

Snapshots

2019-2020
issue 10
for meeting of
February 12
editor
Matthew
Robertson



The Climbers, by Steve Rees

It was such a good night that we didn't want it to end.

Marie was our moderator on a chilly winter evening, presenting ten images and ensuring that everyone was heard. Once again we rallied to the cause of responding to our work with insight and discernment. And even after the last print was shown the discussion and ideas kept on, as we all contribute to making this the Forum we want.

We were able to enjoy our first multi-print presentation of the new decade, as Leif presented his portfolio of people caught in motion. In addition to appreciating his masterful prints up close, it was an excellent opportunity to see how multiple images reinforce and amplify each other.

And our hopes have come true as we welcome Mandeep as a new member. We are very fortunate to be able to see his work and hear his insights.

This has been a remarkable January, and an auspicious beginning for the second half of our 80th year.

Upcoming Meetings

February 12 - No Seal

Judy Griffin

Maker and Title Announced

February 26 - Seal

Matthew Robertson

Maker and Title Announced

March 11 - Seal

Michael Anderson

Maker and Title 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, 29 January

Tom Yates

Karl, a Portrait []

Marie Algieri-Goldgrub

*The Marilyn Monroe Building,
View from Below* [G]

Matthew Robertson

Candyland [S]

Nick Janushewski

36 Bottles of Wine on the Wall []

Allan Flagel

Abstract Blues [S]

Leif Petersen

Window Reflection [S]

Sue Curtis

Autumn Tapestry [S]

Michael Anderson

Luskentyre Beach, Isle of Harris [S]

Steve Rees

The Climbers [G]

Mandeep Bal

Queen [G]



mandeep bal
Queen, by Mandeep Bal

TFF Outing – Diane Arbus at the AGO – Saturday March 14th

For those of you that would like to socialize with other members of the TFF outside of Seoul House, let's gather at the AGO to see the Diane Arbus exhibition. Purchase your ticket (\$25.00) on arrival at the AGO. Just so you are aware, for an extra \$10.00 you can buy an annual pass. An excellent value if you plan on going back now and then in the next 12 months. If you already have an annual pass or membership, the Arbus exhibition is free.

We will meet by the Frank Gehry Staircase just beyond the main entrance to the gallery at 2:00pm.

We will choose a pub in the neighbourhood for banter and beer once we know how many will be attending. I hope you all can come!

– Stephen

Lately I've been struck with how I really love what you can't see in a photograph.
An actual physical darkness. And it's very thrilling for me to see darkness again.

– Diane Arbus

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Lightbox Photographs

from January 29, 2020

This issue features images from our ninth meeting of the season.

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

Left: Autumn Tapestry, by Sue Curtis

Below: Luskentyre Beach, Isle by Michael Anderson

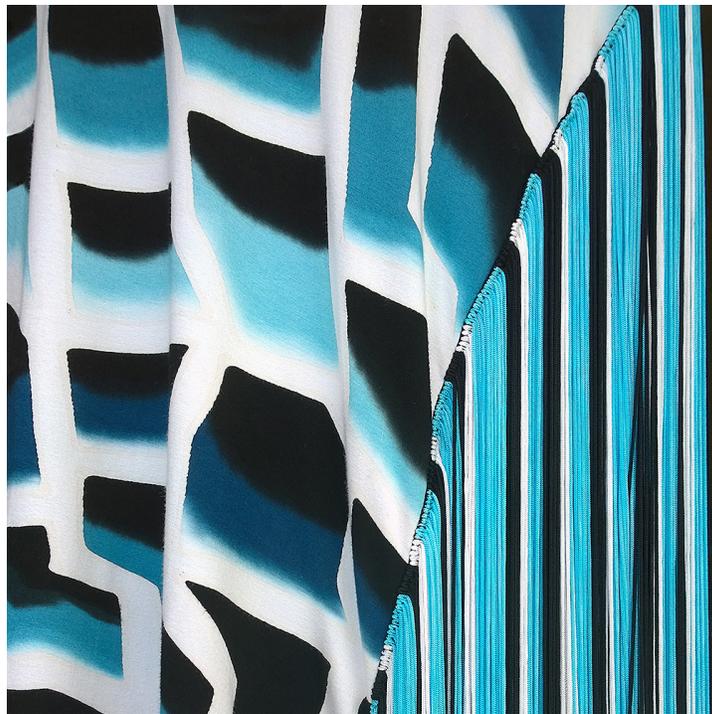


When you approach something to photograph it,
first be still with yourself until the object of your attention affirms your presence.
Then don't leave until you have captured its essence.

– Minor White

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*Above: Abstract Blues, by Allan Flagel
Left: Window Reflection, by Leif Petersen
Below: Candyland, by Matthew Robertson*

Back by Popular Demand!

You can now reach our website through both focalforum.ca and torontofocalforum.ca.

Go there for back issues of Snapshots, handy links to our members websites, and a shortcut to [our new Instagram page](#).



They say fish can't feel pain, but how would they know?
My point is this, we cannot know what someone is feeling unless they tell us. That's all.

— Venetta Octavia

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APPROPRIATION, INFLUENCE and PLAGIARISM

by Stephen Gilligan

For a few years I taught photography at Durham College in the School of Media, Art and Design. My students were primarily graphic designers and fine artist. It was at this time that I was presented with the concept of appropriation in creative work. Now it is important to understand this goes beyond cultural appropriation which is a term we have commonly heard in the media in recent years. I am referring more to works such as Warhol's 1961 Campbell's Soup Can Series. Does anyone know the name of the original graphic designer who did the label around 1900? Apparently not because it was more a group effort and the label evolved over many years. None the less, Warhol appropriated the graphics and positioned it to become a new work.

This concept of "appropriation" was new to me because the bulk of my academic background was in the sciences where all material referenced had to be clearly cited. So, appropriation from my vantage point seemed more like plagiarism. I had to adjust my understanding because the college position, although not absolute in clarity, encouraged adopting ideas from various sources and moulding it into your own work. At times the "influence" was not recognizable, but often it was. Regardless it was not necessarily required to be cited. However, there was some expectation of elaboration, to go beyond the material from which the influence had been drawn.

I have always been fascinated by influence. I see prints presented at the forum that relate to historical or contemporary images and I get excited when I recognize it. Fred Leibl's work often showed influence from the "New Topographics" photographers from the 1970s. The images were uniquely Fred's, but they had the hallmark of Stephen Shore, Robert Adams or Lewis Baltz. He spoke of the movement on occasion, but it was mostly unstated. There is some onus on the viewer to have enough background to appreciate (but not necessarily like) the work, and that may make it unnecessary to always state the influence.

We often see images that exemplify techniques or stylizations of the day. Fashion so to speak. Some might see an impactful image and attempt to emulate it. When does that become plagiarism?

I believe the members of the forum have the best of intentions. However, we may present work that has a stylization or subject matter that is extraordinarily close to another photographer's work. So I write today to open a dialog amongst the members as to when or should we be referencing the work of influence. Whether it be a new technique championed by a known photographer or simply an extraordinary composition that we want to take a shot at, do we need to cite the source?

There is one other caveat to consider. Now that we are posting images more frequently in Snapshots and on social media, is it necessary or just prudent to give credit where credit IS due?

– February 2020

A quick programming note: a late-breaking change will see Judy Griffin moderating our next meeting. This will be a no-seal meeting, so don't miss the chance to bring something outlandish.

Thank you Judy, and we're looking forward to seeing everyone for a great night.

The bad artists imitate. The great artists steal.
– Bansky, quoting Picasso.