Through a lens, lyrically

Three photographers offer civilized moments of artistic harmony at Ann Norton

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In case you have not heard, photography is done cloning pieces of reality.

It signed a clause reading "until atrocity, cruelty and ugliness do us part," and they have all arrived. This breach of contract has rendered the camera free to roam and invent an alternative universe. More specifically, to birth the works on view at Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens.

Aside from its self-evident mission, Expanding Horizons: Nontraditional Approaches to Photography gifts us pleasures absent in the modern world via three artists with distinctive styles. A coming together in harmony without threats or tragedy, a somber unexcelled moment, and the frankness of unfiltered eye contact are all on display through Nov. 17.

The cheerful hues in Kimiko Yoshida's self-portraits balance out the directness with which the Japanese artist looks us in the eye. Her raw delivery is unthreatened by the layers of makeup, drapery and acrylic paint breathing life into six beautiful compositions from 2018. Through them, Yoshida courts the themes of feminine identity and art's transformative power. She becomes a soft spring goddess with yellow flowers for hair — and glitter included — only to embody a stoic Spanish female aristocrat later.

We might not recognize the fashionable sitter Francisco Goya immortalized around 1805, but Yoshida's *Isabel de Porcel* matches the Spanish master's portrait in vivacity and flair. In lieu of black lace, she appears wrapped in a ravishing red-and-gold cloth, which stands in high contrast to her porcelain skin. As if the dramatic effect brought on by color wasn't enough, the invisible line running down the frame and demarking identical halves adds a psychological twist. This mirrored quality alludes to the Rorschach inkblot test.

It is also here that we find the most striking work in the show. Set against a black background and featuring gold powder and Japanese lacquer, *Zen Garden/Harlequin* conveys sadness and joy simultaneously. The intense colors on the diamond-patterned outfit vibrate with confidence and energy, but...
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presentations at two Wentworth Galleries locations this month, with free admission.

Palm Beach ArtsPaper spoke to Hart about his art ... plus a little music and science — by phone from his home in Sonoma County, Calif., in a 15 minute question and answer session that practically went in as many directions as the Grateful Dead’s music.

Q. You started a literary career (with the 1990 book Drumming at the Edge of Magic: A Journey into the Spirit of Percussion) well into your musical career. At what point did you start producing your visual artworks?
A. I started those right after I started writing books. I guess the images I took from my first book, and the research I did regarding the spirit of percussion, were part of my consciousness. So the books have, in so many ways, influenced these images.

Then I met George Smout, the astrophysicist and Nobel laureate, who discovered cosmic microwave background radiation 600,000 years this side of the Big Bang. He turned me on to the sounds of the universe, which is a web.

And it all comes back to individual expression in multiple ways. The synergy. It’s how these two are connecting senses, work, and how we can interpret them. Most of them, these frequencies; these vibrations, pass over and above us. Many affect us naturally. Some have to be visualized as visuals, like visual representations of things I wanted to see on canvas, wood, plexiglass, and other surfaces.

Q. Did any other visual artists inspire you?
A. There’s a lot of other art out there that inspires. But I wouldn’t want to name any one artist without naming the others. I’m trying to go somewhere different, so I try not to get hooked into anyone else’s work.

Q. How long have you been creating the pieces you’ll be presenting in these shows?
A. Most of these images are relatively new, but there will also be some older works. Just like you grow playing music, you grow in your language of paint. What you do with them, what you bring to the work, and what the work says to you. I’ve been doing this for many years now, so I’ve settled into a very interesting new phase of creating these visuals.

Q. You use a lot of color in your works. Do you consider that essential in creating these pieces?
A. Yes. The world is in color for me. I also love black and white. All of those shades interest me. These things are rivers, peaks, valleys, animals. There are all kinds of images within these things, because everything is very detailed. I spend a lot of time on detail. It’s all vibrating into existence. After I form the medium, I create it by vibrating the frame. Then I move things into certain positions that I think are appropriate. So all these works are born out of vibration.

I play music almost everyday in my home studio, and then sometimes at night, I create these images while my head is still filled with the music. So this can be a change of form, let us say, from music to art. Sound into light; light into sound. That’s what’s really happening. A synergy of sound and light.

But there’s a sense of movement in most of your artworks. Is that the result of these images of vibration influencing them?
A. Good point. It’s all rhythm. It’s all rhythm. It’s a rhythm scale. And it’s a map, hopefully, to a higher consciousness. Because that’s what this whole thing is trying to raise us to. What I hope people take from this is the idea of feeling. An awareness of the whole thing; something they can take home with them, and do something good with that feeling. As an artist, I hope that these works bring kindness, an understanding of consciousness, and personal power. And we make contact with other universes, which enhances our power.

