

Boston Globe

At the Griffin, a juried show and photographs that perform

By [Mark Feeney](#) GLOBE STAFF JULY 12, 2017

WINCHESTER — Successful juried shows afford two particular pleasures. The obvious one is getting to look at good pictures. That's easy to do at the "23rd Griffin Museum Juried Exhibition," since there are lots of them. The other is connecting dots — which, of course, the photographers had no idea would be there to connect when they were making their pictures. It's interactive art at its most basic.

This year's show has a subtitle, "Ed Friedman Legacy." An Arlington-based photographer and teacher, Friedman died last July. The title pays tribute to him, as does the inclusion of a half dozen of his photographs.

The juror is Hamidah Glasgow, of the Center for Fine Art Photography, in Fort Collins, Colo. She's included work from 55 photographers. They're as happily varied as the medium they represent. How varied? There are even two tintypes, one each from Michelle Rogers Pritzl and Frank Hamrick.

Most of the images are in color. Tema Stauffer's understated use of it, in "Fishing Shacks, Hudson, New York," is especially impressive, underscoring the sense of stillness in the scene. They're cousin to Catherine Opie's icehouses. That is high praise.

Conversely, Karen Sparacio's "Jump Rope" is the opposite of stillness — and the ripe, luscious color in Preston Gannaway's "Watermelons" is about as understated as seed spitting.

Slightly fewer than half the pictures are examples of straight photography. Does David Weinberg's ravishingly simple "613 Pomegranate Seeds," which consists of said items arrayed on a sheet of graph paper, count as a straight photograph (which it is), conceptual art (ditto), or why even bother to ask (yes)?

A fairish number feature mixed media and photographs within photographs, such as Kev Filmore's not-so-hot-fun-in-the-summertime "Dads Ice" and Richard Kent's nod to infinite regress, "New Holland & Franklin, 8X, Lancaster, PA."

Several incorporate text. Some of the incorporation occurs in passing. Charles Rozier's "Untitled" shows a particularly intent doer of the New York Times crossword puzzle, while Hannah Bates, bless her, includes a copy of the Saturday edition of the Globe in "The Kitchen."

Others make text integral. Jerry Takigawa's "Possession of Navigational Charts of Monterey Bay" (the show's best title) layers letters, maps, a vintage photograph, and

visual planes to echo the layerings of memory. The handsomeness of Lisa Cohen's "Passport Seas" in strictly visual terms, with its blending of seascape and travel document, is what catches the eye. What then stays with the viewer is the larger, darker resonance the image inevitably has during this nativist moment throughout the developed world.

Rocio De Alba writes of her "Honor Thy Mother" series, "I produce these satirical and humorous self-portraits to explore the 'modern family' concept." There are 10 images in the show. In a culture where [Cindy Sherman](#) has been a force for nearly 40 years, it's hard to get excited over performative self-portraits in which a photographer assumes various guises. That said, "The Fisher Man's Wife, Mother of Three, 2015" is a kick, with its shades of pink and green and the way the shape of the cucumber slices rhymes with that of the curlers. Hey, "cucumbers" and "curlers" rhyme alphabetically, too.

Gary Beeber spent three years producing shows at a New York burlesque theater. "Personalities" consists of 14 portraits of the performers. The subjects are cheerful and showy. Performers are always alert to the audience, which in this case is Beeber. If they were any more aware of the camera they'd be inside it. White frames and an absence of mattes emphasize the sense of performance.

What's most interesting about these portraits is how relatively everyday they feel. True, these aren't people you're likely to bump into at CVS, or at least not when they're in costume. But they're less outcasts than outriders. These images are more about exaggeration than transgression. Social mores are so much less rigid than when Diane Arbus (the inevitable comparison) was taking her pictures. These people live in a post-Arbus world. So do the rest of us.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/art/2017/07/11/griffin-juried-show-and-photographs-that-perform/jAIWtZFeFOiMESUxsr4IEJ/story.html>