

The Boston Globe

PHOTOGRAPHY REVIEW

In 'Winter Solstice' at the Griffin, it's most everything under the sun

The members' show features the work of some 170 photographers.

By [Mark Feeney](#) Globe Staff, Updated December 13, 2022, 2:35 p.m.



Sean Sullivan, "We Can't Unmix the Colors." SEAN K. SULLIVAN

WINCHESTER — [“Your Work Here 2022,”](#) the Photographic Resource Center members’ show at the Fort Point Arts Community Gallery, is big, with work from more than 60 photographers. It closes Dec. 18. “Winter Solstice 2022,” the Griffin Museum of Photography’s members’ show, is *really* big. It has work from some 170 photographers. The show runs through Jan. 8, as do the three others currently at the Griffin.



Steven Edson, "NYC, NY" STEVEN EDSON

The beauty of “Solstice” is the variety of “Solstice.” Well, that and the beauty of many of the individual images. There are some general observations that can be made, though. Color predominates, albeit there’s a fair amount of black-and-white. Steven Edson’s “NYC, NY” is a particularly vibrant example of the former.



Betty Stone, "Coming Full Circle" COPYRIGHT BETTY STONE

Landscape and still life are the most popular genres, with few portraits. Representation is the rule, though a few exceptions flirt with abstraction. Or embrace geometry, as with Matt Temple's "Fiddlehead," which gives a botanical title to an architectural subject, a spiral staircase, and produces a splendidly helical effect. The sense of pattern and texture is so pleasing in Betty Stone's "Coming Full Circle" that it's easy to overlook that it's a triptych, showing what seems to be vintage cash register keys, architectural molding, a doily, and a cut flower. Is it a camellia?



Steve Dunwell, "Jose Caralho, braider fixer, Conrad-Jarvis braid mill, Pawtucket, RI," 1975COPYRIGHT STEVE DUNWELL

Most of the photographs are without an indication of time or place. This means they create their own sense of reality, as, of course, every photograph does to at least some extent. That sense of self-containment also has the effect of making the there-and-then-ness of a photograph like Steve Dunwell's "Jose Caralho, braider fixer, Conrad-Jarvis braid mill, Pawtucket, RI," from 1975 all the more striking. The photograph, part of Dunwell's invaluable '70s series on New England mills and mill workers, has a sense of solidity (note how the machinery all but immures the man operating it), which is a different form of specificity.



Frank Siteman, "The Lady in the Window, Arles, France, 1967" COPYRIGHT FRANK SITEMAN

Pawtucket isn't the only identifiable location in "Solstice." There are images from France, India, New Guinea, India, Cuba, the Canadian Rockies, Brazil.

Closer to home you find Indiana, California, Alabama (though part of the very considerable beauty of Frank Armstrong's "Sulligent, Alabama" is a painterliness that really does transcend place, time, even individuality). Closer still are Provincetown and Boston: the Common, Fenway, the Riverway.



Frank Armstrong, "Sulligent, Alabama," 2022 FRANK ARMSTRONG

A few photographers in "Solstice" also have work in the PRC show: Erik Gehring, who took the very appealing Riverway picture, and Stefanie Klavens. Klavens continues her visual chronicling of movie culture. Her wonderfully straightforward view of the Strand Theatre argues for a visit to Caro, Mich. (speaking of geographical specificity).



