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by Karen Braun Malpas

Alameda, that lovely lady, is at it again...showing off, strutting her stuff, mugging for 48 cameras simultaneously.

Once again, The Frank Bette Center is hosting its popular annual Alameda On Camera event in which 48 juried artists have 48 hours to document their randomly drawn 1/48th of the map of Alameda. They then have a month to work with these images and present them in any photo-based way.

With Alameda as the common denominator, the range of numerators is wide and intriguing with images running a gamut between sublime, comical, sobering, sly, modest, theatrical, descriptive and more.

Amidst such diversity, are two beautiful representations of Alameda's bridges. If a bridge is a link between a here and a there, a connection, implying a change, a shift, a transition, Jennifer Cook's "All Signs Say Go" fills us with anticipation because there is literal and symbolic light on the other side of this golden, watercolor-like image. Taggart Gorman shot the "Bayfarm Bike Bridge" from beneath creating a striking black and white image which plays rigorous geometry against a wildly free-form sky.

Alameda's architectural heritage is represented in part by Susan Dunn's "The Birds Are Coming" which looks up at a romantic, yellow, Hitchcockian Victorian house. Decades later, emotionless, barely-broken uniformity defined some suburban neighborhoods as captured by Jeff Cullen in "Me and You". Luis Solorzano looked at "Three Structures" from their relatively nondescript backside, each subtly characterized by its siding or roof pitch but having in common a row of recycling bins and a large "X" in the near center of the composition.

Design, it's everywhere, it's everywhere but several artists isolated it and showed us very specific and striking organizations: Jeff Heyman's iconic "Bay", Patricia

Edith's "Green Bench", Alyx Morgan's "Leaning Ladder", Elizabeth Willard's small tone poems of paint seen up close, Bob Woodford's "Making Ripples", Jeff Dunn's tasteful horizontal curbs showing us that "Alameda Is Undiscurbed" and Stephen Elbert's "Shadow Allegory".

A camera may create entry to a scene the naked eye might miss in passing. "Tattoos" by Rachel Perata guides us into a warmly lit interior. Were it not for the signage, it feels like we are coming upon Papa

Geppetto in his workshop.

As a tool, the range finder and focus of a camera can force us to see something as the artist saw it. Fran Estrada looked at bird "Feathers" and saw a precision and delicacy equaling that of crystalline structures.

Nature has already done it all, the rest of us are copyists, Looking at that feather, a masterpiece of beauty and function, if one was skeptical of miracles before, this photo might make a believer of them.

There are skies of every color at every time of day and everything that grows or blooms in its multitude of shapes and colors. The visual richness of AOC 2014 reflects the visual wealth Alameda offers.

GALA OPENING, 2nd Friday, April 11, 7-9

Frank Bette Center for the Arts. 1601 Paru at Lincoln, Alameda. 510-523-6957. www.frankbettecenter.org. Th/Fr.11-6, Sa/Sun 11-5.