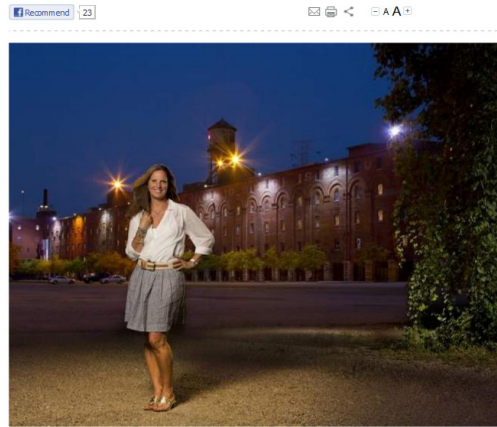


## 60 local photographers pose in each other's lens

1:58 PM, Oct 20, 2012 | Comments

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Peggy M. Hale. Joseph photographed outside Longworth Hall. / Provided/Chris Cone

Written by  
Karen S. Chambers  
Enquirer contributor

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Thinking about portraits usually means thinking about the sitter. But portraits reveal a lot about the portraitist, too. That can be seen in Photographers X Photographers at Xavier University.

Helen Adams, known for her portraits of children and families, came up with the idea of "creating a 'portrait chain' of sorts with other photographers."

"I thought it would be a great way to have your portrait done, reach out to a photographer you have always admired, and learn empathy for your subject," she said.

Adams, with a committee of Melvin Grier, Samantha Grier, Ann Segal and Robert Fischel, brainstormed to come up with approximately 100 photographers. About half came to a meeting in January where they pulled names out of a hat to pick whom they would photograph.

One thing that's apparent the minute you walk into the gallery is the diversity of talent in the area. There's not a boring picture in the lot.

As I look in the images, in a variety of photographic techniques, I found myself picking out people I'd like to meet – both from in front of and behind the camera.

I was particularly intrigued by Mel Mittermiller as photographed by Cal Kowal. Known for his fine-art photography and a two-time winner of Ohio Arts Council grants, Kowal posed Mittermiller, a 3-D digital commercial photographer, dressed in an "undertaker's" black suit and bowler hat, standing in back of a stool presenting his hands like a child to show they are clean. A work light, resting on two partially used cans of red house paint, illuminates his hands. I'd say Kowal captured what Mittermiller describes as his "intuitive ability" ... (that) enables me to see that magical extra something special."

Kowal looks like a regular joe as photographed by Peggy Joseph, a commercial photographer who calls photography a "dream vocation."

Then I found Mittermiller's photo of "Chris Cone at Mirrored Sculpture/Gazebo Riverfront Battery Park." Cone is shown standing facing the camera – the viewer. That's pretty straightforward but then he's reflected in the sculpture's funhouse mirrors.

And Cone, whose true passion is connecting with people, photographed Kowal's portraitist, Joseph, using a tricky technique of multiple exposures that are then "pieced" together in Photoshop.

This photo brought me full circle as Adams really has created a "portrait chain."

Bryn Weller and Shanon Rice photographed each other. In the 10-minute video, produced by Ann Segal on view in the gallery, Weller, who does candid event photography and informal portraits, explains how, although Rice's face is partially hidden, her tattoos and rings let the viewer in on who she is.

But how did Weller convince the fully dressed Rice to jump into a lake and to try to pull herself up on the dock?

And was Rice, who teaches at Antonelli College, specializing in digital imaging and multimedia and video production, getting "payback" by photographing Weller with her head submerged up to her eyes, creating a haunting black-and-white image?

Rick Norton's headshot of Enquirer photographer Jeff Swinger, positioned on the right half of a horizontal photo, is washed-out, but Swinger's eyes still bore through the viewer. It's an eerie image by the self-taught Norton, who started his career with Taft Broadcasting in 1976 at King's Island.

In Melvin Grier's picture of Norton, he's exhaling cigarette smoke in a colorful patch of sunflowers. I wonder how this fits with the

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comment in Segal's video by Grier, a retired Cincinnati Post photographer, who came to photography while in the U.S. Air Force and retired from *The Cincinnati Post* in December 2007, that bored photographers like to photograph each other, preferably in "embarrassing situations."

Swinger photographed Jane Alden Stevens framed in an arch of a gazebo, which is an apt location for Stevens, who says all of her work has been influenced by history. In the center of the composition, she stands upright with an upturned face and closed eyes as if visualizing those "stories of the past."

I'm not much for openings, but this is one I wish I'd attended. I want to meet these artists, to understand who they are and what their portraitists saw in them. And maybe commission a portrait of myself.

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**FOTOFOCUS ROAD TRIP: MASON**

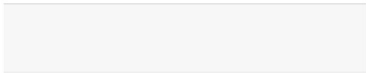
Head north to Mason for three engaging exhibitions.

• Catch Kent Krugh's and Francis J. Michaels' outsiders' interpretations of family life in **HOME** at **Pop Revolution**, 105 E. Main St., Mason. Through Oct. 31. 10 a. m.-6 p. m., Tuesday-Friday, 11 a. m.-3 p. m., Saturday. 513-492-7474, [www.poprevolutiongallery.com](http://www.poprevolutiongallery.com).

• Then stroll down Main St. to **Gallery 42 Fine Art** for Anna Ogier-Bloomer's Family Pictures, which trace her family through small and large dramas. Through October 31. 117 W. Main St., Mason. Through Oct. 31. 10 a. m.-6 p. m., Tuesday-Friday, 11 a. m.-3 p. m., Saturday. 513-234-7874, [www.gallery42fineart.com](http://www.gallery42fineart.com).

• And end up at **Mason-Deerfield Arts Alliance** for FACE, an all-female lineup that interprets the idea of "face." Through Oct. 31. Mason Community Center, 6050 Mason-Montgomery Rd., Mason. 513-309-8585, [www.masonarts.org](http://www.masonarts.org).

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