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## Bodega shines in hyper-real color; display arranged in Mayor's Gallery

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"It looks like the old West!" exclaimed Romulo Ortiz when he saw the glowing image of the exterior of Ortiz Market, his little corner store in Mattapan.

Hyper-real color images of Ortiz's bodega and of a couple of similar Dorchester shops will be featured in an exhibition of

convenience stores and their owners throughout September at the Mayor's Gallery on the fifth floor of City Hall.

The photo series is part of an ongoing project by Roslindale photographer Peter Bates, who uses High Dynamic Range (HDR) Photography processing to recast these easily overlooked corner joints as luminous, almost magical places. HDR-users take multiple photos at various exposure levels and use special software to merge them into one HDR image that glows with highlight and shadow details. The effects can range from natural-looking to painterly and surreal with Bates's pictures somewhere in between.



Most of the pictures were taken at twilight, says Bates, "at the 'blue hour,' when you get the best of the world of light and the world of dark."

Next to each image Bates places a lively biographical sketch and black and white

portrait of the owner. To be considered for the show, the owner had to be an immigrant willing to share a little of his life story.

Here's a bit of what Ortiz, who came here 19 years ago from the Dominican Republic, had to share: "Some people used to hang out in front of the store, scaring the customers away. I talked to them in a nice way. 'Please move from here, this is my business.' They moved away. I learned that in school, how to talk to people. I been here nine years. No robberies."



The two Dot stores featured are Las Americas Market at 970 Blue Hill Avenue and Happy Superette at 122 Seaver Street.

Bates is currently shooting shops all over the Northeast and hopes to publish a coffee-table book with spreads of these gritty, yet mystical-

looking shops and their owners who came to America to make their dreams a reality.