

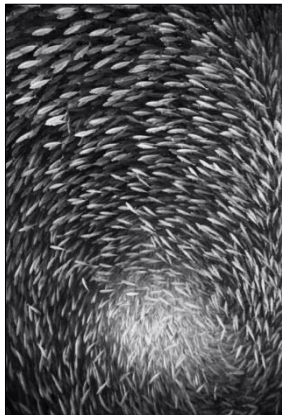
Wayne Levin, Smith-Anderson Gallery, March 7, 2016

Wayne Levin has been free-diving (snorkel only, no scuba) and photographing underwater off the Hawaiian Islands for many years. The photographs in the Smith-Anderson show are all Black & White images ranging in size from 20x24 to 40x60 (my estimates), with matts and simple frames.

We find underwater photography fascinating because we can't go there. Sunlight passing through water looks different than light passing through air. The ocean holds strange and exotic creatures and scenes. There is little or no external context from our "dry" world to help us understand what we see.

Levin's photographs are factual yet they transcend the world of facts. They describe and record but do not explain. These photographs, like all photographs, are an interpretation but it is more of an interpretation of visceral response to pattern and motion, not scientific enlightenment. Levin often points his camera up. His body surfers appear like flying gods in the sky and the pounding waves have become clouds. The circling school of fish becomes a mesmerizing pattern. His Ironman swimmers become a school of fish. Radiating light pattern seems to be pushing a shark towards the viewer. These are a few of the dozen or so images on display.

Levin does work in color, but color would have diluted these images. We become seduced by color. The blues and greens of the ocean would make it difficult to un-anchor these from reality. These Black & White images have no color to distract us from going beyond the facts of the titles. Levin clearly loves the elegance of fine prints.



Circling Akule



Body Surfers



Swimmers, Ironman Triathlon



Oceanic Whitetip Shark with Pilotfish