

Snapshots

2018-2019
issue 01
for meeting of
September 12
editor
Matthew
Robertson

Welcome to the 2018/2019 season of the Toronto Focal Forum

Founded in 1939 we are entering our 80th year of celebrating photographic works in print. Our membership has varied photographic interests, resulting in diverse works. Every meeting offers opinions and insights that benefit the print maker and the group as a whole. This is a tradition worth pursuing and I look forward to the coming season.

The executive will work this year to deliver an experience that is engaging and fulfilling to the members. Your suggestions and feed back are always appreciated. Our Print Director, Matthew Robertson, is reviving Snapshots to help better communicate events and proceedings to our group. Your input and support will enrich his effort. If you have something you would like to communicate to the group, contact Matthew to make it happen.

As photographers / artists we utilize tools and techniques to best communicate our message or intent. There are infinite ways the image can reveal itself. It is important that we all dig deep to present the best image possible. That said, it is also important the we explore new ideas and methods without fear of outcome. Success is not measured by the colour of a seal. Take chances, challenge yourself.

Stephen Gilligan
President
Toronto Focal Forum
7 September 2018

Meeting Report for May 2, 2018.

The final meeting of the 2017-2018 season was held on a beautiful summer evening in the middle of spring. Like the weather, the food provided by Katz's Deli was warm and pleasant as we sat down for our annual year-end banquet.

Under the guidance of Clive, our moderator for the evening, many members brought prints that evoked emotion for themselves as the maker, and frequently for us as viewers. We were treated to photographs that we likely would never have seen without Clive's well-chosen theme, and the evening was far better for it.

The banquet was a great success with many guests joining us for the evening, bringing our numbers up to 35, with excellent prints on display around the room in addition to the 21 in the lightbox. And even by the standards of our good-natured group it was an evening of ample laughter.

Upcoming Meetings

September 12 – Seal

Stephen Gilligan
Title Announced, Maker Anonymous

September 26 – Seal

Michael Anderson
Title and Maker Announced
Stretch your vision and take a risk

October 10 – Seal

Matthew Robertson
Title and Maker Announced

At the Toronto Focal Forum we share a passion for the printed photograph: it's our chosen means of creative expression, so we strive for artistic and technical excellence. Our candid print reviews are times for diverse work and different ideas, creating an invigorating, ongoing conversation about our experiences in art and in life. These evenings are times of inspiration, honing our craft of clear vision and communication, enriching our photographic pursuits. This is the measure of our success.

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Prints shown
May 2, 2018
Year-End Banquet

Allan Fligel
Rust Flow
Bruce Macaulay
Christine Wife Of...
Carm Griffin
Woman With Split Personality
Clive Tonge
Joyce
Craig Lauder
Mom's Dog
Dass
The Beggar
David Chun
Country Post Office
David Kennedy
Virgin River Sunset
Grant Dale
Ballerina
Guy St. Louis
Vertical Flight
Judy Griffin
There Are No Secrets
Lawrence Sitwell
No Title
Leif Petersen
Mixed Emotions
Marie Algieri-Goldgrub
The Joy of Baking With Nonna
Marvin Cooper
Tranquility
Matthew Robertson
The Awesome Power of Water
Michael Anderson
Study in Blue and Yellow
Mort Shapiro
Memories
Pavel Muller
I Just Want To Dance, Dance, Dance
Rhonda Starr
Your Pain is Our Pain Too
Stephen Gilligan
Pilgrimage

Hello from your Print Director

by *Matthew Robertson*

We make prints.

As members of the Toronto Focal Forum that's what sets us apart, and the drive to show our artwork and collectively improve our craft is what brings us together. So this year let's see more of it.

We're going to be putting more emphasis on an underused Forum feature: the "re-make". What's a Remake, you ask? It's an image that was voted Silver or No Seal and has been remade into a new print. On any night in this new season you can submit a remake print *as well as* a new print for the lightbox. That's right: two prints, one night. A mulligan, a do-over, another chance to shine. Just remember that your remake image needs to be marked as such, include the original print for comparison, and will be shown as time permits.

But wait, there's more!

We are also formally reviving the Forum tradition of Multi-Print Presentations, which Marie outlines a bit more in her article on page 4 of this issue. These presentations will be on display during our social time, make an excellent dinner conversation topic, and will be discussed as a group prior to the lightbox session. But there will only be a half-dozen opportunities to enjoy these series through the 2018-19 season, so if you have a body of work to show, contact me soon for details.

