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### Juror's Statement

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The task of choosing just fifty artworks from a selection of images so vast as those submitted to 12 12 Gallery's National Juried Exhibition is always a challenge. Oftentimes one is pressed to compare apples to oranges—documentary photographs to digital exercises; fashion shots to nature imagery. Thus, in the end, one is left with a group of powerful, but frequently unrelated photographs. A further challenge is the electronic submissions process—convenient and practical, for sure, but also deficient in providing the juror knowledge of important information such as output selection, print quality, and scale.

That being said, I did attempt to judge the artworks based on a set of loose criteria, including not only technical proficiency (composition, light, etc.), but also sound conceptual foundation (whether or not the work responds to or reflects cognizance of artistic predecessors, or whether it stakes claim to new and relevant issues in the sphere of contemporary art). A good deal of attractive and impressive landscape and floral imagery, for instance, was not chosen for the exhibition for this reason. There is such a strong tradition of this particular genre, it is, in my opinion, often a Sisyphean task to build upon that foundation in any sort of meaningful way.

The awards selected largely reflect my interest in fresh vision and technical experimentation. They also represent submissions that were consistent and uniformly strong across all five photographs. (Five clearly related artworks are of more interest to me than a smattering of images from different bodies of work.) Those artists chosen for awards generally submitted images from a single project, and all five images clearly were of merit.

I wish to extend many thanks to gallery director, Martin McFadden, who meticulously prepared materials for my easy review, and especially to all the artists who submitted work for the competition. I very much hope this show can serve as motivation and encouragement for all the artists who submitted their photographs to continue to produce imagery; and for them to persist thinking critically about—and most importantly to enjoy—the medium of photography, that which brings us all together at Gallery 12 12 in the first place!

