

Juror Statement

Lindsay Elgin

I was delighted when I was contacted to serve as a juror for this show; the Wickford Art Association always has an impressive showing and boasts a wealth of talent. I was nonetheless astonished to see how many photographs had been submitted for the show - I have never seen a gallery so filled with work! There were many truly lovely pieces, and it was beyond challenging to select those for the show.

Beyond the high level of quality of the images, something else I noticed early in the selection process was how many photographers had taken chances with their imagery. For some, this meant working back into their images digitally, using myriad techniques in image editing to change our view of the subject. For others, this meant using incredibly precise compositions to create a powerful visual relationship between subject and background, which reinforces the emotional response to the work. I was so excited to see the chances that people were taking with their photographic explorations, and this idea of juxtaposition within an image was evident in so many of the works presented. In the end, I looked to those images that best represented both a distinct artistic perspective and a cohesive, flawless presentation for selection and awards.

Serving as a juror is an exciting and humbling experience, and I'm honored to have been able to participate. Showing one's work requires great care and thought – and courage. I congratulate all the artists represented in this show, and want to extend a great thanks to the Wickford Art Association, the wonderful folks who helped during selection, and to Sarah Tallarico, for their hard work and dedication to the arts.

FIRST – Diane E. Miller, “Pigeons”

I could not help but think of the color photographs of William Eggleston when I saw this image. The use of a flat field of color as a powerful compositional tool works beautifully in this image, serving as an intensely saturated backdrop for the subjects to work upon. And the subjects have been captured at such a perfect moment as both a visual narrative, and in their interaction as formal shapes. The small gestures of the birds, in concert with the dynamic shadow, bring a sense of animation that adds another visual layer to this rich, vibrant image.

SECOND – John Pitocco, “Brianna #4”

The juxtaposition between subject and background in this image is just extraordinary. The lighting and other photographic concerns are all executed with precision; not the kind of precision that makes the photograph feel staged, or forced, but in such a way that the image seamlessly coalesces. This allows the viewer to focus on the rich visuals, and the exquisite tension between the graceful gestures and ethereal qualities of the subject, and the bold strokes and gritty textures of the background.

THIRD – Jillian Barber, “White Crane”

I have been trying to define this image, and I find myself unable to wedge it into a specific category. This is because the image defies such categorization. It is a beautiful study in the use of complementary colors, formal shapes (including positive/negative space), and texture variation. These elements combine to create a strong rhythm and bring visual intrigue to the image. But it's this sculpture of the bird that adds the last bit of visual tension that makes the image so strong: it's a sculpture that communicates grace and undulating line, which is underpinned by the texture of its deterioration and the arbitrary objects surrounding it.

HONORABLE MENTION – Shane Guitierrez, “Seis Luces”

It was the interplay between the recognizable and the ambiguous that drew me to this image. We can discern a female form, certainly, but the gesture is unclear. We can find orbs of light, but their source and function are a mystery. The mottled cloth obscures the form, and it's unclear whether the person exists above, below, or intertwined within its textures. By combining these visually identifiable elements in such a way that requires the viewer to create their own narrative, this image has the ability to shift and change for every viewer, and relies on as much on strong photographic style as it does on visual uncertainty.

HONORABLE MENTION – Alyson McCann, “Untitled”

This image is beautiful in its simplicity; a repetition of forms on a background that functions as much as negative space as it does anything else. The balance, movement, and tension in this image stems from the placement and implied movement of the subjects; a lovely visual rhythm that engages the viewer in its echoing of forms. The size of the image is a very wise choice indeed, as it brings the viewer close to the image and into the other realm where it resides.

JUROR'S AWARD – Karin Forde Whittemore, “Watch Dog”

If we consider lines within an image as framing elements, creating small, separate vignettes, then this photograph is comprised of sets of images-within-an-image. The geometric separation created by the balcony fence and the washing lines break up the space into a world that is jumbled without being confusing, disarrayed without being distracting. Add to this the completely disjunctive subjects (the dog and the clothing), and we end up with an image that revels in its arbitrariness – and we revel in it, too.

JUROR'S AWARD – Lewis Keen, “Colonial Dames”

This image stood out to me from my first pass around the gallery. An expert use of both lighting and selective focus isolate the subject – and her truly fabulous hat – from the background, while still providing enough information for the viewer to infer context. This creates a lovely environmental portrait, which maintains visual interest and relies on strong composition and careful photographic technique to drive the image, rather than simply the unusual garb of the subject.

JUROR'S AWARD – Avis O'Neill, "Driftwood"

This image stood out to me in the wonderful tension that its gestural forms create. The driftwood is at once delicate and heavy, gestural and spooky. This tension is furthered by the shadow that the driftwood leaves on the ground beneath it; a thick, reductive shadow that traces the forms of the wood in such an attenuated fashion that it creates a sense of flattened space in the foreground. This image pits this sense of shortened space against the sense of perpetual, insistent reaching emanating from the driftwood to great visual effect.