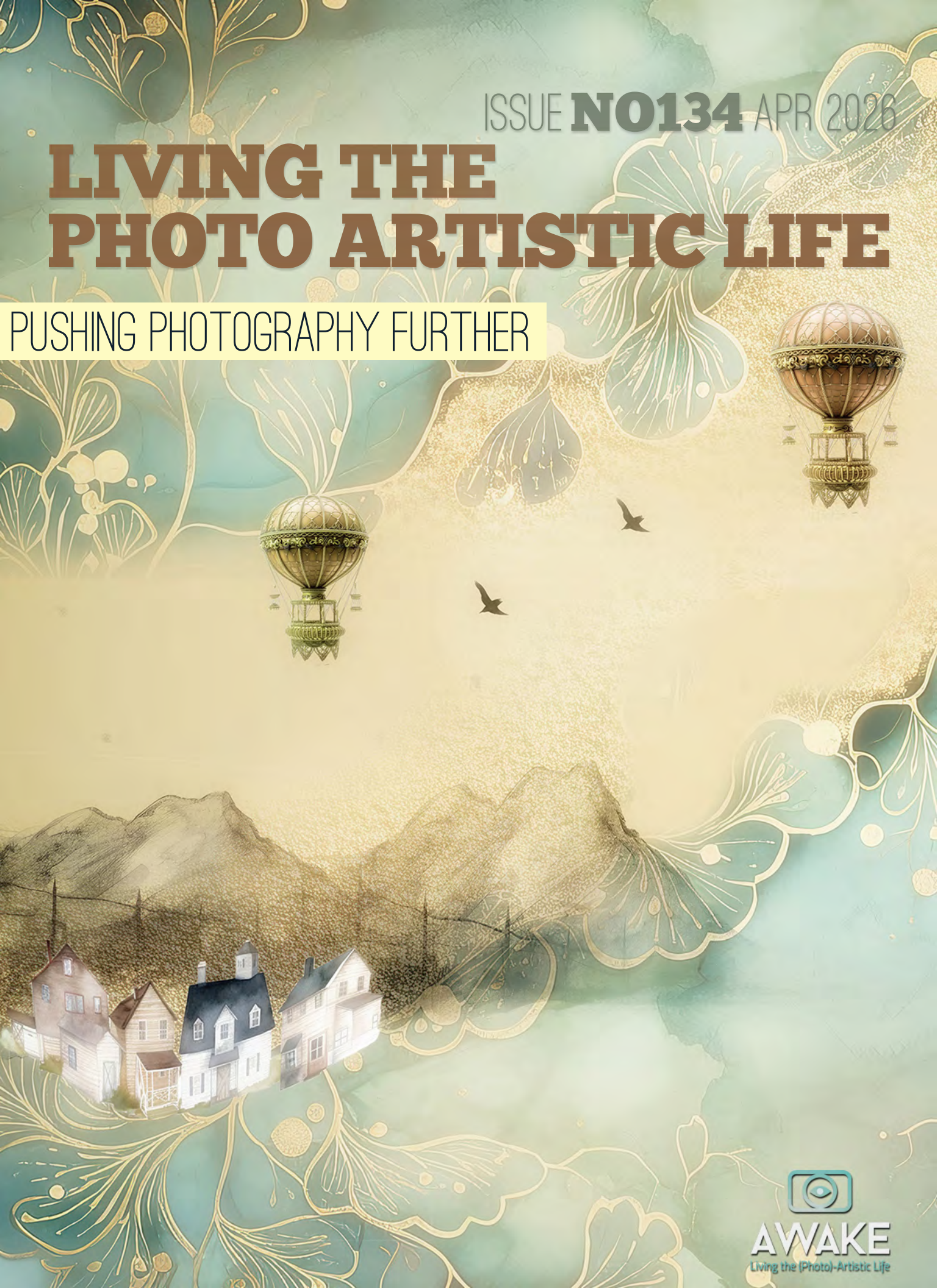


ISSUE **NO134** APR 2026

LIVING THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

PUSHING PHOTOGRAPHY FURTHER



AWAKE
Living the (Photo)-Artistic Life

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

SEBASTIAN MICHAELS

Have you ever been so immersed in taking photos or working on a piece of art . . . that you found that time seemed to disappear?

An hour or two might go by while you happily become one with your craft.

You're in the zone. You've found that fabled land of *flow*.

Ray Bradbury gave as his greatest piece of advice to writers: hang a sign over your desk reading "DON'T THINK."

Mind you, this isn't to say you shouldn't have *thoughts*. Ideas and inspiration arrive as thoughts. ("Wouldn't it look great if . . . ?" or "What if I tried this . . . ?")

What you need to avoid is *thinking* about your thoughts.

That's when your Muse sighs and closes shop.

We've all experienced this. We have some inspired thought, some idea for a photo or composition, maybe some glimmer of something really cool we might do with our artwork — but then the mind butts in and starts *thinking* . . .

"Yeah, but you're not good enough to do that. No one is ever going to like it; they'll probably think it's stupid. And what makes you think you can be an artist anyhow?"

You had this wonderful inspired thought or idea; you could feel yourself getting excited about it; the sun was shining and the birds were singing.

Then you went and let your mind throw cold water (cold *dirty* water) all over it.

When you let your mind start up with all its thinking, negativity and self-doubt inevitably creep in. Especially when you're about to begin something new and haven't yet learned to push all that mental garbage aside and simply dive in and *get to work*.

All of the artists we showcase here each month have learned to trust in their inspiration and see where it leads. Immersed in their craft, creative ideas pop up . . . and before the paralysis of self-doubt can poison the waters, they breathe deep, jump in, and begin to create, explore, *play*.

I've long felt that one of the greatest rewards of taking up photo artistry is that it gives us this opportunity to spend more and more of our life in the zone — in that delicious state of creative flow — where all our troubles (all the world's troubles) fall away . . . and life is truly simple again.

This is what makes an artistic life so rich and fulfilling.

Embracing our inspiration, and refusing to allow our mind to muddle with it, we take up our creative tools with the faith that our Muse will see us through. The universe shines on us. And our days and nights acquire a quality of grace.

It's a good way to live.

