Juror’s Statement

Selecting work from a large pool of submissions is not easy. Around 15% of the entries will eventually be selected, which means that the curator must say “no” over and over again, which goes against the grain of most people’s nature, which is to say “yes.” The necessity of saying no, and the necessity of making fine distinctions over and over, becomes exhausting. Only around 10% of the work submitted can be quickly eliminated, because it is not at the stage of artistic development of the rest of the group. Even then one hears a voice in the back of the mind suggesting that “well, it might be immature, but it was a great idea, and maybe I should make an exception.” After the first round I had cut the 450 slides down to about 175, roughly a third. About 35 were in my definite group, leaving around 140 maybes that I had to reduce to about 50. That’s when the really difficult work began. Over and over again I had to evaluate the ambition of the work, whether it related to the theme of shadows, the skill in fulfilling the idea, whether it was original or predictable. I also tried to be as inclusive of all the media submitted as possible, especially given that photography has an advantage when investigating shadows. I feel very good about the work chosen and look forward to seeing it in person. I took it very seriously and tried my best to honor the trust and vulnerability of an artist when giving their work to be evaluated by a stranger. I trust that I did a good job globally but freely acknowledge that someone else might’ve picked a final exhibition making different choices along the fuzzy border between yes and no.

Renny Pritikin

August 2023