

## The Boston Globe

At the Griffin: pandemic associations, US-Philippine relations, cross-cultural concerns

‘Under the Mask’ runs through May 28, as do the other two shows currently at the museum, ‘Jason Reblando: Field Notes’ and ‘Rohina Hoffman: Embrace’

By **Mark Feeney** Globe Staff, Updated April 27, 2023, 10:44 a.m.

WINCHESTER — The Griffin Museum of Photography’s “Under the Mask: 29th Annual Juried Members Exhibition” comes with a (very loose) theme. The 59 photographs in the show were taken over the past three years. So all of them to some degree reflect the central fact of those past three years: COVID-19.



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Mark T. Atkinson, "Covid Kids." MARK T. ATKINSON

Lisa Volpe, curator of photography at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, was the juror for "Under the Mask."

Sometimes the pandemic connection is direct and unmistakable, as in Mark T. Atkinson's "Covid Kids." A sign hung on a chain-link fence announces "Closed Due to Virus." Blurry in the background is a set of playground equipment, its vibrant color making the sign all the more melancholy.



Bruce Magnuson, "Ponyhenge." BRUCE MAGNUSON

More often, the connection is indirect, a matter of implicit association or the happenstance of timing. Would Joe Greene's "Dress Scape," showing an empty dress standing in the middle of an open field, be as startling and spooky had it been taken three years earlier — or three years later? Impossible to say. It certainly looks startling and spooky now. It also chimes nicely with Sally Bousquet's "Memory and Thorn." An actual person, standing outdoors, wears a vividly red dress, though superimposed on her head is a reflective cube. Startlement and spookiness take on a different aspect.



David Oxtun, "Reflections and Shadows." DAVID OXTON

Volpe has included other photos that complement each other in unexpected ways. The redness of the crustacean at the center of [Nancy Scherl's](#) "Serving Lobster" is all the more impressive in contrast to the greenness of the serving plate it rests on. A different sort of contrast obtains in [Susan Lapedes's](#) "Sarah, Age 16." The center of attention is the young woman in the title, yet notice the lobster she holds in her left hand.



Lynn Saville, "Year Red Building at Myrtle Wyckoff Platform," 2022. LYNN SAVILLE

Bruce Magnuson's "Ponyhenge" boasts the exhibition's wittiest title. The photograph shows multiple rocking horses arranged in a circle, Stonehenge-like, in a snowy field. Snow is in the air as well as on the ground in David Oxtan's "Reflections and Shadows." The highly theatrical lighting recalls the work of Philip-Lorca diCorcia, and the dramatically backlit snow is visual kin to the dramatically backlit spray of water in Hannah Altman's "Interruption," a title that assumes an additional aspect in the context of the pandemic.



Jeff Larason, "Mass. Ave. Bus Stop."JEFF LARASON

Mass transit connects Lynn Saville's very handsome view of a not especially handsome Brooklyn elevated station with Jeff Larason's black-and-white "Mass. Ave. Bus Stop." Part of the bus stop is shown as a reflection, so what we see appears upside down. This includes the T sign — which might well serve the purpose of civic commentary as well as visual variation.



Sharon Draghi, "Domestic," 2021. SHARON DRAGHI

Sharon Draghi's "Domestic" has no counterpart in the show. A woman stands in a corner facing away from the camera. Perhaps she's just shy. Yet a very strong sense is conveyed that she's confined, if not outright trapped. It's a feeling all too pertinent to the COVID alertness of "Under the Mask."







Rohina Hoffman, "Beets for steaming in water and lemon juice.'ROHINA HOFFMAN

A comparable, even more personal sense of cultural duality informs the work of Rohina Hoffman. Born in India, she came to the United States at 5. She addresses cross-cultural concerns obliquely and with a winning lyricism. "Embrace" consists of work from two Hoffman projects, "Generation 1.75" and "In Gratitude."

With the former, titles like "Upended" and "Transplant" allude to the state of sharing two cultures; while the sight of a handful of turmeric or a forking tree trunk does so visually.

"In Gratitude" offers a simple recurring motif: a person seen from the waist up and neck down holds a vegetable or fruit or bouquet of flowers. With no faces seen, the emphasis is on the relationship between the human and vegetative. The images are very attractive — in association no less than appearance — and so much so that it's easy to overlook the basic fact that these beets and avocados and flowers all have in common. They've been plucked or uprooted.

**UNDER THE MASK: 29th Annual Juried Members Exhibition**

**JASON REBLANDO: Field Notes**

**ROHINA HOFFMAN: Embrace**

At Griffin Museum of Photography, 67 Shore Road, Winchester, through May 28.  
781-729-1158, [griffinmuseum.org](http://griffinmuseum.org)

Mark Feeney can be reached at [mark.feeney@globe.com](mailto:mark.feeney@globe.com).