~ Sebastian

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

004 CATHY LABUDAK
 005 NANCIE ROWAN
 006 CHERYL PARRIS
 007 ASHBY PRESLEY
 008 PAMELA WALDER
 009 ROBZ LIPNER
 010 RENEE PHOENIX
 011 KATHLEEN GREENWOOD
 012 ANN LAVIN
 013 DONNA ELLIOT
 014 RACHELLE R. VETTER
 015 MERRILEE SOBERG
 016 EVELYN ELWAN
 017 BEVERLY EVERSON
 018 JOYCE SIMPSON
 019 CATBEAGLE CREATIONS
 020 ANITA HUBBARD
 021 CJ SHANK
 022 MARK LUTNES
 023 REBECAH THOMPSON
 024 PAULA D POWERS
 025 ROSA PERRY
 026 JILL JOHNSON
 027 JANICE S. BATTERBEE
 028 MAGGY R. THORVALSDOTTIR PEASE
 029 PAULINE VAN DER SPUY
 030 SUE WATERHOUSE
 031 PENNY DE JONG
 032 DOV FUCHS
 033 DORI FLEMING
 034 MARK HEMSTREET
 035 NANCY BRIZENDINE
 036 DEAN KELLEY
 037 MARIUS ELS

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 039 CHRISTINA BRUNTON
 040 MATTHEW BERBERICH
 041- SPECIAL TRIBUTE FEATURE:
 045 **MARJUT KORHONEN**
 046 JEAN HUTTER
 047 KRISTIN COUCH
 048 DONNA WATERSON
 049 MAUREEN MAXWELL
 050 MARILYN SUMNER
 051 NINA IRVIN
 052 KAREN SORRELLS
 053 DOREEN FAIELLO
 054 DIANE PINSART
 055 TERRI BUTLER
 056 INGRID POMEROY
 057 BARBARA MIERAU-KLEIN
 058 KIM RICCI
 059 VIV BUCKLEY
 060 MARY ANN ROESLER
 061 RENEE KEEL
 062-063 MARGARET WEIR
 064 VICKI ARDOIN
 065 INGE KLEMENT
 066 SUE PULASKI
 067 WANDA ANN KINNAMAN
 068 CATHERINE KING
 069 KEELEY MCCLEAVE
 070 DAN BORGE
 071 MARGO REASNER
 072 BARBARA A LANE
 073 BOB DESILETS
 074 DIANE EASTHAM
 075 JAN ROBINSON

076 KEITH G. HAWLEY
 077 HELGA BLANKE
 078 MAXI BALGER
 079 MARIE FARMER
 080 LOU ANN DONAHUE
 081 JOY BUCKLEY FLYNN
 082 LINDA LEWIS
 083 AUGUST NAUDE
 084 SANDRA DANN
 085 LARRY BUCKLEY
 086 S. H. LAYRE
 087 TINA CHRISTENSEN
 088 SHELLEY BENJAMIN
 089 DAVE HATTORI
 090 DIANA HARONIS
 091 DEBORAH MORRISON
 092 DIANE LEICHER GLATZER
 093 DAN LAVERY
 094 JOHN T JONES
 095 ELLY FOX
 096 JOHN MOLINO
 097 DENISE HUNTER LOGAN
 098 JULIE MAE THIES
 099 TRACY COOPER
 100 SHARON JENKINS
 101 ILONA ABOU-ZOLOF
 102 BOB RUDE
 103 HELEN ANNE LEMKE
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FRONT COVER & BACKGROUND IMAGE
 MARJUT KORHONEN



AWAKE
 Living the (Photo)-Artistic Life



Far Above the Madding Crowd

Cathy Labudak
(USA)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/clabudak/>



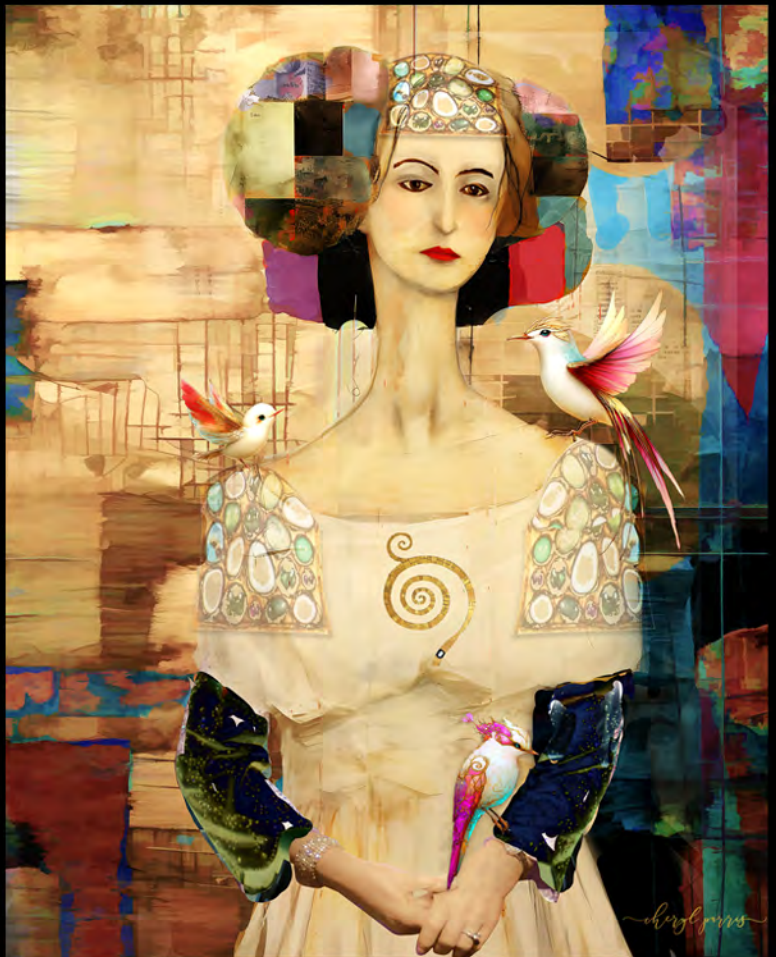
Season of
Becoming



Nancie Rowan
(USA)

Damask Rabbit

Court of the Feathered Muse



Cheryl Parris
(USA)

<http://www.cherylparris.com/>

The Meeting





Rainy Day - Impressionistic Painting

Ashby Presley
(USA)

<http://www.ash3photography.com/>



Asleep in the Butterfly Workshop

Pamela Walder
(UK)



A Little Freedom



Robz Lipner
(South Africa)

<http://www.robzartworx.com/>

Against the Divide

City Girl



Renee Phoenix
(USA)

<http://www.reneephoenix.com/>

A New Legend





Easter Sunday

Kathleen Greenwood
(USA)

<http://fineartamerica.com/profiles/kathleen-greenwood/shop>





Once upon a Time



Donna Elliot
(USA)

I am Taken by You

<http://donnaelliot.slickpic.com/>



Age of Wisdom

Rachelle R. Vetter
(USA)

<http://rachellerphotography.com/>

Waiting for Spring





Merrilee Soberg
(Canada)

Sunflower Shuttle





Waiting at the Corner

Beverly Everson
(USA)

<http://www.eversonphotography.com/>



Downtown

Joyce Simpson
(UK)

<https://joycesimpson.myportfolio.com/>



City Bound



CatBeagle Creations
(Australia)

<http://www.cherylparris.com/>

Captain Byron's Big Day Out

A Beautiful Mess



Anita Hubbard
(Canada)

