

HOME / LIFESTYLE / FOOD

GALLERIES

The Boston Globe

Capturing the overlooked



"Untitled (Telephone Wires) Hanoi, Vietnam," one of the photographs in Sean Keenan's "Southeast Asia Series." (Courtesy of Judi Rotenberg Gallery)

By Cate McQuaid
Globe Correspondent / August 20, 2008

Email | Print | Single Page | Yahoo! Buzz | ShareThis Text size - +

Photographer Sean Keenan got his start shooting skateboarders, so it's his habit to stay low to the ground and point his camera up. Not all his photographs of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand, now at Judi Rotenberg Gallery, look skyward, but the best of them do, homing in on details most of us would ignore and capturing the unnoticed with long exposures and a narrowly focused lens.

RELATED

- EVENT **'Sean Keenan: Southeast Asia Series'**
- EVENT **'Nicole Kita: The Sickness Vocation'**
- EVENT **'Taryn Wells: There Are No Others Around Me'**
- THEATER/ARTS **more reviews, museum, and art gallery listings**

Sean Keenan: Southeast Asia Series

Nicole Kita: The Sickness Vocation

At: Judi Rotenberg Gallery, 130 Newbury St., through Aug. 31. 617-421-1518, www.judirotenberg.com

Lumens

I tend to be suspicious of travel photos, which can depict gorgeous, unfamiliar settings without being good photography. But Keenan is an urban photographer, not a travel photographer. He's less interested in the culture than he is in the DNA of a city, such as the crisscrossing of cables around a utility pole in "Untitled (Telephone Wires) Hanoi, Vietnam."

It's a sight you might take for granted in any populated area, only this thicket of wires is denser than any I've ever seen. With the surroundings blurring and the sky black in the distance, the crisp, ugly nexus of cables pops against the balcony beyond.

There's something almost gothic about "Untitled

ADVERTISEMENT

INSIDE BOSTON.COM

ZOO BABIES



New Panda cub is roughly the size of a cell phone

12 FANTASTIC SANDWICHES



The greatest Greater Boston things in sliced bread

ELECTION MOVIES



Boston.com's favorite movies about politicians and polls

JEEPERS CREEPERS



In time for Halloween, the 50 scariest movies of all time

At: Greylock Arts, 93 Summer St., Adams, 413-241-8692, and MCLA Gallery 51 Annex, 65 Main St., North Adams, 413-664-8718, through Oct. 31.

www.turbulence.org/works/newadar

Taryn Wells: There Are No Others Around Me

At: Brookline Arts Center, 86 Monmouth St., Brookline, through Aug. 29. 617-566-5715,

www.brooklineartscenter.com

(Purple Window) Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam." The titular window is one of six on walls so worn with age they're lovely maps of tone and texture. The largest is streaked and shadowy, a second looks stripped and abraded, and one in the foreground runs with rust. Together they read like an abstract painter's dream, neatly offered up by a photographer of Vietnamese buildings.

Also at Rotenberg, artist Nicole Kita, who just got her masters from the School of the Museum

of Fine Arts, offers a spare drawing installation that sports fine technique but doesn't come together conceptually. Focusing on types of healing, she has covered a wall in vinyl tape with a snowflake-like pattern borrowed from hospital johnnies, along with two taped images of crystals.

She also has small, spare graphite drawings of crystals, along with images of herself performing a Jazzercise routine and donning a bearskin, perhaps like a shaman. In one comical image, Pope John Paul II wears an African headdress. These don't add up; against the larger backdrop of the hospital gown pattern, they read like Band-Aids. It's not clear whether Kita is summoning the powers of alternative methods of healing (including religious faith), or questioning them.

Most illuminating

I don't know any community more engaged in the projects of local artists than North Adams, thanks to outreach pioneered by Mass MoCA before that museum opened in 1999. For the sweetly effective "Lumens," artists Matthew Belanger, Sean Riley, and Ven Voisey solicited lamps from residents of North Adams and nearby Adams, and the story behind each lamp.

"Lumens" is a magical interactive light installation in galleries in both cities, with a Web component at www.turbulence.org. I visited the project at MCLA Gallery 51 Annex in North Adams on a gray day last week, and as I walked through the space, the lamps lit and dimmed; light rippled around me as water might if I'd been wading in a pond. Belanger told me that at Greylock Arts in Adams, lamps linked to those in North Adams turned on and off synchronously with those sparked by my movement.