And do you know what's even better than being part of a lively print discussion? Leading that discussion! So why not volunteer to be a moderator for a night? Training is provided and first-time moderators are especially encouraged. If you're interested let's talk.

It's going to be a great year. So go ahead.
Try the soup, and have that slice of cake.

Suzuki Roshi once described the life of a Zen master as "one continuous mistake".

I've often wondered what that means.

– *Gaylon Ferguson*

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My Motivation as Moderator

by Stephen Gilligan

Many years ago, as a new member of the Toronto Focal Forum, I was enjoying listening to the commentary of my first official meeting. Even the members I knew, I did not know well, and I was very unaware of what I had gotten myself into. It was revealing to listen to the comments of the very articulate membership and learn about them and their perspective on the printed image.

The moderator had given me about an hours grace period to climatized to the room before I was called upon. Normally, I would have been comfortable making a public statement about the work but, what had been placed in the light box was technically flawed, lacked emotion, and was void of a narrative that I could discern. In my mind, all I could think was “this is awful!” I struggled to put words together so as not to offend the maker. I scrambled my brain to find a channel to initiate diplomatic discourse. My problem was, I was stuck on “awful”. What I was lacking was the focus to concisely identify the technical flaws. I had no path to identify what image qualities contributed to the perceived absence of emotion or narrative. What I needed in order to contribute a constructive commentary was to ask myself questions and structure the answers to break my initial impression.

I know we all try to comment to either affirm the photographer’s direction or offer input to potentially improve their presentation but sometimes we may fall short. The commentary is really a fundamental value of the Toronto Focal Forum. It is the core of why we meet.

In light of this, to get a kick when we may be stuck for words, or hung up on an initial impression, I will be circulating my question cards once again for our first meeting of the year, Sept 12. The cards are for you, if you feel the need, to spark an internal dialog to hopefully help formulate a thought or a new direction that will be beneficial for you and the print maker. Regardless of how we formulate our comments, the process should be enjoyable; spurring a lively and respectful exchange.

I’m looking forward to the evening.

Stephen Gilligan
3 September 2018

In his role as President, Stephen will be moderating the first evening of the new Forum season on Wednesday, September 12.

A word of forewarning: if experiencing a photograph can not be done with some of the abandon of children wading in gutters after the rain there is no reason to experience photographs. Postpone judgement!
...Come at a picture with an open mind, give it an even break, let it speak for itself.

– *Minor White*

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Telling Stories

by Marie Algieri-Goldgrub

We all know that a single photo can tell a story. Quite often a story can come to life or be better told when combined with other images.

This season Multi Print Presentations will be making a comeback to the TFF. This will give our members an added opportunity to share, view, and comment on more images. These will be presented in an informal manner prior to a meeting, allowing members to browse and comment should they wish.

Here are a few simple suggestions for creating a series:

1. Establish a theme.

This can be something simple, such as photographing the same tree at different seasons. It can be more specific – old fences, people changing over time. Or it can be designed based - the colour blue, triangles, etc. The theme can be established prior to taking a photo, or you can come up with one once you look at your images and realize there is a common theme there.

2. Show a theme that is easily identifiable by the viewer... or not.

It will help if your images have a clear connection to one another, so the viewer can quickly establish the topic. Then again this might not be the case if your subject is more along the lines of abstract art. Regardless, the images need to have some kind of common thread.

3. The series should consist of 3-6 images.

4. Displaying your images in a consistent way will help to deliver your message in a clear manner. Establishing a similar look among the images will keep the viewers' attention where you want it to be. You don't need to necessarily spend a lot of time and effort on mounting your photos, and there will be stands available to hold mounted images at a convenient viewing angle.

Our intention is to have one member a month present a photo series. Please contact Matthew for more information if you are interested in showing your work.

Marie will be presenting our first Multi-Print Presentation
of the new Forum season on Wednesday, September 26.

Remember: Snapshots is **your** Toronto Focal Forum newsletter.
Have something you want to share? Send it in! tffsnapshots@gmail.com

Without question, one of the greatest virtues of photography is that one can point a camera at anything – I mean *anything*.
There are subjects that recur with frequency on the walls of fine art galleries,
but the world is so much more interesting than that.

– Brooks Jensen