<https://digartography.pixels.com/>

Messy Escape



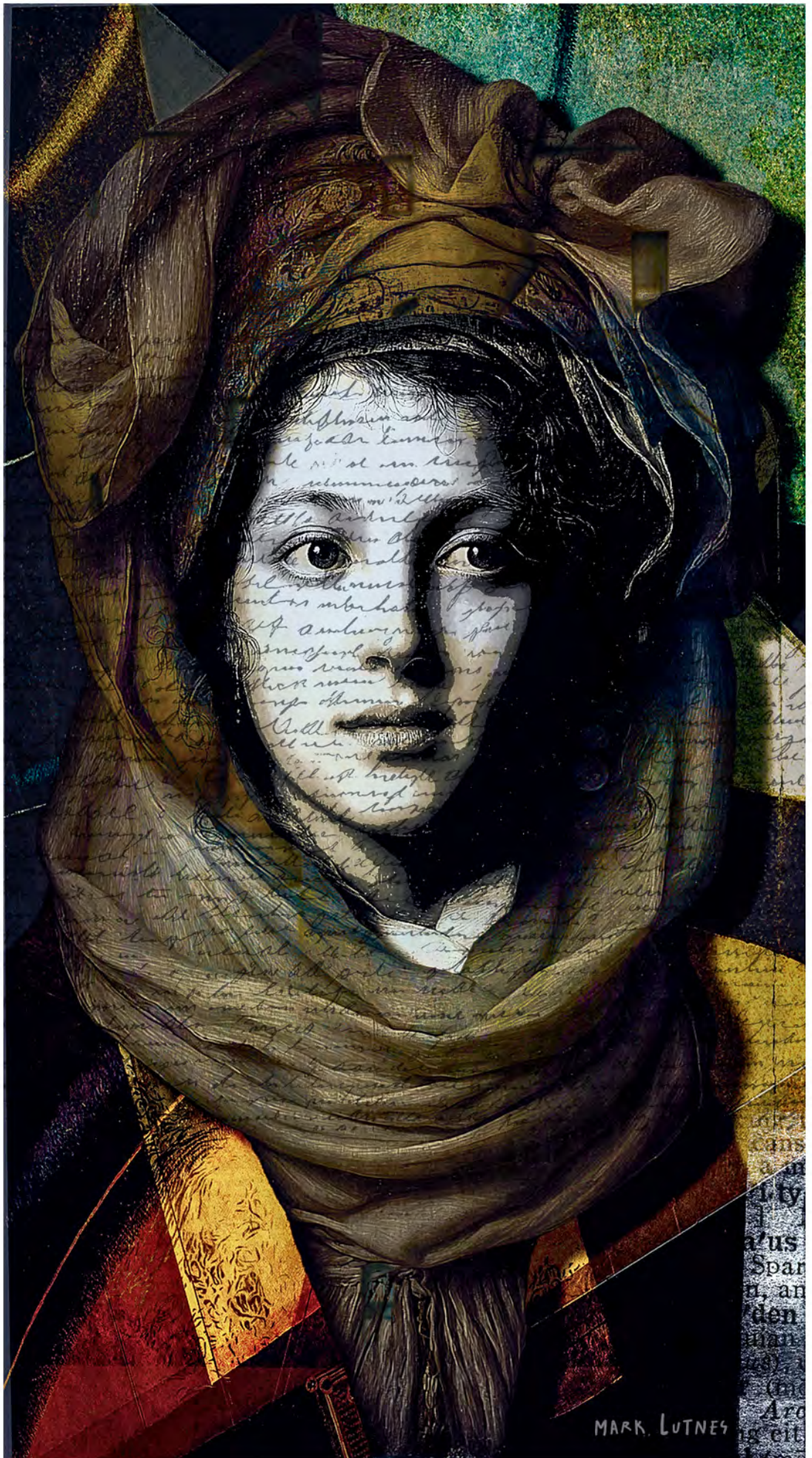


Drops of Blue

CJ Shank
(USA)

Attraction

Mark Lutnes
(USA)





Rebecah Thompson
(USA)

Schroeder



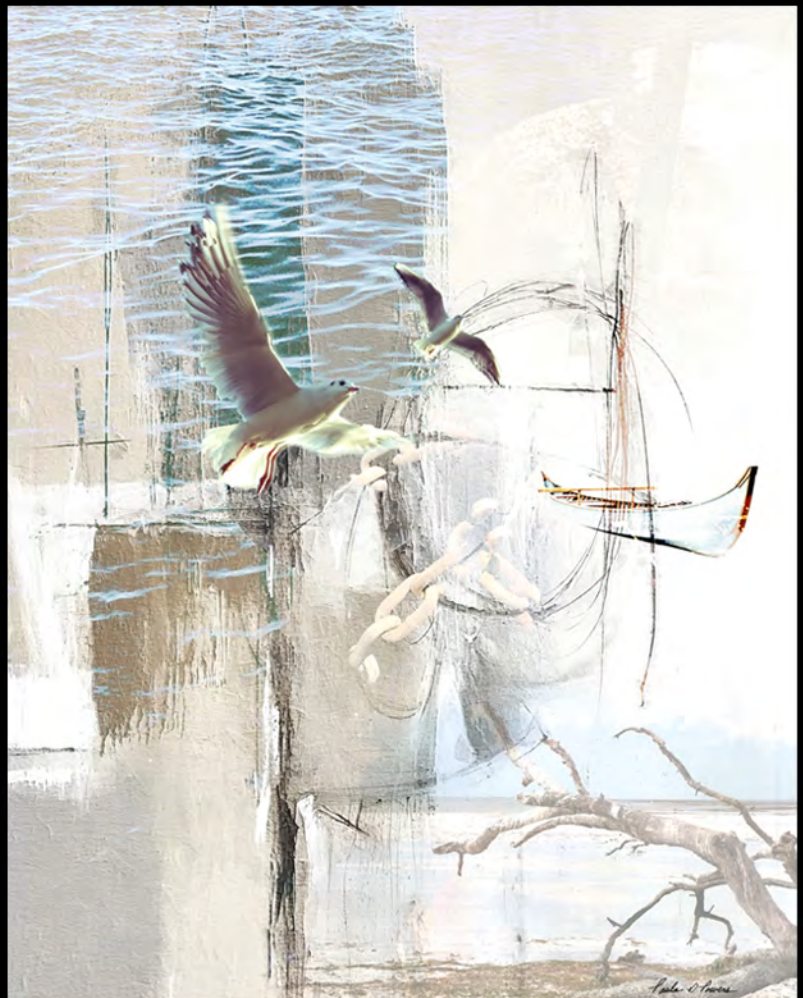


Sprites of the Sea

Paula D Powers
(USA)

<http://www.pauladpowers.com/>

On the Dock Abstract





The Cat Who Wanted to Be the Easter Bunny

Rosa Perry
(Australia)

<https://rosa-perry.myportfolio.com/>



Smell the Roses

Jill Johnson
(USA)



Landscape with Almonds

Janice S. Batterbee
(Spain)



The Goat

@janicebatterbee1695



Marsh Song

<https://maggy.myportfolio.com/>

Maggy R.
Thorvaldsdottir Pease
(USA)

