

Snapshots

2021-2022
Issue 10
for meeting of
February 2
editor
Matthew
Robertson



Untitled, by Stephen Starkman

For our ninth meeting we enjoyed Marie serving as our moderator. She presented us with twenty images, including one from guest Christine Kobielski, whose “Flower Talk” started us off with a nuanced image filled with different layers of meaning and personal connection.

This proved a fitting opening to the night, as we were encouraged to take a more personal and interpretive approach to our critiques. Art and our experiences of it are subjective, so limiting our discussion to only the demonstrable facts of a photograph’s existence is missing most of the insights we could share.

This remains, as most things do, a work in progress that we can improve on. Fortunately, there’s no such thing as an incorrect personal response, and we’ll have another chance to get involved in the meaning behind our art soon.

Upcoming Meetings

February 2
David

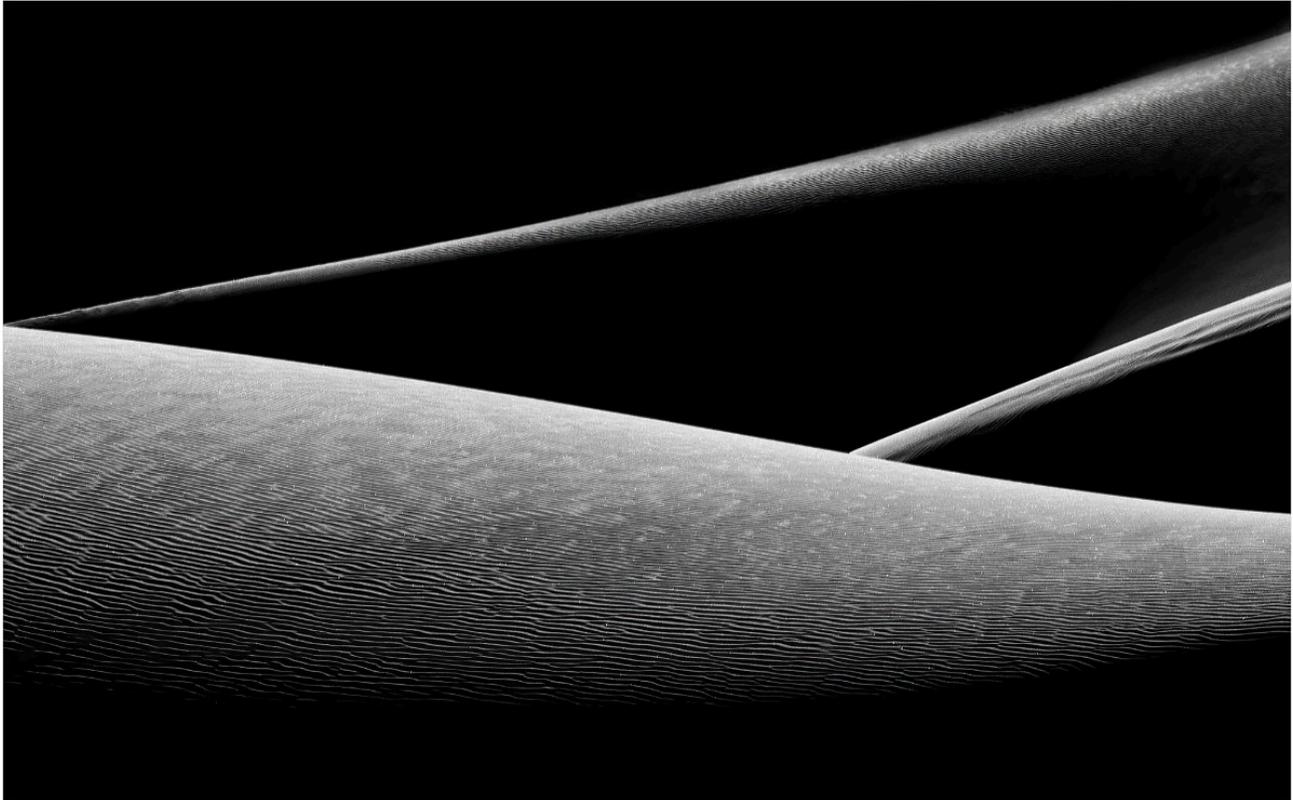
February 16
Matthew

March 2
Carm & Judy

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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Shadows & Light, by Avi Cohen

