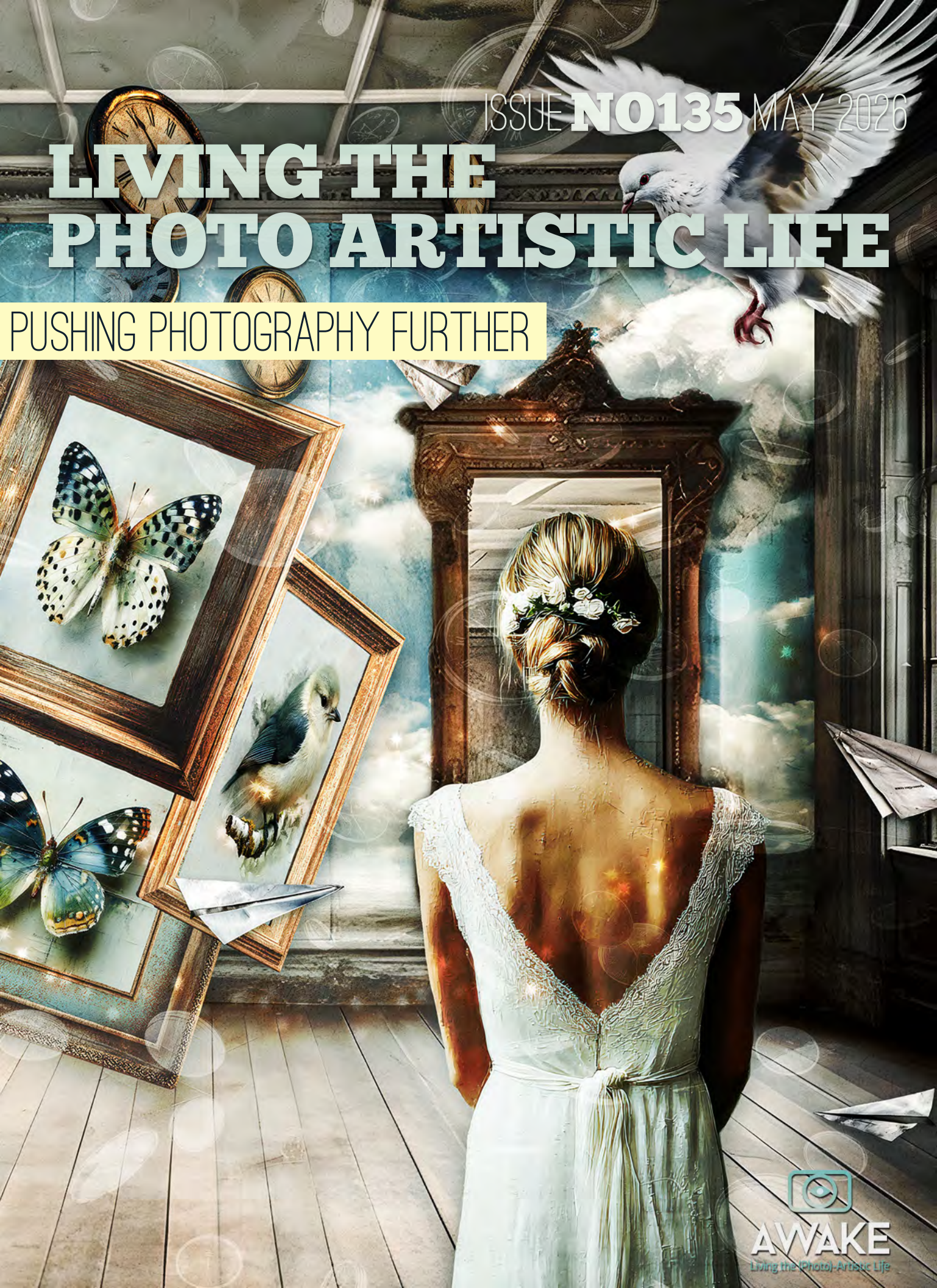
ISSUE NO135 MAY 2026

LIVING THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

PUSHING PHOTOGRAPHY FURTHER



AWAKE
Living the (Photo)-Artistic Life

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

SEBASTIAN MICHAELS

Can't wait for you to see the dazzling new art we've brought together for you this month.

And I think I can speak for the AWAKE artists published here in assuring any aspiring artists reading this:

The secret isn't in the material. The secret isn't even in what you do with the material in Photoshop.

