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MAR 24 DAVID OPDYKE: WAITING FOR THE FUTURE | CRISTIN TIERNEY GALLERY

REVIEWS

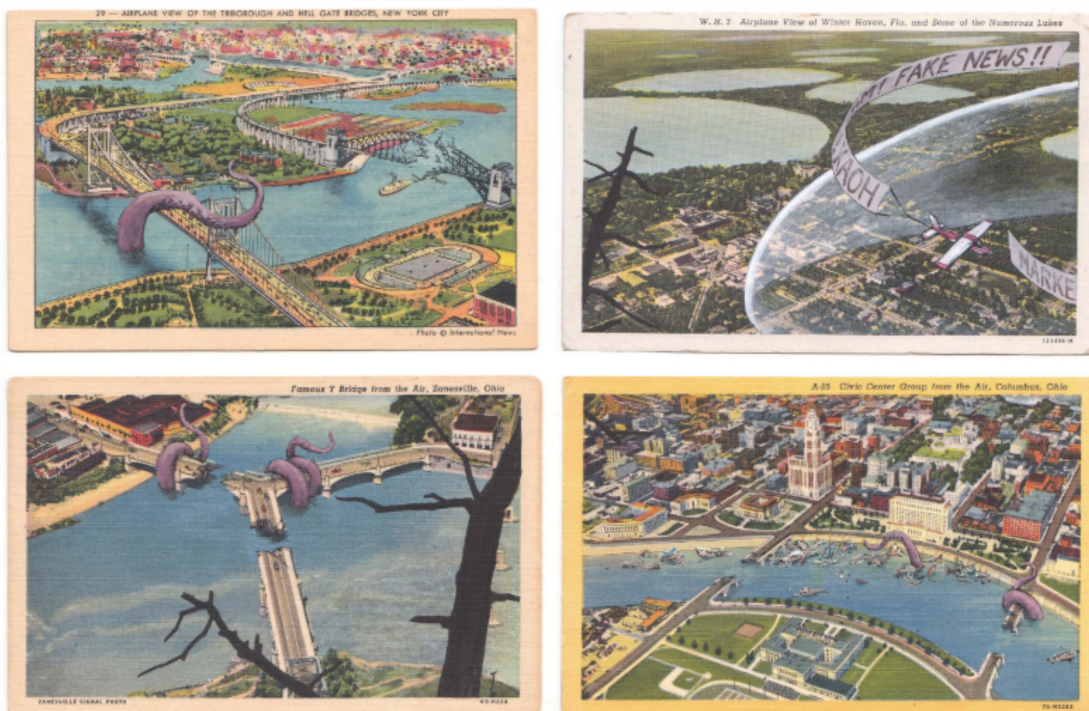


David Opdyke, *Overlook*, 2025. Gouache, acrylic, ink, 42 vintage postcards on panel. © David Opdyke & Cristin Tierney Gallery.

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Written by Eugenia Mosquera

We are in the Anthropocene — the Holocene was left behind several decades ago. Human-induced global environmental changes will most likely leave a lasting record in rock. And we have heard it all: acidifying oceans, forests and other natural habitats transformed into cities and farms, widespread pollution, radioactive fallout, and mass extinction of species are just some examples of our imprint on the Earth. Yet, we seem to have become imperturbable, resistant to habit change. Even as witnesses of natural tragedies, ecology is not part of our personal agenda. David Opdyke, however, successfully explores such areas.



David Opdyke, *Overlook (Detail)*, 2025. Gouache, acrylic, ink, on panel. © David Opdyke & Cristin Tierney Gallery.

When artist David Opdyke (b. 1969, Schenectady, NY) wanted to address climate change in his work, he found the perfect medium in vintage, hand-tinted postcards. His large composite of 500 vintage postcards forming a mural, calls for a closer look. The early 1900s photographs transformed into postcards construct a mural that unfolds like a stage. *Enough of Nature* (2025) reveals its grand narrative from afar — a tapestry of colors and forms that coalesce into a massive wall of water approaching a coast. The pristine wilderness common in the Manifest Destiny style of the postcards is juxtaposed with fatalistic messages. From macro to micro, the inspection of each melodrama reveals an end-of-the-world nature. Opdyke introduces encampments, dooming messages, comical elements, absurdity and futurism. The mural is magnificently unified by fire smoke, tornadoes, crippling trees and curled up branches — as if holding their breath and witnessing the state of the Earth, what is left of their land. The artist takes inspiration from actual climate catastrophes such as droughts in the West, the 2019 Nebraska floods, the Hurricane Katrina aftermath, Indian cyclones, among many other natural disasters. The central valley is progressively crumbling; the American landscape, fading out.



David Opdyke, *Tipping Point* (Detail), 2025. Gouache, acrylic, vintage postcards on panel. © David Opdyke & Cristin Tierney Gallery.

The sweeping vistas are deceiving to the uninterested eye. Once your attention is captured, the small-scale mosaic tiles transform into narrow windows to unsettling anomalies. In close inspection of *Overlook* (2025), the idyllic postcards that have traditionally provided a portrait of American life are, with great attention to detail, working as cautionary tales. Simultaneously taking place we find apocalyptic imagery and surrealist scenes: the cities are burning and a lucky few are fleeing from the Earth; dooming messages and vengeful nature are now protagonists of this approaching future. Opdyke's art reifies the transience that reconnects us to local environments and natural events in powerful, memorable ways.

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David Opdyke, *Overlook (Detail)*, 2025. Gouache, acrylic, ink, on panel. © David Opdyke & Cristin Tierney Gallery.

Opdyke blends dark humor with environmental catastrophe, forcing us to face uncomfortable truths. His works capture tension between nostalgia and a crumbling future — between American pride and inevitable downfall. The ever-present uncertainty of what lies ahead haunts human nature, yet we remain numb, overwhelmed by a flood of predictions and information. Scenes of burning cities and fleeing crowds recall recent catastrophes like the LA fires, blurring past and future. In the end, it is this fusion of art and irony that might awaken us — reminding us that perhaps, despite everything, art might save us.

Cristin Tierney Gallery is pleased to present *Waiting for the Future*, a solo exhibition of new works by David Opdyke.