

## **LACP Fourth Annual Members' Exhibition**

### **Juror Statement**

Think about all those times in a crowded restaurant you've tried to engage in conversation with a friend. It's almost impossible to do so in a comfortable way. Even if you ask for a table in a quiet corner, the din still overwhelms. But you persevere by focusing only on your friend. Eventually the noise drops away and what is left is only the conversation.

Jurying photographs is a similar experience. It begins with the clamoring of a thousand voices. Like a Zen exercise, the quiet comes with reading one photograph and repeating that investigation a thousand times (less or more depending on the amount of submissions).

The exhibition submissions for LACP gave me great pleasure. My initial responses came from more than a third of your submissions. And after interaction with each photograph I reacted to even more. Statistically these are very good odds.

Reading a photograph means you have to spend time getting to know the whole of it. It requires asking questions of the photograph, of yourself as well as the artist. It involves noting colors and objects and making speculations in determining what is happening within the image. It takes relating one's own personal experiences to the photograph and thinking about the emotions expressed in the piece. What does the photograph say about the artist and her/his feelings and how does it make you as viewer feel? Has the photographer chosen a literal route or a nonrepresentational direction? Can the materials used provide more information about the artist's intent? What about the other photographs supplied by the artist? Do they give away any further knowledge about what is happening within the frame?

After all this interrogation do you respond to the image enough to move it into the next round for consideration? It is an arduous process that eventually becomes innate with more practice, especially for visual learners and detectives. Just as you can learn to see the world as an artist would, it is possible to learn how to look at art and broaden the aesthetic.

Juror service usually ends when the number of art pieces required is chosen. Rather than provide fifty singular images to a venue, I like to think about the overall viewing experience. How do we bind the exhibition together? What will draw the viewer in and hold attention throughout? What relationships can we find to build rhythm and emotion into a sequence? How do we populate these sentences with pauses and periods? It is the narrative that moves the viewer along from one image to the next.

There is no right way to jury an exhibition. This is what you get when you ask me to jury your show, however. I give you the orchestra rather than the solo parts. Every photographer contributes in holding this exhibition together on your wall. They are the real focus. I just acted as the translator.

Thank you for the invitation and the opportunity to get to know your membership at LACP through their photographs. I wish success and enjoyment for all. Maybe too, I wish a collector would buy a photographic sentence instead of just one piece in order to relive the experience of a conversation at home daily. Wouldn't that be grand!

Paula Tognarelli

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