The secret is in *loving the process of creating art each day.*

The secret is in *falling in love with the artistic life itself.*

As a creative photographer, it can't just be about the one shot in a hundred that turns out worthy of your portfolio. It has to be about the feel of the camera in your hands, the controls under your fingers and the compositions you're framing through the eyepiece. It has to be about that strange, almost dreamlike state you slip into as you seek to create something beautiful, original, stunning . . .

And as a digital artist working in Photoshop, you have to fall in love with playing with brushes, assigning blend modes, painting on layer masks. You have to fall in love with laying down dramatic lighting and shadows, with finessing textures and making subtle tweaks to the toning.

You have to fall in love with creating the perfect background, extracting models, and bringing together creative elements and artistic content.

You have to take joy in playing with the Warp tool, adjusting Camera Raw settings, stacking Filters.

To you, all these have to become as delightful as the feel of clay on the wheel is to a sculptor or the mixing of oil paints on a palette is to a painter.

And when each day promises a return to these delights, how much greater and endlessly rewarding is the artistic life you've chosen.

Not that being an artist is without its share of frustrations or fallow periods when self-doubt creeps in and threatens to throw a cloud over even the sunniest of days. But the solution when this happens, I'm convinced, remains the same:

Take a deep breath. Maybe revisit some of the issues of this magazine. *And remind yourself again what it is you love about art and about the creative process itself.*

If you find you're putting too much pressure on yourself, if you're wasting your time and energy comparing yourself to others, if you're spending too much time on social media when you should be sipping tea, playing music, and *making something* . . .

It's time to take up the tools of your craft again and spend some time simply *playing*, rediscovering the *fun* in all this, and reminding yourself just how much you love the process of creating something for the simple joy of it all.

An artistic life is a magical life in so many ways. But only when we see its blessings for what they are and continually fall back in love with all the little things that go into it each day.

~ Sebastian

ISSUE NO135 MAY 2026

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

004 JILL JOHNSON
005 NANCIE ROWAN
006 DONNA WATERSON
007 PAMELA WALDER
008 BARBARA A LANE
009 MARGARET WEIR
010 MERRILEE SOBERG
011 CHRISTINA BRUNTON
012 LOU ANN DONAHUE
013 CATHY LABUDAK
014 DAN LAVERY
015 MARK LUTNES
016 CHRIS HARRIS
017 NANCY BRIZENDINE
018 DENISE HUNTER LOGAN
019 RENEE PHOENIX
020 MARJUT KORHONEN
021 ROBZ LIPNER
022 ANITA HUBBARD
023 TINA CHRISTENSEN
024 JOHN MOLINO
025 JOY BUCKLEY FLYNN
026 MAGGY R. THORVALDSDOTTIR PEASE
027 MARGO REASNER
028 CJ SHANK
029 DOV FUCHS
030 KRISTIN COUCH
031 INGRID POMEROY
032 ANN LAVIN
033 MATTHEW BERBERICH
034 DON SCHIFFNER
035 JANICE S. BATTERBEE
036 KAREN SORRELLS
037 BEVERLY EVERSON
038 DONNA ELLIOT
039 KEELEY MCCLEAVE
040 PAULA D POWERS
041-045 FEATURED ARTIST RACHELLE R. VETTER
046 ASHBY PRESLEY
047 MARIUS ELS
048 MARY SADLER
049 JOHN SCHULTZ
050 HELEN ANNE LEMKE
051 NINA IRVIN
052 SHARON JENKINS
053 INGE KLEMENT
054 BARBARA MIERAU-KLEIN
055 CATHERINE KING
056 VICKI ARDOIN
057 KATHLEEN GREENWOOD
058 PENNY DE JONG
059 DORI FLEMING
060 PAULINE VAN DER SPUY
061 PIERRE PEVSNER
062-063 JO CRANE
064 DENISE MCDERMOTT
065 DOREEN FAIELLO
066 JEAN HUTTER
067 SHELLEY BENJAMIN
068 TRACY COOPER
069 SUE JOESTEN MERRITT
070 BOB DESILETS
071 DIANE PINSART
072 SANDRA DANN
073 LINDA LEWIS
074 CHERYL PARRIS
075 SUSAN BAILEY
076 SARA SANDBERG
077 MAXI BALCER
078 VIV BUCKLEY
079 DAN BORGE
080 BOB RUDE
081 AUGUST NAUDE
082 JOYCE SIMPSON
083 HELGA BLANKE
084 KEITH G. HAWLEY
085 TERRI BUTLER
086 JULIE MAE THIES
087 DIANA HARONIS
088 S. H. LAYRE
089 ROSA PERRY
090 CATBEAGLE CREATIONS
091 DEAN KELLEY
092 DAVE HATTORI
093 WANDA ANN KINNAMAN
094 MAUREEN MAXWELL
095 REBECAH THOMPSON
096 LARRY BUCKLEY
097 LINDA CARRUTH
098 SCOTT CLEMENTS
099 MARIE FARMER
100 ILONA ABOU-ZOLOF
101 EVELYN ELWAN
102 DEBORAH MORRISON
103 DIANE EASTHAM
104-111 CONTRIBUTING DESIGNERS SPOTLIGHT

