

Depth of field

Cameras are just the jumping-off point for artists in an exhibit inspired by photography.



“Silent Witness” by Bonnie Gepner



“In the Light,” inkjet print by Margaryta Kenis

By GWEN SHRIFT
 STAFF WRITER

An art photographer compresses diverse media within one frame, sometimes gathering and shifting references and happy serendipities, at other times replicating the mood or style of painting.

All the above techniques and insights are on view through July 19 in “Exposure,” the New Hope Arts Center’s inaugural juried exhibition of 80 works of photographic art.

It is a remarkably fresh assemblage, and a departure for an arts center more often filled with painting and sculpture. Contributors include many first-time exhibitors, adult amateurs and professionals, and at least two high school students.

Among the works are tributes to representational and abstract painting, plus portraiture and psychological studies, landscapes, still lifes and elegies on dilapidated vehicles and buildings.

Margaryta Kenis’ “In the Light” is emotionally stirring, in an exhibit that does not lack for sympathetic subjects. Her inkjet-print study of a very young man caught in stripes of light falling through a window blind touches an elusive quality of personality and mood.

Elsewhere, Kaya Tinsman offers “Opossum,” an archival inkjet print that studies a motionless animal curled among dried leaves. It is unclear if the possum is dead or sleeping; either way, it is an astonishingly intimate look at the fragility of life.

Quite by accident, two photographers captured forms — one natural, one man-made — that mirror each other across time and space. The man-made subject of Rob McHugh’s “NJ State Museum,” which is what the future used to look like in architectural terms, is echoed by Sanford Overton’s “Hideaway,” a rock formation that seems a prehistoric version of the building’s brooding overhang.

McHugh’s feel for the mood created by structures is well-presented by his archival pigment print “It’s OK Detroit,” a rendering of modern ruins overlain by upbeat, colorful graffiti. The bright slogan seems, poignantly, to cover an older inspirational mural that reads “If we fight together, the dream is now.” Photographers who seem to paint with their lenses came up with works such as “The Gathering,” David Wagner’s homage to Norman Rockwell showing diners at a seafood shack, while “Chinese Card Players” by Donna D. Lovely has something of the flavor of a Cezanne, this time with action in the flick of the dealer’s hand and the fall of the cards.

Susan Kott offers a shot of surrealism with “Missing Parts” and “Laced Banana,” still lifes of fruit that appears to have been cut up, then stitched back together.

Photographers represented here adeptly produce psychological effects, notably Bonnie Gepner in “Silent Witness,” a street scene showing an oversized likeness of a model in a fashion poster flanking a man wearing headphones and a woman talking on a cellphone. The giant beauty seems to embody the visual power of a monumental deity from ancient times, a pull completely lost on passersby.

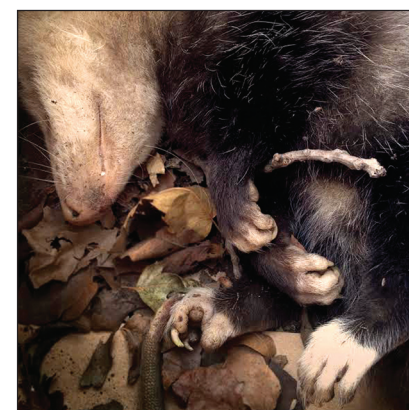
Natalie Lang’s trio of triptyches, “Preen,” “Solitaire” and “Indulgence,” lets the viewer in on the secret life of women, or what many believe to be the secret life of women.

Lang’s seriocomic look at this private world is set up almost as film strips, each horizontal image cropped into three as individual subjects are shown reading in a bathroom stocked with beauty supplies, smoking, drinking and playing solitaire, and sampling the contents of a mixing bowl.

The arts center plans to award prizes on a viewers’ choice basis. Had a separate category for composition been established, John Slavin’s pigment print “Elephant” would win, hands down, for purporting to show a pachyderm devouring a little kid.

Hours are noon to 5 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 2 Stockton Ave. in New Hope. Information: 215-862-9606 or newhopearts.org.

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“Opossum,” archival inkjet print by Kaya Tinsman

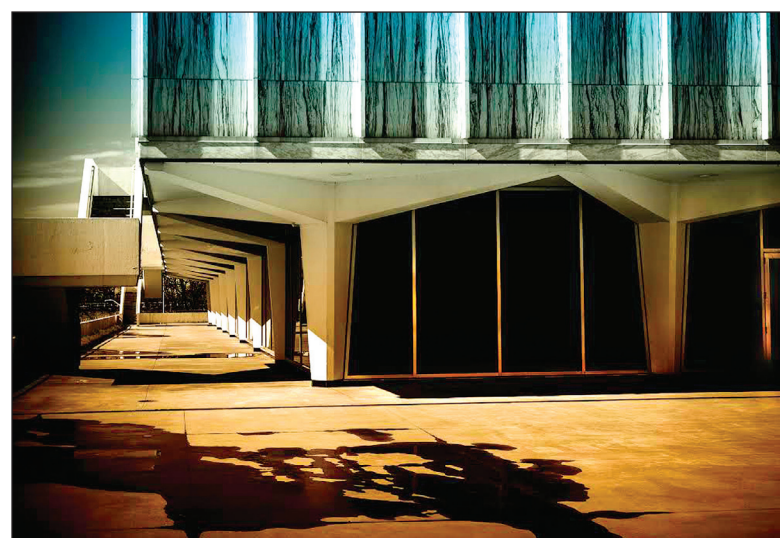


Video online



“Elephant,” pigment print by John Slavin

“The Gathering,” archival pigment print by David Wagner



“NJ State Museum,” archival pigment print by Rob McHugh