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From Apples to Architecture

Four Photographers Featured in Art Council's 'New Directions II' Show

By Maggie Wolff Peterson
Special to The Winchester Star

Ancient architecture and gala apples. Perfectly straight Corinthian columns and eternally twisted tree trunks. An old, tumbling edifice and an overgrown, ruined orchard.

These are the images explored by four photographers in the show, "Shenandoah Photography: New Directions II," that opens today at the Shenandoah Arts Council.

In the council's rear gallery, a viewer will find the complexity of manipulated images, the fullness of a story told in photos, and the still-life simplicity of fruit in a bowl.



Helen Moravsky's work is computer-generated photo assemblage, made from images pulled from 19th-

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In Your Opinion

Do you send Christmas cards?

I used to but don't have time anymore

I never send them

I try to send them out every year

Helen Moravsky (above) prepares her pieces of digital art for the "Shenandoah Photography II: New Directions" show opening today at the Shenandoah Arts Council Building in Winchester. An opening reception will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. The show runs through July 2. The right photo is a sample of her work, "Dome at Night." Pieces by graphic communication students at Handley High School will be displayed in the front gallery.
 (Above photo by Ginger Perry)



century photographs she began collecting 20 years ago. She was drawn to the antique travel photos, created by professionals for purchase by tourists, before she had an artistic purpose in mind.

First came a bundle of 100 photos from the 1860s. "I picked them up at an antiques shop,"

Moravsky said. A conservator at the National Gallery of Art instructed Moravsky as to what she had.

"I wanted to really date them properly," she said.

The photos, made either by a gravure process or as albumen prints, were sold to travelers as souvenirs of their voyages in the years before most everyone had a Brownie or Instamatic, much less a digital camera or a cell phone that takes pictures.

"Little touristy packets — that was the memento of your trip," Moravsky said. Today, she finds the old photos primarily on e-bay.

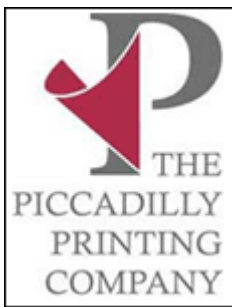
Moravsky concentrates on architectural images, particularly European sites. She calls the arches, columns, and domes "shards of our collective history," and rearranges them electronically to update the ancient.

"The computer acts as my canvas," she said.

Today Moravsky has about 500 old photographs in her computer memory.

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“It’s a wonderful range of beautiful photos of that period that are architecture and strictly architecture,” she said. She especially marvels at a shot of St. Peter’s Square in Rome in which no people appear.



“There’s nobody there,” she said. “How early did [the photographer] have to get up to get that?”



Moravsky takes the old black-and-white images, layers and juxtaposes them, then adds color. Some pieces, such as “Entrance to the Well,” are composed of muted greens, blues and purples. But others, including “Civilization Burning,” are saturated with orange, magenta and peacock blue.



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Having begun working in computer graphics more than 20 years ago, Moravsky is well acquainted with the process.

“I got involved in computer graphics in 1980,” she said. “That was before the desktop.”



A still life of apples is one of the photographs by Ian Zuckerman exhibited at the “Shenandoah Photography II: New Directions” show at the Shenandoah Arts Council in Winchester. The show opens today and continues through July 2.

Today she works on a Macintosh computer “that I’ve speeded up,” then prints on an Epson 4000. Most compositions are printed 25 times, as “limited edition multiple originals.”

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Conservator Geraldine Kiefer said she wanted the show to display divergent viewpoints of what’s happening now in photography. Ian Zuckerman, an anthropology major at James Madison University, considers his photography to be “mostly a hobby,” and the resulting eight pieces in the show are meditations on peaceful scenes.

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“Apples and Oranges” is a traditional still life, while “Wise Horse,” is the portrait of a horse with a full forelock falling over his face. “Vulnerable Tree” concentrates on a single knothole.

“The knot in the tree looks like a wound.” Zuckerman said.

The opposite of Moravsky in his artistic philosophy, Zuckerman aims to alter his photos as little as possible, even in the cropping of the image to fit the frame. “Much of the art of photography is capturing the intended subject with the camera alone,” he said.

The photojournalist of the group is Scott Jost, a professor of photography and digital media at Bridgewater College. Having already had a series of his ecology photographs published as a book, Jost has begun negotiating a book deal for “Valley Apples,” the series now at SAC.

Discovering apples meant more to Jost than simply finding subject matter to photograph. “I grew up in Kansas, and I didn’t really like apples,” he said of the flabby, cottony examples found in the local supermarket. “They didn’t have much flavor.”



Ian Zuckerman labels one of the photographs by Scott Jost for the “Shenandoah Photography II: New Directions” show at the Shenandoah Arts Council in Winchester. Zuckerman is one of four photographers featured in the juried show opening today and continuing through July 2. (Photo by Ginger Perry)

Jost began his project by interviewing apple growers, discovering their pride of place, and the encroaching development that is making their land too pricey to farm.

“It’s an incredible, rich history there, and one that is changing fast,” he said.

The series, which includes both individual images and

diptychs, shows both working orchards and abandoned ones. “What I find the most satisfying and the most

heartening is when the orchards are intact,” he said.

Jost is in “preliminary discussions” with the Center for American Places in Staunton for book publication. “I still have negatives to print and interviews to transcribe,” he said. His last book contained 64 pages of photos.

Jost began the Valley Apples project in 2001 and took his first photos in 2002. “2003 and 2004 were the years I was working on collecting the raw material in earnest,” he said. Jost’s photos cover nine counties, including Frederick, Clarke and Shenandoah, as well as Winchester.

The fourth photographer in the show is Karl Mueller, whose three black-and-white images feature the architecture of the Milwaukee Art Museum, a graceful, contemporary building.

On the shore of Lake Michigan, the building reflects its surroundings. “The exteriors remind one of either a ship setting sail or a bird taking flight,” Mueller said.

Kiefer called the pieces “technically good and visually exciting.”

The photography show, in its second year at SAC, is unusual in that the artists install their work collaboratively, Kiefer said. Instead of having the curator determine where works should hang, the artists themselves selected which walls would best suit their pieces.

To be displayed in SAC’s front gallery are pieces by graphic communication students at Handley High School. Additionally, a showing of antique postcards that Kiefer installed in a previous show, Blossoms and Brushstrokes, remains at the gallery.

“Shenandoah Photography: New Directions II” opens today at the Shenandoah Arts Council, 811 S. Loudoun St., with an opening reception from 6 to 9 p.m. The show runs through July 2. Gallery hours are Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays, 1 to 4 p.m. Call 667-5166 or visit www.shenarts.org for more information about the Shenandoah Arts Council.

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