

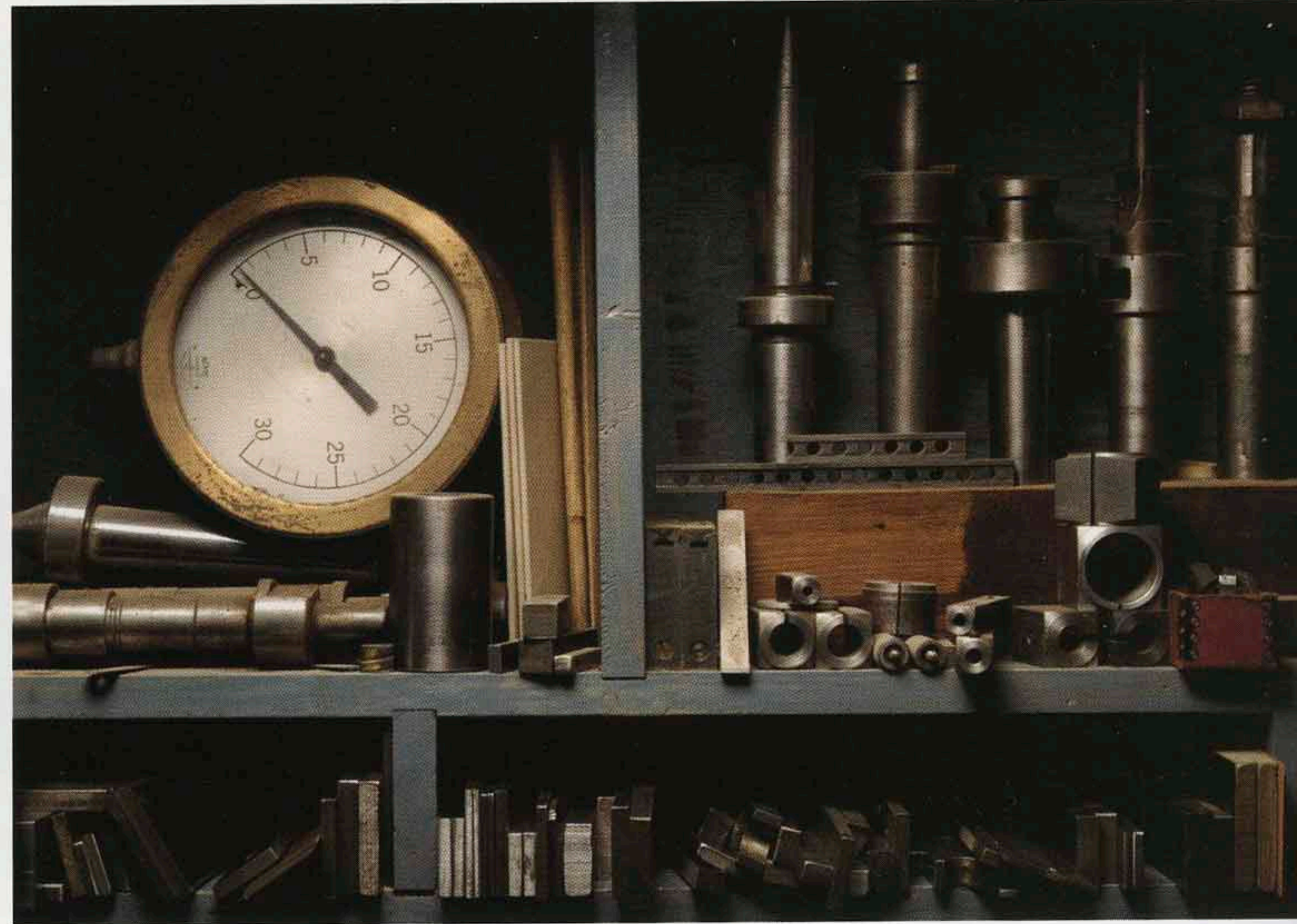
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SHAPING THE IMAGE: 28TH ANNUAL JURIED MEMBERSHIP EXHIBITION

by Hannah Frieser

Every year HCP proudly holds a call for entries for its Annual Juried Membership Exhibition. Juried by an internationally acclaimed specialist in the field, members' work is selected for exhibition in the HCP galleries. This year we were delighted to have Hannah Frieser, Director of Light Work (Syracuse, NY) as our juror. Of the more than a thousand submissions, Hannah selected 56 images which were exhibited in the main gallery at HCP July 9th to August 22nd, 2010. To learn more about the annual membership exhibition, see "Calls for Entry" at www.hcponline.org.



