

# EXPOSURE REVIEW 2018

Posted on 2018-02-18 2019-12-17 by spd\_wp\_admin

Dear Reader,

Just over 2 weeks ago I decided to participate in the Exposure Review. This is an event, part of the Exposure Festival, where a minimum of 4 people from the photography community spend 20 minutes each in one on one conversations with photographers. Yesterday was an interesting day. I had 5 conversations with reviewers and spoke with a number of participants.

Before I go further it may be helpful to share with you the names of the reviewers I met, and the portfolio I presented. Each photo has 2 numbers. The first is the order in which it was presented. The second is the number of stars on the Sean scale. Photos can have a maximum of 5 stars, and as I have written before a 5 is rare. The one photo without a score is the one that precipitated my signing up. Number 13 is and was a problem for me. On one hand I find it captivating. On the other hand, I feared it was too banal, and that I had stripped so much from the image I was on the verge of Malevich's "White on White" (1918).

My general take these days on art in general, and photography in particular is that if the supporting essay makes more sense than the piece (whatever that is), then the expression of the idea is the essay and not the piece. While were on this small digression, I also believe it is good to see the original, when possible, rather than the copy in book or article. Invariably, the scale of a piece is important.

Unlike many of the people I spoke with, I was not particularly interested in finding marketing opportunities. My objective was to get some thoughts on where I can take some of my visual ideas.

## **Reviewers (They all deserve better introductions than I am providing here)**

- Caroline Loewen – curator interested in cultural geography, memory, cultural and natural landscapes
- Costas Costoulas – co-founder of ResolvePhoto, photography advocate, gallery curator
- Greg Garla – commercial and fine art photography
- Su Ying Strang – artist, arts advocate, director of The New Gallery
- Natasha Chaykowski – writer, curator and art historian
- Thank you reviewers for your time and comments.

## **Portfolio Presented on my laptop as a Lightroom Slideshow**

- [2018-02-portfolio-1-](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-2 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-3 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-4 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-5 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-6 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-7 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-8 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-9 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-10 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-11-](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-12 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-13 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-14 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-15 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-16 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-17 -](#)
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- [2018-02-portfolio-19 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-20 -](#)
- [2018-02-portfolio-21-](#)

As in all conversations there is what was said, and what I took away. I can't remember the first. So, here are the headlines from what I took away.

## **People / Works To works to check**

- Andreas Gursky; "Rhine II "; 1999; last sold for approximately \$US 4.2 Million. Compare to photo 13 above. I had vaguely heard the name but did not know his work. 3 people suggested I have look at this piece in particular.
- Wanda Koop; Winnipeg painter new name to me
- David Hockney; I have enjoyed his work for years
- Edward Rucsha; painter; I have seen his text work (sometimes I get it sometimes I don't) before but did not know it was him. More investigation required. An initial check suggests that there is a point of reference from the 80's.
- Alfred Stieglitz; one of the pillars of photography. I know some his work. 2 people suggested I have a look at his series "Equivalents". This series is new to me.
- An ACAD student suggested Josef Hoflehner; some of his images are familiar. I didn't know it was him.

## **Strengths**

- Colour Pallete
- Composition
- Painterly
- Form
- Not everyone agreed with my 5's but that is at it should be.
- Technical Execution

## Things to Think About

- In an age of visual saturation, how do you engage the viewer for more than a 10second glance. I have some ideas that resonated with 2 reviewers. No, I cannot share those ideas yet.
- Are you making a nice photo, a photo to sell, or exploring an idea. There is nothing wrong with any of those possibilities. The key though, is to be clear on the objective. PS if you have seen my work, then you probably recognize that the first and third options are the most likely possibilities for me. The nice photo is a slippery slope, too cliché.
- Strip out everything but what is of interest. Explore subtlety, minimalism, whitespace, image flatness. This requires intent, because anything in the image becomes very present. While we're at it what about texture. Is it there, and do you or don't you want it there? I knew 5, 6, 9 were 4's, and now I can articulate why they didn't make the grade. There is either too much, not enough, or they're on the verge of the old Microsoft screen saver (oh horror).
- Explore what is disquieting (see 13 above).
- There were too many photos and too many ideas in the portfolio. Think about the subject, viewer, photographer triangle.
- What are cultural landscapes?
- What is the Dusseldorf school of photography?
- I am part of an historical continuum. I knew this but I am out of touch. It was nice to hear that my garden path is contemporary.

Cheers, Sean

## 2 Replies to “Exposure Review 2018”

### 1. **Keith** says:

2018-02-19 at 07:16 Edit

So many thoughts. So early in the morning. So little coffee yet. I will have to revisit this. Of the names you mentioned, Costas is the only one I've heard of. You might wish to blog about your further explorations of these names. Or not.

Firstly, I admire your courage in putting your work out there for pros to critique. I know this is how to get better, but still. It's tough. I know I'm not there yet. I suspect that even showing off my best photos, most would be dismissed with a vaguely patronizing “it's a nice photo, but,”

Secondly, I think I've seen most of these before, and was there when you captured some of them. I suspect that most people either pass over these photos almost instantly, or dive in and enjoy. I've thought a lot about engaging the viewer, finding or creating the elements of interest to catch their attention in the first place (punchy drama/bright colours/the exotic/boobs) and then draw them in to explore deeper.

Thirdly, I've been thinking about what makes a good photo, and the origins of human consciousness. It comes to the spark of creativity in all of us. Is a creative photo automatically a good one? Is a photo that follows all the rules but was created by a computer algorithm a good photo? (I'm just assuming that if a computer can compose music, and some can, that a computer could compose a photo.) If a bunch of art pros agree that a photo is “good art”, does that mean it merely lines up with their cultural prejudices, or is there something deeper? I've been deliberately looking at the Exposure festival to find photos I don't like, and yet, there they are up on the wall in a major festival, so a bunch of people agreed they were good. My thinking is that if I learn what makes them good, I might learn to broaden my taste, or learn to manipulate images that I work with in order to create good (or better) photos, even if I might not like them as much as others.

Fourth, that's a lot of writing on someone else's blog before much coffee. Some of that is a springboard to my own blog writing. Hmmm.

1. **spd\_wp\_admin** says:

2018-02-19at 08:07 Edit

As always,thank you for visiting and commenting. I was particularly impressed today. So many words, so little coffee.

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