

ART

Photo art gets high exposure

Dozens of exhibits extend into January

A Month of Photography, built around a conference here in two weeks, lasts much longer than the calendar's definition of a month.

In fact, the lineup of dozens of shows is massive, with at least one stretching into January.

The only down side so far appears to be whether those who love the medium — or who want to learn more about it — can get to all the offerings, which have overlaid a rewarding (if demanding) construct on a busy fall season.

But there are many gifts to be unwrapped here, including work on view through Oct. 16 at William Havu Gallery, and through Oct. 30

at a scan of contemporary photography at Robischon Gallery.

Perhaps most surprising is work by Lawrence Argent, known for sculpture and installations that feature impeccable craftsmanship and a subtext that borders on subversion. (Think the blue bear to be installed next year, peering in the window of the Colorado Convention Center.)

Here, in a quartet of C-prints, Argent turns a sculptor's eye to, of all things, baby toys and paraphernalia, in work that offers hazy shapes, jewel-like colors, and a general sense of mysterious shapes (until you figure out what he's shooting).

As an added fillip, Argent has framed the pieces in a milky white plastic, an ethereal material that makes the works appear to float.

Randy Brown, meanwhile, has moved out of the realm of the primal (his "Spirit of the Trees" series) into the arena of pattern and repetition for more than a dozen carbon pigment inkjet prints that incorporate his body and silhouette as the basic canvas.

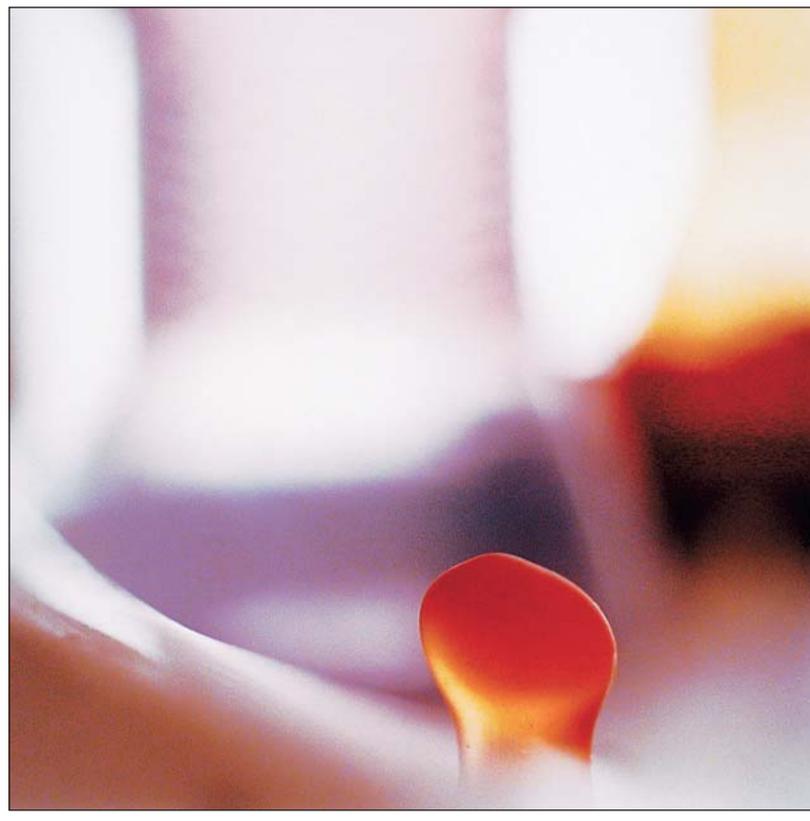
It is a satisfyingly complete look at a new direction, a shift from trees and flesh to ghostly solids and lines, and although Havu thankfully has included four of Brown's "Trees" prints as a reminder of the human hand and the photographer's ability to link man and nature in a jarring, almost frightening way.

As a grace note, Havu has installed work by former and current gallery administrators Julia Rymer and Kate Thompson, both University of Denver grads with an eye for art.

On the first floor, Rymer's paintings demonstrate her skill at abstraction built around shapes accented by circular forms (she recently received her MFA at Pratt Institute).

Upstairs, Thompson's paintings incorporate difficult colors — green and maroon, included — in solid works in which paint is expressed and pulled to create the tension of layers and voids.

FINE IMAGERY AT ROBISCHON: Robischon Gallery has almost outdone itself for the Month of Photography, with a trio of exhibitions presented as discrete shows that work together in the exploration of how photog-



Hazy shapes and jewel-like colors pop out of Lawrence Argent's C-print *Nuk3*. Argent is primarily known as a sculptor.

Lawrence Argent and Randy Brown

- **What:** Photography, with paintings by Julia Rymer and Kate Thompson
- **Where and when:** William Havu Gallery, 1040 Cherokee St.; through Oct. 16
- **Information:** 303-893-2360

raphers approach the impact of the word *landscape*.

First, and most ambitious, is "Far Afield," with an international roster of photographers that range from Ruth Thorne-Thomsen (evocative, blurry toned-silver images via pin-hole camera) to Edward Burtynsky (large chromogenic prints that document the fallout of industrial and development "progress") to Guido Guidi (a grid of Italian landscapes and architectural scenes, chromogenic prints that read like a grayed-out travelogue).

On a perhaps lighter note, Denver-based artist Gary Emrich continues his experimentation with photo-based work, in *Elements: Sky* and *Elements: Flame*, in which he has applied sharply defined photo emulsion on glass (as in eyeglasses).

