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Making Contact

There's too much to see at the photo festival, so here's a handful worth your time

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VISUAL ARTS CRITIC

The Scotiabank Contact Festival can be a tough slog: Too much stuff, not enough time, and no idea how much of it is actually *worth* your time. Humping around the catalogue — a five-pounder, easy — can, on its own, give you a rotator-cuff injury. So a week deep, a remedy: I've done the legwork, and can propose a few to bump to the top of your list for the remaining few weeks. Enjoy.

› Lorenzo Vitturi, *Dalston Anatomy*, Contact Gallery, 80 Spadina Ave.: Venice-born, London-based Vitturi moved to rainy London to find it full of colour, specifically in Ridley Road Market, a hub of the city's rich immigrant community and the sensual pleasures of cross-cultural foodieism. Inspired, he built sculptures and made delightfully surreal photographs of the sensual delights he found.

› Vanley Burke, *Watchers, Seekers, Keepers*, Black Artists' Network in Dialogue (BAND), 1 Lansdowne Ave.: Vanley Burke left Jamaica for the U.K. in 1965 as a teenager, and spent the next 50 years (and counting) documenting the black diaspora not only there through the tumult of the '60s and '70s, but into Africa itself. BAND entered the world last Contact festival with a show of photographs by the pioneering African-American photographer Gordon Parks, and Burke is a worthy follow.

› Grit Schwerdtfeger, *Zehn-Ten*, Jane Corkin Gallery, 7 Tank House Lane: There's something unsettling in this era of the unstoppable selfie, about a photographer making a picture of her son every single day for a year. Far from the weird dislocation that practice evokes, Schwerdtfeger instead extracts real intimacy between mother and son. Charming.

› Nicholas Pye, *Rise and Fall*, Birch Contemporary, 129 Tecumseth St.: Pye's artistic practice usually had "and Sheila" attached to it, for his collaborator and wife, with whom he built a considerable career. They

split, and this show is his first on his own, which do doubt explains the solitude that pervades. Far from bereft, there's a peaceful playfulness that suggests he's very much past the fall and on the rise.

› Siebren de Haan and Lonnie van Brummelen, *Episode of the Sea*, Gallery TPW, 170 St. Helens Ave.:

St. Helens Ave., near Bloor and Lansdowne, was for years a fish-packing hub. A couple of years ago, an art gallery moved in, then another, and now, with the grand reopening of Gallery TPW here, the transition is near complete. To mark it, TPW is showing *Episode of the Sea*, a hypnotizing maritime epic of a Dutch fishing community run aground by overfishing regulations that stripped them of the ability to compete with international rivals. The irony is deliberate — a nod, in solidarity, to a way of life on the rocks.

Elizabeth Zvonar's digital collages poke fun at everything from art history to pot smoking

› Elizabeth Zvonar, *The Challenge of Abstraction*, Daniel Faria Gallery, 188 St. Helen's Ave.:

I love it when Contact is not so Contact-y, which is to say it steers away from pictures on the wall and into more adventuresome territory. Zvonar, with her digital collages that poke fun at everything from art history to celebrity culture to pot smoking, fit the bill. And — bonus! — gosh, they're beautiful.

› Jimmy Limit, *Surplus*, Clint Roenisch Gallery, 190 St. Helen's Ave.:

Limit's a high-concept kind of guy, and this show means to get at the endlessly accreting digital image archive to which each and every one of us is contributing, every day. Too many, in fact — surplus; get it? — so what's a few more? Like Zvonar — next door, conveniently — *Surplus* is less a show of photography than a show about photography, which means to really get it, you have to show up. I won't spoil the surprise, but do. You'll see what I mean.

The Contact Photography Festival continues to May 31. Go to scotiabank-contactphoto.com for more information.



Lorenzo Vitturi's work at the Contact Gallery is inspired by food in London.



Vanley Burke's *Untitled (Barbershop)* at Black Artists' Network in Dialogue.



Elizabeth Zvonar's *Join the Resistance* is part of *The Challenge of Abstraction*.



Episode of the Sea is a maritime epic about a Dutch fishing community.

-Whyte, Murray. "Making Contact", *Toronto Star*, May 11, 2015.