

Snapshots

2020-2021
Issue 2
for meeting of
September 23
editor
Matthew
Robertson



Beacon, by Lawrence Sitwell

Our first meeting of the new season was not, perhaps, quite the same as they have been in the past. There were some slight differences that the keen observer might have noticed. But the main elements – passionate photographers gathering to discuss the art and further the craft – remains unchanged even as the technology and times shift around us.

Digital display has officially arrived at the Toronto Focal Forum.

The meeting was a definite success as we made the shift to the new presentation format. Mort kept the technology running while Dass served admirably as our moderator, welcoming us back with panache and humour after our too-long summer break. Sixteen images graced our screens in this new non-seal meeting format, giving us plenty to discuss and an opportunity to consider how the presentation affects our experience.

Certainly, this season will be different from all those that have come before. Fortunately that's always true when we're at our best.

Upcoming Meetings

September 23

Matthew Robertson

October 7

Leif Petersen

October 21

Stephen Gilligan

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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Images Shown, September 9:

Allan Fligel
Spiralling Down

Dass
Lost in the Spray

Lawrence Sitwell
Beacon

Leif Petersen
Glass Shelf

Marvin Cooper
Queen's Park

Michael Anderson
White Figure

Mort Shapiro
Rust

Paul Yi
Home Coming Under Moonlight

Rhonda Starr
Determined

Steve Rees
Pixels and Analog

Sue Curtis
Mountain Mist

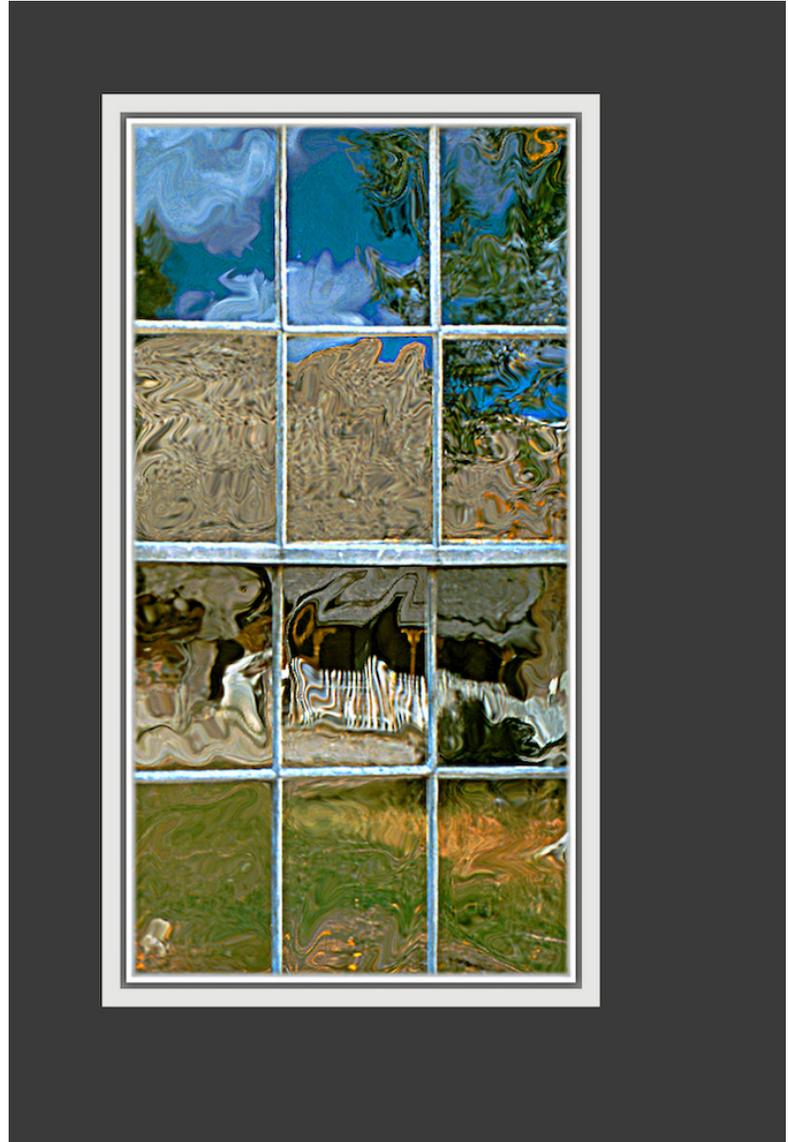
Tom Yates
Old Window, Old File

Darcy Rector
The Bustard Rocks, Georgian Bay

Matthew Robertson
Insanely Great

Nick Janushewski
Sun Burst

Stephen Gilligan
Fortitude, Perseverance, Dedication



Old Window, Old File, by Tom Yates

This is a 'old file', dating back to the 90's, transparency film, scanned with a film scanner (remember those?) to get a file. It was part of a project by David Stone, Sue Curtis and myself to demonstrate to TFF members that the world was changing and 'Digital' was the future.

Covid-19 restrictions took me to a search of 'old files', and this is a part of the result.

Acidly observing the decline of everything – manners, language. Vulgar TV programs.
Children who talk back to their parents. Students who write “it’s” for “its.”

– Susan Sontag, 1980

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Spiralling Down, by Allan Flagel

Originally *Spiralling Down* was part of my 'Isolation Project', where I spent a few weeks trying to look at the spaces inside my home with 'fresh eyes'.

While processing it, it became a metaphor for my feelings of not being able to be as active as usual in my life.

My daily trips up and down these stairs, my 30 min. workouts on my exercise bike, and a little yard work became the new normal.

What I remember and where I start is with the detail that is the equivalent of the punctum, the moment of a life, the shape of an object, the darkness of a room, that solicits me, most often because it represents an opening or a detour.

– Saidiya Hartman