Images Shown, January 19:

Christine Kobielski <i>Flower Talk</i>	Laurence Sitwell <i>To the Unknown</i>	Marie Algieri-Goldgrub <i>Resilience</i>
Marina Leyderman <i>My Bench</i>	Vincent Sheridan <i>Iron Horse</i>	Leif Petersen <i>Sensuous</i>
Michael Anderson <i>Street Portrait</i>	Tom Yates <i>Winter Window</i>	Stephen Starkman <i>Untitled</i>
Allan Flagel <i>Out of the Blue</i>	Avi Cohen <i>Shadows & Light</i>	Sue Curtis <i>Hurricane Fury</i>
Dass <i>Window</i>	Katherine Keates <i>The Performer</i>	Guy St Louis <i>Dream of the Desert</i>
Carm Griffin <i>Doorway - Historic Chimayo</i>	Steve Rees <i>Glamorous</i>	Matthew Robertson <i>The Difference Between</i>
Judy Griffin <i>Cuban Curls</i>		Doris Woudenberg <i>All Sails Set</i>

Even when the cloud is not there, it continues as snow or rain. It is impossible for the cloud to die.
It can become rain or ice, but it cannot become nothing.

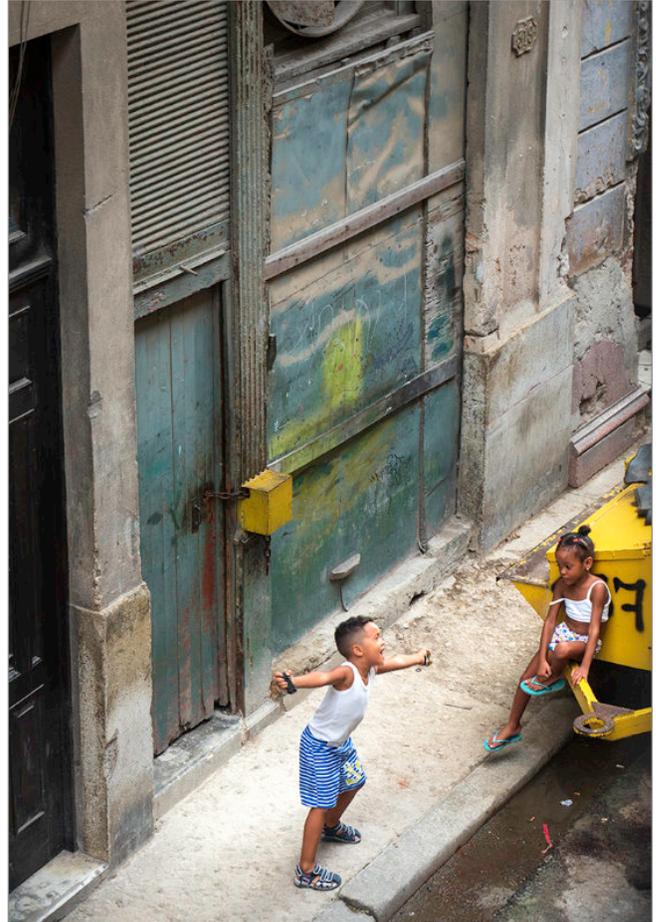
– *Thich Nhat Hanh*

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Out of the Blue, by Allan Flagel



The Performer, by Katherine Keates

Moderator's Guidance for February 2

from David Kennedy

For this meeting, I want to ask you to bring images that you have taken or re-visited during the pandemic. Through these images, we can discuss how we have responded to the pandemic and what emotions or subjects have become important to us. You may introduce your photograph or hold your comments and respond to the conversation at the end.

As we look to passing this peak of the pandemic, we are looking to returning to more of a normal time where travel and social interaction return for all. I'm looking forward to your images and next week's discussion.

I've been absolutely terrified every moment of my life,
and I've never let it keep me from doing a single thing I wanted to do.
– Georgia O'Keeffe

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*Left: Cuban Curls,
by Judy Griffin*

*Below: To the Unknown,
by Laurence Sitwell*



The blue of the sky is one of the most special colours in the world,
because the colour is deep but see-through both at the same time.

