



Cindy Bernard's 1990 photographic series *Ask the Dust* included a salute to *Vertigo*; its view of the Fort Point site was a remarkable echo of the original Hitchcock shot.



*Vertigo* has also inspired artists outside of the medium. Much of this work was recently recognized in an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. "Art and Film Since 1945: Hall of Mirrors" called attention to artwork connected to many of Hitchcock's films, most notably *Spellbound*, *Rear Window*, *Psycho*, and *Vertigo*. The exhibit included both art used in *Vertigo* and art inspired by the film; featured in the exhibit are the opening titles by Saul Bass and John Whitney, Marker's *La Jetée*, and other works that pay homage to Hitchcock's vision.

Cindy Bernard's photographic work is perhaps the most straightforward in the exhibit, yet startling on its own terms. In the series entitled *Ask the Dust*, Bernard revisited a group of famous film locations to shoot pictures using the same lenses and camera positions as the original films. The results are haunting—the locations are recaptured not as we know them, but like ghost landscapes, without actors or the context of a theater to animate them. Of the twenty-one films that Bernard selected, two were Hitchcock's: *North by Northwest* (for which she chose the site of the famous crop-duster scene) and *Vertigo*, for which she selected the view of the Golden Gate Bridge from Fort Point. "As an object or film," Bernard has said, "*Vertigo* is beautiful, an amazing piece, just on that level."

When she originally conceived the project in 1987, Bernard chose as her cultural window the twenty years between 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and Richard Nixon's 1974 resignation. "The films that I included either fit the idea—that of landscape and the effect that film has had in defining the landscape for us—[or were] films that I loved and wanted to include."

*Vertigo* fell neatly into both categories, although Bernard admitted that the fit didn't appear natural at first. But nevertheless, she was drawn to the film: "I think it was the depiction of impossible memory—Scottie's inability to let go, [his desire] to re-create the space of that experience, to create a simulacra of Madeleine. This was very powerful to me. I also think the attraction has to do with the film as a metaphor of the artistic process: Scottie's obsessive desire to make this thing/woman what it is he wants her to be."

Bernard's work demonstrates the power of location to evoke the memory of a film—perhaps most provocatively with *Vertigo*, a film itself concerned with the power of memory, and a film so linked to its location that it has inspired decades of pilgrimage.