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*Left:
Determined,
by Rhonda Starr*

*Below:
Queen's Park,
by Marvin Cooper*



A photographer needs to be a good editor of negatives and prints!
I find the single most valuable tool in the darkroom is my trash can – that's where most of my prints end up.

– John Sexton

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Home Coming Under Moonlight, by Paul Yi

I thought about this photo for half a year, 'when the full moon arises from the vast ocean or lake, nothing else on horizon except a sailing boat with the sail catching the moon light....' Checking [The Photographer's Ephemeris](#) for the best dates during the summer season. And decided to do it on September 1st at the tip of Tommy Thompson Park. That day was rainy and cloudy, nothing happened. The next day, the moonrise was a bit late but that's the only chance this year that I could get the photo.

I hiked 5k to the tip, and witnessed a magnificent sunset but in the other direction, the moon was shy away behind clouds. Luckily, it partially appeared between gaps of clouds for a short moment, and I took a few shots of the reddish moon. The sail boat was from another photo I took 15 minutes before moonrise. I put them together to finish my dream photo - Home Coming Under Moon Light.

There is nothing new under the sun, but there are new suns.

– Octavia Butler

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Lost in the Spray, by Dass

Shot at a wakeboard park, the boarder had just gone over a jump.

Snapshots is on the web!
[visit focalforum.ca](http://visit_focalforum.ca)
[2020-2021](#) • [2019-2020](#) • [2018-2019](#)

Young humans can be impulsive.
The trick is keeping them around long enough to become old humans.

– Martha Wells

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Insanely Great, by Matthew Robertson

What's Left?

by Matthew Robertson

What's left to say about a photograph when it isn't a print? What can we critique when we know that tone, tint, contrast, and colour are all properties of our displays, and may not look the way the maker intended? We don't know if there are details in the shadows, or if we're the only one seeing that slight cyan shift. We're a print group, and we can't talk about print quality.

Well, what's left is the image itself. Composition, timing, impact and significance are all still there. We can still consider the relationship of figure and ground, the originality of the approach, the artistry and the vision that brought the image together. We can still consider each photo with our full artistic sensitivity and the knowledge that its maker is a skilled and expressive photographer, exactly as we do when we are seeing prints in person.

Our display medium has changed, but who we are as the Toronto Focal Forum has not. While the printed photo remains our preferred means of creative expression, we can still use these different times as a source of new insights, new experiences, and new art.

The main blindness in modern amateur enthusiast photography as it is expressed and discussed online, in my opinion, is the conflation of "image quality" with good photographs.

– Mike Johnston