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Democracy Dies in Darkness

In the galleries: These landscapes are something short of idyllic

By **Mark Jenkins**

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Colleen Spencer Henderson's "Storm Clouds, Inch Beach," at Multiple Exposures Gallery.
(Colleen Spencer Henderson/Multiple Exposures Gallery)

Sandy LeBrun-Evans & Colleen Spencer Henderson

The photos in the twinned shows at Multiple Exposures Gallery are all rural landscapes, and mostly black and white. Yet Sandy LeBrun-Evans's "Hard Truths" and Colleen Spencer Henderson's "Irish Landscapes" are as different as their locations: West Virginia and western Ireland.

That's not just because LeBrun-Evans's pictures document economic decline, while Henderson's portray a land with no noticeable industry. (So the area's commercial engine must be tourism.) "Jobs, jobs, jobs" promises a campaign sign in West Virginia, but abandoned mines and buildings

abound. In this account of Ireland, the principal man-made structures are a church and a bridge. Surf and sky dominate.

Those expanses are showcases for light, which is Henderson's essential subject. The heavens glow, and the water mirrors their sheen. Such individual moments are transitory, of course, but the link is eternal — at least by the standards of human perception.



Sandy LeBrun-Evans's "Best Damn Coal Miners." (Sandy LeBrun-Evans/Multiple Exposures Gallery)

The moments frozen in LeBrun-Evans's photos also are still, yet convey a sense of motion. Many of her pictures include railroad tracks or line-divided highways, and these pathways usually lead the eye from one side of the image to the other. (A notable exception is "Mine Entrance," on which the tracks lead into a dark void.) The ribbons of steel or asphalt are a dynamic compositional device, but they also hint at a message: We gotta get out of this place.

***Sandy LeBrun-Evans: Hard Truths and Colleen Spencer
Henderson: Irish Landscapes*** On view through Feb. 12 at Multiple Exposures Gallery, Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. 703-683-2205. multipleexposuresgallery.com.