



Musical Guru by Lawrence Spencer

SURFACE TREATMENT

Photographic Art Show

Where: UVAL, Kika de la Garza Art Center, 921 E. 12th Street, Mission.

When: Through March 4, 2017

Hours: 10am to 6pm Tuesday to Thursday; 10am-2pm Friday; 2-6pm Saturday.

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What We See

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

An enjoyable viewing experience awaits literal-minded art lovers.

Photographic experiences have dominated the early 2017 art season, and it isn't over yet. The Upper Valley Art league's annual *Photographic Art Show* is on display at the Kika de la Garza Fine Arts Center, and as usual, a variety of subjects and types of photos are presented, but less variety of technique. It is an exhibit that emphasizes more of *what* we see, rather than *how* we might see it. Photographs include fine art, documentary, portrait, studio, and nature.

Portraiture was barely evident, but Mujtaba H. Naqvi made up for the scarcity with his sharp focused image, "Fisher." As if on cue, Cassandra Bazhaw zoomed in on the prows of two docked fishing boats to document her "Dream Catchers". There are excellent wildlife photographs that capture

some amazing bird watching moments. Other photographers chose more stationary subjects, while others pique a viewer's curiosity as to possible narratives within an image. Color images overwhelm the few black & white entries, and while the UVAL membership usually stays within safe boundaries, a few surprises can be found. Oversized fine art studio photographs greet the viewer upon entering, and soon thereafter, Marilyn Carren's gelatin silver print, "Aunt Shirley of Yesterday", speaks of a nostalgia only partially remembered. Briana Vargas rejects the traditional camera completely with her "Untitled" scanography print - hands pressed against what appears to be cellophane compete for dominance with brilliant white shards of broken light. Linda Lewis's digital print, "Possibility No.10", goes to a surprisingly dark place; cows stand in a bluebonnet field observing human arms and legs sticking out of an old suitcase. "It was all based on a series called 'Impossibilities'," explained Lewis. "it's about unexpected things that could possibly happen to you in to your lifetime; maybe you could find yourself by the side of a road, stuck in a suitcase. I liked the fact that the suitcase was made of leather and the cows were there looking at the suitcase."

Lawrence Spencer provides a lighter note with his documentary photograph, "Musical Guru". A colorful turban pops against the gray tones of monochromatic architecture. "It was taken in Jaipur, India," said Spencer. "He was sitting on the steps playing his sitar; he sat there while I took his picture, and as I gave him some money for posing, he reached behind his back and pulled out CD, 'Would you like to buy my CD?', he asked."

Carren, Photography Lecturer at UTRGV, who has been working with a local group of UVAL members to help them hone their photo-taking skills, coordinated this year's exhibit. "We have a group meeting once a month and we discuss things," she said. "Sometimes we have a class if we want to learn a certain topic, or technique. Usually, because many of our photographers are Winter Texans, they work in the late winter, and then leave for summer break. Because of the heat, sometimes everyone stops." This year the group tried something a little different and took the classes all through summer, which hadn't been done before. The result seems to have been beneficial; there is a more polished feeling to the *Photographic Art Show* this time around.

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