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'DE | MARCATION' Reframes Utah Through Photography



A featured piece, "Untitled 1227" by Andrew Patteson, in the collection. (Photo by Abigail Bowé | The Daily Utah Chronicle)

By Abigail Bowé
September 27, 2019

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The Utah Museum of Fine Arts, in collaboration with Red Butte Press and Granary Arts, celebrated the publication of “DE | MARCATION,” a survey of images from some of Utah’s cutting edge photographers.

To the participating artists — many selected based upon the promise of their work and many of them just up and coming — this survey will help them project their work into exhibits across the United States. Bound with critical photography essays into a series of collected portfolios — of which only 35 were printed and packaged through Red Butte Press —

(<https://www.lib.utah.edu/collections/red-butte-press/publications/demarcation.php>) “DE | MARCATION” is now available for museums and professional photography organizations to purchase and add to their collections.


Additionally, the team will publish the pieces all together in a book in the near future, according to organizer and participant Amy Jorgensen. For the time being, however, each photo that is part of the collection is available to view at the UMFA’s exhibit.




Each photo book will be packed into a handmade clamshell box just like this one. (Photo by Abigail Bowé | The Daily Utah Chronicle)

Self-described as “[challenging] traditional notions of the West and [highlighting] the state’s complexity,” the survey displays photographs that explore themes of interruption and diversity.




Edward Bateman, head of photography at the University of Utah and “DE | MARCATION” participant, said last night “Like it or not, Utah has


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Even 16 years after his death, Mr. Rogers still has a lasting cultural legacy. [@NoWayBowe](#) writes that...
  

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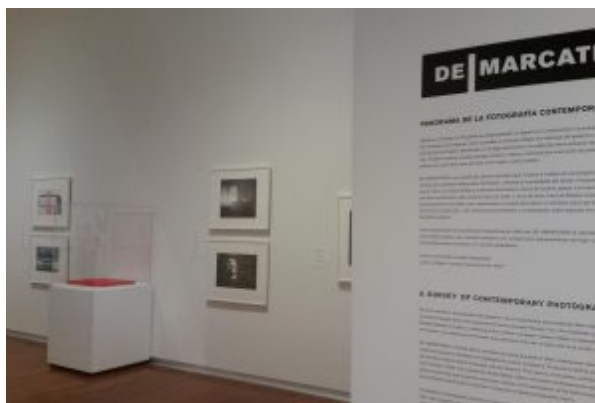
RT [@NoWayBowe](#): While I'm here on Twitter, I'll shout out another article I've written recently. If you're interested in the...

  
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an image,” explaining how most people who live outside this state view it along the lines of stereotypes. “DE | MARCATION,” however, is meant to provoke the traditional image of Utah photography — a predictable source of landscape and animal images — by creating an official, museum quality portfolio of work that pushes the limits of what it really means.

Even the boxes that these prints will be placed into are meant to convey a sense of what makes Utah unique. Bateman said that the red color of the boxes “may represent Utah as a red state” while Jorgensen noted that the band around it, which shimmers from both blue to gold, may simultaneously reference the history of Mormonism and Utah Democrats. Aside from potentially representing the notch out of Utah’s near rectangular shape, Jorgensen said, “An interruption, the little notch in the exterior of the case, answers how we are interrupting our traditional photographic narrative.”

Certainly, each of the fifteen images that are part of “DE | MARCATION” represent transgressions of boundaries and imagination, bringing a new sense of imagination and newness to Utah photography as a



The entrance to UMFA’s “DE | MARCATION.” (Photo by Abigail Bowé | The Daily Utah Chronicle)

whole. Samuel Davis’ “Joan,” for example, depicts a woman in front of a bleak grey sky not so unfamiliar to many Utahns in the dead of winter, but a UFO hovers behind her from her sight.

Similarly, the other photos of “DE | MARCATION” suggest a sense of the unusual behind the ordinary. “Indoor Weapons Training” by Kim Raff depicts a man posed with a gun in a plain living room as a reminder to the strangeness behind debates of gun ownership and use in the state. Karalee Kuchar’s “Bearing Weight” depicts a woman in a plain blue dress in the middle of a scrappy, grassed wilderness which resembles most un-tampered Utah landscapes. This is a kind of typical pioneer figure, except that she hoists over her a large red boulder for seemingly no reason. The other works, which depict everything

seemingly no reason. The other works, which depict everything from an exploding can of foam to an unsettling late night game show, dive into a sort of magical realism.

Though “DE | MARCATION” is a relatively small exhibit that only takes up one room in UMFA, it’s an eclectic and breathtaking collection of some of the most clever pieces I’ve seen from any museum this year. Looking at these works for however long — either a quick ten minutes peek to a half-hour of quiet contemplation — will certainly give you a glimpse into what’s fresh in Utah photography, and may even force you into questioning what Utah culture means to you as well.

“DE | MARCATION” will be on display at UMFA through Jan. 12, 2020. Entry is included in general admission prices and is free to all U students and staff. For more information, visit UMFA’s website (<https://umfa.utah.edu/demarcation>).

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