FRONT COVER & BACKGROUND IMAGE
RACHELLE R. VETTER

AWAKE
Living the (Photo)-Artistic Life



Unconditional Love

Jill Johnson
(USA)



In the Word Maze



Nancie Rowan
(USA)

Always Wear Pink



Hydrangeas

Donna Waterson
(USA)



Mama's Memories



Work in Progress

Pamela Walder
(UK)



Spectral Mare

Barbara A Lane
(USA)

https://barbaraalane.com/



Guarded



Margaret Weir
(Canada)

https://www.watertomysoul.com/

Consulta

Dragon Spirit



Merrilee Soberg
(Canada)

Winter's Goodbye





Watercolor Ladies

Christina Brunton
(Australia)

https://chrisbrunton.com/



Night Fishing

Lou Ann Donahue
(USA)



Lessons Learned



Cathy Labudak
(USA)

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

Bring It On



Misty Blue

http://danlaveryartist.ca/

Dan Lavery
(Canada)



Mirror Mirror



The Town Princess

Mark Lutnes
(USA)



@allshapeofartistry

Chris Harris
(USA)

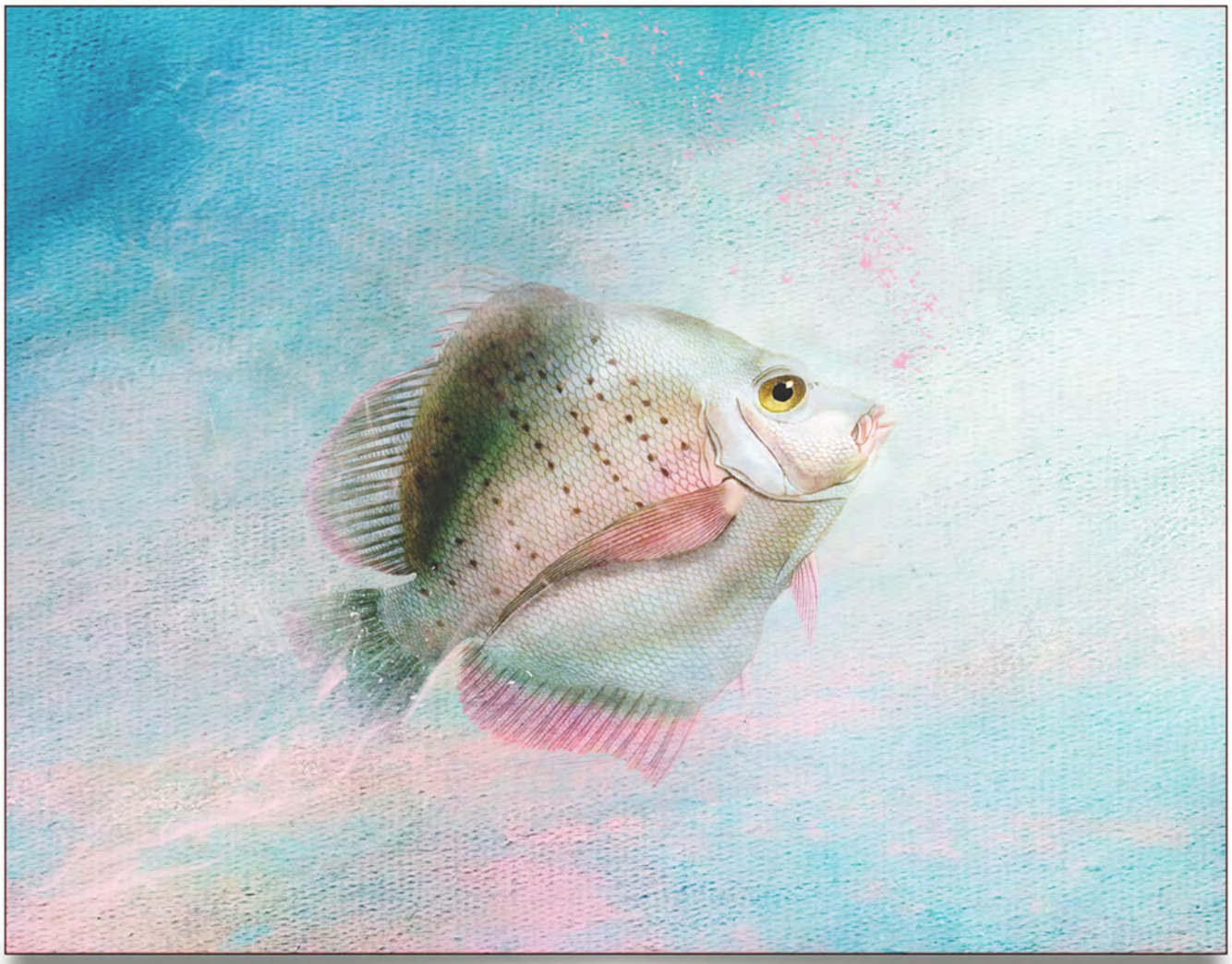
Dreamin' On a Dandelion



If Iris Ruled the World

Nancy Brizendine
(USA)

https://www.facebook.com/nbrizphotoart



Go with the Flow

Denise Hunter Logan
(Australia)



Regina

Renee Phoenix
(USA)

http://www.reneephoenix.com/



Singing Bird

In Loving Memory

Marjut Korhonen
(Finland)

@photoartistrymarjutkorhonen



When the
Ocean Weeps



Robz Lipner
(South Africa)

http://www.robzartworx.com/

