

Juror Statement for Dreams

Not to overstate the obvious, but it was a dream to be the juror for this amazing selection of photographs, and to work with Hamidah Glasgow and the staff at The Center for Fine Art Photography. I felt very privileged to spend time with the over 2,500 images, each carefully selected for this theme, and each so appropriate for its interpretation. I personally thank each and every photographer for submitting work.

The concept of dreams is a broad one—a dream can be a personal goal, a life fantasy, a desire, and an ethereal scramble of ideas and imagery ripe for interpretation. It was from this heaping platter of ideas and elucidations with which I had to form an exhibition. And what a feast it was. I wasn't disappointed in this quest, in fact, I was overwhelmed with fantastic images and I was only sorry that I had to edit the exhibition down to 62 images.

As a photographer, I look at work in one way, as a writer and editor, another, and as a juror, yet another. For this exhibition, I was looking for work that was well executed and that was open-ended enough for the viewer to bring their own experiences (and in this case, dreams) to the image. I happen to be drawn to simple images, that don't give away the ending and allow for a broad range of interpretations. I wanted the work to spark my imagination and allow me to begin a new narrative, transporting me to a place I've never been.

My Juror Selection Award for Laura Hartford's wonderfully cinematic piece, *Root*, was just one of several amazing images she submitted. I strongly suggest visiting her site to see more. Laura's image was an example of creating something totally unique and compelling, where her execution did not get in the way of the end result. I can't wait to see where she takes her work next.

Rebecca Martinez's image, *Grace*, made me laugh out loud and reminded me of the strange dreams I had when I was pregnant.

Congratulations to all the photographers and I hope you have sweet dreams.

-Aline Smithson