

A look at 'Photoart 91'

March has been, for quite some years now, the month Halton Hills' lovers of photography are waiting for, and this year is no exception. "Photoart '91", the juried exhibition, sponsored by the Halton Hills Camera Club, has opened at the Gallery of the Cultural Centre in Georgetown, and will continue to be on view there to March 24.

The judges selected 90 photographs for the exhibition, from a total of 168 entries. They also selected the following photographs for best awards: "Fishing Dory," by Peter Philpott, got the award for best photograph in the exhibition. "Untitled," by F.A. Curr, got the first prize in black and white photography. "Clown in Store Window," by Paul Schearer, got the first prize in color photography. A second prize in color photography was given to "Silk Stream," by Sam Armstrong. The judge's favorites are "Grave Yard," by Hellen Kollonay, "Out of Business," by M. Philpott, and "Mauthausen Concentration Camp," by Sonja Wassermann. There are four honorable mentions: "Man on the Old Silk Road," by Nancy Murphy, "Empty House," by Fred Thoonen, "Cat at Rockwood Academy," by Una O'Callaghan, and "Lindsay Township Architecture," by Elaine Wassermann.

At the opening of the exhibition on February 26, Joy Thompson, from the Halton Hills Parks and Recreation Department, congratulated the award winners on behalf of the Town. The wife of the mayor, Ms. Geraldine Miller, who traditionally presents the awards at the opening of "Photoart," was, unfortunately, booked for another function that night.

What is photography? To most of us it is a way to record events in our lives. In every house today, one finds albums with photographs that record birthdays, weddings, picnics in the backyard, and trips to foreign countries.



Ideas and The Arts
by John Sommer

Beside these mundane uses, the camera is also an instrument for art making. The great photographs of the last 150 years have left us a legacy of unforgettable images that have become icons of our collective consciousness.

To make art with a camera requires the same amount of sensibility and daring that is needed to make art with a pencil or a brush or a chisel. Since only a few of us have what it takes to make art of any kind, our attempts at art making will be mostly failures. But every attempt might bring us closer to an understanding of art's mystery. For that reason alone, the amateur needs to be told to try again and again, and to measure himself against the achievements of the greatest of mankind, with a humble heart.

How well is this year's crop of photographs standing up to the "Photoart" exhibitions of former years? Peter Philpott, judging by his three entries, has become a reliable photographer, with his own point of view. Nancy Murphy has four entries that are up to her usual high standard. Bruce Andrews, with five entries, is, quite likely, the most interesting photographer in the show.

But I personally miss the kind of artist, who, in the past, turned "Photoart" into a special event.

I am thinking of Ted Brown, Paul Savoie, Peter Delroy, Elise Mosher, David Bianchi, Graham Tyler, and Barbara Stephens, to name a few. Maybe this impression comes from the helter-

skelter way the exhibition has been hung.

Even amateurs deserve that their entries should hang together, if they have several, and a lot of indifferent photographs, in some spots, drown a good one. The exhibition is difficult to take in, because of these faults. And yet, if you take your time and search long enough you will be rewarded. Mona Knoessel has several works in the show that I liked. "Birds in a Cage," for instance, and the remarkable "Picnic."

Kathy Toth has some good entries, and so have Fred Thoonen and Elaine Wassermann.

Other entries I liked came from Gretchen Hamilton Day, Andrea MacCallum, Sandra Timleck and Bruce Cameron. Myles Gilson's entry is engagingly cheeky. There is a charming backview of two little, nude bathers, that sticks in my mind. I picked my way through the show and I had, on the whole, a good time with it.

One more remark: Why so few black and white photographs? The novice photographer should start with black and white, just as the painter has to master drawing before he is ready to take on the world of color.



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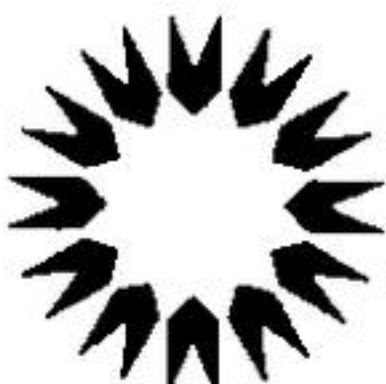
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