



Sarah Karess  
*Flight or Fight*  
Best in Show Award

## 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL INVISON PHOTO-BASED ART JURIED EXHIBITION

**Juried by: Sarah Stolfa; President, Chief Executive Officer, and Artistic Director of the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center.**

### **“We grow accustomed to the Dark”**

This year’s theme for the 2020 Juried Exhibition is inspired by Emily Dickinson’s poem “We grow accustomed to the Dark,” written in response to a time of personal loss in her life and at a time of national uncertainty during the Civil War. “Dark” in this context stands as a metaphor for the unknown, and the poem details how humans have a unique ability to prevail onward and slowly adjust to new circumstances of the world around them. To many of us, this year has had numerous new uncertainties. The inspiring, but in many ways challenging, the acts of social solidarity in response to the global pandemic changes and shapes all aspects of our lives around us. This year, we ask artists to consider this new “Dark” and how we adjust our eyes to see the road forward again through the lens of photo-based artwork.

Our staff has selected three main topics for artists to follow under this year’s theme:

Unexpected Heroes  
Connection & Community  
A Light in the Dark

Before walking through the gallery/viewing the collection of work on-line, take a moment to consider the poem “We grow accustomed to the Dark”, by Emily Dickenson. Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) was an American poet who lived a mostly introverted, secluded life, maintaining friendships through written letters. She wrote over 1800 poems in her seclusion, most of which were published after her death. As you read, take notes on the meaning of “darkness” throughout the poem.<sup>4</sup>

*We grow accustomed to the Dark —  
When light is put away —  
As when the Neighbor holds the Lamp  
To witness her Goodbye —  
A Moment — We uncertain step  
For newness of the night —  
Then — fit our Vision to the Dark —  
And meet the Road — erect —  
And so of larger — Darkneses —  
Those Evenings of the Brain —*

*When not a Moon disclose a sign —  
Or Star — come out — within —  
The Bravest — grope a little —  
And sometimes hit a Tree  
Directly in the Forehead —  
But as they learn to see —  
Either the Darkness alters —  
Or something in the sight  
Adjusts itself to Midnight —  
And Life steps almost straight.*

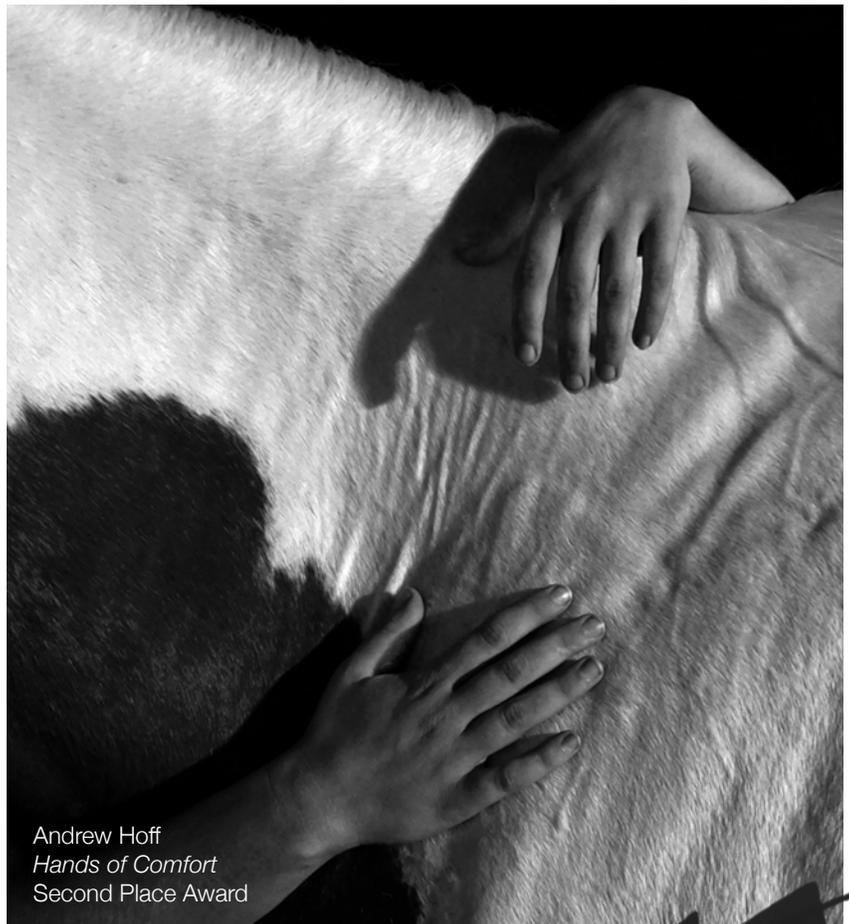
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.commonlit.org/texts/we-grow-accustomed-to-the-dark>

## Essential Questions

- Dickinson is known for her unconventional use of capitalization. As you read the poem again, make notes about Dickinson's use of capitalization. What patterns do you notice? How does her capitalization help you understand the poem?<sup>5</sup>
- What does "dark" mean in this poem to the reader? To the narrator?
- Look at the photographs and photo-based artworks in the exhibition, and notice the use of light & dark the artists use. How are the artist's using lighting differently in these works? Consider one of the themes artists could follow is "a light in the dark"
- Compare the photos that are black and white and photos that are in full color. How does making the images in black and white change both the look of the photo, as well as the feeling or mood of the photograph? Do you think the artist does this intentionally?

## Suggested Projects

- Select a photo from the exhibition, and write your own short poem about the piece. The poem can reflect how the photo makes you (the viewer) feel, or can be written from the point of view of the photo's subject.
- Select three images that fit the three suggested themes of the exhibition, one for each theme (Unexpected Heroes, Connection & Community, A Light in the Dark) write down or talk about why you chose each photo for the themes. Think about one of the essential questions from the 100 Black Dad's Exhibit "How do photographs convey meaning? How do viewers contribute to constructing that meaning?"
- Consider the themes for the exhibition, Emily Dickinson's poem, or your own short poem. Using that as inspiration, take a photograph or create a photo-based artwork- this can be taken on a digital camera, a phone camera, created from found photos/magazines to create a photo collage, etc.



Andrew Hoff  
*Hands of Comfort*  
Second Place Award

<sup>5</sup> www.commonlit.org, discussion questions