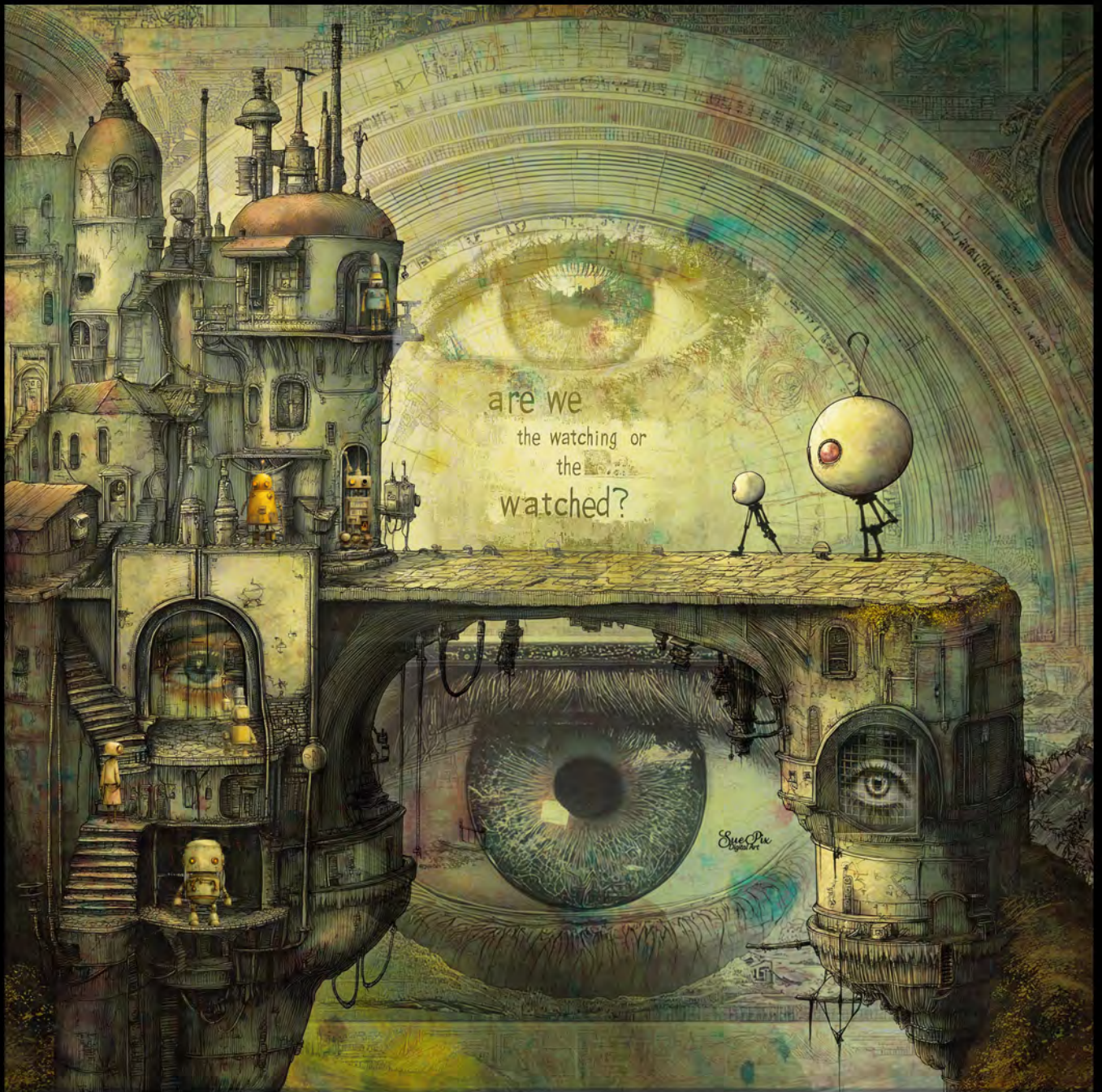
Buster





Dark Quiet Hour

Pauline van der Spuy
(South Africa)



Neighborhood Watch

Sue Waterhouse
(England)



<https://artistsdownunder.com.au/artist-4/penny-de-jong/>

A Sense of Beauty



Penny de Jong
(Australia)

A Life in Portraits

Your Time is Up



Dov Fuchs
(Israel)

<http://www.dovfuchs.art/>

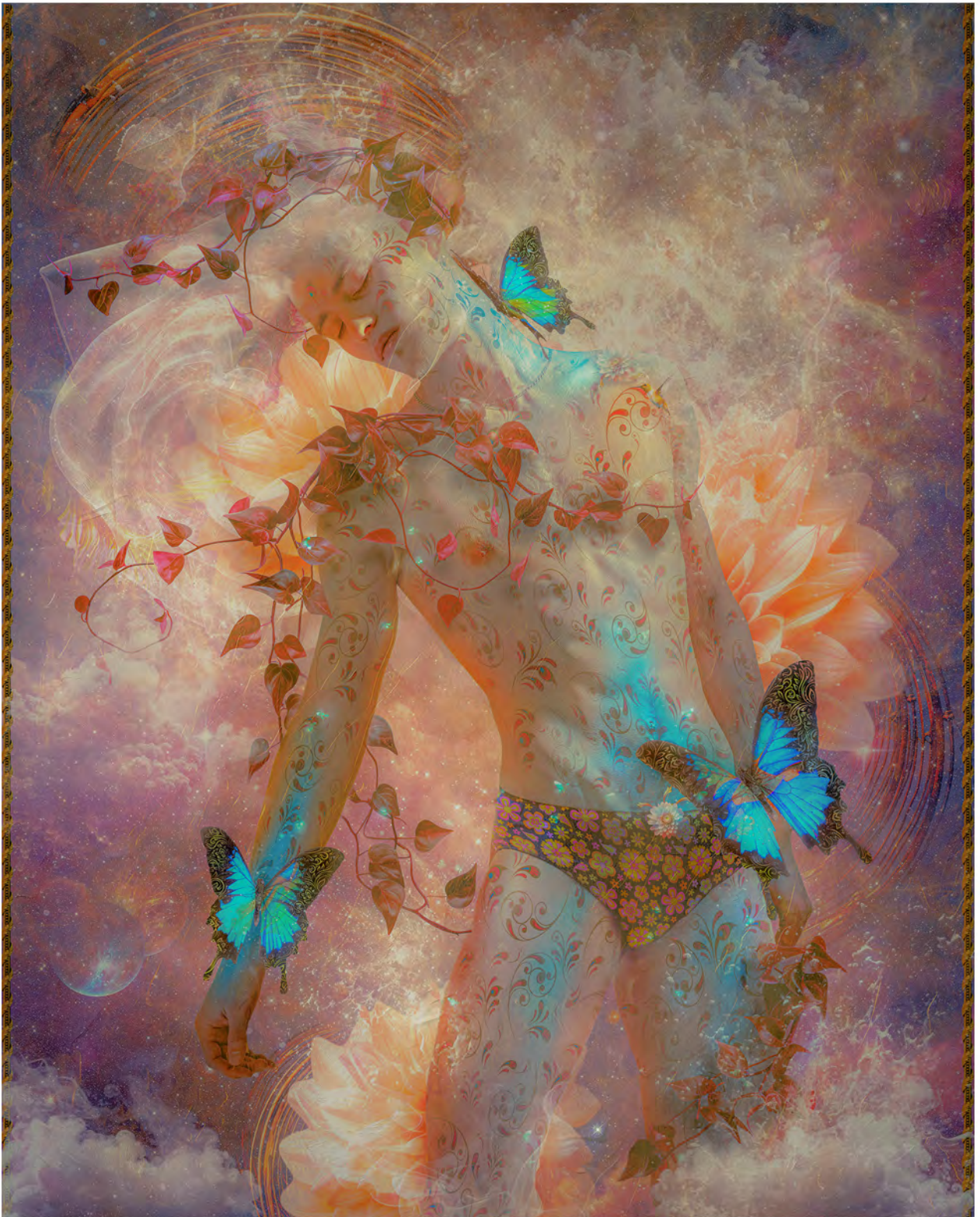
The Threshold





Strange Creatures!

