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ART IN REVIEW

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Charles Hagan

Tom Baril and Rocky Schenck Bonni Benrubi Gallery 52 East 76th Street Manhattan
Through Feb. 24.

Appeals to the sublime abound in the highly polished photographs of Tom Baril and Rocky Schenck. Mr. Baril worked for many years as Robert Mapplethorpe's printer, and his technical mastery is evident in these big, luscious images.

In his own work he favors natural subjects, from the twisting stems of a handful of poppies to the expanse of sky and blurred line of surf on Fire Island. But he also finds crisp graphic compositions in such industrial subjects as the Verrazano Bridge between Brooklyn and Staten Island; photographing it from directly underneath, he turns the receding span into a dark angular form splitting the frame.

Mr. Schenck, a Hollywood music-video producer and commercial photographer, here offers soft-focus images that suggest particularly moody remakes of turn-of-the-century Photo-Secessionist pictures. A field of sunflowers at dusk, lights seen at night from a porch and a storm-tossed ocean at night are among the subjects in these vacuous concoctions.