



SEPTEMBER, 2011

Featured Artists:

Amber Reumann Engfer

Craig Melville

Mayr McLean

Rhen August Benson

* *

Gallery Offerings:

Acrylics

Mixed Media

Oils

Photography

Photomontage

Watercolors

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www.riverfrontartgallery.com

(707) 775-4278

THE GALLERY'S NEW SHOW

Show dates: September 14 - November 6

Show Reception: Saturday, September 17, 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Art Walk Reception: Saturday, September 10, 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

FOUR PHOTOGRAPHERS AS FEATURED ARTISTS

Riverfront Art Gallery has two spaces designated for Featured Artists at each two-month show. On some occasions, two artists will share a featured space. When artists share a space, both must address the same theme. This requirement has led to several interesting combinations of works.

In the Early Fall Show, beginning September 14, the two Featured Artist spaces will be shared by a quartet of photographers, all recent members of the gallery.

Under the theme, *Two Photographic Views*, Amber Reumann Engfer and Craig Melville will tender to the viewer nearly opposite perspectives--with neither presenting the usual color landscape. Craig specializes in black and white photography, not all that uncommon, but his presentation in square and panoramic formats does lend an air of the less-usual to his works.

Amber creates one-of-a-kind prints, often without the aid of a camera, using photographic paper, special solutions, and the sun. In contrast to landscape photography, Amber looks closely at nature's details, studying, for example, leaves and roots.

Mayr McLean and Rhen August Benson are a photographic team living in the West Country and basing their photographic works on the moods and seasons the landscape presents to them as they go about Sonoma County. Under the theme, "Soft Focus," each one offers a collection of images on subjects they see near home on a regular basis, which proves the oft-made suggestion for photographers: "Look in your own backyard. You will find a world of photographic subjects there."

The following pages highlight the works of these four photographers.

IN CLOVERDALE IN SEPTEMBER

Riverfront artists Jerrie Jerné, Stephanie Hamilton-Oravetz, Frank Oravitz, and Cathy Thomas are exhibiting at Towers Gallery as well as at the Cloverdale Performing Arts Center during their 'Wait Until Dark' performances in September.

AMBER REUMANN ENGFER

Interpreting the theme: "Two Photographic Views"

Amber Reumann Engfer's approach to rendering an intimate portrait of nature sidesteps the camera altogether. Her technique involves complicated processes which are challenging to control and easily ruined by slight miscalculation. They also yield results that cannot be predicted with accuracy.

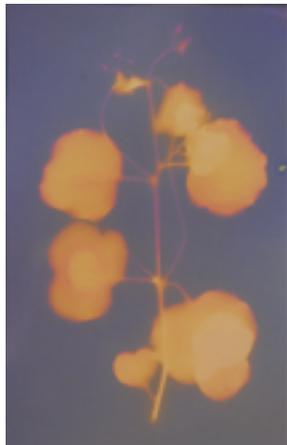
"All of that uncertainty makes it very exciting," Amber says. "I know what I want, but never know exactly what to expect. When an image is developing as I had hoped--or better than I had hoped--I feel a rush of anticipation that is very invigorating. It keeps me eager to experiment."

She continues, "I am focusing on objects found in nature, bits of plants, trees, roots gathered from around my home. I'm also planning on using fruit and vegetables. While I haven't explored that yet, I believe the transparency of something such as orange slices will work well."

Bamboo II, *Roots*, and *Eucalyptus* (below) have been created as lumen prints. To create a lumen print, Amber arranges the plant bits on unexposed black and white photographic paper. The plant

arrangement is then exposed in sunlight, the UV rays leaving an outline of the objects on the paper. Often the result is monochromatic, as in *Roots*, although different types and brands of paper and whether the finish is matte or glossy make for a potentially wide range of color tints, as in *Bamboo II*.

In cyanotype and Van Dyke prints, two kinds of iron solution, one producing a blue background, the other yielding brown, are painted onto watercolor paper and dried. Then Amber positions her subjects on the paper. On that photosensitive background, sunlight again does the image creation.



Lumen Prints: *Bamboo II*, *Roots*, *Eucalyptus*

Deceiving Creations

Collage on cyanotype and Van Dyke background



In an unusual piece among a collection of unusual pieces, Amber used both cyanotype and Van Dyke solutions to create the background for her collage, *Deceiving Creations*. In creating collages, Amber often adds bits from her own photographs (yes, created using a camera!). However, for this particular image, she has taken strips and cutouts from magazines to produce a mixed media piece.