Q. Tell us about the work you do with Dr. Adam Gazzaley.
A. We’re working on cognitive exercises for those suffering from autism, Alzheimer’s disease, and another condition in particular. ... We create rhythm games for them, and introduce them to musical stimulation. The autistic, and the one that is lost around loud sounds, so we created sounds and instruments that are easy to use. Dr. Art and Dr. Gazzaley is an amazing resource for that.

Q. Can you give us an example of one of these instruments?
A. One is a large frame drum, many other instruments are one note, and that note is really, really low. So the patients relate to it as their heartbeat, or their friend. Music becomes medicine this way.

Q. Do you see yourself being a visual artist longer than you’ll be a musician?
A. The music is what makes me whole. So that’s what I go into. I’m a trained musician, or musician, whichever you want to call it. I’m fine with both. In art, you don’t play with other people. Normally. But people are talking to you. So you could say that music is that of a higher consciousness, because you’re sharing that communal vibe and energy and making conversation musically and psychologically.

Brooklyn Bridge’ is one of the photos by Stephen Wilkes in the exhibit. Photo provided

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the subject’s stare skims that sentiment. It’s guarded; it keeps us at a distance. However, her other characters, Yoshida’s Harlequin is less eager to entertain and happy to remain a quiet mannequin who has no funny moves left.

The first gallery room is a tough act to follow. The task falls on Stephen Wilkes’ photographs, which despite looking quirky and alive seem nothing special at first glance. Scattered across green lawns are cyclists, runners, children flying kites, and couples having a picnics. Isolated, each of these frozen moments is perfectly plastic, but finding them in the same place at the same time highly improbable. The method through which Wilkes arrives at these scenic sites has never before been seen apart from everyone else who has taken a nice panoramic photograph.

Like a sniper, Wilkes spends hours watching and documenting iconic locations (sometimes from scaffolds and rooftops) with his camera. He takes thousands of snapshots and later selects the frames that go on to compose a large cohesive scene. The insane perseverance of this American photographer goes undetected except for a curious characteristic hinting at the progression of the day. Four of the five photographs on view appear brighter toward their right edges and gradually turn dark as our eyes travel west.

Night and day are condensed into one other-than-normal print titled Brooklyn Bridge, which manages to map the day’s motions with incredible detail. It captures a pair of newlyweds, children running, pets being walked, a ferry and even the孩童 playing in the distance. No spot is left neglected. While we are busy discovering the events happening in every corner, the sky undergoes the biggest transformation. Bright white clouds turn dark and the lights of skyscrapers come on. The show piece is a glorious triumph over instant gratification, an optimistic interpretation of days that feel mostly gray now.

Were we ever this happy? Could we be so again? Wilkes’ works answer yes and yes. The smallest less shiny

If You Go

See artwork by Mickey Hart 7-9 p.m. Nov. 22 at Wentworth Gal- lery, Seminole Rock Hall, Holly- wood (800-732-6140) and 7-9 p.m. Nov. 23 at Wentworth Gallery, Boca Ra- ton Town Center Mall (338-0804).

If You Go

Expanding Horizons: Nontraditional Approaches to Photography is on view through Jan. 17 at Norton Sculpture Gardens, 253 Barcelona Road, West Palm Beach.

Admission is $15; $10 for 65 and older, free for members Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday

Info: 852-5328 or anog.org

offerings in Expanding Horizons are credited to French photographer Bernard Faucon, who presents six photographers executed, in fact, in 1978. Due to their size and muted appearance, they get somewhat lost in the decor of the room opening up to the gardens. It isn’t until someone points out this is a three artist exhibition that we do the math and realize the number must be three. There are no echoes of the thrill delivered by the previous rooms, as Faucon, also a philosopher, writes, in his work, in depth.

In Les images, the sun shines through a window and illuminates literally stacked piles of clothes like domestic monuments. No effort is made to conceal the clothing racks or the stains on the pale blue walls. This is ordinary life. Take it all off of it, Faucon seems to say.

A few of his works are populated by fully dressed mannequins sitting or waving from a departing train. Their strong point is the intricate staging of the backdrops housing the dolls. Faucon is known precisely for turning the ordinary into a performance.

In Le départ, Les Grandes Vacances, he positions the figures in the act of walking, smoking and climbing aboard a rusty train. The children hold red handkerchiefs and butterly catcher clearly signaling the start of the summer holidays.

By the time we leave the premier, only the influence of all the works has settled and delivers an unexpected blow, for now we are back in the real world and it doesn’t look like anything in Expanding Horizons. The show is not intent on pleasing any plumage, it comes across fun, imaginative, private and well mannered, all of which makes the return to reality much harder.