

# POSTMASTERS

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## Art in Review

WEEKEND Arts FINE ARTS LEISURE

The New York Times

### Anthony Goicolea

Almost Safe

Postmasters  
459 West 19th Street, Chelsea  
Through June 2

For Anthony Goicolea, best known for photographs of preadolescent boys in prep school uniforms whose faces he digitally replaced with his own, "Almost Safe" is an uncharacteristically somber series. Color-saturated bacchanals have been replaced by chilly, black-and-white landscapes; a few sleepy old folks supplant rampaging youths.

Mr. Goicolea still employs digital techniques, but he's also looking back to 19th-century art history. Caspar David Friedrich's nihilistic Romanticism can be detected in the moody skies and icy waters of "North Bank" and "Black Ice," though updated with graffiti-covered seawalls, power lines and energy plants. A contemplative woman lodged in the craggy landscape of "Low Tide" serves the same function as the doppelgänger figures in Friedrich paintings.

Early photography, particularly Gustave Le Gray's seascapes, is also evoked. Le Gray's images were made by combining negatives. (In the 1850s it was too difficult to capture both sky and sea in one image.) Mr. Goicolea does the same thing, but his 21st-century digitally constructed landscapes merge elements from locales as far flung as New Zealand, Vancouver, Buffalo and Greenland.

Despite the 19th-century allusions Mr. Goicolea's current project is very much of this moment — perhaps too literally. The work is full of easy associations: ice flows and climate change; energy plants and postindustrial environmentalism; disjointed landscapes and globalization; the elderly as portents for humanity's demise.

There's something consciously sensible about Mr. Goicolea's move from a Brothers Grimm-on-psychotronics aesthetic to "An Inconvenient Truth" on antidepressants. Yet there was something unpredictable, perverse and exhilarating about those earlier pictures, which these lack.

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