Stefanie Klavens, "Strand Theatre, Caro, Michigan" COPYRIGHT STEFANIE KLAVERNS

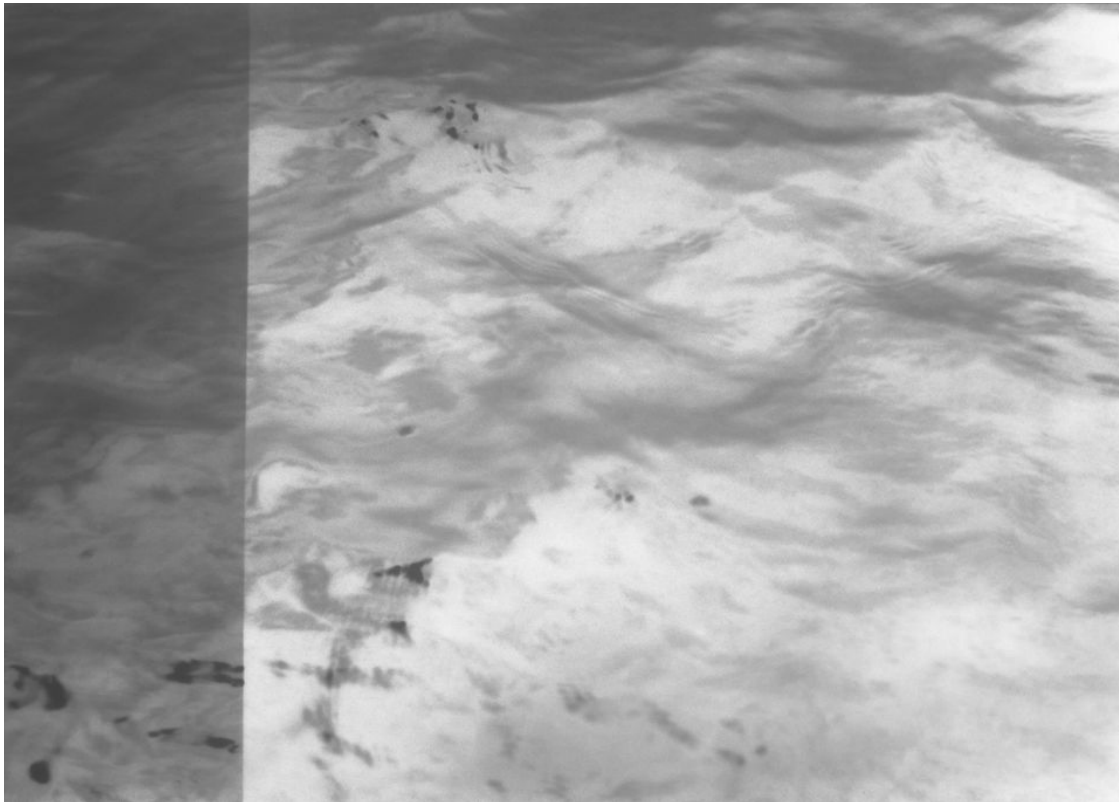
As one might expect with the work of so many photographers, there are several processes to go along with the many inkjet and pigment prints: daguerreotype, tintype, [chemigram](#), infrared, several cyanotypes. Traditionalists will be pleased to find a few good old-fashioned gelatin silver prints. There are also several materials used for printing: aluminum, vellum, various specialized papers, and even wood (talk about solidity!). That's what Sharon Schindler used for "Pick a Tune." Showing a row of jukebox selections, it's the exceedingly rare photograph that sounds as good as it looks, and it looks very good.



Sharon Schindler, "Pick a Tune." COPYRIGHT SHARON SCHINDLER

Part of the visual pleasure of "Pick a Tune" is how battered that bit of jukebox looks. If a sense of the timeless is commonly found in "Solstice," so is evidence of time's passage. The distressed facade in Sean Sullivan's "We Can't Unmix the Colors" (now there's a title to reckon with) is as worn as the beat-up upright piano in Janet Milhomme's "And Then the Music Faded." It would be interesting, if not perhaps pleasing, to hear some of the selection shown in "Pick a Tune" played on it.

In “an end and a beginning,” Alyssa Minahan uses almost as many processes as all the photographers in “Solstice” put together. There are chemigrams, gelatin silver prints, photograms, lumen prints, and Polaroids. Regardless of format, the work has a visual consistency. The images hover between abstraction and representation, owing more to breath than touch. All photographs, even abstractions, document *something*. With Minahan’s work, emanation supplants documentation.



Alyssa Minahan, "Untitled" COPYRIGHT ALYSSA MINAHAN

The title of Sarah Schorr’s “The Color of Water” isn’t metaphorical. The water in question came from Judkins Pond, which is next to the Griffin. Schorr’s images look more like watercolors or [color field](#) paintings than photographs. Put another way, they resemble [Rorschach blots](#) painted by [Helen Frankenthaler](#).



Sarah Schorr, "holding beauty" COPYRIGHT SARAH SCHORR

The Griffin Museum's namesake is Arthur Griffin, a prominent local photojournalist during the middle years of the last century. His work appeared in *Life*, *Time*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *The Boston Globe Magazine*. Becky Behar's "Illuminating the Archive — Call & Response" enters into a dialogue with Griffin's work. It includes seven of her photographs, all color, and six of his, all black-and-white.



Becky Behar, "Untitled" COPYRIGHT BECKY BEHAR

Her photographs come from her ongoing project “The 50th Hour.” Behar’s use of light is highly dramatic, and effectively so, with foregrounds almost seeming to leap out of velvet-black backgrounds. The most striking example shows a bathtub. The tub is empty, but the impact of its pearly whiteness might generate metaphors for any number of things. Here’s a different kind of dialogue from that with Griffin. It’s the kind of larger, ongoing dialogue that photography does best: between what was there in front of the camera then and what a viewer brings to it now.

WINTER SOLSTICE 2022

ALYSSA MINAHAN: an end and a beginning

SARAH SCHORR: The Color of Water

BECKY BEHAR: Illuminating the Archive — Call & Response

At Griffin Museum of Photography, 67 Shore Road, Winchester, through Jan. 8.

781-729-1158, griffinmuseum.org