

Simply Photography 21 – Juror Statement

One of my most challenging jobs as a professional artist is judging the merit of another artist's work. I take my role as a juror seriously and do my best to provide fair and unbiased responses to each artist's work.

I want to thank all of the photographers who submitted works for this exhibition.

This opportunity to open this exhibition allows us to share it with everyone who can visit. It also can highlight the importance of art through times of isolation and uncertainty. Art can heal, open our eyes, sooth, and bring new insights to all who view it. It truly does remind us that we should make every effort to support our local artists and arts organizations as much as possible so that they will continue to be there to feed our souls in the future.

About the show

It's been an honor and a privilege to review a remarkably wide range of photographs and to then get to know the artists, at least a bit, through viewing the works. An overwhelming number of the submissions demonstrated a pursuit for excellence and were of very high quality and professionalism which made the process most difficult but also extraordinarily rewarding. As always, only so many objects can be chosen. I want to remind those artists who were not included in this exhibition that their work is also celebrated.

While there are awards to be given, I want to make certain each artist featured in the exhibition knows how much their individual work contributes to a substantial show filled with insights, challenges and inspiration.

Awards

First place goes to Erlene Hendrix for her composite photograph, *Whether Go My Hopes and Dreams?* It seems to combine the real and unreal to create a new window into our dreams but also stays rooted in the real world we each experience differently. I get a sense of the work of photographer Jerry Uelsmann but also the poems of Emily Dickenson.

Second place goes to Andrew Hersey for his photograph entitled, *The Best of My Tactile Dreams*. This piece is rooted in the fine tradition of the figure in the landscape. There is a sensuality when the figure and nature combine. The work plays the notion of time and memory within a technically masterful print.

Third Place goes to Sue Maida for *Resting Tulips*. The altered digital process creates a wonderful sense of timelessness with an elegant composition recalling paintings by the Impressionists. The off center line between dark and light also contributes to it being a still-life that is far from still as our eyes roam around the image.

Honorable Mention. I would also like to award an honorable mention to Anita Storino for *Magic 3*. The silhouette image of birds in tree branches over a blue background covered with water droplets is of time and place but altered to represent what the photographer truly sees and wants to share with us.

Jeffrey Allison

Jeffrey Allison is the Paul Mellon Collection educator at VMFA and a professional photographer. He holds a BA in photography and film from Virginia Intermont College and an MFA in photography from VCU.