trip.