60 local photographers pose in each other’s lens

Thinking about portraits, usually means thinking about the sitter. But portraits reveal a lot about the photographer, too. That can be seen in Photographers X Photographers at Xavier University.

Helen Adams, known for her portraits of children and families, came up with the idea of “creating a portrait chain” of sorts with other photographers.”

“I thought it could be a great way to have your portrait done, reach out to a photographer you have admired, and learn empathy for your subject,” she said.

Adams, with a committee of Mavis Greer, Samantha Greer, Ann Segal and Robert Fletcher, brainstormed to come up with approximately 100 photographers. About half came to a meeting in January or February; they polled names out of a hat to pick who they would photograph.

One thing that’s apparent: the minute you walk into the gallery to the diversity of talent in the area. There’s not a boring picture in the list.

As I look in the images, in a variety of photographic techniques, I found myself picking out people I’ve met – both from in front of and behind the camera.

I was particularly inspired by Milt Mittendorf as photographed by Cal Kowal. Kowal was for his fine-art photography and for the first time winner of Ohio Arts Council grants. Kowal posed Mittendorf, a 3-D digital commercial photographer, dressed in an “undertaker’s” black suit and bowler hat, standing in back of a casket preserving his hands as a child to show they are clean. A white light, casting on him and partially useless coats of red house paint, illuminates his hands. It’s a shot Kowal captured as Mittendorf describes as his “intuitive ability”...that enables me to see that magical extra something special.

Kowal also looks like a regular guy as photographed by Peggy Joseph, a commercial photographer who calls photography a “dream vacation.”

Then I found Mittendorf’s photo of “Ohio, Gone to Mixed Sculpture/Gazelle Riverfront Battery Park.” Gone is shown standing facing the camera – the view is, that’s pretty straight forward and hard to see his reflection in the sculpture’s fountain mirror.

And Cone, a true true person in connecting with people, photographed Kowal’s portraitist, Joseph, using a quirky technique of multiple exposures that are then “posed” together in Photoshop.

This photo brought me full circle as Adams really has created a “portrait chain.”

Bryan Weller and Dianne Rice photographed each other. In the 10-minute video, produced by Ann Segal on view in the gallery, Weller, who does candid event photography and informal portraits, explains how, although Rice’s face is partially hidden, her labors and legs lift the viewer in on the site.

But how did Weller convince the fully-dressed Rice to jump into a lake and to try to pull herself up on the dock?

And we Rice, his teacher at Antofnio College, specializing in digital imaging and multimedia and video production, getting “payback” for photographing Weller with her head submerged up to her eyes, creating a haunting black and white image.

Rick Norton’s headshot of Enquirer photographer Jeff Coringer, positioned on the right half of a horizontal photo, is wished out, but Coringer’s eyes still glow through the view as. It’s an eerie image by the self-taught Norton, who started his career with Tall Broadcasting in 1976 at King’s Island.

In Mavis Greer’s portrait of Norton, he’s exhaling smoke in a colorful swirl of blue smoke. It’s a fine piece.
comment in Segal’s video by Grieco” a noted Cincinnati Post photographer, who came to photography while in the U.S. Air Force and retired from The Cincinnati Post in December 2007, that bored photographers like to photograph each other, preferably in “embarrassing situations.”

Swinger photographed Jane Alden Stevens framed in an arch of a garde, which is an apt location for Stevens, for whose eyes all of her work has been influenced by history. In the center of the composition, she stands upright with an upturned face and closed eyes as 4 visualizing those “stories of the past.”

If not much for openings, but this is one I wish I’d attended. I want to meet these artists. To understand who they are and what these portraits saw in them. And maybe commission a portrait of myself.

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Head north to Mason for three engaging exhibitions.

• Catch Kent Nough’s and Francis J. Michæls’ outsiders’ interpretations of family life in HOME at Pop Revolution, 105 E. Main St., Mason. Through Oct. 31 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Tuesday-Friday; 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday; 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Sunday. 937-448-7747. www.poprevolutiongallery.com.

• Then stroll over to Gallery 42 Fine Art for Anna Osgar Bloomer’s Family Pictures, which trace her family through small and large dramas. Through October 31 117 W Main St., Mason. Through Oct. 31 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesday-Friday; 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday. 513-934-7074. www.gallery42mason.com.

• And end up at Mason-Darby Fine Arts Alliance for FACE, an all-female lineup that interprets the idea of “face.” Through Oct. 31. Mason Community Center, 6500 Mason-Montgomery Rd., Mason. 513-339-6955, w w w. masonarts.org.