

L.A. Photo Curator: Global Photography Awards, BEST SERIES: Dreams, 2020

Review by Curator Emma Powell

"This series stood out to me for being both clearly connected while also expansive. These images work together as a cohesive series because there is a consistency in aesthetic style and symbolism. The soft focus and warm black and white approach suggests a fictional dream environment, rather than reality. This consistent mood and sense of ambiguity asks the viewer to read these images as parts of a larger narrative.

This artist utilized selective focus in a unique way. Rather than softening the images making the scenes gentle, the lack of focus heightens the sense of movement and implies an urgency that might not otherwise be there. I interpret this as depicting the singular concentration that can come with dreaming. The choice of placement of the focus is also important. In these images, the figure is often located in an out of focus portion of the composition. This adds to the emotional aspects of these images, as the figure's lack of focus suggests a lack of control or a fear of the dream world she inhabits.

Repeated themes link these images together and ask the viewer to try to unlock the story behind them. The same female figure appears in each image. While she is recognizable as a consistent protagonist, she is also somewhat anonymous. To me, this figure represents the dreamer. Through obscuring distinguishing features, she is both an individual and also a more universal character. Within these scenes the figure is very active, using subtle movements and gestures to direct the viewer's attention and suggest a narrative to discover. Though the figure is dynamically engaged with the spaces she is inhabiting, she does not appear at ease. It is this tension that prompts the viewer to imagine what the story behind the image could be. Multiple images in this series have an abstracted man-made structure in the background that provides strong compositional lines, while adding to the anxiety in these scenes. In contrast to these grounded forms, a bird repeatedly serves as a detail the viewer is directed to pay attention to.

While the images in this sequence have similarities to each other, they are a strong series because each is also unique from the others. These images do not repeat the same compositional structures or formats, rather they build on each other and are stronger together."