– *Cynthia Kadobata*

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Window, by Dass

I was surprised at the last meeting when people thought my window image was taken from inside looking out. I had not considered that people might see it that way as I only thought about it as I had seen it, from outside.

There have been questions about how/why I presented it this way. Here's the story:

I liked the window and the reflection in the original capture, top left, but the rest of the image was chaos. So I wanted to isolate the window. Once I straightened the window it reduced the wall above and below it (left). I had thought I might be able to 'make' more wall all around the window but it would have been a difficult clone

job, doable but a lot of work. So I decided to cut out the window and put it on a solid background. I tried white first but didn't like it, black seemed to intensify the colour more and add some mystery.

Then I decided that the wall that remained should follow the shape of the window. I cropped the sides to where I wanted them, then removed unwanted wall above and below the window. It produced a window that appears to float, I like that. I didn't add a stroke line around the image, to accentuate the feeling of floating, as I knew it would be displayed on a black background.

If you have further questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

A camera is just a medium to capture what you have in your vision,
and vision is something that cannot be bought.

– Neeraj Agnihotri

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*Above: Iron Horse,
by Vincent Sheridan*

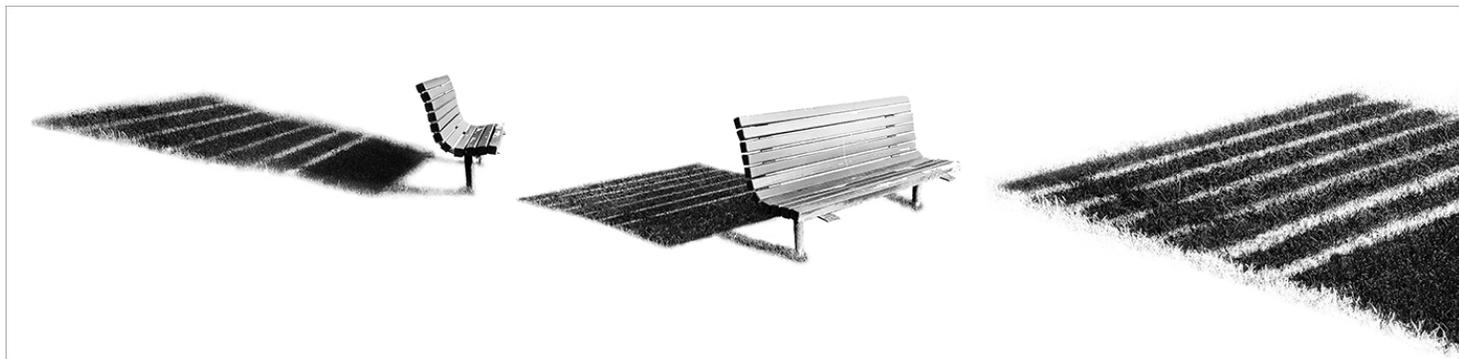
*Right: Street Portrait,
by Michael Anderson*



There are two ways to live a life.
Either forget everything, or remember nothing.
– Santosh Kalwar

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Over the past few years, I've done quite a bit of garden photography and I find that blooming plants provide some of the most interesting subjects.

This Calla Lily, in the early stage of blooming, was no exception. I liked the colour image very much, but I believe that the B&W tells the story better. I thought about using the title 'Portrait of a Triffid at Rest', from the movie, 'Day of the Triffids'.



