

Juror's Statement: Eric Kunsman

It has been a sincere honor to serve as the juror for the 7th Annual Members' Exhibition. Reviewing the hundreds of submissions from the RICPA community is a recurring sign of the sheer breadth of the photographic medium, ranging from the detailed chemistry of historical alternative processes to the unlimited potential of digital manipulation. Selecting these 57 images required a search for a specific kind of "visual gravity": works that rise above mere scene recording to exhibit a sophisticated investigation of texture, atmosphere, and the layered complexity of the human experience.

The resulting exhibition is not simply a sequence of successful individual pictures; it is a collective dialogue centered on the "surface." Whether it is the weathered facade of a building, the intimate topography of skin, or the physical layering of the print itself, these works engage in a continuous negotiation between what is seen and what is felt.

The Tactile and the Transcendent

A core strength of this year's selection is a mastery of tactile reality. We see this grounded in the works of **Bill Clark** and **George Lowell**. Clark's *If Not Now, Then When?* is a masterful study of industrial decay, where cracked and oxidized surfaces are transformed into colorful, abstract maps of time. This tactile intensity finds an organic counterpart in **George Lowell's** *Botanical Gardens I*, which captures the rough, biological architecture of flora in high-relief detail. This physical "weight" is balanced by a fascinating investigation of the spiritual. **Christine Acebo's** anotype *Deer on Wine*, grounds the exhibition in photography's fugitive, chemical origins. By utilizing light-sensitive plant matter to create a soft, ghost-like silhouette, Acebo reminds us of the medium's organic and momentary nature. This investigation of light and fleetingness is mirrored in **Pip Shepley's** *Blue Whirl* and *Celestial*, which capture the luminous, sculpted forms of ancient ice, transforming a monumental subject into a geometric meditation regarding clarity and deep time.

Humanity in the Landscape

The exhibition finds its emotional pulse in the recurring theme of the isolated figure. Many of the selected artists explore the "decisive moment" not solely as a snapshot but as a study of human persistence in vast or complex environments.

Tresha Glenister's *Snow Day* series is a prime example of this graphic narrative. By utilizing the stark, high-key negative space of a white-out environment, Glenister turns pedestrians into solitary anchors against the elements, highlighting our smallness within the weather's expanse. This sense of isolation is reproduced in the cinematic black-and-white work of **Keith Prue** (*Prue 03*), which places a figure within a glass shelter against a rugged coastline, and **Andres Saldana's** *Following you*, where a distant walker is dwarfed by a geological immensity bisected by the delicate geometry of power lines.

In the urban sphere, **Diane Bennett** captures a different kind of presence. Her works, such as *Street Bar* and *Birthday*, lean toward the complexities of city life. In *Street Bar*, reflections on a windowpane merge the subjects with the streetscape, creating a layered reality that suggests the blurred boundaries between private moments and public spaces. This candid, street-level observation is complemented by **Robin Radin's** *Julio*, a touching portrait of quiet reflection on an aged stoop, and **Rene Derome's** *The Walkman*, which captures a mid-century urban coolness through sharp, rhythmic composition.

The Body as Vessel and Performance

Beyond literal portraiture, the exhibition explores identity as a structured performance. This is achieved most strikingly through the sculptural works of **Marky Kauffmann**. In pieces like *Orange and Green Rainbow Dress* and *Patchwork Dress*, Kauffmann peels away the literal person to focus on vibrant, distressed silhouettes. By treating the garment as the subject, she suggests a human presence through absence, using color and texture to conjure a sense of history and "wear."

This investigation of the "self" as a performative act is furthered by **Marcy Cohen's** documentation of masked personas. Cohen's vibrant use of color and the theatricality of her subjects explore the line between the individual and the cultural costume, transforming the street into a stage for communal ritual. This is anchored conceptually by **Jean Duffy**, whose portraits, such as *Jagged Edges*, use superimposed textures, broken terrain, and fragmented grids to suggest internal psychological layers and the "jagged" nature of identity.

Geometry and Atmosphere

The dialogue between architecture and light provides the exhibition with a structural backbone. **Joni Lohr's** *Urban Geometry* utilizes harsh, angular shadows to bisect a building's facade, turning a mundane corner into a cubist composition. This structural sensitivity is mirrored by **Marc Jaffe's** *Panes*, which uses a strong silhouette set against a window grid to explore the relationship between the viewer and the viewed.

The atmosphere serves as a psychological character throughout the show. From the misty, somber isolation of **Matt Temple's** *Mobile Home, Wimauma*, to the high-contrast, noir energy of **Ed Healy's** motion-blurred street scenes, place is treated as a felt experience. **David Walega** concludes this thematic cluster with *Western Washington Ghosthorse* and *Roadside Alligator*. By using a vintage, bordered aesthetic, Walega makes contemporary scenes feel like rediscovered artifacts, effectively blurring the line between the present and a spectral, documented past.

Closing Reflections

What binds these 57 works together is a shared commitment to intentionality. Each artist, from the saturated, painterly coastal planes of **Trish Gilmore** to the gritty, torn-poster collages of **Bonnie Jaffe**, has made a specific, deliberate choice about how to render their world.

Together, these images form a fabric as diverse as the RICPA membership itself. It is an exhibition that rewards the slow, intentional look, encouraging the viewer to expose the physical and figurative layers of each composition to find the story beneath.

Congratulations to all the selected artists.