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ARTS & CULTURE

Peter French's photography crosses the line in Connecting Moments



COURTESY PHOTO

Peter French, Marsh Birds Reflected (Bright).

By **Scott Andrews**

PUBLISHED: OCTOBER 17, 2012

The horizon is not a line. It is a zone that extends in width beyond the edges of vision, rising and falling with the land, becoming incredibly thick in the haze of twilight. At night, it retreats into memory.

Peter French's exhibition on view in the hallway of Southwest School of Art's admin building tracks the horizon's play over land and water in the wild country of Texas in lyrical scenes that almost, but not quite, match expectations built by generations of nature photographers. Reflected clouds in water punctuated by the sparse strokes of a distant flock of birds, and close-ups of grass blades, portray the immense places outside our cities that have all but been forgotten in the rush towards urbanity. But

these lands are not unpopulated. Children's portraits, framed by summer grasses and the stray destinations of casual glances — a pole thrusting up from a hillock, roads, and blurred bits of fencing, are seen in strange crops, as if from the edge of the eye. Described in exhibition notes by curator Kathy Armstrong as "experimental," French's self-taught technique includes use of six digital and film cameras, but it is his framing and capture of light that intrigues. His most interesting photos feel unresolved; but in the distant shots it is not a lack, but additional information — edges to the right and left of a traditionally conceived scene, or a lateral stretching of classic ratios — that confounds the eye, while reminding the viewer that the rectangle of the photograph (or painting, or screen) is only a conventionalized detail cut from the wide oval of our vision. In the almost accidental feeling close-ups, he brings street photographer Garry Winogrand's shoot-from-the hip technique to the country, delivering a sense of urgency, and more importantly, a knowing sense of place. Taken in long exposure, the night shots, such as *Gage Ranch HQ at Night (Close)*, remind one of constructed photographs, hinting at early works by Canadian artist Jeff Wall. Though that connection is only coincidence (in conversation with the *Current*, French confirmed Winogrand's influence, but not Wall's), it doesn't matter. Delighting in sharing his works as much as taking them, French knows that it all happens in the eye of the viewer.

Peter French: Connecting Momen

Free
9am-5pm Mon-Sat
Ursuline Hall Gallery, Ursuline Campus
Southwest School of Art
300 Augusta
(210) 224-1848
swwschool.org

Through November 25

RECENTLY IN ARTS & CULTURE

[Welcome to Halloweentown](#) Taking a closer look at Orlando's obsession with everyone's favorite pagan holiday | 10/24/2012

10.27.12

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30	01 02 03 04 05 06		26 Showing events from Oct. 26. Click for more.
07 08 09 10 11 12 13			
14 15 16 17 18 19 20			
21 22 23 24 25 26 27			
28 29 30 31 01 02 03			

Ballet San Antonio presents *Dracula*

In an elegant lead-in to Halloween, Ballet San Antonio reprises its original adaptation of Bram Stoker's Gothic vampire epic *Dracula*. Set to a "haunting score" by Philip

Pop Pistol *Animal Prisms* Release Show

Local indie-rock trio Pop Pistol celebrates the release of *Animal Prisms* in both 12" vinyl and CD formats. The \$10 cover includes a copy of the 13-song CD. DJ SteReyo,

Sheer Bloody Lunacy!

The 1965 Italian gothic horror movie *Bloody Pit of Horror*, allegedly based on the writings of the Marquis de Sade, is the springboard for *Sheer Bloody Lunacy!* — a

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