Dori Fleming
(UK)



Butterflies

Mark Hemstreet
(USA)



<https://www.facebook.com/nbrizphotoart>

When Pigeons Retire



Nancy Brizendine
(USA)

Mother Nature's Ex



Heartfelt

Dean Kelley
(USA)

<https://deankelleyphotography.com/>

Beach Front





Oh, How Delightful!

Marius Els
(UK)

<https://mariuselsphotoartistry.com/>



Fishing Boats

Don Schiffner
(USA)



The Boys



Christina Brunton
(Australia)

<https://chrisbrunton.com/>

The Girls

Saying Goodbye



Matthew Berberich
(USA)

<http://matthewberberich.com/>

Window Botanical



CELEBRATING
THE ART OF
MARJUT Korhonen

*With love and gratitude for her many years of creative contributions
and presence in our beloved artistic community.*



Runners

“ The **AWAKE** and **KAIZEN** groups and have brought me so many years of joy and inspiration. There are very few photographers doing this kind of digital photo-artistry here in Finland, so I could never have gotten the training, support of the community and the materials without the **AWAKE** group. I was able to pursue my photography further and achieve the highest awards, in other words . . . leave a mark. I have sold over 200 works over the years, so I am more than pleased. ”

“ I have learned so much and enjoyed the community of some very talented photographers. This magazine has also been important to me — trying to get a picture or two included each month has been something that has given me much joy. ”



Pearl

“ It has been a delightful journey and quite humbling to know that some my works have touched the viewers in some way. ”



Dreaming

Wrong Address
Perhaps





Walkabout



Aloha



Flycatcher



Daydreaming

“ I am grateful for these many years of my life that have been enriched by creative photography and art. I will go with my mind filled with years of wonderful art . . . not bad! ”



And Darkness Came

MARJUT *Korhonen*

(Finland)

@photoartistrymarjutkorhonen



The Flower Girl

Jean Hutter
(USA)

@jeanhutter1



Shattered



Kristin Couch
(Sweden)

<http://www.kcart.se/>

The Day Butterflies
Borrowed Her Dreams

Prayers



Donna Waterson
(USA)

Running After Time





The 60's Fashion Icon

Maureen Maxwell
(Australia)

<https://artistsdownunder.com.au/artist-3/maureen-maxwell/>



The Memory Garden

Marilyn Sumner
(USA)

<http://www.marilynsphotoart.com/>



Welcome Spring



Nina Irvin
(USA)

Spring has Sprung

What's Up Doc?



Karen Sorrells
(USA)

And How Was
Your Day?





The Last Glow in a Fading Room

Doreen Faiello
(USA)



Invitation

Diane Pinsart
(USA)



Tidal Muse



Terri Butler
(USA)

<https://www.pixelmixerart.com/>

Chess Time

Golden Beauty



Ingrid Pomeroy
(USA)

Lost Love



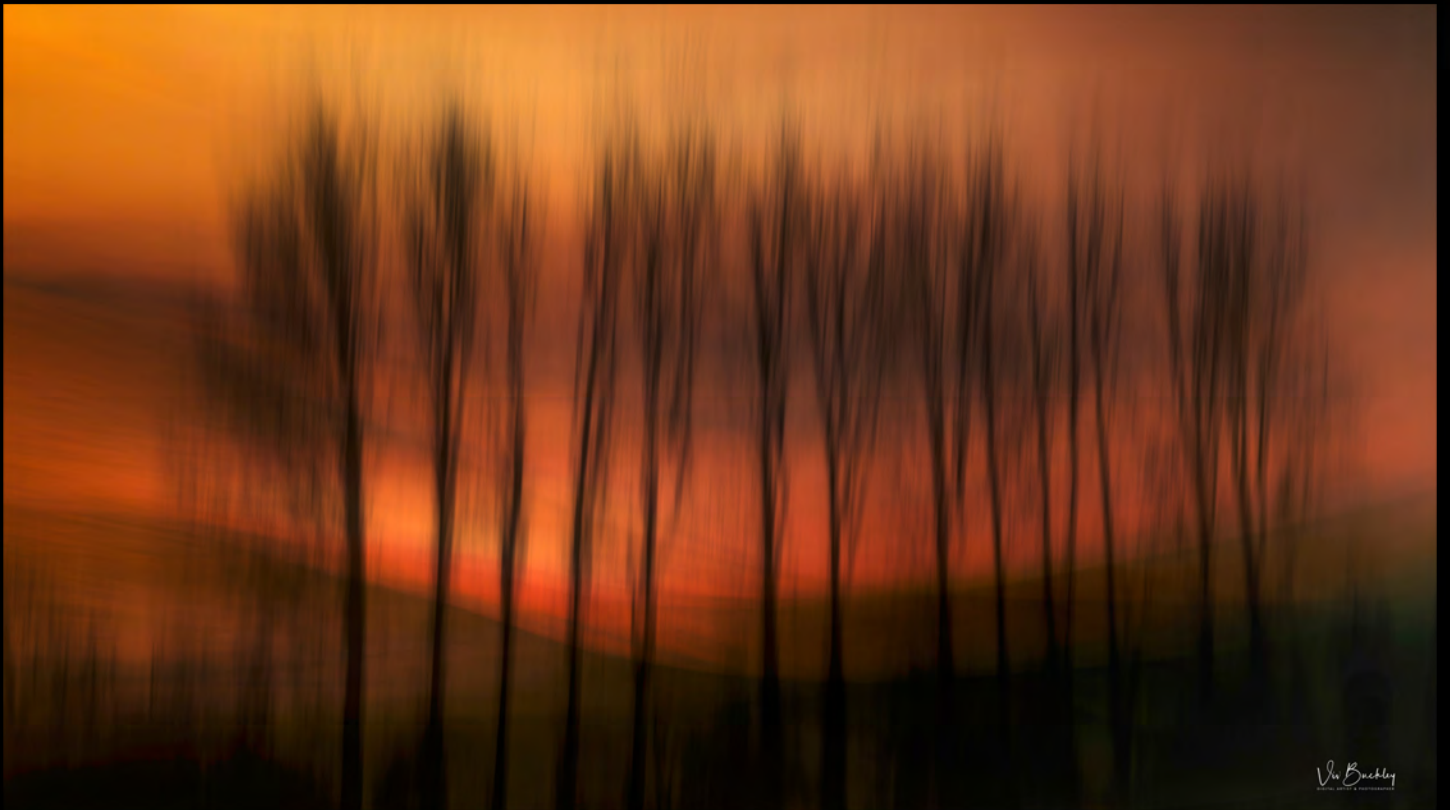


Moghul Garden

Barbara Mierau-Klein
(Germany / USA)