Life, with all its different levels of intensity, is ever-present around us. Yet while our daily existence includes a wealth of input through our senses—including sight—most people do not see the world as a string of extraordinary images. We may notice occasional moments that would make a good picture. We may even reach for our cell phone cameras to take a quick snap, but for the most part we move through our life trying to get to the next place we want to be. It is not our priority to maximize our visual experience or find its best interpretation through the lens of a camera.

Then there are some of us for whom even a stroll to get the morning paper represents a visual plethora, who cache away impressions, ideas for composition, colors, or memories of little moments for possible creative use later. The photographers among this group work ceaselessly when filled with an idea for a project, until their images express the full depth of what they had envisioned. So rather than capture their images, they cultivate ideas until they have matured into the perfect blend of concept, style, and camera work. They push for excellence and the culminating image.

The resulting images usually look and feel entirely different from casual photos. They amaze with layered depth, while greatly varying from boldly colorful to discretely monochromatic, energizing and active to soothing and still. They may imply a narrative, or not; show an invented scene or a documentary one; be heart-warming or distantly cool. But they will move and beckon to be noticed.

For example, **BRYAN SCHUTMAAT's** timeless photographs of the Great Plains and other regions distill moments from the land to communicate the artist's intent. The images stand on their own, making additional information such as an artist statement or gallery text unnecessary. His striking images in the *Heartland* series describe a great expanse of land that has been shaped to accommodate the needs of its people and their rural life style. By combining the landscapes consistently with at least traces of human presence, the focus shifts to the people not shown in the images. The images of topography narrate the land that serves its people, but they more importantly become portraits of the people that exist there because of their relationship to the land.

Whereas Schutmaat uses the landscape to tell the story of its residents,



above, left:
Bryan Schutmaat (Houston, TX)
Food Sign, 2008
From the series *Heartland*
Chromogenic print
Edition 1/15
28 x 36 inches
Courtesy of the artist



above, right:
Bryan Schutmaat (Houston, TX)
Baptist Church, 2008
From the series *Heartland*
Chromogenic print
Edition 1/15
28 x 36 inches
Courtesy of the artist

opposite, left:
Joseph O. Holmes (Brooklyn, NY)
Hugo (Telephone), 2009
From the series *Custom Machinery*
Archival inkjet print
Edition 1/12
16 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the artist and
Jen Bekman Gallery (New York, NY)



opposite, right:
Joseph O. Holmes (Brooklyn, NY)
Headstock, Bridgeport, 2009
From the series *Custom Machinery*
Archival inkjet print
Edition 1/12
16 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the artist and
Jen Bekman Gallery (New York, NY)



above, left:
Danielle C. Head (Bloomington, IN)
Paisley, 2009
Archival inkjet print
Edition 2/20
17 x 11 inches
Courtesy of the artist

above, right:
Danielle C. Head (Bloomington, IN)
Gold, 2009
Archival inkjet print
Edition 2/20
17 x 11 inches
Courtesy of the artist

JOSEPH HOLMES uses people to tell the story of a vanishing trade. His starkly lit images in the *Custom Machinery* series depict men in small New York City repair or machine shops, who sit idly waiting. They have seen time pass them by, as a shift to mass production has created a world that throws away and replaces generic products instead of repairing and maintaining customized items. The juxtaposition with photographs of the machines only emphasizes the way machines and their keepers have changed in the face of technology. The photographs are weighed down by a saddening stillness that recalls a time when these tools would have been in constant use – all within the lifetime of these men.

DANIELLE HEAD casts a sympathetic eye on sleazy men of dubious backgrounds. These fictitious characters, styled as inhabitants of the forties to mid-seventies eras, typically straddle the sidelines of pulp novels and B movies. The photographer pulls them uncomfortably into the limelight by taking on their personas in these dark-humored self-portraits. The resulting images are as funny as they are poignant and memorable. Referring to her images as “Mantasies,” the photographs offer Head the opportunity to step outside of her own skin. “I wouldn’t necessarily

want to actually be some of these people, yet I find myself wondering what it would be like to step into that identity,” Head muses in her artist statement. She breathes life into roughly sketched characters, thereby making them real and herself a little less so.

The Houston Center of Photography is fortunate to have an abundance of excellent photographers among its members, who are currently making their mark on the medium and who understand what it means to shape an image. A group exhibition of their work sparkles with talent from Texas and beyond. The styles and formats run the gamut, but the quality of the work never waivers. 