

GALLERY REVIEW



"Going with the Flow," Magdalena Taber

FLATBED The demise of the camera?

CURATED BY PAUL WEINER

Images from flatbed scanner & high-resolution printer

NE School of Art and Design at
Suffolk University
75 Arlington St., Boston
617-573-8785
Through August 16

People make art, technology doesn't. But the creative use of technology is always a thrill, when it brings us new insights into ourselves and our culture. In "Flatbed" at Art Institute of Boston through August 16, eight artists explore the possibilities of using a 500 pixel scanner and a high-resolution inkjet printer.

Revere resident and longtime photographer **Magdalena Taber** actually has her models press their faces to the scanner and then plays with the resulting image using Photoshop. The results are uncanny, partially because facial feature proportions are distorted by the scanner, but mostly because instead of portraits the artist has created archetypes like masks of death; desire half fading into the underworld; or the cold profile of rejection. Other faces, jangled and elongated, bring out complex some indefinable states of mind, some benign, some not. Possibly because the images are so powerful, the artist has stayed with subdued hues, like sepias and hennas with greenish tinges.

Toru Nakanishi was originally a black and white photographer, but he expanded to scanner and high resolution inkjet printer when this combination became affordable. Two tenets of his philosophy are apparent here: use the technology of the time for the art of the time, and depict the deep relationship of culture to food. For the piece in this show, **Nakanishi** placed an octopus, a favorite of the Japanese diet, onto the scanner (in plastic). By heightening color saturation through Photoshop, he discovered colors that this otherwise gray creature assumes when under attack. **Mr. Nakanishi** will be a guest juror for a digital photography juried show at [artSPACE@16](#) in Malden this fall.

The two oversize facial self-portraits of **Linda Leslie Brown** manipulate the predictability of the digital into random, small-scale distorted splotches, with a sort of haphazard Chuck Close treatment. In these companion images, called "Two Mourners," you will see an eye drooping, apparently peeled away: viscous resin drops hang from it. Building large composite images from small scale pieces, the photographs are metaphors for the complexity of the human face, always more than the sum of its emotional and physical parts. The artist has suspended a microphone in front of the pair of images, another tool to amplify (and potentially distort) the "voices" of the images.

Joanne Kaliontzis has created a spiked, kicky American iconography with Pepsi and other random cans and a 1995 scanner hooked to a G3 Mac. Rolling the cans over the scanner glass, she tweaks the serrated-looking images into echocardiogram-like spikes that pop out from a black background. The result is pure visual fun.

In contrast, the scanner-executed panels of **Harriet Casdin-Silver**, motifs of sensuous Georgia-O'Keefe-like roses that surround images of nude prisoners, are painful metaphors of oppression. A renowned holographer whose work is imbued with feminist militancy, **Casdin-Silver** presents here "Attica" and "Byte This."

The technique used by **Gary Duehr** preserves the human stories he finds in discarded pieces of paper. He scans

the scraps, and imports the scans into Photoshop, printing them with pigments on watercolor paper, then embedding them in beeswax. The effect is the creation of an artificial artifact, a preserved token of American culture in an entirely new technique.

Tony Andrade and **Joseph Scheer** are the photorealists of the exhibit. The simple, clear large prints of plant life by Andrade, sometimes "engineered" through the scanner into hybrid plant forms, celebrate plant life with clarity and precision. **Joseph Scheer** does scans from his collection of 17,000 moths from Allegheny County, New York, bringing out details invisible to the naked eye. **Mr. Scheer's** work has been in *National Geographic* and the *New York Times*.

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