

Stick a Pin in It

The name of this group photo show is *Process*, which certainly describes its very procedural, materials-focused theme. Forget about digital; these prints—some made without a camera—

THEFUSSYEYE

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are all about the chemicals, photons, paper, and the physical basis of old-school photography. The medium was invented some 175 years ago, and this exhibit is generally historicist; it feels like an insiders' farewell to traditional darkroom skills at a time when so many of us are retiring our old film cameras—and finding no buyers on eBay. I fear, however, that the average gallerygoer has no such interest in these foundational traces. The images here seem mostly like shop-speak directed at other photographers; they're mainly technical and forbidding. Nobody bothers with beauty or scenery. Yes, let's overexpose or over-develop the paper, then sand off the emulsion. Yes, let's tear or crinkle the paper or put it out in the rain to see what happens. This is an inward-looking and backward-looking show, arranged as if the 15 artists are talking exclusively to themselves (and the curators). The only thing that really answers your gaze is a huge circular pushpin collage of male faces by the Bellingham duo of Garth Amundson and Pierre Gour. Their appropriated images make me think of Richard

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Prince (masculinity is being playfully dissected), yet the array also has a pleasing tactility to it, like sculpture. (For that matter, why not go further and use old red-and-yellow Kodak boxes or film rolls or their discarded cans to make things? Why not turn those unwanted old Nikons and Konicas into some new assemblage?) The message here, perhaps unintentionally gloomy, is that traditional photography's done—so stick a pin in it already. **Photo Center NW, 900 12th Ave., 720-7222, pcnw.org. Free. Noon–9 p.m. Tues.–Fri., noon–6 p.m. Sat. Ends June 15.**