

BlackFlash

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Capture Photography Festival Highlights Part 1: Images That Speak

by Rhiannon Herbert

The first time the Vancouver Capture Photography Festival was held was in October of 2013. In a city known for its rich and dedicated photography culture, it was extremely well received. Two years later, it's back; a soon-to-be annual event, Capture aims to "increase knowledge and appreciation of photography and lens-based art by emphasizing the cultural importance of photography in all its forms," a mission succinctly described by festival executive director, Kim Spencer-Narin.

With most shows launching from early to mid-April and running into May, the variety of work featured by local and international artists in this year's exhibitions are as excellent as they are numerous.

While checking out the website <http://capturephotofest.com/> is a must for any serious snooping, some of the current festival exhibitions will be discussed here.

Images That Speak

April 3 – May 16

Michele Abeles
Shannon Ebner
Ryan Foerster
Susanne Kriemann
Steve McQueen
Arthur Ou
Ryan Peter
Eileen Quinlan
Matt Saunders
Stephen Waddell

Curated by Christopher Eamon

Co-produced by Capture Photography Festival and Presentation House Gallery

Satellite Gallery
560 Seymour Street–2nd Floor
Vancouver BC

Images That Speak is the Capture Photography Festival's feature exhibition. Curated by the New York based writer and curator Christopher Eamon, *Images That Speak* demonstrates Eamon's eye for photographic work that goes beyond "depictive realism" and that experiments with both process and representation within the medium.

Aside from this being the featured show of the entire festival, this exhibition is a pleasure to visit in person simply on account of the location – the Satellite Gallery is both a beautiful space, and a kind of ground-zero for the kind of experimental, investigative and thoughtfully rigorous programming within Vancouver's arts community, shared among the Charles H. Scott Gallery (ECUAD), the Morns and Helen Belkin Art Gallery (UBC), the Museum of Anthropology (UBC), and Presentation House Gallery.

Images That Speak features ten artists, balancing a line up of women and men practicing from local and international bases: Michele Abeles, Shannon Ebner, Ryan Foerster, Susanne Kriemann, Steve McQueen, Arthur Ou, Ryan Peter, Eileen Quinlan, Matt Saunders, and Stephen Waddell.

Among the locals is University of British Columbia faculty member Ryan Peter, who creatively engages with processes of photographic making as a means to produce his resulting works. Peter's otherwise untitled "autograms" are extremely interesting to consider and likely even more interesting to watch being made: combining darkroom processes to achieve tonalities along with drawing and painterly techniques, Peter renders highly textural and moody images in silver gelatin prints.

Another intriguing contribution was the work of Michele Abeles, based out of Brooklyn, who takes another "maker's" approach to photographic media by making use of both digital and analog rendering process and then cutting and collaging her images to beautiful compositional results. Eileen Quinlan is another to watch: her silver gelatin prints evoke the strange, alien landscapes revealed through the intense magnification of ordinary surfaces and fragments. As it happens, Quinlan has achieved this effect through somehow recording the loosened chemical layers from suspended negatives in their darkroom baths.

The main promotional image being used for Images That Speak is from a recent Academy Award winning filmmaker (among other creative handles) Steve McQueen. Accompanied by a textual account of the violence we then associate with the scarred, black shaved head in the image, Eamon posits that the appreciation of this piece lays in the veracity of the story in relation to the pictured subject. Perhaps a discomfoting and worthwhile moment to have while considering the embedded cycles of racial violence and its representations in our lives, in new media, in police reporting, and all other spheres of narrative.

Obviously, I've left a great deal out. This is the inevitability with such dense exhibitions and the festival at large, however, the full curatorial statement can be perused on the Capture website via the exhibition page at <http://capturephotofest.com/exhibitions/images-that-speak/>, or check out the Satellite page and space at <http://www.satellitegallery.ca/>.

Capture Photography Festival ran from April 2-29, 2015, in various venues around Vancouver.