Between the Silence

The Painter's Muse



Anita Hubbard
(Canada)

https://digartography.pixels.com/

Heart Strings





My Sketchbook - Lewis's Woodpecker

Tina Christensen
(USA)



Spring Hideaway

John Molino
(USA)



Ship Ahoy



Joy Buckley Flynn
(Ireland)

http://www.photosbypreston.c

Young Artist



Red-winged Blackbird

Maggy R. Thorvaldsdottir Pease
(USA)

https://maggy.myportfolio.com/



The Vulture's Watch



Evening Fly-By

Margo Reasner
(USA)



My Queen

CJ Shank
(USA)

@smilingwarrior18



The Internal Tribunal



Dov Fuchs
(Israel)

http://www.dovfuchs.art/

The House of What Remains

The Day Butterflies
Borrowed Her Dreams



Kristin Couch
(Sweden)

http://www.kcart.se/

The Space Where
She Waits





Ingrid Pomeroy
(USA)

Golden Angel



Lost

Ann Lavin
(Australia)



The Hunter's Respite



Matthew Berberich
(USA)

http://matthewberberich.com/

Morning Meditations

Sunday
Picnic



Don Schiffner
(USA)

Cabin in Spring





The Year of the Horse

Janice S. Batterbee
(Spain)

@janicebatterbee1695



Journey's End

Karen Sorrells
(USA)



Puppy Dog Eyes



Beverly Everson
(USA)

http://www.eversonphotography.com/

A Mother's Love



I Am Learning

http://donnaelliot.slickpic.com/

Donna Elliot
(USA)



Drifting in
Daydreams



Up, Up & Away

Keeley McCleave
(England)