<http://www.barbaramierauklein.com/>





Viv Buckley
ARTIST & PHOTOGRAPHER

The End of the Day

Viv Buckley
(Ireland)

<http://www.vivbuckley.com/>



Mister Frog's Neighborhood

Mary Ann Roesler
(USA)

<https://roeslerwings.wixsite.com/fine-art-photography>



The Stillness that Strengthens

Renée Keel
(USA)

<https://reneekeel.com/>





Solus

Margaret Weir
(Canada)



Vernal Equinox

Vicki Ardoin
(USA)

<https://vickiardoinfineart.com/>



The Queen
of Lightness



Inge Klement
(Norway / Austria)

The Queen
of Darkness

Birds on a Roof



Birds on Branches



Proud Crow



Bird Musings (Series)

Sue Pulaski
(USA)

<https://www.suepulaskiart.com/>



Nevermore No. 7

Wanda Ann Kinnaman
(USA)

<https://www.wandaannkinnaman.com/>



Choose Your Path

Catherine King
(USA)

<http://www.ckingfineart.com/>



Fabulous
Fashionista No.14



Keeley McCleave
(England)

Fabulous
Fashionista No.6

Puppeteer



Dan Borge
(USA)

Magritte Visits
His Painting





Rose's Dream

Margo Reasner
(USA)



Swing into Spring

Barbara A Lane
(USA)

<https://barbaraalane.com/>



Bob Desilets
(USA)

Maine Shoreline



Route 66 Gas Station

Garden Bower



Diane Eastham
(Canada)

<http://www.diane-eastham.pixels.com/>

Flying through Space
and Time into the Light





Jan Robinson
(Australia)

Owl



At Peace

Keith G. Hawley
(Australia)

<https://keith-hawley.pixels.com/>



<https://www.helgablanke.com/>

Easter Long Time Ago



Helga Blanke
(The Netherlands)

Living in a
Butterfly World



The Pirates Under the Sea

Maxi Balcer
(USA)

Aquatic
Companions





The Ocean Within

Marie Farmer
(USA)



Rescued

Lou Ann Donahue
(USA)



The Alchemist



Joy Buckley Flynn
(Ireland)

Echo of Sailing Days

The Difference Between Mannequins and Puppets

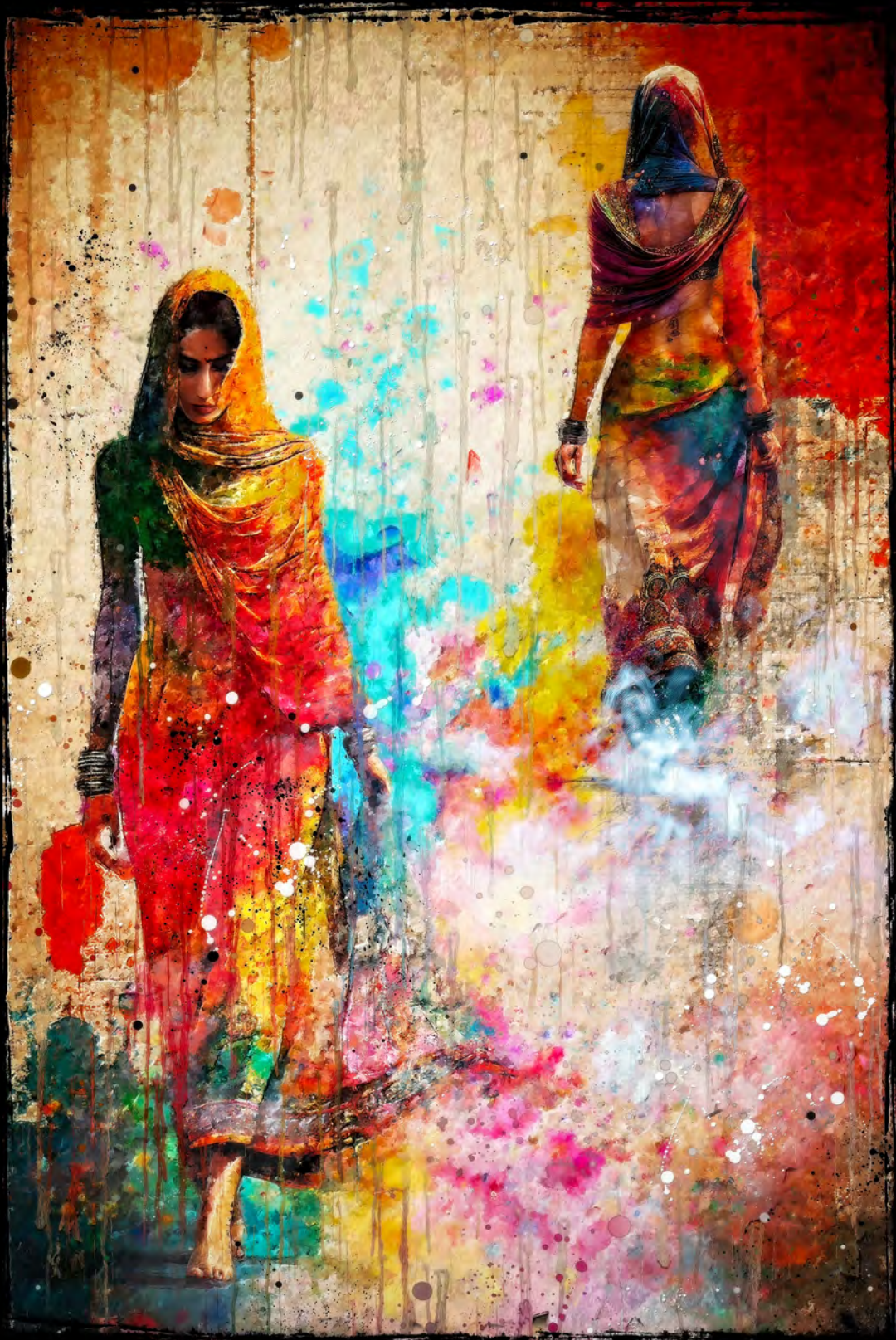


Linda Lewis
(USA)

<http://www.lindalewis.net/>

Charging Station





Day End

August Naude
(South Africa)

<https://www.augustnaudephotography.com/>





<http://www.bylarrywbuckleyphotography.com/>

Embers Burning



Larry Buckley
(USA)

Lower West Side

The Fish
in the Sea



S. H. Layre
(USA)

The Quiet Geisha





Messenger of Spring

Tina Christensen
(USA)



