

12th International Exhibition at The Rhode Island Center for Photographic Arts

It is always a daunting task to review and edit for an open exhibition. So many great images, so many ideas, techniques and visions. To narrow them down to a select few is an exciting and overwhelming task. I often find myself with multiple exhibitions all blending into one final group that stops me in my tracks.

The one constant as I went through the images was that every one I selected told me a story. Each one led me down a path, made me want to explore more, spend more time with the image and become a storyteller. Each image held a mystery, of technique, exposure, or vision. I lingered on the works trying to understand what was in front of me, or simply bask in the beauty. Each of these works asked questions, left open the possibility of change, of human presence not defined.

I am a fan of the hand of the artist, and it was visible in Sally Chapman's abstract cyanotype book, and in the weaving of Sandi Daniel's exploding florals, taking me down a garden path. The quiet warmth of Rick Wright's structure-and-form architecture drew me in. Sam Elkind's sculptural piece bends the horizon and turns me upside down. Michael Cohen's photomosaic of a gun stopped me in my tracks. It held my attention, and knowing it was a collage of images made it even more powerful.

While each image stands on its own, the work feels cohesive, a moment in time collecting the varied ways in which we see the world, have visual conversations, and grow from the experience. Ishmael Hunter's image holds me in the palm of his hand, the strength and power of the shadow on the wall, along with the anonymous and unexpected congregants. As an amateur geologist, I spent so much time looking at Shreepad Joglekar's cross sections and topographic maps that I wanted it to be real. Learning they are visual representations of sound is extraordinary.

The quiet contemplation of the images by Peggy Becker, Celia Lara and David Rathbone grounded me in holding space for the landscape. I was mesmerized by the power of the storm in Ksenia Winnicki's beach scene. Yet I reached for the aurora in Jenna Lynch's deep green haze. I spent time with each of these images in what seemed like liminal space, not quite on the ground and not yet reaching the sky.

What strikes me most, moving through this collection of images, is how much craft, exploration and vision are on display from each of the artists. Taken together, these images don't offer a single conclusion so much as a shared sensibility: a desire to look closely, stay curious, and trust the viewer to respond to the work.

Thank you for making my job so difficult and so exciting. I'm grateful for the opportunity to see and experience these images, and I look forward to watching where each of you goes from here.

- Crista Dix