

The Megaphone

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meg·a·phone [meg-uh-fohn] –noun

1. a cone-shaped device for magnifying or directing the voice, chiefly used in addressing a large audience out of doors or in calling to someone at a distance.

www.dictionary.com

Hello everyone! I have a special treat for you this week – this excellent article was submitted to us by Jessi Gowan of Swift Current. Artist Bob Siemens of Rush Lake agreed to send in some photos for us to add to the story, so I'm sharing it with you directly.

Congratulations Jessi, on a great article, and Bob, on what looks to be a great show! Also thanks to Kim Houghtaling of the Art Gallery of Swift Current for his cooperation in getting this on the site. Good luck to all of you with the event! – Lisa

P.S. Do you have an event to share? Send your write-up to me on e-mail at lisa.thomson@saskmuseums.org and we'll get it on The Megaphone! – L.

Article Author: Jessi Gowan

Photos Courtesy: Bob Siemens

Art Gallery of Swift Current is pleased to announce the exhibition, 'Through A Cold Looking Glass.' This solo exhibition features black and white photographs by Bob Siemens of Rush Lake, SK.



Bob Siemens

"This series of photographic prints represents an accidental and equally amazing discovery," explained Siemens. "It was November of 2007 and my wife and I had just driven onto the ice at Highfield Reservoir, south of Rush Lake. We soon noticed that the ice was very smooth and crystal clear, which allowed us to look into and in fact through the ice into the water below.

"Then we began to see amazing forms and lines in the ice. The more we looked, the more we realized that these fantastic "shapes" were everywhere, like an endless display in suspended animation."

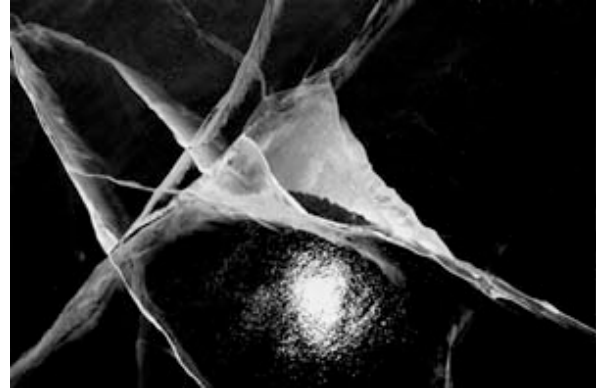
Siemens immediately went home to get his camera equipment, and headed straight back to the dam to start photographing. He focused mainly on finding interesting compositions, and found many.

"Mostly, the structures are made up of intersecting cracks, together with air bubbles that had been literally trapped as they were rising to the surface," he noted. "As I worked, kneeling on the ice, I could hear the constant cracking and rumbling as the sound telegraphed through the ice in every direction. It was like being in some science fiction movie."

Kim Houghtaling, Director and Curator of Art Gallery of Swift Current, described Siemens' photographs as abstract compositions, noting that it is difficult to identify what it is that you are actually looking at.

"The fissures and cracks in the ice make unusual looking landscapes, and there is this wonderful illusion of depth," he said. "They are really quite magical and beautiful."

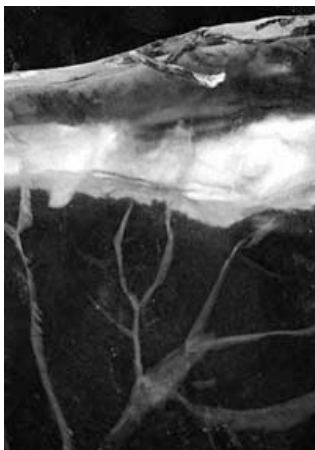
"At times, while photographing, I imagined I was looking through a telescope into deep space," noted Siemens. "In other places it was like looking through a microscope at living tissue. Some of the forms are actually quite erotic, while others are lyrical, still others are purely structural. I also became aware that I was constantly looking at my own reflection, which had a major effect on my approach."



Over the next three days, Siemens returned to the ice, shooting images in the daylight as well as in the dark with a strobe light, until he had covered miles of ice surface. It wasn't until he started making prints in the dark room that he realized that he had witnessed something quite rare.

"Usually, the ice is milky or the surface is rough or the ice is covered by snow and it is not possible to see into or through this frozen layer," he explained. "A few days later, we had a bit of snow and I returned to find the ice covered by a white sheet and the display was gone. It was a brief glimpse at life in its most basic form; so simple and so complex. I had been looking at nature's peep show... through a cold looking glass."

Houghtaling has been interested in Siemens' work for years, and has been wanting to do a major exhibition with the artist for some time. When he first saw this portfolio, he knew that this series would be a perfect fit for Art Gallery of Swift Current. "This portfolio brought forward some real stunners," he said. "They are something that will appeal to anyone."



The exhibition, 'Through A Cold Looking Glass', will run until November 20th, 2008. There will be a public coffeehouse evening with artist talk on November 15th, featuring music by Mark Penner.

Gallery hours are Mondays to Thursdays, 2-5 pm and 7-9 pm and Fridays and Saturdays, 1-5pm, and Sundays from 1-4:30pm. Weekday tours and school tours and workshops can be booked by calling the Art Gallery at 778-2736.

Check out our web site at www.artgalleryofswiftcurrent.org