Pastoral Secrets

Shelley Benjamin
(USA)

<https://shelleybenjamin.com/>



Cooling Off



Dave Hattori
(USA)

<http://www.davehattoriphoart.com/>

Washington Pass Sunset



Dreaming of Spring

Diana Haroni
(USA)

<http://www.dianasphotoart.com/>

Faery Bunny and Bee

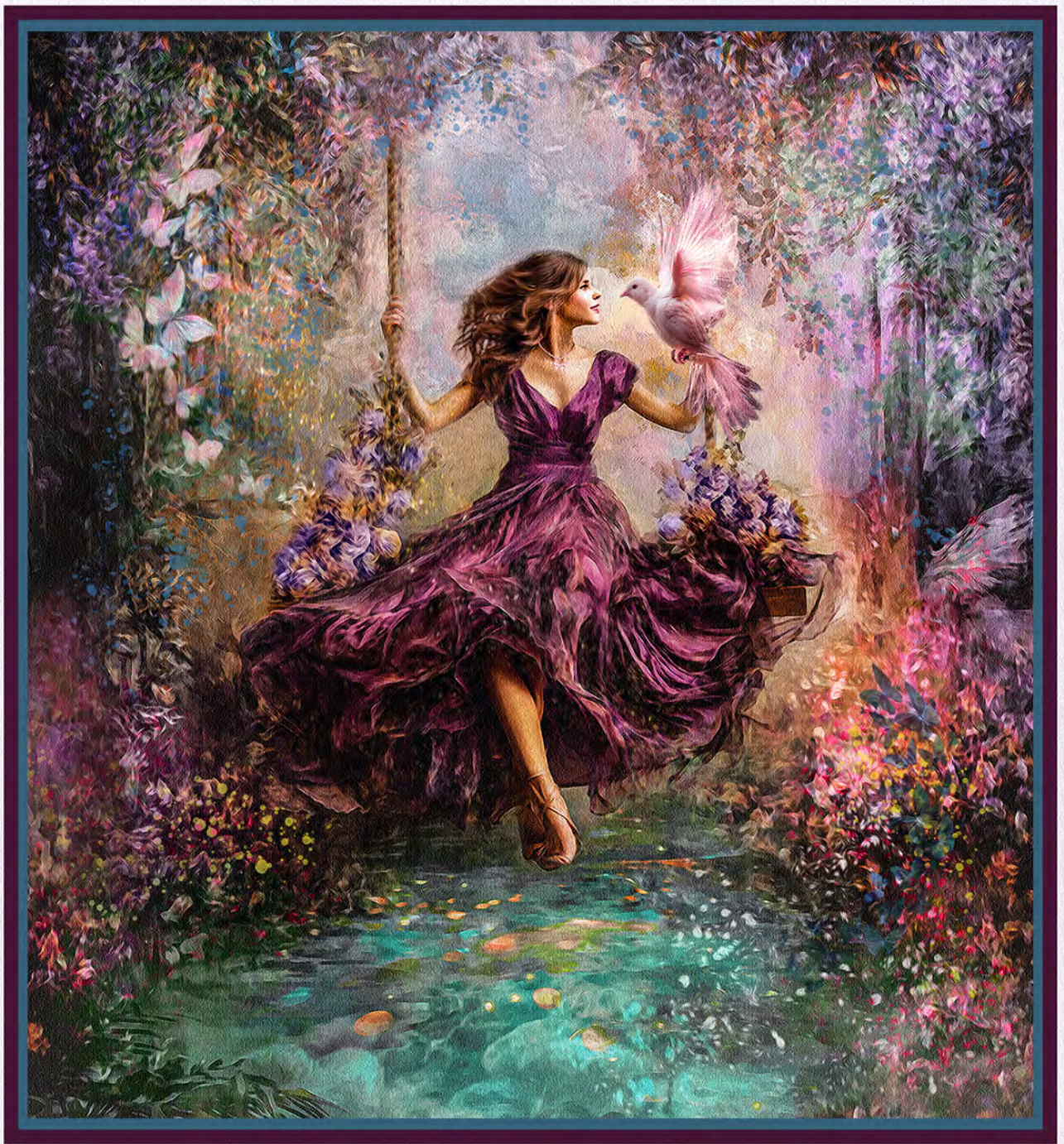




Stepping Out

Deborah Morrison
(USA)

<http://deborah-penland.pixels.com/>



D. Glatzer

Spring is in the Air

Diane Leicher Glatzer
(USA)



Boy, Ball & Bird



Dan Lavery
(Canada)

<http://danlaveryartist.ca/>

Cosmic Mums



Gadwall Bump

John T Jones
(USA)

10 Point Whitetail





Walks Like a Duck

Elly Fox
(Canada)



Fading Memories

John Molino
(USA)



Denise Hunter Logan
(Australia)

Leopard





Wild Horses

Julie Mae Thies
(USA)

@TeasingImages

Blue Heron





The Rooting

Tracy Cooper
(Portugal)

@tracycooper0825



The Thoughts We Wear

Sharon Jenkins
(Canada)

<https://soulfulphotoartistry.myportfolio.com/>



Serene Poppy



Ilona Abou-Zolof
(Australia)

<https://gigglegallery.design/>

Flowing Streets



Eerie Cemetery

Bob Rude
(USA)



Lady Hiding in Red



CONTRIBUTING DESIGNERS

"AWAKE" : LIVING THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

Amanda Rockwell

<http://www.brushworkshop.com>

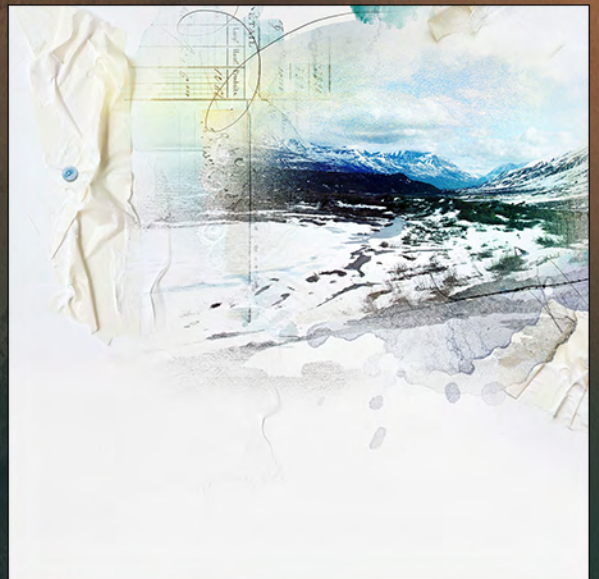
A professional designer with ScrapbookGraphics, Amanda Rockwell creates fantastic content for the AWAKE and KAIZEN groups. But I think her greatest contribution is in encouraging digital artists to get away from their screens and break out the art supplies now and then and actually have fun creating their own custom brushes.



