

Humanity (Or Lack Thereof)

Two mini photo exhibits explore location at the J-Schnitz

I only had to read one line from Frank Miller's artist statement — "I don't like most nature photography" — to convince myself to review his photography exhibit, "Trust," now showing at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. That's because I don't blame him; *most* nature photography is Ansel Adams Lite or, worse, eco-porn — portraying nature as a seductive pleasure ground. The handful of color photos in Miller's show, all coming from his larger series called "Trust," are hard to pin down as nature photography. It's more accurate to call them portraits, but portraits of what?



Trust Sign, Oregon by Frank Miller

Well, let's take stock: crosses, flags, abandoned cars, powerlines, fences, blackberry bushes, clearcut hillsides, Trust Jesus signs, impromptu art installations, etc. Call it roadside ephemera with an American West tilt. Shot along roads in Oregon, Washington and Nevada, Miller's landscape imagery is cast in bleak winter light: dull, gray and slightly menacing. (When Miller mentions in his artist statement that he feels at home in "gray areas," he means it in many ways.)

But perhaps "bleak" is too strong a word.

There's great familiarity to these scenes — Westerners pass by them all the time but hardly acknowledge them. Miller takes notice using a tilt-shift selective focusing technique that only casts a narrow strip of the photo in focus, used to best effect in a photo like *Tree, Nevada*, which depicts a dismembered oak tree strewn with boots and shoes on its remaining branches.

While the tilt-shift effect creates a swirling motion, evoking a swing carousel ride at a carnival, the empty shoes recall the ghosts of homesteaders who once populated the West, or those who still do.

The absence of people, of human warmth, gives the show a sense of pessimistic dread. The only print Miller "warmed up" is *Trust Sign, Oregon*, which he gave a light magenta tint. Miller also burned out the word "Jesus" in order to emphasize "Trust" in the Trust Jesus sign, but it comes across as overt manipulation not in keeping with the rest of the show's untouched quality.

Ribbon, Washington, the only photo to hint at a blue sky (a glimmer of optimism!), features a waterlogged pasture, barbed fences and huge powerline towers — all indicating this is fly-over (or drive-over) country. Nothing important

is happening here. Nature, in Miller's photos, is just somewhere to cross, to mark or to let be.

In contrast to Miller's ghostly landscapes, Roger Marshutz's collection, "Aftermath:

Postwar Photographs of Busan (1952-54)," are brimming with humanity. Busan, now South Korea's second largest metropolis (and current contender for the 2020 Summer Olympics), was devastated by the Korean War. But thanks to the city's resistance to North Korean Communist occupation, the U.N. presence in Busan remained strong during the war, and reconstruction efforts began there before anywhere else on the peninsula.

Marshutz, enlisted to document these efforts for the Public Information Office of the U.S. Army, found extra time to wander Busan and snap photos at his leisure. What he captured was an urban population transitioning from the collective war effort to a more individual path: selling goods, providing services (such as fortune telling) or just wandering around in awe as life changed with each passing day.

The American footprint in Busan was massive and included more than just soldiers. Marshutz captured Koreans selling American products — Dole canned pineapple bits, Baby

Ruth candy bars, Ritz crackers, Hershey's chocolate, Pall Mall cigarettes — and flirting with G.I.s outside the "Paradise Café." *Counting cash* has a man selling zippers, leather shoes and other miscellany just trying to eek out a living, relearning the ropes of capitalism after the brief threat of communism.

While Miller takes roadside photos, Marshutz prefers the urban street, capturing vivid snapshots as he explores what must have been an exotic and uplifting scene around



Ravaged Building by Roger Marshutz

every corner. Despite its clunky composition, *Ravaged building* is the centerpiece of the show for its obvious symbolism. Koreans, in the shadow of a formerly glorious building reduced to a shell, toil in the rubble. They are literally starting from scratch.

The pieces in this show are digital prints from 35 mm negatives and slides. This reproduction process works well in the black and white prints, but unfortunately the color prints lose resolution and clarity in the transfer, especially in the multicolored *Girl selling snacks*. An artist's lecture by Marshutz was canceled, unfortunately, but you can still hear Frank Miller give a talk at 2 pm Sunday, Sept. 30 at the JSMA.

EW

"Trust" runs through Sept. 30; "Aftermath" through Nov. 26.

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Youth and Family...

Toddler Time (FM) A time where parents can come with their toddlers (Ages 6 months—2 1/2 years) and enjoy time in the small pool. Focus is on play and being comfortable with water and an introduction to instruction.

Circle Swim with Natalie (FM) An introduction to aqua jogging with a touch of YMCA fun facts and info.

Family Water Aerobics (FM) Everyone is welcome to this water fitness class with a family flair. Family Time in the pool with a great cardio workout. (8 and older welcome with participating adult.)

Swim Lessons (Fee) Classes for 6 months to Adults, new sessions start Oct. 1 - 25, Oct. 29 - Nov. 21, Nov. 26 - Dec. 13 (3 week)

Health and Wellness...

Teen Training (FM) Youth 12-15 years old require two sessions with a YMCA Wellness Coach before using Health and Wellness Center on his or her own (parent's permission required).

Family Training (FM) Parent and child (8+) sign up for one family training session with a YMCA Wellness Coach, learn how to workout safely and effectively together.

Wellness Appointments (FM) This is your first appointment with a Wellness Coach, includes health history, goals, program wishes, orientation and tour.

Nutrition 101 (Fee) Join us on the following dates at 5:30pm or 7:30pm 9/20, 10/18, 11/15. You'll walk away with helpful information and educational materials, and small changes that improve your health.

Managing Your Diabetes (FREE) This workshop will give you lots of information you need to manage diabetes. Join us 10/1, 11/5 or 12/3 at noon or 5:00pm.

Athletic Conditioning (FM) Enjoy short intensity drills, sprints, strength conditioning and endurance work.

Key...

FM = Free for members
Fee = There is a fee for this program. Please check out website or call for more information.
FREE = Open to everyone

New Classes to try...

Salsa Dance Lessons (Fee) 2 four week sessions starting in October and November. All levels welcome, individual, couples or Parent/Child (12+).

Pilates (FM) This is a mat based class. Pilates creates a wonderful mind-body connection that will tone your "power house" muscles (abdominals, back, obliques) as well as improve your posture, balance and body-awareness.

Turbo Kick (FM) Move and groove your way into shape with this pre-designed and choreographed kickboxing class. Come prepared to kick, punch, sweat, and shake it to high energy, hip-hop inspired music. It's a blast—try it once and you'll be HOOKED!

Belly Dance (FM) Experience mind-body coordination through the joy of belly dancing, work on isolations, core support and self enrichment. Come practice belly dancing as a family, or as an individual (Age 8+).

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