Photographed to abstraction

Jeffrey Becton's multi-layered digital montages take viewers to the edge of reality, posing questions that he asks them to answer on their own terms.

By ROB KEYES
Staff Writer

OBER ISLE — Before Jeffrey Becton married his wife, Hillary, they met with a minister to talk about religion and spirituality. Becton told the minister that he was not religious but had a spiritual side.

"I knew," the minister told him, "I've seen your work.

That might be the best compliment Becton could receive. A photographer who plays with paint in the way a painter pushes paint, the 58-year-old makes images that demand contemplation. Whether making pictures of old New England houses juxtaposed with the paintings of generations or the steel hull of a boat painted with rust, paint and sea life, Becton's work is ambiguous and suggestive. He layers these images with elements from other photos, imbuing his work with dreamlike properties. He doesn't lead the viewer to answers. He just asks the questions. "I want the viewer to finish the story," he said.

This winter, Becton is showing nearly two dozen large scale photographic montages at Bates College Museum of Art. "The

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"The Pilot House," 2014

IF YOU GO
WHAT: "The View Out His Window (and in His Mind's Eye): Photographs by Jeffrey Becton"
WHERE: Bates College Museum of Art, 78 Russell St., Lewiston
WHEN: 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, through March 26
ADMISSION: Free
INFO: 786-6158, bates.edu/museum

"March Morning 2," 2012