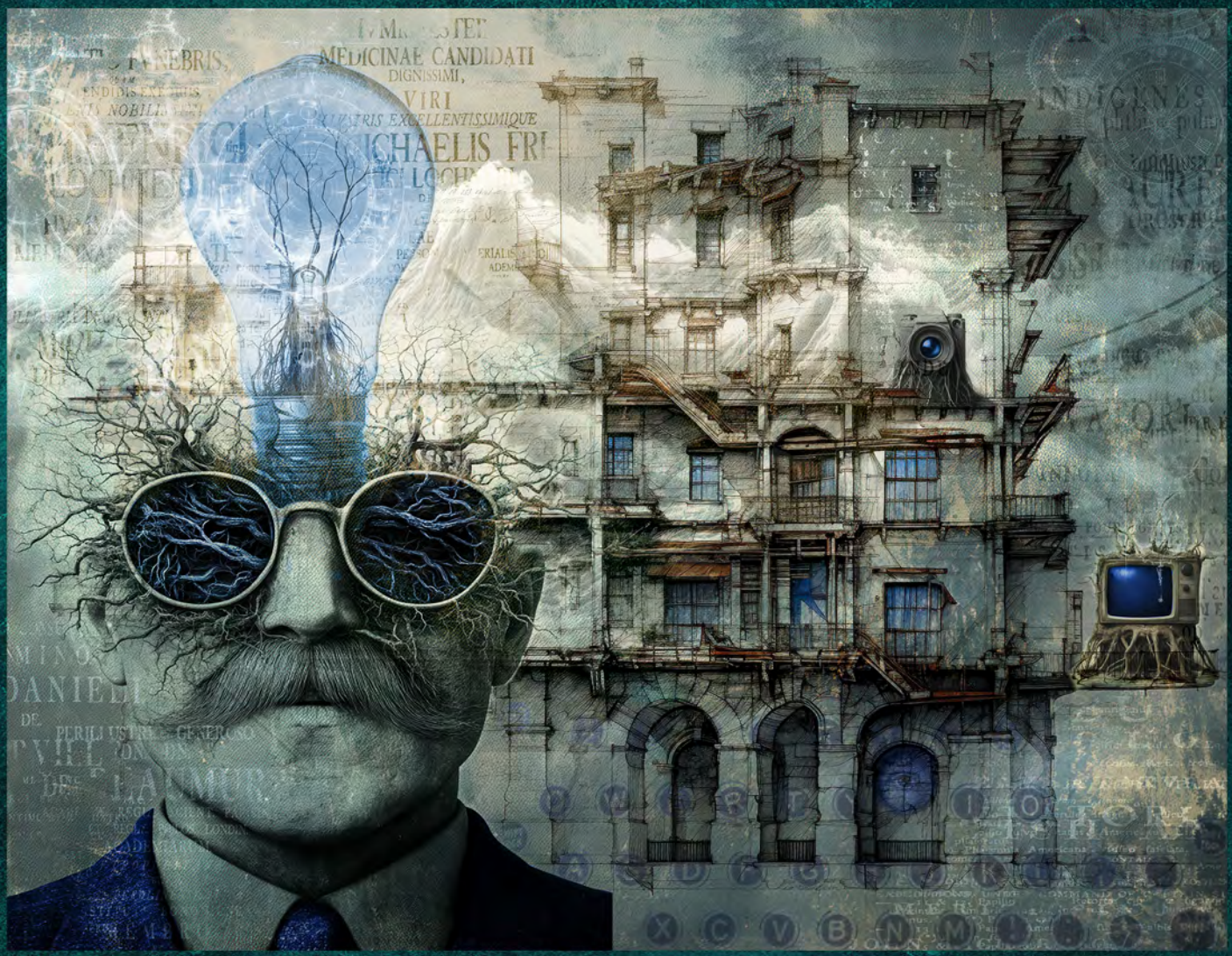
Wind Blown

Paula D Powers
(USA)

http://www.pauladpowers.com/

FEATURED ARTIST

Rachelle R. Vetter



Blue Idea

“ My journey as an artist started in childhood and has developed through the years. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in architecture and it has ultimately led to me becoming a professional graphic designer and then, professional photographer. ”



Oceanic



Coming Back



Curiosities

“ Two years ago I lost my Mom, and it was at that time that I decided it was past time to work on trying to master digital art. Now that I have finally arrived on my journey as a digital artist, there really are few words that adequately describe and express just how much I enjoy the creativity of it and the fulfillment that it brings to my daily life. ”



Bird Lady



Oppressed

“ This has truly been like no other art that I've ever done before. The support from both Sebastian and David, as well as the fellow artists in the AWAKE and KAIZEN groups, have been nothing short of amazing as they have become a great asset to my work. ”