Each image in her show is one-of-a-kind. Another *Eucalyptus* or *Bamboo* piece would turn out differently due to the humidity or the heat of the sun that day or myriad other variables. However, by scanning these pieces, Amber is able to create a file that can be reprinted. Whether in an original or print, Amber gives us her distinct photographic view.

www.amberreumannengfer.net

CRAIG MELVILLE

interpreting the theme: "Two Photographic Views"

Craig Melville's photographic view is one that lacks color. "Color gets in the way. It's distracting," he says, "and not essential to the impact of the image." Who could argue? Craig's work is stunning.

Craig also often rejects the standard rectangular format that cameras force the world into. Some subjects need less than that, in which case Craig may present them as squares of carefully selected, more contained subjects.

Some subjects are only beautifully rendered when allowed to expand into a width or height that suits their essential form. This expansive panoramic treatment is where Craig finds his own preferred form, whether capturing a fuller landscape or a defined bit of verdant bank along a flowing creek.

The panorama is the perfect presentation for Craig's Featured Artist show with its long, narrow subject. "This is a collection of photos I've taken of the Golden Gate Bridge over the last few years," Craig explains. "The bridge continues to be one of my favorite subjects, a globally-recognized landmark in my own back yard!"

Referring to images such as *Horseshoe Bay* (below), Craig continues, "The equally-famous fog makes it difficult to photograph the bridge at times, but, if you wait long enough, that ever-changing fog may work to your advantage and create an amazing photo." *Horseshoe Bay* is, in fact, one of Craig's personal favorites. "The fog partially covering the bridge is a perfect representation of what I think of when I think of the Golden Gate Bridge."



Baker Beach



Vista Point

In his nighttime shots of the bridge, Craig often manages to get a starburst of light from street lamps all across the bridge, making the image twinkle as if star-studded.

Craig has mastered the technique of taking multiple shots to combine into panoramas. *Horseshoe Bay*, for example, required Craig to take a series of vertical shots lined up side by side. *Vista Point* required a series of horizontal shots, ultimately stacked on top of each other. For multiple shots to successfully match up, both the camera and the tripod must be exactly level. The images are then combined using a digital program designed for that purpose.

Craig states the photographic view for this featured show quite simply. "This show is meant to represent the beauty that is the Golden Gate Bridge."



www.cjmfineart.com

Horseshoe Bay

FEATURED ARTISTS: MARY MCLEAN & RHEN AUGUST BENSON

Interpreting the theme: “Soft Focus”

In describing their show, filled with soft moods and effects, Mayr McLean and Rhen August Benson explain their theme this way: “Soft focus is a way of looking at the world without effort. One can relax, allow the gaze to soften and open to a greater perspective. It is inclusive, not exclusive. It is the way we look at those we love.”

“When something particular catches the attention, it can be held like a moment’s jewel by the camera’s eye, honored, and then let go. Soft focus is the vision shared by each of these series of photographs, seen from two unique perspectives.”

In this featured show, Mayr and Rhen are not using “soft focus” as the usual technical photographic term, but more as a viewer’s sensitivity to the soft beauty of the natural world. In fact, each of them has “partnered” with nature in the creation of these images, using a particular effect provided by nature at that moment—fog and wind.

Mayr gives us her series *Trees in Fog*. The creation of the series was fortuitous, as Mayr explains. “One cold, grey afternoon, I was home alone. It was nearly twilight. I looked up from what I was doing, out the windows, to an old grove of oak and ferns that lies below the house. The fog had come in amongst them, creating a Realm of Mystery. I grabbed the camera, entered their world, and photographed this series in one, spontaneous act of awe.”



Trees in Fog #9

For Rhen, the catalyst for his *Delphinium* series was the wind. He explains, “The *Delphinium* series was shot late on a windy afternoon. The dance of movement and light created an effect not unlike a blue neon light turning on and off, as the delphinium buds and blossoms swayed in and out of the light, in and out of focus.”



Delphinium #9, Delphinium #3, Trees in Fog #7

The ongoing emphasis of this photography duo is the environment they live in. As Rhen has said, “Our photographs are an attempt to render each scene as we have experienced it.” Thus Mayr and Rhen, one inspired by fog, the other by wind, have brought their cameras to bear on their own “soft focus” view of Sonoma County.