

## Juror Statement

Getting invited to judge the Griffin Museum's 16<sup>th</sup> juried exhibition and to award prizes was an incredible honour, for which I am profoundly grateful. Despite the fact that every day I have to make decisions about what to pick and what not to pick, it never is an easy task. While I believe that the work I selected for this exhibition stands out in a variety of ways, of course it is also based on my own personal preferences and ideas for this show.

Over the past few years, contemporary photography has flourished to an amazing degree. As new talent is pushing into the “scene,” those who have been active for a while are honing their skills. To a large degree, contemporary photography lives from this friction: New voices engaging with older ones, against the backdrop of what we could call the photographic canon. The photography that I had the task to pick from clearly reflected this.

With my selection, I tried to not only showcase outstanding artists, but also to create a grouping of photography that would raise each and every one of the selected artists a little bit more. Photography is not being created in a vacuum. Larger societal and cultural trends shape photography just like they shape what we eat, how we dress, what we read... The influence of these trends on an art form like photography are not always as clear as, say, whether we all wear green pants for one Summer; but there is no denying that our art reflects our times. I thus selected artists not only based on the merit of their own work, but also according to how their work would interact with other artists' images.

As a consequence, I asked the Griffin Museum to display the photographs in groups, where each of the group has a “theme,” which might be obvious, or which might be hard to define. Some of the artists even find their images in more than one group. Needless to say, this is my own curatorial decision, and it reflects my own reaction to the work.

But I am convinced that having one artist's image interact with another one's will enhance the viewers' experience. I hope that after having seen the exhibition, they will leave with more questions than answers. Yes, you read that right, more questions than answers: “Why have I never seen things this way?” “Why does this move me so much?” etc.

The best of contemporary photography amazes us by asking questions, by challenging us, to transform us into different persons. For me, *that* is the essence of contemporary photography. I am very excited to see the 16<sup>th</sup> juried exhibition reflect this.

I decided to highlight the work of two artists, Natalia Engelhardt and Keliy Anderson-Staley, who were awarded the Arthur Griffin Legacy Award and the Griffin Award, respectively. In the 16<sup>th</sup> juried exhibition, they are *primae inter pares*. I have no doubt that we will see a lot more from these two outstanding artists.

I congratulate Natalia and Keliy, as well as all the other photographers in this exhibition, for their achievements; and I am looking forward to seeing new work by them in the future.

Jörg M. Colberg, founder and editor  
*Conscientious*, a website dedicated to contemporary photography