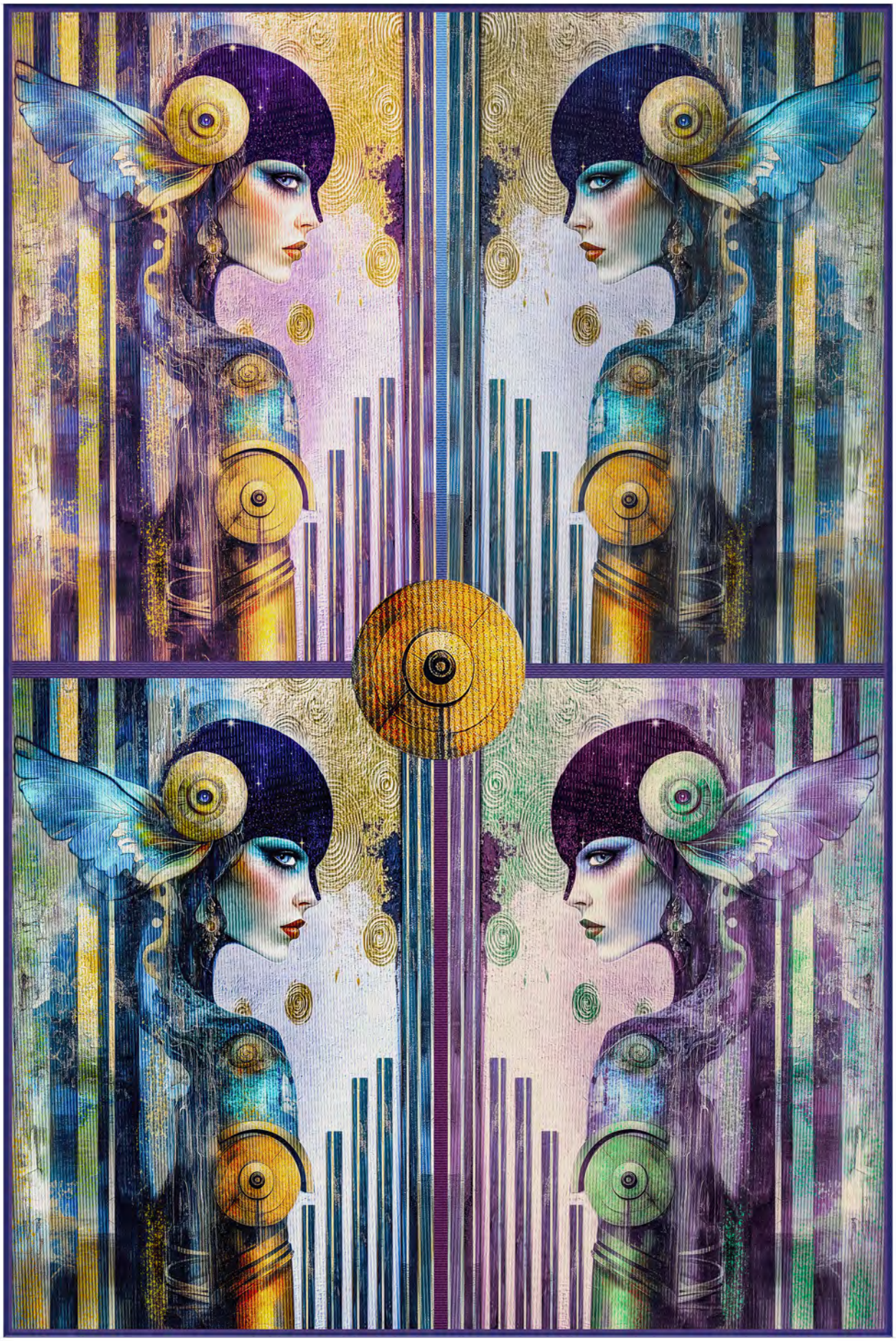


Lord of the Gandalf

Rachelle R. Vetter

(USA)

http://rachellerphotography.com/



http://www.ash3photography.com/

Ashby Presley
(USA)

The Superheroes



Sixties Icon



Marius Els
(UK)

Floral Pop

https://mariuselsphotoartistry.com/

Sunflower Fairy



Mary Sadler
(USA)

Sunshine and Shadows





Coming in for a Shower

John Schultz
(USA)



Moth Keeper

Helen Anne Lemke
(Canada)

https://helenannelemke.myportfolio.com/



Sun Worshipper



Nina Irvin
(USA)

Day's End in
the Marsh



Wisdom



Grace



Peace



Compassion

(Origami Series)

Sharon Jenkins
(Canada)

https://soulfulphotoartistry.myportfolio.com/



A Sense of Desolation

Inge Klement
(Norway / Austria)

https://www.deviantart.com/ingeklem



Domed City

Barbara Mierau-Klein
(USA / Germany)

http://www.barbaramierauklein.com/



Chasing Trains



The Caballero

Catherine King
(USA)

http://www.ckingfineart.com/



A Tisket a Tasket

Vicki Ardoin
(USA)



Happily Ever After

https://vickiardoinfineart.com/



Magic is Brewing

Kathleen Greenwood
(USA)

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



Magical Fairyland

Penny de Jong
(Australia)

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



Dori Fleming
(UK)

Too Many Cooks



Remorse



Don’t Cry for Me

Pauline van der Spuy
(South Africa)



If You Go Down in the Woods Today



Beyond Appearances

Pierre Pevsner
(France)

http://pierrepevsner.com/



Infinity

Jo Crane
(Just Josie Photography)
(UK)


PONTE DEL
DIAVOLO



Love

Denise McDermott
(Australia)



The Rose Keeper



Doreen Faiello
(USA)

