

2022 Five State Photography Juror Statement

What inspires people to make photographs? We do not suffer from a lack of imagery in 2022: according to one internet resource, 4.7 billion photographs are taken every day. Often, we make photographs for personal reasons, as a means to remember the beauty or sadness of a moment, to record an eye-catching subject, or to freeze a fleeting perception. Photographs document the people and places we find interesting or meaningful, and express uniquely creative ideas and emotions.

The most compelling pictures reveal something about the person behind the camera—their technical abilities, yes, but perhaps more importantly, their curiosity and imagination. These photographs may point to something memorable in the real world, such as the particular yellow glow of a flower's petals in the sun, or the electric zigzag of a lightning bolt piercing a steel-gray sky. They may also present imaginative scenarios inhabited by ghosts and dark angels, or reflect back to us memories forged through family photographs.

All of the photographers selected for this year's exhibition share with us pictures of the people, places, and moments that matter to them. This in itself is a generous act, one whose goal is to connect us through the visual language of photography. Though the selection process was difficult, in the end I chose photographs that demonstrated technical proficiency, defined broadly as a keen understanding of light, focus, shadow, color, and composition. I also considered the unique, artistic perceptions of the photographers, preferring those who strove to avoid clichés in favor of something slightly more unexpected.

I have greatly enjoyed the opportunity to serve as this year's juror, and extend a special thanks to Brenda Meder, Executive Director of the Hays Arts Council, for inviting me to participate. Brenda's boundless energy, enthusiasm, and tireless commitment to the arts communities of our region inspires us all to embrace and nurture our creative potential every day.

***April M. Watson
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The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art
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