

# The Boston Globe

## Frozen time, altered perspectives in new photo shows

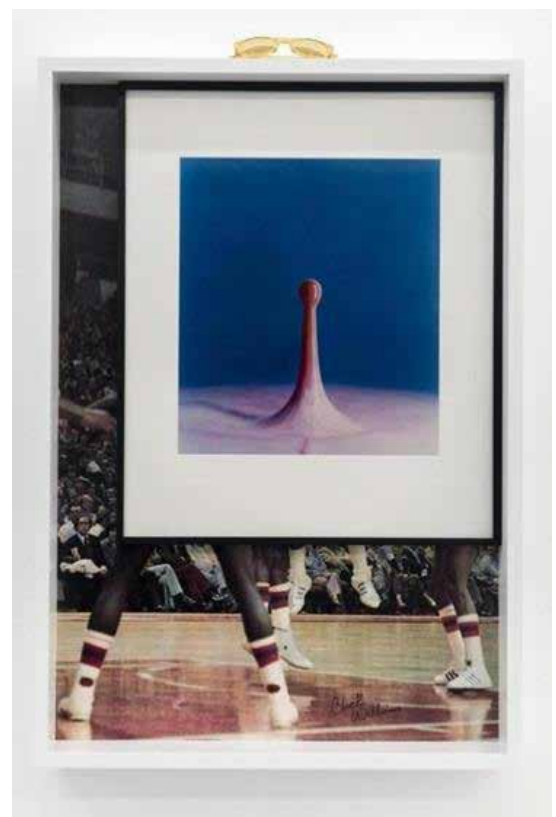
By Cate McQuaid | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT SEPTEMBER 29, 2015

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Photography stops time, and no photographer has done that more succinctly than Harold “Doc” Edgerton (1903-90), the MIT electrical engineer who took the electronic flash to extraordinary heights. He captured moments, such as the corona-like backplash of a drop of milk, that happen so quickly the eye cannot perceive them.

Sports photographers stop time, too, looking for drama. In his new show at Samson, Todd Pavlisko layers Edgerton’s vintage prints on old basketball posters, and the coupling is strangely perfect: funny, even sweet, and humming with erotic undertones and comedy.

They make a cartoon of male prowess. Edgerton’s explosive drops, or a bullet passing through an apple, echo the cheesy stand-ins for sex in midcentury movies, such as fireworks, or trains going into tunnels. But there’s much more



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**One of Todd Pavlisko’s untitled pieces employs Harold “Doc” Edgerton’s “Dye Drop Into Milk.”**

going on here. Many of Edgerton's images have a lyrical affinity for basketball's rhythms and movements.

One of the untitled pieces features Edgerton's "Dye Drop Into Milk," in which the drop launches vertically from the smooth surface of the milk. Pavlisko places it directly over the frame of a player leaping for the basket; we see only his feet, suspended well over the floor. The drop conveys his precision and physical eloquence, and the quiet isolation that cloaks an undistracted player at crucial moments. Plus, Edgerton's image drives home that this will be over quicker than the blink of an eye.

The photo/poster pairings all capture climactic moments, but a series of sculptures cheekily address the lulls that follow. These include flaccid, gold-plated Ray-Bans that droop over bottles of Orange Crush, and violins (crafted by luthiers!) that melt over basketballs. Violins suggest mastery, but also sentimentality and the sad sound of emotional deflation after the game is over.

As much as it represents stopping time, Pavlisko's show evokes rhythm — full, as it is, with rushes and pauses. His clever installation, in which the portions of posters obscured by the Edgerton photos appear elsewhere in the gallery, keep the eye darting around the space (even up to the rafters) the way a ball moves around a court. As in a fast-moving basketball game, there's little opportunity to lose interest.

### **TODD PAVLISKO: Hummingbird**

At: Samson, 450 Harrison Ave., through Oct. 24. 617-357-7177,  
[www.samsonprojects.com](http://www.samsonprojects.com)