

Serendipitous Connections opens at the Art Gallery of Bancroft



By Chris Drost

What happens when a group of inspired and talented local photographers come together? The results are on view for everyone to enjoy in a new show called Serendipitous Connections at the Art Gallery of Bancroft. The AGB is grateful to show sponsor, Camp Ponacka.

The photography group, known as f23, is a play on the photographic term for lens opening (f-stop), combined with the address where they met for several years, 23 Bridge Street. According to the artists' statement, 'we came together looking for mutual inspiration and critique, but also to learn more about the history, aesthetics, ethics, and techniques of photography. The make-up of the group has changed over the years, but there are rarely more than ten of us. We usually share our photos in print form at our bi-weekly meetings.'

Current members of the f23 group who have work included in the show are Clive Baugh, Michael Dowdall, Harold Eastman, Doreen Tumia, Ernst Grell, Bentley Jarvis, Lynn Singer and Eric Weiner. A video collage and soundscape by Bentley Jarvis is also part of the exhibition.

'We've focused on the serendipitous connections that can arise when we juxtapose our work side-by-side: surprising points of contact in composition, shape, colour and concept. Whenever and however they occur, we also see these connections as symbolic of the bonds of friendship and support we're building as a community of artists,' says the artists' statement.

Each of the artists has a different inspiration and technique for their work.

'My photographic work is prompted by both an artistic and a documentary impulse. I strive to create interesting images, with an eye for composition and a command of technique: but in my choice of thematic material, whether family and friends, landscapes, travel pictures, or images of birds and insects captured in their natural habitat ' I want to keep a photographic record of the things that matter the most to me,' explains Baugh.

'I fell as though I've always been drawn to shapes, details and patterns in the world around us. Photography is one of the ways that I try to share that vision with others,' says Michael Dowdall.

'My aim with photographs is usually to suggest the presence of a story, often whimsical or surreal. I hope to elicit responses like,

?What is going on here?? or ?What happens next?? or ?Wow that's strange,? says Eastman.

Fumia on the other hand, explains ?my eye is often captured by moments of visual pleasure and playfulness. Emerging as a hobbyist photographer, this art form expands my field of vision in ways that enhance how I experience my world through changing seasons, community events, and serendipity.?

?I have come to understand the power of the photograph and appreciate the influence it holds in our everyday lives. I am intrigued by the work of those accomplished photographers who have mastered the art of revealing the extraordinary from within the ordinary. My journey to unearth those images challenges me to see beyond what lies before me,? says Grell.

Artist, Bentley Jarvis has created a video for the show that makes connections among seven photographs, one from each of the seven other members of f23. These photographs are each very different in style, content and technique and are used as the start and end points of computer generated animation sequences. ?I am attempting to establish a strong relationship between sound and image by creating both the music and computer animation for this project. I look forward very much to future collaborations with the members of the group,? explains Jarvis.

?Through my photography I seek to draw the viewer into the fascinating world of what is all around us. I invite them to slow down, put their devices away (even for a few minutes) and see a little of what I see,? says Singer.

Weiner explains that his images were shot this year on his property after the first real snow. ?I call the series, ?The Calligraphy of Snow.? The snowfall buried most of the landscape but what was left appeared to me as elegant as eastern calligraphy or Zen watercolours. The images lent themselves to the rather unusual formats used. I also found some of the images evoked (to me), line drawings and abstract painting,? says Weiner in explaining his work.

The artists ask visitors to the exhibition to consider ?What visual connections do you see in the show??

There is still plenty of time to get out to consider those connections and to enjoy the show.

The show runs through Feb. 25. The AGB is currently open Thursday ? Saturday from 10 a.m. ? 4 p.m.