Anna Aspnes

<http://annaaspnesdesigns.com>

Again and again in the work of my top students I was seeing one name turn up constantly when they were citing the source of the artistic content in their work: Anna Aspnes. When I visited her website I was stunned, and when I saw her work in *Somerset Digital Studio* magazine I knew that this was a talent I needed on my team.



Art House Whimsy

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/arthousewhimsy>

Tracy Pitchforth is the artist and designer behind Art House Whimsy. Digital art has been a huge part of her life for over a decade – with it bringing much friendship, inspiration and joy. She has embraced the world of AI as a creative partner. When used thoughtfully, it is powerful tool that enhances the artistic process and makes creativity more accessible for everyone.



Caroline Julia Moore

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/HiraethMacabre>

Over the past many years, I've watched as the immensely talented Caroline Julia Moore shifted from cognitive neuropsychologist to full-time self-employed artist and conceptual photographer ... all while also launching a successful content-design business. Her contributions to the group have been a delight and an inspiration.



CONTRIBUTING DESIGNERS

"AWAKE" : LIVING THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

Denise Love

<http://2lilowls.com>

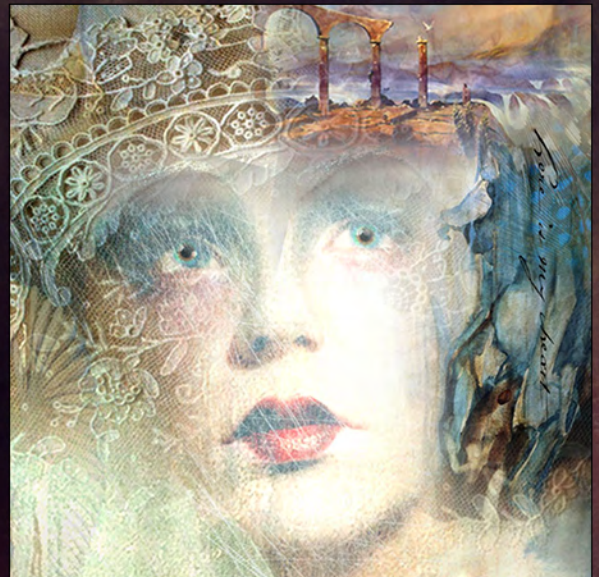
The textures and backgrounds from 2 Lil' Owls are some of the finest in the digital art industry, and indeed many of the works in this magazine feature Denise's textures – often several in one piece. Without question the photo-artistic community is so much the richer for the love and care Denise brings to her designs.



Foxeysquirrel

<http://www.foxesquirrel.com>

Immensely popular (and stunningly prolific), Foxeysquirrel is the name by which artist Teddi Rutschman is known around the world. Her artistic design kits bring together a wide range of styles – from the enchanted and purely whimsical to classic illustration, from the exquisitely ornate to elements with touches of dreamlike old world mastery.



itKuPiLLi

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/itKuPiLLiimagenarium>

itKuPiLLi is the rather unusual name donned by Kirsi Rouvinen, the celebrated digital artist from Finland. The itKuPiLLi Imagenarium at MischiefCircus.com is a source for whimsical digital goodies, and the content Kirsi creates for our KAIZEN group is always greeted with excitement and enthusiasm.



Jai Johnson

<http://www.DailyTexture.com>

Jai Johnson is a fine artist and the acclaimed designer behind "The Daily Texture." Time and again when a work of digital artistry caught my eye, I'd find Jai's name listed in the credits as the texture designer. It took some time to get her, but I'm extremely excited to now have Jai an active member of our KAIZEN design team.



CONTRIBUTING DESIGNERS

"AWAKE" : LIVING THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

Jen Maddocks

<http://jenmaddocks.com>

When some students introduced me to the work of Jen Maddocks, I was quite knocked flat. Here was a digital content creator who was as fabulous an artist as she was a designer. We are lucky to have her in our community and MORE than lucky to have her material and tutorials here in "AWAKE" and "KAIZEN."



Jill Catrinel

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/JillCatrinel>

Jill Catrinel works out of her art studio just north of Asheville, making her one of the few designers here quite close to me. Her work is fresh and inspired, and it's exciting to look ahead to everything I will be able to coordinate with her as the projects in the "KAIZEN" group evolve over the year ahead.



Julie Mead

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/JulieMeadDesigns>

It's always exciting to see creatives success stories, and Julie Mead has certainly become one! She stepped into the digital content scene not long ago it seems, but rapidly brought on a bunch of great designers (and of course created a wonderful stream of original content herself.) We're incredibly grateful to have her on our team!



Marius Els

<https://www.mariuselsphotoartistry.com/>

Marius Els is a digital artist residing in the vibrant city of London. He brings to his craft a unique blend of creative experiences. The creation of his intricate elements is a labor of love. He aspires to provide fellow artists with access to these elements, hoping to evoke the same joy he experiences when exploring a brand-new designer collection.



CONTRIBUTING DESIGNERS

"AWAKE" : LIVING THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

Miles Beyond The Moon

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/MilesBeyondTheMoon>

Mary Bailey is the artist behind Miles Beyond the Moon. She is a digital and paper crafting artist with a vintage soul. Inspired by the details of everyday life, she creates digital graphics that reflect her love for nature, books, whimsy, and adventure. Through attention to detail and an imaginative approach, her hope is to inspire her fellow digital artists to infuse their own artistic creations with a touch of magic.



Rebecca McMeen

<http://www.rebeccamcmeen.com/>

Joining our team just this year, Rebecca McMeen has proven a tremendous hit with her extraordinary material, all of it so rich and complex, whimsical and artistic. Her unique style has made for a fantastic addition to the library of content our artists are now able to employ, and the resulting creations are endlessly charming.



Tangie Baxter

<https://shoptangiebaxter.com/>

Tangie Baxter is the lead artist of her own wildly successful design company with over a decade spent as dedicated “purveyors of digital art journaling supplies.” Her material is quirky and fun, and always a delight. Bringing her onto our team was a big event for us. Everything here got a lot more exciting with her arrival!



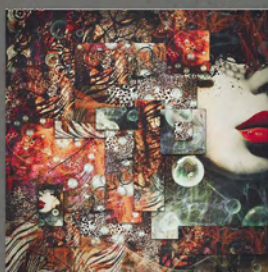
The Colby Files

The Colby Files is the intriguing moniker of a celebrated professional photographer located in Scottsdale, Arizona, specializing in female portraits, fashion art, model portfolios and fine art nudes. He has become our resident pro model photographer, providing an amazing library of images for our artists to work with when creating their masterpieces.





Quil
LIVING



Quill and Camera

THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

Enjoy interviews with the featured artists of AWAKE at:
<https://www.quillandcamera.com/>

**And Be Sure to Follow us and See
Your Favorite Artists on Instagram!**

@photoshopartistry



Background Image Credit:
Marjut Korhonen (Finland)

LIVING THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

PUSHING PHOTOGRAPHY FURTHER



INTERESTED IN CREATING PHOTO ART OF YOUR OWN?

GET STARTED HERE:

[HTTP://PROPHOTOSHOPARTISTRY.COM](http://prophotoshopartistry.com)

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