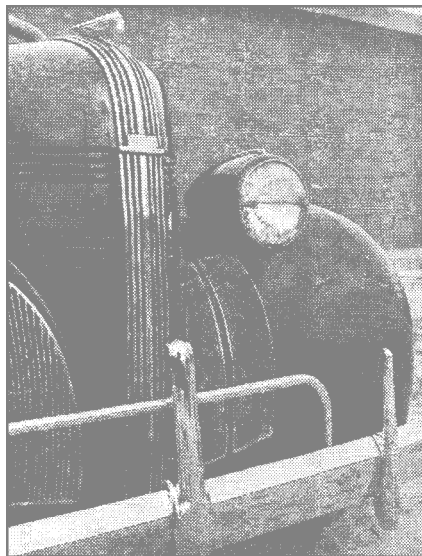


Camera group makes promising debut with exhibition at Williams Arts Center



The front of a restored 1939 Pontiac is the subject and inspiration for this Fred DeWitt photograph displayed in Rutherford.

Just nine months ago the Camera Arts Group was an idea in search of reality. Some serious photographers wanted to get together with like-minded souls to create a small support group away from the mainstream of camera clubs.

Last month, the group's five members presented their first show in the Williams Arts Center in Rutherford. It was a good first effort that helped to highlight the stylistic differences of its members:

Richard M. Coda, Fred DeWitt, George Ingham, Stephen Kaplan and Fred Stettner.

Good contrast and sharpness help highlight the details in DeWitt's "Mayan Indian Stone Art." The work uses the crevices in between the stone blockwork to demonstrate a geometric pattern, while not distracting from the design featuring the upper half of an Indian figure.

"Dunes, Long Beach Island, N.J.," another DeWitt work, is rendered as a dreamscape, with a grainy softness throughout the image. One hardly notices that the photograph was shot in bright, direct sunlight, so skillful is the treatment.

DeWitt's "Pontiac-1939," observes the classic lines of the grill on the fine old car. The nose of the hood starts out with the bumper at the bottom of the shot and arches upward to the stylized Indian hood ornament in the upper left hand corner of the image. The chromework is offset by a dark area that includes the car's front left fender and an oval headlamp.

Water seems to be cascading down the middle of a forest in Kaplan's "Eagle Falls." Apparently shot with a telephoto lens and at a slightly long exposure, the water makes a dramatic entrance, slicing through a rocky, tree-covered mountainside.

"Lake Agnes," another Kaplan effort, is a serene vista, with craggy, snow-dotted mountains looking down on a mildly rippling lake. The upper right corner of the shot is dominated by a black evergreen tree, sticking precariously into the sky from a hillside. As if in comparison, a weathered white tree trunk, devoid of bark, lies half-submerged in the shallows at the bottom of the shot.

Kaplan's "Brant Point" is a combination of human and natural elements, with a rigid-looking walkway cutting across beachfront dunes from the left to a stubby lighthouse in the middle of the shot. Beach grasses wave in the breeze under a cloudless sky, while a section of snow fence seems to be mimicking their motions, its slats at a pronounced tilt to the right.

"Cane," also a Kaplan work, luxuriates in the way the dried reeds hanging ready for chair-making capture the light against a darker background.

Ingham's "Pemaquid Reflected" also shows that sort of interaction, but from a unique perspective. Weather-worn streaks of rocks surround an irregularly shaped puddle. Reflected in the water is a lighthouse, slightly distorted by small ripples.

Ingham's ominously monolithic "Stone Steeple" has stark geometric lines angling skyward away from the viewer, and an interesting mosaic pattern is formed by the stonework. The building depicted seems imposing and forboding, like a priest about to scold an altar boy.

"Westie" is a simple Ingham portrait of one of man's best friends. A dog, inquisitive dark eyes peering out from a Phil Donahue-ish head of white hair is presented with all the dignity of a bank president.

Coda's "Window, Pompton Lakes, N.J." follows the course of some water droplets along a frosted piece of glass. Coda's observations of this phenomenon are interesting, with the streaks heading inexorably downward, taking occasional detours but inevitably completing their gravity-mandated trip. We see four of the trails completed down the vertical shot, while two water droplets are seen just finishing their trip down the pane.

The brilliant white tree trunks in Coda's "White Birches" cut downward through the shot like lightning bolts in a thunderstorm. The darkness of the surrounding forest further serves to help define them.



Stephen Kaplan's 'Cane' shows how dried reeds can catch the light in a show by the Camera Arts Group

"Rocks #6, Point Lobos, Calif." has a sensual smoothness about it, with Coda making the water-worn rock patterns look like dark smoke billowing from afire, or the surface of a kettle brought to a furious boil.

Stettner presented a full house of slickly executed color pieces for his contribution to the show. They were the only color works in it.

"Eggs" has six of the aforementioned objects arranged in the familiar cardboard carton. The container angles diagonally from upper right to lower left, with three in the left hand row and three in the right. One egg is broken open to reveal a yellow yolk, with the top of the shell resting in the space next to it.

While still in the kitchen, we stop at the sink for a view of four colorful mugs surrounded in a sea of delicate soap bubbles in "Suds and Dishes." The mugs—brown, green, yellow and orange—are perfectly yet casually arranged. The lighting umbrella is perfectly caught among the bubbles, which adds sparkle to go with the image's colors.

"Aces and Kings" is an Alice's Wonderland of sorts, with four playing cards visible as they are normally in the left side of the shot. Rippling reflective material comes down from the upper right to the middle left of the shot, multiplying the cards in the foreground and distorting them. Another ace and king placed on the panels further help to meld reality and illusion.

The only question raised by this show is "Where to go from here?" It will be interesting to see how their association affects the works of these five photographers. The center, which cut back its first exhibit by a week on short notice, should give these folks another show two years down the line, to see how, if any, their work has changed.

CAMERA CLUBS

TUESDAY

Tri-County Camera Club, "Competitions-Nature and Assigned Subject, Triangles," 8 p.m., Nutley Historical Museum, 65 Church St., Nutley.

WEDNESDAY

Clifton Camera Club, "Competition," 7:15 p.m., Clifton Main Public Library, Piaget Avenue, Clifton.

THURSDAY

Vailsburg Camera Club of Springfield, "50th Anniversary Open House," Sarah Bailey Civic Center, Church Mall, Springfield.

FRIDAY

Morris Photocolor Club, "Kenya," by Catherine and Jean Roxburgh," 8 p.m., Second Floor Meeting Room, Morris Township Police Headquarters, Woodland Avenue and Dwyer Lane, Morristown.