*Top: My Bench,
by Marina Leyderman*

*Above: Sensuous,
by Leif Petersen*

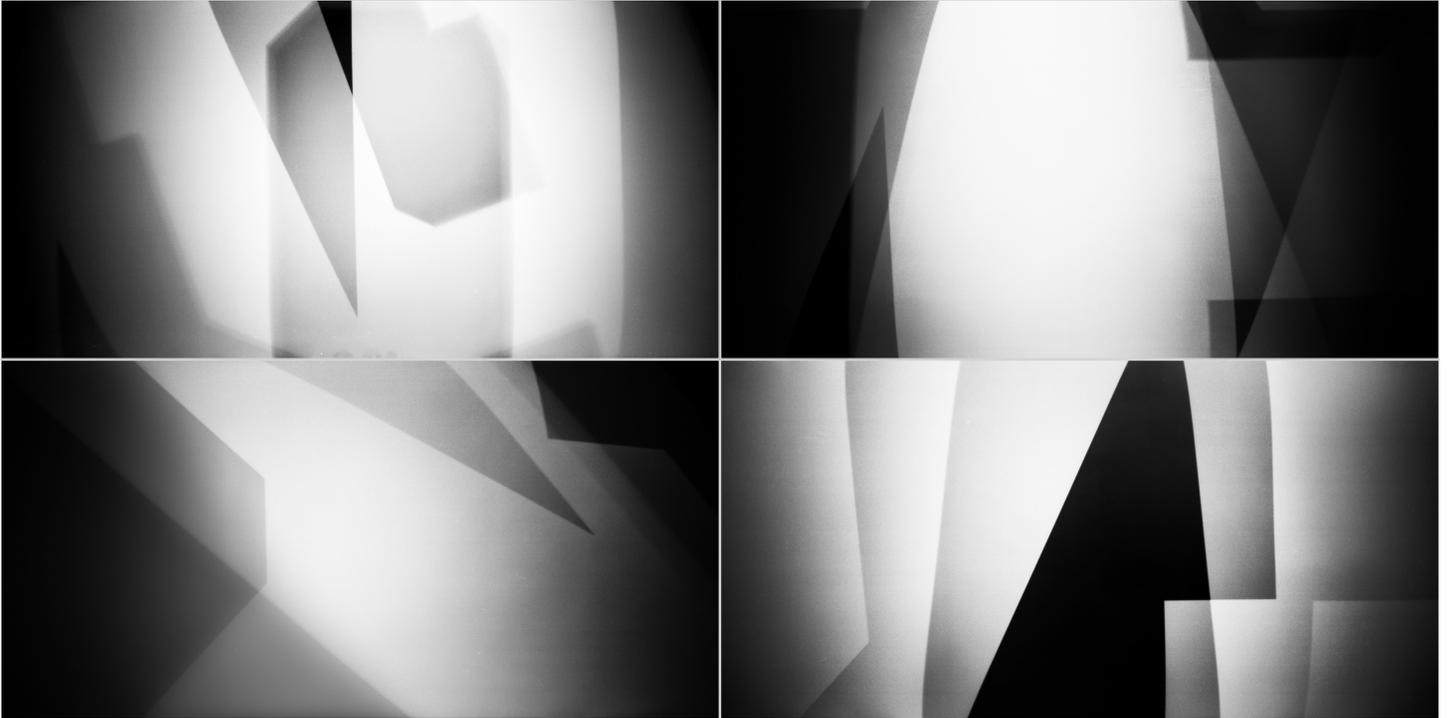
*Left: Glamorous,
by Steve Rees*

Sometimes it's not enough to know what things mean,
sometimes you have to know what things don't mean.

– Bob Dylan

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The Difference Between Letting Go and Giving Up, by Matthew Robertson

All four of these photos simply go by the name of the full set, *the difference between letting go and giving up*.

Letting go might be a positive thing. Relinquishing what's unhelpful or harmful. It might be a negative thing, but necessary. Adjusting to the death of a friend or a family member. It could be liberating. It might not be.

Giving up might be a negative thing. Resilience erodes, efforts fail, things get worse, gradually then suddenly. It might be finding safety, reprieve, a way of reducing to only what can be managed. It might be a complete collapse.

I have a hard time letting go. I have a hard time giving up. I don't like change. I don't like the way things are.

These photos were recorded as part of this process of adapting. There's no answer here, but there's also no question, simply the experience of doing less. They are images of things that don't exist – multiple exposures of one of my sources of comfort and anxiety. Addressing it directly, but without the need for control, has helped.

It's no coincidence that these photos were taken with a lensless wooden box using film that can't even be bothered to record colour. There's an amazing amount of photography that I've either given up, or learned to let go of.

Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference.

It's either the best or it's the worst, and since I don't have to choose, I guess I won't.

– Lou Reed