

CHARLES CAMPBELL GALLERY

647 Chestnut Street • San Francisco, CA 94133

Telephone (415) 441-8680 • www.campbellgalleriesf.com

GAGE OPDENBROUW

Artist's Statement

I've always found the ocean deeply hypnotic, at once soothing and threatening, so massive and impenetrable, dwarfing all that is human. Contemplating the ocean makes me feel insignificant, and also deeply thankful for the beauty that surrounds us. The mystery, and the vastness of the ocean and the sky, the play of light and color over such an immense space, express that insignificance eloquently. A common concern in traditional landscape painting is to capture a certain kind of light, fleeting effects of the atmosphere and color. While I am concerned with that to a certain degree, my aim is to distill such things to a point where they become more potent and less literal.

For the past 7 years or so, I have focused on bringing forth these feelings with radically simplified paintings of the ocean. Certainly they owe something to artists like Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman, but also are influenced by artists like Turner and Caspar David Friedrich and others who saw the landscape as a vehicle for the spiritual. I am keenly aware that nothing lasts, and so I find great beauty and sadness in being attentive, for nothing is ever the same, if one really and truly looks.

My paintings of the city share many similar concerns. One of the most compelling problems to solve is how to simplify such a complicated view into something digestible, how to synthesize the rhythms of buildings and trees, light and shadow, into a satisfying abstract rhythm without losing the sense of space. As always, navigating the difference between paint and illusion, surface and depth, is an important part of the work. These paintings are more literal, and look realistic from a distance, but become very abstract up close; for a painter concerned with atmosphere, what better city to paint than San Francisco?