

ArtisticLandscape



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY SOHN FINE ART

Sohn exhibit reminds that photography doesn't always require a camera

Garry Fabian Miller's "The Middle Place. Golden"

By BENJAMIN CASSIDY
The Berkshire Eagle

LENEX — A new exhibit at Sohn Fine Art demonstrates that photography doesn't always require a camera.

The Lenox gallery is currently featuring works by Garry Fabian Miller and Chuck Kelton photographers whose camera-less creations appear in shows and collections around the world — but they're not necessarily trail-blazers.

"Camera-less photography is where photography began, really," Kelton told *The Eagle* during a recent telephone interview.

Before Joseph Nicéphore Niépce was believed to have snapped the first camera shot in 1820s France, he and his brother, Claude, used light-sensitive substances on paper to generate images. Miller

and Kelton, whose pieces will be on display at Sohn through Sept. 2 (an opening reception is scheduled for Saturday, July 7), draw from that history. "Both artists create images directly on photographic papers, which use silver

salts that darken when exposed," an information sheet at the exhibit explains. "By filtering or blocking, or by chemically treating its surface, the paper is transformed into an image."

Miller's six images are geometric, a common theme in his work.

"I'm using the circle and the square as a place you can inhabit. I think I see the circle more as nature, and I see the square more as thought," he says in a 2010 video filmed in conjunction with an exhibit at London's Victoria and Albert Museum, where some of his pieces reside.

"Black Sun," 50-inches-by-64-inches as a print, certainly evokes nature. Dartmoor National Park has served as inspiration for much of the photographer's work.

"Every time I come, it's go-

ing to give in another way," he says in a BBC "Civilisations" episode.

For his camera-less work in the show, Miller uses dye destruction print (cibachrome), which was discontinued in 2011, according to his website. Kelton's materials keep him devoted to camera-less work.

"It's silver on paper put into a light-sensitive emulsion, and that's what traditional black-and-white paper is," he said.

Kelton has created photograms and chemograms. What's the difference between them?

"A photogram is basically putting an object on a light-sensitive piece of photographic paper. ... It transitions when it's exposed to light. So, you put an object on that [paper] in a darkroom and then develop it, and that comes up as a negative image, so what was black was white and so on," he said.

A chemogram is essentially applying chemistry to a photogram in the light.

"My chemograms, specifically, are done in the daylight. They're done outside, and I'm selectively using [different types of chemistry] to either paint on or pour on or dip in or wipe on to the surface of a light-sensitive paper, the same type of paper I would use for a photogram, and create the image that way."

All 10 of his pieces in the Sohn show are chemograms. Early on in his camera-less career, he didn't use the process.

"My images started as photograms. I was eliminating material and then, after like an eight-year period of using photograms, I started to reapply detail into them using that process called chemogram," he said.

The exhibit's images depict abstract landscapes that remain representative.

"I've always been involved in the need to create some kind of narrative. So, when I take these kind of marks, and I put them on paper, there's a certain chaos that I love," he said, "but I love to be able to rein that chaos in." In "New Year No. 37," view-

ers can see chemistry cascade down the photographic paper.

"I'm just holding the paper and running [a fixing salt at different dilutions] along the paper in this very slow process of one drip at a time," he said, "and those drips are what's creating that foreground that looks a little bit like water falling, or something like that."

Kelton, whose family owned a home on Onota Lake for decades, is a master printer in Jersey City, N.J., collaborating with photographers from all over the world. He has worked in darkrooms and traditional photography for more than 50 years.

"The process of this comes very natural to me. Most people are really completely dedicated to digital imagery at this point. So, this type of analog, chemistry-based [work] is what I've done for decades," he said.

He took up camera-less work when his father had a stroke.

"All of a sudden, I saw this kind of massive man, who was both intellectually and emotionally and personally massive to me, become this very simple being. And I started making images with very, very little detail, just photograms [with] hints of shadows and light on them," he recalled.

Recent major museum exhibitions have generated more interest in camera-less work, according to Kelton.

"I think in the last five or seven years, camera-less photography has gotten huge," he said.

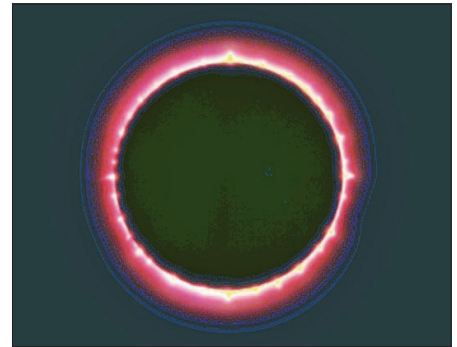
Anecdotally, he mentioned that seven museums acquired his work in the last year.

"It's becoming a language that people are starting to see," he said.

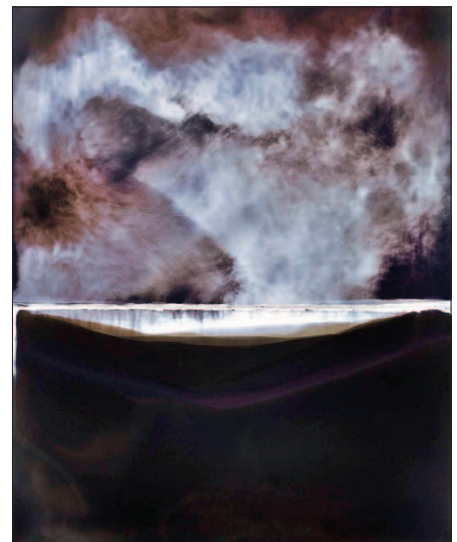
Kelton wants his creations to be recognizable in form, to resemble but not mimic camera shots.

"I try to push that so that you know it's created from an imagination," he said, "but it almost looks like it could've been taken with a camera."

Benjamin Cassidy can be reached at bcassidy@berkshireeagle.com, at [@bybenccassidy](https://twitter.com/bybenccassidy) on Twitter and 413-496-6251.



Miller's "Black Sun, Autumn" (2011).



Chuck Kelton's "View Not from a Window."

If you go ...

What: "Light + Dark"

When: Through Sept. 2; opening reception Saturday, 4 to 7 p.m.

Where: Sohn Fine Art, 69 Church St., Lenox

Reservations/information: 413-551-7353; sohnfineart.com



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