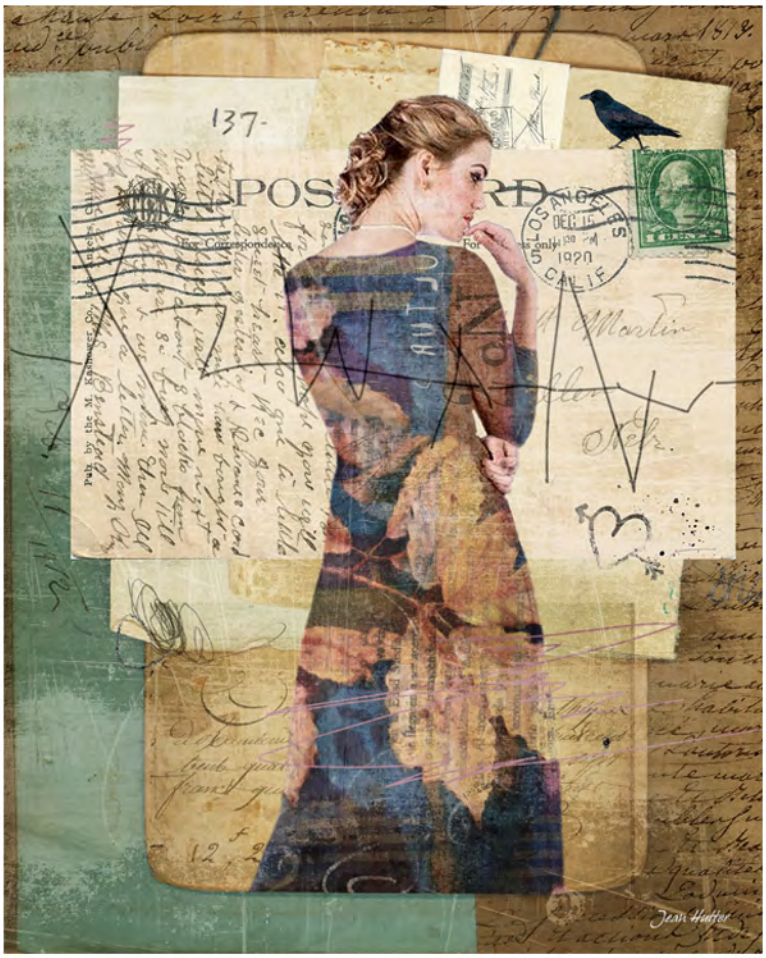
Her Gaze Follows the Music Toward Tomorrow



Not Knowing the Tune

Jean Hutter
(USA)

@jeanhutter1



The Postcard



Illusion

Shelley Benjamin
(USA)