Two smaller exhibitions serve as adjuncts. The gallery has drawn from Mary Peck's monograph *Away Out Over Everything* for a selection of her views of the Olympic Peninsula and the Elwha River.

The soft but telling views by activist Peck are tucked into an alcove area. (Peck will speak at the Tattered Cover Lodo at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 28.)

And "Configuration" focuses on "landscape" in terms of the human anatomy and role-playing, with figurative work by painter-turned-photographer George Woodman, Owen O'Meara, Janieta Eyre and Eric Schwartz installed in the back Viewing Room Gallery.

Schwartz's digital prints tackle off-kilter religious imagery, while Eyre's distinctive portraits of herself

as twins explores a surreal, and occasionally funny, geography in the vein of Diane Arbus.

As with all its exhibitions, Robischon Gallery has extended a wide reach to find sensitive and surprising work. The gallery is at 1740 Wazee St.; information: 303-298-7788.

THE LIBESKIND WATCH: Daniel Libeskind, designer of the Frederic C. Hamilton Building at the Denver Art Museum, is to be in town briefly next week for meetings, and to attend the DAM's annual Collector's Choice event Thursday.

Proceeds this year from the fund-raiser will go toward the capital campaign to raise money for amenities for the museum. The goal: \$350,000.

Of note: People can attend at various levels, such as titanium, glass, steel and . . . Rheinzink, an alloy that makes zinc easier to work with as a construction material.

Rheinzink, with zinc, is to be used on the residential and retail co-development at the museum.

And the bridge connecting existing and new museum buildings, which was supposed to have a zinc and glass skin? It now is to be all glazing material.

AND IN PASSING: W. Dorwin Teague, an industrial designer (from cash registers to a reclining chair for dental practices) and father of Basalt-based architect Harry Teague, died last month at age 94 in Carbondale.

To track that extraordinary design lineage further, W. Dorwin Teague was the son of Walter Dorwin Teague, whose streamlined aesthetic in the realm of interiors and transportation made him one of the fathers of 20th-century industrial design.

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'Miss Communication' proves laughter can be Miracle cure for past

By Lisa Bornstein
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Maybe it was the carne asada with jalapeño pesto, or the neatly packaged bento box. But when comedian Michelle Miracle met director Mare Trevathan Philpott, the result was a soggy one.

"We ended up weeping at the Whole Foods at Cherry Creek," Philpott remembers.

And this was a professional meeting.

The two had come together to discuss Miracle's one-woman show, *Miss Communication*. She already had performed brief runs in Boulder and Denver, and had been the first Denver artist accepted to the Chicago Improv Festival. But Miracle wanted to take it further, and brought in Philpott as her first outside director.

The two found they had much to share, including long separations — Philpott is recently divorced and Miracle has been separated for more than two years — and deceased fathers. Miracle's father, who died in 1997, was the impetus for much of her show.

"It is about how I learned to communicate poorly and what that did to my life," says Miracle, who finds the filter between brain and mouth not always securely fastened.

Originally, she intended the show simply as a vehicle to introduce her as a performer. Her silky blond hair and vibrant blue eyes haven't overcome her large size in making her hard to cast.

"Sometimes it's hard to find someone who's willing to take a risk on me because of my size, or my look," Miracle says.

"I might not be the pretty girl or the popular girl but I can learn how to make them laugh or make them look stupid."

As she began writing, two themes surfaced: "A, that I'm a horrible communicator and B, my dad keeps popping up," Miracle says.

Miracle, now 30, was the youngest child, and her father had four children from a previous marriage.

"He just never really communicated his feelings. He wasn't a nurturing person," Miracle says.

Philpott adds: "He was a big jokester, and then there was a side of the man that could be violent."



Michelle Miracle intended her one-woman show as a vehicle to introduce her as a performer. Since then it has opened additional career doors for her.

PAUL TRANTOW

Miss Communication

- **When and where:** 9 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays through Nov. 6, Rattlebrain Theatre, 16th Street Mall and Arapahoe Street
- **Cost:** \$12
- **Information:** 720-932-7384

"There wasn't a lot of in-between," Miracle confirms.

Miracle began her college studies as a theater major, eventually graduating in communications from Metropolitan State College of Denver.

"I went back and forth between wanting to be a theater major and not knowing how that was gonna fly with my parents — or my dad," she corrects herself.

A frequent performer — first at Bovine Metropolis, then with the Traveling Susans and Rattlebrain Theatre (where her show opens tonight) — Miracle approached Philpott for help refining *Miss Communication*.

"I watched the piece in my living room and found myself doing that belly laughter out loud, the kind of laughter that makes your whole body feel good," Philpott says.

"So many one-person shows I find are self-indulgent. I admire very much that Michelle is able to speak about things that are painful, but also that it's done with a whole lot of humor."

The process of refinement wasn't always pleasant, though. Philpott pulled out a pair of scissors and began physically chopping Miracle's script into pieces.

"She helped me create a structure that made sense as a piece of humor instead of just my life," Miracle says. "It was like killing the baby, making it into a horse."

And while Miracle thinks her father would laugh at the play, her mother had a mixed reaction, telling her:

"Well, you did a great job — but I think you exaggerated some stuff."

Lisa Bornstein is the theater critic. bornsteinl@RockyMountainNews.com or 303-892-5101