Part of the charm is in the range of lamps - many are homey table lamps; others are handmade and bizarre, such as a toy rattlesnake with a bulb in its mouth. On the website, you can click on the image of a lamp and read its story. The tales range from heartfelt to quirky to factual; they read like the voices of a community. When you click on a lamp, it will flicker on in the Berkshires.

"Lumens" suggests we're all connected, and that's a reassuring notion, even expressed in the light of energy-burning incandescent bulbs.

A portrait of the artist

"There Are No Others Around Me" is the title of Taryn Wells's drawing show at the Brookline Arts Center, and it takes a much lonelier view than "Lumens." Wells has remarkable skill with graphite, and her self-portraits are confrontational. In them, she grapples with race.

If the exhibit is autobiographical, it suggests that she's the daughter of a black father and a white mother; there's a rendering of a wedding snapshot, and beneath it a drawing of a photo of Wells as a girl, smiling, with her mother's blond hair and her father's full lips. Alongside the wedding shot, she has a list titled "Marriage - Fit and Unfit," with equations from "Pure + Pure" to "Tainted

PLUS...

[Blogs](#) | [Crossword](#) | [Comics](#) | [Horoscopes](#) | [Games](#) | [Lottery](#) | [Caption contest](#) | [Today in history](#)

MOST E-MAILED »

1. [Patrick to name first African-American chief justice of SJC](#)
2. [With wave of a hand, Microsoft's Kinect is the controller to beat](#)
3. [Modern brought up-to-date](#)
4. [Report: 10-year-old gives birth in southern Spain](#)
5. [It's a boy-apalooza](#)
6. [Seminar to look at energy disputes](#)
7. [Belmont native killed in Afghanistan awarded Bronze Star](#)

RECOMMENDED SEARCHES

- [NH murder trial](#)
- [Sudoku](#)
- [Beetle free trees](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Al Qaeda threat](#)
- [Crossword puzzle](#)

[ABOUT THIS LIST](#) ▶

+ Abnormal," and the types of children, from pure to abnormal, they might produce.

In "The Clown," she portrays herself in makeup, darkening her face. In "Self-Hatred," she draws herself twice, as a cowboy and as an Indian. In "The Other: People Beyond Definition," she writes out a dictionary entry on "other" and inserts her own picture to illustrate. Despite Wells's assured hand, the work is claustrophobic; it ultimately says as much about how the artist feels about herself as it says about racism. ■

© Copyright 2008 Globe Newspaper Company.

Email	Print	Single page	Reprints	Share

<p>Your Name</p> <p>Your e-mail address (for return address purposes)</p> <p>E-mail address of recipients (separate multiple addresses with commas)</p> <p>Name and both e-mail fields are required.</p>	<p>Message (optional)</p> <p>DISCLAIMER: <i>Boston.com does not share this information or keep it permanently, as it is for the sole purpose of sending this one time e-mail.</i></p>
---	---

Ads by Google [what's this?](#)

Photography Degree Online
Earn Your Photography Degree Online at The Art Institutes. Learn More!
www.aionline.edu

Boston Photo School
Turn Photography Talent to a Career Learn How at our Local Campus.
Photography.ArtSchoolNewEngland.com

Free Delicious Recipes
Live & Eat Better With Diabetes. Register For Free Kraft Recipes!
www.KraftRecipes.com/Diabetes



Send Holiday Cards
That Conquer Cancer



Where Art and Culture
Meet



LUNAFEST at the Liberty
Hotel on Wed., Nov 10th



The premiere of Giacomo
Puccini's opera TOSCA



A distinctive collection
of artists jewelry.

[Home](#) | [Today's Globe](#) | [News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [A&E](#) | [Things to Do](#) | [Travel](#) | [Cars](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Homes](#) | [Local Search](#)

CONTACT BOSTON.COM | [Help](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Work here](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS feeds](#) | [Make Boston.com your home page](#)

CONTACT THE BOSTON GLOBE | [Subscribe](#) | [Manage your subscription](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Boston Globe Extras](#) | [The Boston Globe Store](#) | [Reprints](#) | © 2010 NY Times Co.

