

Picture sound.

Lakeview exhibit balances numbers, photography and music

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The logic and rigor of mathematics, the elegance and precision of the quantitative offer one kind of pleasure, at least for a certain kind of mind.

Art offers yet another. Yet the two are not as far apart as some might suppose.

Alice Hughey, whose photography exhibit, "Sound Prints: Images of Musical Instruments," is on view at Lakeview Museum through Jan. 20, knows something about both kinds of pleasure.

As a former economics professor, the Pomona, N Y., resident used to spend a lot of her time developing mathematical models. Her talent for numbers and logic has sharpened her appreciation of another kind of logic - the visual logic of photography. Including the balance of dark and light, and the play of lines and curves that make up a well-composed image.

She follows this logic closely in the Lakeview exhibit, which consists of 20 black-an-white close-ups of musical instruments, including a drum, a piano, a clarinet and a French horn.

The close-ups transform the familiar into the unfamiliar. What might be the keys of clarinet dissolve into a play of shiny circles and metallic drips. The inside of a piano becomes a study of diagonal lines.

"I guess you could say it's a second career," Hughey said. "I had always played around with cameras as a kid, but I never look it seriously. Then I was on sabbatical, and I took a photography class for fun. Before I knew it, it was becoming all consuming, and so I left academia and devoted myself to photography full time.

"It's a bit of change, although they're not as dissimilar as people think. The way I tend to look at things is more abstract. Rigorous is not necessarily the right word, but it's what I see as a parallel to the mathematical rigor I was used to in economics. More dispassionate, I suppose, more abstract."

Hughey, 49, who lives in Rockland County, just north of New York City, exhibits her work regularly in the New York metropolitan area, most recently at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. Hughey's work also was seen at the Peoria Art Guild during the summer.

Since leaving her post a decade ago as associate professor of economics at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. Hughey has been preoccupied with photography full time, studying at Parsons/The New School for Design and at the International Center of Photography, both in New York City.

Kristan McKinsey, Lakeview's vice president of collections and exhibits, has known Hughey since the two attended college together. She showed a portfolio of Hughey's work to Jim Richerson, Lakeview's president, who was impressed enough to exhibit her work.

The last day that "Sound Prints" is exhibited in the gallery - Jan. 20 - coincides with a chamber music concert at 5:45 pm. with harpsichordist Charlotte Mattax (call 686-7000 for more information). It's a happy juxtaposition that underscores the musical inspiration behind the photos.

"I like the shapes she sees, I like being drawn into things," McKinsey said. "She's showing me a bit of beauty that's within the larger whole. There's a thoughtfulness to them."

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