

Curator's Statement

For EXPOSURE 25, I selected 12 artists from an applicant pool of nearly 100 remarkable submissions. This process is always a privilege: the chance to look closely at an artist's practice, to understand their vision, and to select three works from each participant so that viewers—and I—can see their ideas unfold in depth. Rather than follow a single unifying theme, I embraced the variety of work submitted, choosing projects that stood out for their conceptual strength, visual impact, and resonance.

Seeing multiple photographs from a series allows a theme to develop with nuance and complexity. Allison Plass, Quincey Spagnoletti, and Andrew Foster each use the camera reflexively, probing how identity evolves through learning, unlearning, and relearning. Plass's vivid images of her husband and sons in *Boys in the Garden* invite alternative visions of masculinity. Spagnoletti's carefully constructed scenes reveal the inherited weight of gender expectations. Foster's moody, introspective photographs of fatherhood open up into personal reflection onto the process of becoming.

I was also drawn to works where the photograph itself operates as just one element within a broader act of making—often becoming a visual metaphor for something larger. In his *Fragility of Hope Series*, Steven Crawford's frozen bouquets, delicate yet encased in ice, evoke fragility and instability but also persistence. Suzi Grossman reimagines weeds and other overlooked plants in *Naturalized* through cyanotype, laser cutting, and re-photography, blurring the line between documentation and abstraction. Suzanna Theodora White physically manipulates her landscapes—folding, tearing, and collaging—in her *New American Landscapes* project to echo the disruptions of climate change, making the image plane itself a site of environmental commentary.

Photography can also serve as a tool for connection—between objects, places, and histories. In Samantha VanDeman's *Remnants of What Was*, portraits and belongings from the abandoned Indiana State Sanatorium become paired visual narratives, partially recovering forgotten stories while opening up to new imaginings. Glen Scheffer's photographs, in a lighter register, capture surreal moments where the built and natural environments intersect, reminding us to see the familiar with fresh eyes.

Documentary photography projects here reveal their strength through accumulation and repetition. In *Life-Lines Throughout the United States*, Eric T. Kunsman turns our attention to the payphone—an outmoded yet once-essential communication tool—asking what is lost, and who is excluded, as they become defunct even while remaining in public space. Todd Danforth's series *Queer Inheritance* honors LGBTQ+ elders in dignified, joyful portraits, acknowledging those who have shaped and continue to shape the community's present and future.

Some artists fold autobiography into their work, creating images that are both documentary in nature and deeply personal. In *Expired Eggs*, Josie Rybczyk's photographs—bees in bottles, cracked eggs, a stitched forehead—chart her nonlinear journey through addiction and recovery,

allowing us to feel alongside her. Mari Saxon's collaborative portraits of the painter Sophie are equally affecting, exploring the fraughtness of self-image through the intimacy of artistic partnership, with Saxon behind the camera and Sophie before it.

Taken together, these works speak to universal themes—selfhood, memory, resilience, connection, and our relationship to the environment. They remind us that photography is uniquely capable of holding the complexity of human experience: both the fleeting and the enduring, the personal and the collective.

Serving as a PRC juror for this exhibition was an honor. I leave the process inspired by the depth and diversity of artistic thinking in this region, and grateful to all the artists who shared their work. My thanks to the PRC for the invitation, and to the photographers whose vision and generosity made this selection possible.

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