

**Robert Richfield,
“A Look Around”**

**Klotz/Sirmon Gallery,
through May 31 (see Photography)**

Despite the fact that the title of his show evokes the breezy feeling of a fleeting glance, Robert Richfield's stunning new body of photographic work is the result of close and thoughtful observation—albeit from a very broad perspective. The 18 vistas in his current exhibition are actually composed of numerous photographs placed side by side, each shot with an old-fashioned 4x5 view camera. Richfield rotates the camera anywhere from 180 to

360 degrees on the swiveling head of its tripod to give the works their panoramic sweep. But it's the fact that he uses such a large-format camera (rather than, say, a wide-angle lens) that accounts for the incredibly crisp details in each individual frame—and for his overall oeuvre's powerful punch.

Grange-over-Sands Station, a 10-foot-long view of a train station in Cumbria, England, is a superb study of motion and stasis. On the far left, we see a weary traveler rubbing her eyes while sitting on a waiting-room bench. Soon the scene unfolds in a dizzying mix of vanishing points: An expanse of sea visible

through the room's windows is followed by a train platform that rushes away at a steep angle. *Levens Hall, Beech Circle* gives us a long, sculpted hedge in an English garden. All is still, yet each frame contains a portal or a pathway that beckons the mind's eye to wander.

Isn't the way we see a lot like these photographs? The vastness of the world is before us, yet our consciousness can only take it in one bit at a time. Richfield freezes those bits. But he also places them in their wider contexts, reminding us that a truly meaningful present can never fully be grasped by a mere fleeting glance.—*Sarah Schmerler*



Robert Richfield, *Grange-over-Sands Station, Cumbria, England, 1999.*