

Pompton gallery shows works by artists with contrasting approaches

Overlapping photography shows featured at the Pondhole Gallery and Custom Frameworks in Pompton Lakes display two photographers and dozens of styles.

Richard Coda, whose exhibit of black and white photographs closed Wednesday, is very much in the pictorial tradition. On the other hand, George Peirce, whose show continues through June 14, presents something of a photographic smorgasbord.

Coda enjoys the use of different aspects of nature in the black and white pictorial tradition, and is quite obviously influenced by what you could call the "masters" of photography. With "Pigeon #2," from Ellis Island, you see that he isolates the detail in the pigeon's feathers—the small downy ones and the larger broad ones—much as one might expect to find in Minor White or Edward Weston.

Similarly, "Pinnacles National Monument #3" shows he has that Ansel Adams influence, for want of a better term. The wavy line of smooth rock outcroppings is balanced against a dark gray, almost black sky, the fluffy silhouette of a scraggly pine tree at the left side of the shot.

The feel for random design is evident in "Foundation," a work shot in Paterson, in which he depicts the brick base of a building covered at various points in layers of paint and plaster. These layers have, at various points in time, been stripped away, leaving the building with a varied pattern both of brick and a mottled tone of blacks and white.

"Garage Doors" is interesting in that you have the rough symmetry of what appear to be handmade wooden garage doors, with many vertical lines on a corrugated metal building. At right, a window is cut into the structure, but in a most unusual fashion. The 11-sided portal can best be described as the shape one sees when a square is superimposed on a triangle. The relatively even lines of the construction are at humorous odds with the ragged design of the window.

"Rocks #6," shot in the photographic shrine of Point Lobos, Calif., shows the smooth details of worn rocks. As pretty as this spot is, you have to wonder what many photographers would do if cameras and film were banned from this section of the Pacific coast.

Similarly, "Big Sur Coast" shows the white-capped waves crashing against the sea-worn California coast. It would be amusing, some time, if one of these images (not Coda's, but the genre specifically) showed another photographer or an empty film box. It's amazing they don't show up in the shots.

A diptych called "Tideline" shows the view up and down the Big Sur coast, with the photographer's perspective from the top of the cliffs. To the right you see rock outcroppings curling into the surf, and to the left you see more rock formations heading up the coast, with the two photographs combining to show the curve of the coastline.

"Clouds #1" shows the puffy moisture formations rising ominously into a dark sky over Pompton Lakes. Tones of light and dark grays in the clouds make them appear something less than benign.

While one exhibitor is fairly certain about what direction his photography is heading, the other seems to be trying any number of different things.

George Peirce really appears to enjoy dabbling in a hit of everything, starting with a selection of Platinum-Palladium prints, in which he presents the nude figure of a woman in a variety of settings.

One, depicting a stairwell in which the woman looks quite confined, is shot from above with her arms extending back toward the camera. Next to that photograph, another one using the same model, stairwell and perspective has the woman curled up in a fetal position, creating a feeling of great loneliness. His "Sun Dial" series also features the woman at various positions on a patio, playing off the circular stonework in the middle of the image.



George Peirce's image of a chair and pot of daisies indicates his talent for interior design photography

Another four photographs feature the nude, though much less prominently. In these, the woman is seen as a much smaller element of nature scenes, becoming part of the landscape with rocks, trees and bushes. The nude is almost mythical in depiction, a nymph seen against the background of forest.

Peirce also features a series of black and white street photographs. "Street Cart" depicts a man working on a New York street, a cigarette dangling from his lips. "Butchers, Poughkeepsie, N.Y." has the two aforementioned meat cutters in their white smocks caught on a break or after a long day at the icebox. "Times Square Couple" has two sweethearts embracing amid the hustle and bustle of a New York City subway station, oblivious to everything around them.

"Port Authority Boy," another of the street series, depicts a youngster, cap down over his face, a broomstick horse at his feet, firing a toy pistol off into the distance.

Architectural photography is represented in "Cyanamid, Wayne, N.J." a fairly standard building study that shows the clean, blocky lines of an office building, while "The Chapel, Hancock Point, Maine," is a similarly inspired piece of work. And, in the strict decorative mood, Peirce presents a wooden cane-bottom chair next to a jar of daisies.

As if all that wasn't enough, Peirce also displays a series of color prints, both motion studies and gauzy nudes, where the effect is quite dreamlike.

Peirce, a professional photographer who specializes in architecture and interior design, is trying to present too much at once. A show featuring a single body of work would be fine, but this seems a little too scattershot to effectively show his talent.

The Pondhole Gallery and Custom Frameworks is in the rear of Chris' Camera Center, 215 Wanaque Ave., Pompton Lakes. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Mondays through Wednesdays; 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays.

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MONDAY
Milburn Movie Makers and Video Club,
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West Milford Camera Club,
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TUESDAY
Cranford Camera Club, "Annual
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WEDNESDAY
Friends of the Fleetwood, "Rollfilm
Pioneer Hannibal Goodwin, by George E.

Helmeke," 7:30 p.m., The Fleetwood Museum of
Art and Photographica, 614 Greenbrook Rd.,
North Plainfield.

Plainfield Camera Club, "Annual
Banquet."

Sparta Camera Club, "Year-end
Photography Competition," 8 p.m., Community
Room, Sparta Library, Sparta.

THURSDAY
Montclair Camera Guild, "Annual
Dinner," 7p.m., Robin Hood Inn.

FRIDAY
Madison-Chatham Camera Club,
"Annual Banquet."