

Photographers explore 'Landscapes of the Mind'

11:01 AM, Nov 10, 2012 | Comments

Recommend 28 people recommend this. Sign Up to see what your friends recommend.

Recommend 28



'There Goes the Neighborhood ... Vampire Grrrls' from the series 'City Shadow: Mythic Journey of the Hero' / Provided/YWCA Women's Art Gallery

Written by
Karen S. Chambers
Enquirer contributor

FILED UNDER

Things To Do
Arts

One of the 70+ exhibitions that were part of October's regional FotoFocus photo fest sticks around until Jan. 10 – Landscapes of the Mind: Metaphor, Archetype & Symbol at the YWCA Women's Art Gallery.

It's worth a look even if you have photo fatigue.

It showcases three photographers: Nancy Rexroth, Judi Parks and Jane Alden Stevens. The Cincinnati artists used various techniques and cameras and shot different subjects at 20-year intervals. But each creates documentary images that go beyond mere representation of reality to deeper meaning.

IF YOU GO

Where: YWCA Women's Art Gallery, 898 Walnut St., Downtown.
Dates: Monday-Friday through Jan. 10
Hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Admission: Free
More information: 513-241-7090, www.ywca.org

First, Rexroth's dreamy photographs of small towns and the people who live there comprise a mid-1970s body of work she called *low a*. However, the pictures are of Southeastern Ohio where she was living at the time. For her this "sad and dreary area" contrasted with happier childhood memories of visiting relatives in *low a*.

These photographs are the first serious art photography made using a Diana plastic toy camera. A "passable camera," Rexroth bought one for a dollar in 1970, and embraced its "defects" – irregular exposures, bent perspective and blurred focus.

The Diana "could make dream-like, and even ethereal images," Rexroth explains. "I photographed emotions of longing and urgency with a dark and gritty underbelly."

Rexroth's haunting pictures are about 4 inches square – snapshot size – and their intimacy draws you in like "Clara in the Closet, Carpenter, Ohio, 1973," did me.

Clara is very grandmotherly or what I used to think of as grandmotherly until I started meeting 40ish ones.

The stooped woman with sagging breasts wears a house dress. I imagine her white hair tinted blue and tightly permed. Standing in her bedroom closet, she looks lost.

I "know" Clara. I even recognize that antique dresser and the quilt that covers her bed. I bet you "know" her, too.

Judi Parks' black-and-white photographs from the "City Shadow: Mythic Journey of the Hero" series, made in the 1990s, also record a "dark and gritty" world. But she focused on the "urban landscape and social issues plaguing many cities."

Parks documented street people and rundown neighborhoods, all very real, but that doesn't mean they can't be melodramatic and manipulative.

How can you not be affected by "Ferry and Ralph"? Cradling a dog, a homeless man is asleep with his cheek on a scavenged throw pillow.

"There Goes the Neighborhood ... Vampire Girls" is lighter in tone, verging on the comic. Here an elderly woman wearing oversized bifocals and an anorak stands in front of Mission Dolores with its extravagant church door. Two young women with their Halloween vampire fangs bared look over her sloping shoulders. One snarls menacingly but her partner seems to smile. This is not a hostile takeover.

You can escape the city in Jane Alden Stevens' recent "Secrets the Land Told Me" color photographs of the apple farms of northern Japan and the anonymous people who tend them. The subject sounds mundane but the photos are poetic.

"This landscape spoke to me like none other before," Stevens explains. "It sang of passion, temptation, fertility and desire. It sighed of death and endings as the seasons turned, and, at the same time, it whispered of renewal."

Having read a 1995 article in "The New York Times" about apple growing in Aomori Prefecture, it took until 2010 for Stevens to get grant money and time to undertake this project.

Growing these apples – Fuji is the best-known variety – is incredibly labor-intensive. From the time the trees bloom, the

CincinnatiUSA.com

Dead Sea Scrolls, Balluminaria

Thrice the fun at Cincinnati Museum Center

Facebook Activity

Sign Up Create an account or log in to see what your friends are doing.

- 1 stole from a 9-year-old? Court-ordered sharing**
111 people recommended this.
- Nordstrom scam netted thieves \$151K**
210 people recommended this.
- Bill key to making us ABLE**
362 people recommended this.
- Bengals tailgate Nov. 4, 2012**
25 people recommended this.

