

Through July 24: *Cold Warriors* by Tom Sliter at Multiple Exposures Gallery



In his exhibit of photographs of Cold War-era airplanes, D.C.-based artist **Tom Sliter** presents images that are oddly animalian. One image captures a rotund portion of a plane that suggests a manatee; another shows an armored nose shaped like that of a shark; a third captures a pointy extrusion that is a dead ringer for a narwhal. (Appropriately, Sliter's images share a washed-out gray palette with the dimly lit aquarium photographs of [Henry Horenstein](#).) When Sliter's planes aren't looking like sea creatures, they sometimes offer pleasingly minimalist arrangements, such as one image that consists mainly of a thin arc of white set against a fuselage and the sky, both of which are nearly black. Sliter's artist statement says he seeks to pair the "inherent beauty" of these war machines with "the complicated, darker story of the forces that drove these designs." He largely succeeds in communicating the planes' splendid geometries; save for their lack of color, his loving, often decontextualized portrayals of machine design are not unlike paeans to the smooth lines and curves of the cars of yesteryear. But without further elaboration on the history, viewers who want to explore the "darker" side of this nuclear-trigger era will need to bring their own Cold War backstories to the exhibit. *Cold Warriors* runs *through July 24 at Multiple Exposures Gallery at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Studio 312, Alexandria. Daily 11 a.m.–5 p.m. multipleexposuresgallery.com. Free.* —**Louis Jacobson**