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Art & Soul: Contemporary exhibit goes beyond color

By [Allison Hersh](#)

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Summary:

In contemporary photography, large-format color work tends to dominate the discussion, leading some critics to dismiss black and white work as decidedly retro and fundamentally irrelevant.

Allison Hersh

In contemporary photography, large-format color work tends to dominate the discussion, leading some critics to dismiss black and white work as decidedly retro and fundamentally irrelevant.

"After Color," a group exhibit on display at the Savannah College of Art and Design's Hall Street Gallery , attempts to reclaim black and white photography as an experimental, bold and edgy medium. Amani Olu, the exhibit's guest curator, assembled new photo-based work by nine contemporary artists who push the conceptual and technical limits of black and white imagery.

"Each artist is interested in how to make a new type of black and white photograph that does not rely solely on photographic conventions, nostalgia and the cool factor that is 'I thought this would look cooler as a black and white image,'" explained Olu, an independent curator and writer based in New York City.

The exhibit, which originally debuted in 2009 at Bose Pacia Gallery in New York, immediately attracted attention for its unconventional approach to monochromatic photography.

"In New York everyone loved the show," Olu said. "People still talk about it today."

From Pushpamala N'sfeminist portraiture to Michael Buhler-Roses's conceptual photograms, "After Color" attempts to redefine the creative potential of black and white photography.

"I was motivated by how artists were playing with the medium and making it fresh," Olu said, "namely through looking at photography's loaded history, conceptual art and 25 years of color's dominance."

Highlights include Adrien Missike's telescopic views of the Grand Canyon, which re-imagine the iconic landscape as ethereal, swirling planets, as well as Talia Chetrit's abstract Photoshop-inspired images, which elevate geometry to the level of fine art.

From the dreamy, hypnagogic patterns in Arthur Ou's seascapes to Matthew Gamber's neo-expressionistic photographs of weathered classroom chalkboards, each of the artists in "After Color" finds visual poetry in unexpected places.

"When you look at these different 'movements' and apply black and white, you almost always end up with a different type of image, one that was impossible to make 50 years ago," Olu said. "It's the combination of history that makes this work new."



[Amani Olu, curator of the show "After Color" gives a talk about the work in Gallery See.](#)

[1]



[Amani Olu, curator of the show "After Color" gives a talk about the work in Gallery See.](#)

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IF YOU GO

What: "After Color," featuring photo-based works by nine contemporary artists

Where: Hall Street Gallery, 212 W. Hall St.

When: Through Jan. 28; Guest curator gallery talk with Amani Olu at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 28 followed by a reception from 6-7:30 p.m.

Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., weekdays.

For more information: 525-4950 or www.scadexhibitions.com [3]

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