Facebook social plug-in

Most Popular Most Commented More Headlines

- 1 City might buy Tower Place
- 2 Gray feelin' good, Mackie mum as both back on air
- 3 Man found shot in Madeira
- 4 In election's wake, online talk of secession
- 5 Early returns suggest anonymous Xavier squad isn't bad

Most Viewed

PHOTO GALLERIES



Reds should listen to offers for Cozart



Things to do, Nov. 13-18

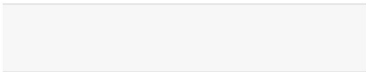
increasingly labor intensive. From the time the trees bloom, the workers touch the apples 10 times, including double bagging each one.

The outer bag is light tight and sometimes splits open before being removed when the apple matures. The inner bags are translucent wax paper to prevent the fruit from being sunburned. When they are taken off, the apple turns red within 24-36 hours.

In Red Inner Bag #1, Fall, 2010, Stevens has photographed a bag, which looks like a tulip against a field of green grass. Although it has a simple, almost sublime beauty, the discarded bag served an essential purpose and will be burned with trimmed branches and leaves to replenish the earth.

Each of the artists approached the exhibition's themes of metaphor, archetype and symbol through their own personal lenses, and then invited us into their worlds.

[View Comments](#) | [Share your thoughts »](#)



EVENT PHOTOS



Photos: 2012 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show

[More Things To Do](#)

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Share

- [Submit a Story](#)
- [Submit a Photo](#)
- [Submit an Event](#)

Advertise

- [Submit a Letter to the Editor](#)
- [Send Your Feedback](#)

Newspapers in Education

- [Reprints](#)
- [Newsroom Staff](#)
- [Subscribe Today](#)
- [Manage Your Subscription](#)
- [Pay Your Bill](#)
- [Subscription Questions](#)
- [E-Newspaper](#)

BUY & SELL

Jobs

- [careerbuilder](#)
- [Find a job](#)
- [Post a Job](#)

Cars

- [Cars.com](#)
- [Find a car](#)
- [Sell a car](#)

Apartments

- [apartments.com](#)
- [Rentals](#)
- [Place an ad](#)

Homes

- [HomeFinder](#)
- [Find a home](#)
- [Sell a home](#)

MOBILE

Use our mobile site and iPhone apps to keep updated with what's going on around Cincinnati.

Mobile Site

Mobile App

- [Reds Baseball App](#)
- [Bengals Football App](#)
- [CinStages App](#)



CINCINNATI.com
A GANNETT COMPANY

[Site Map](#) | [Back to Top](#) ^

NEWS

- [Latest Headlines](#)
- [Crime & Courts](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Government](#)
- [Elections](#)
- [Nation/World](#)
- [Archives - Free](#)
- [Archives - Paid](#)
- [Traffic](#)
- [Weather](#)

OPINION

- [Editorials](#)
- [Letters](#)
- [Columns](#)
- [Cartoon Archive](#)
- [Blogs](#)

SPORTS

- [Bengals](#)
- [Reds](#)
- [UC](#)
- [Xavier](#)
- [High School](#)
- [Paul Daugherty](#)
- [Golf](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Video](#)

BUSINESS

- [Markets](#)
- [Stocks](#)
- [National Headlines](#)
- [Career News](#)
- [HYPE](#)
- [Blogs](#)

THINGS TO DO

- [Dining](#)
- [Movies](#)
- [Arts & Theater](#)
- [Bars & Clubs](#)
- [Events](#)
- [TV & Radio](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Comics & Games](#)
- [HYPE](#)
- [Blogs](#)

OBITUARIES

- [Obituaries](#)
- [Lives Remembered](#)
- [Kentucky](#)

LIVING

- [Home & Garden](#)
- [Food](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Money](#)
- [Dating](#)
- [HYPE](#)
- [Deals](#)

BLOGS

- [News & Opinion](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Living](#)
- [Money](#)
- [CincyBlogs](#)

FOLLOW US

- [Twitter](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Mobile](#)
- [RSS](#)
- [E-mail Alerts](#)

[USA Today](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars for Sale](#) | [Homes for Sale](#) | [Apartments for Rent](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Shopping](#)

[USA TODAY](#) [Cars.com](#) [HomeFinder](#) [apartments.com](#) [HomeGain](#) [shopLocal.com](#) [careerbuilder](#) [eHarmony](#)

GANNETT

Copyright © 2012 news.cincinnati.com. All rights reserved.
Users of this site agree to the [Terms of Service](#), [Privacy Notice/Our California Privacy Rights](#), and [Ad Choices](#)