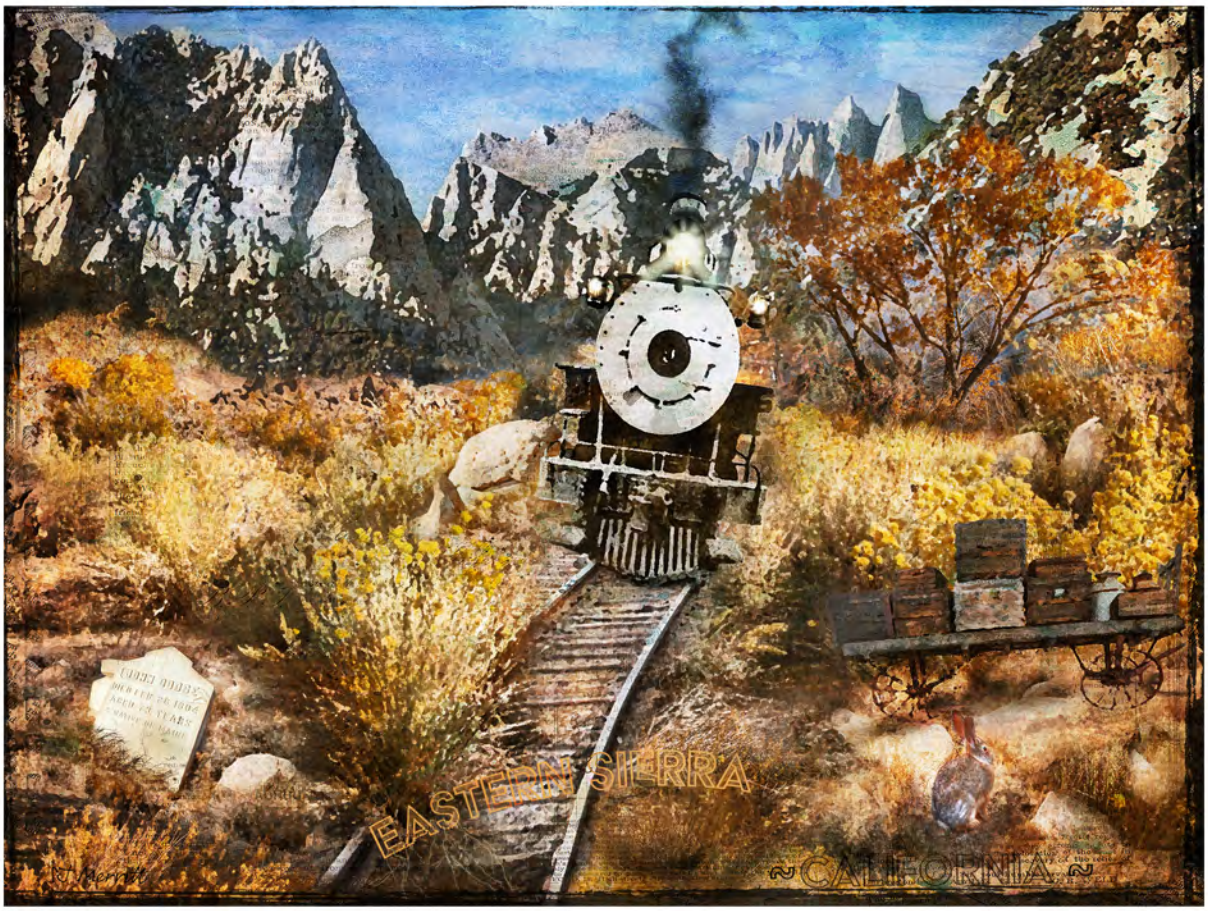
https://shelleybenjamin.com/



The Keepers

Tracy Cooper
(Portugal)

@tracycooper0825



Sue Joesten Merritt
(USA)

Eastern Sierra



https://suemerrittphotography.com/

Land's End



If the Walls Could Talk

Bob Desilets
(USA)



Cape Cod



Backstage

Diane Pinsart
(USA)



Otter Fashionista

Sandra Dann
(Australia)

https://www.sandradimagery.com/



Reading Room



Linda Lewis
(USA)

http://www.lindalewis.net/

Testing a Parable



She Carried the Dawn

Cheryl Parris
(USA)

http://www.cherylparris.com/



Curated Spring



Tulip Play Day

Susan Bailey
(USA)

http://www.susanbailey.smugmug.com/



http://www.sarasandbergart.com/

Sara Sandberg
(Sweden)

Moonlight Serenade



Bellarose

Maxi Balcer
(USA)



Evening Cruise on the Danube

Viv Buckley
(Ireland)

https://www.vivbuckley.com/



Vermeer 1



Dan Borge
(USA)

Vermeer 2



Dancing in the School Yard

Bob Rude
(USA)



Old Homestead



Wounded and Weary

August Naude
(South Africa)

https://www.augustnaudephotography.com/



The Perfect Pose

Joyce Simpson
(UK)

https://joycesimpson.myportfolio.com/



Helga Blanke
(The Netherlands)

Looking at Her Beautiful
Surroundings so Close to Home



https://www.helgablanke.com/

Looking at His Beautiful
Surroundings so Close to Home

Brothers



Keith G. Hawley
(Australia)

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

Remembering





The Carriers of Archives Within

Terri Butler
(USA)

https://www.pixelmixerart.com/



Waterfall Dreams

Julie Mae Thies
(USA)

@teasingimages



Magical Bloodline



Diana Haronis
(USA)

http://www.dianasphotoart.com/

Faery of Spring



In the Forest
of Forever

S. H. Layre
(USA)



She Haunts
the Night



Dreaming Between Pages

Rosa Perry
(Australia)

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



Parallel Lives

CatBeagle Creations
(Australia)

https://catbeaglecreations.myportfolio.com/



Dean Kelley
(USA)

Where Time Pulled Over



http://deankelleyphotography.com/

Edsel



Iceberg Ice Cave

http://www.davehattoriphotoart.com/

Dave Hattori
(USA)



Horned Puffin



The Fox and Hare

Wanda Ann Kinnaman
(USA)

https://www.wandaannkinnaman.com/



The Fairy Garden Treasure

Maureen Maxwell
(Australia)

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



Moonlit Nap



Rebecah Thompson
(USA)

http://www.rebecahthompson.com/

Moonlit Forest

Rockin' in the Park



Larry Buckley
(USA)

Time Travelers



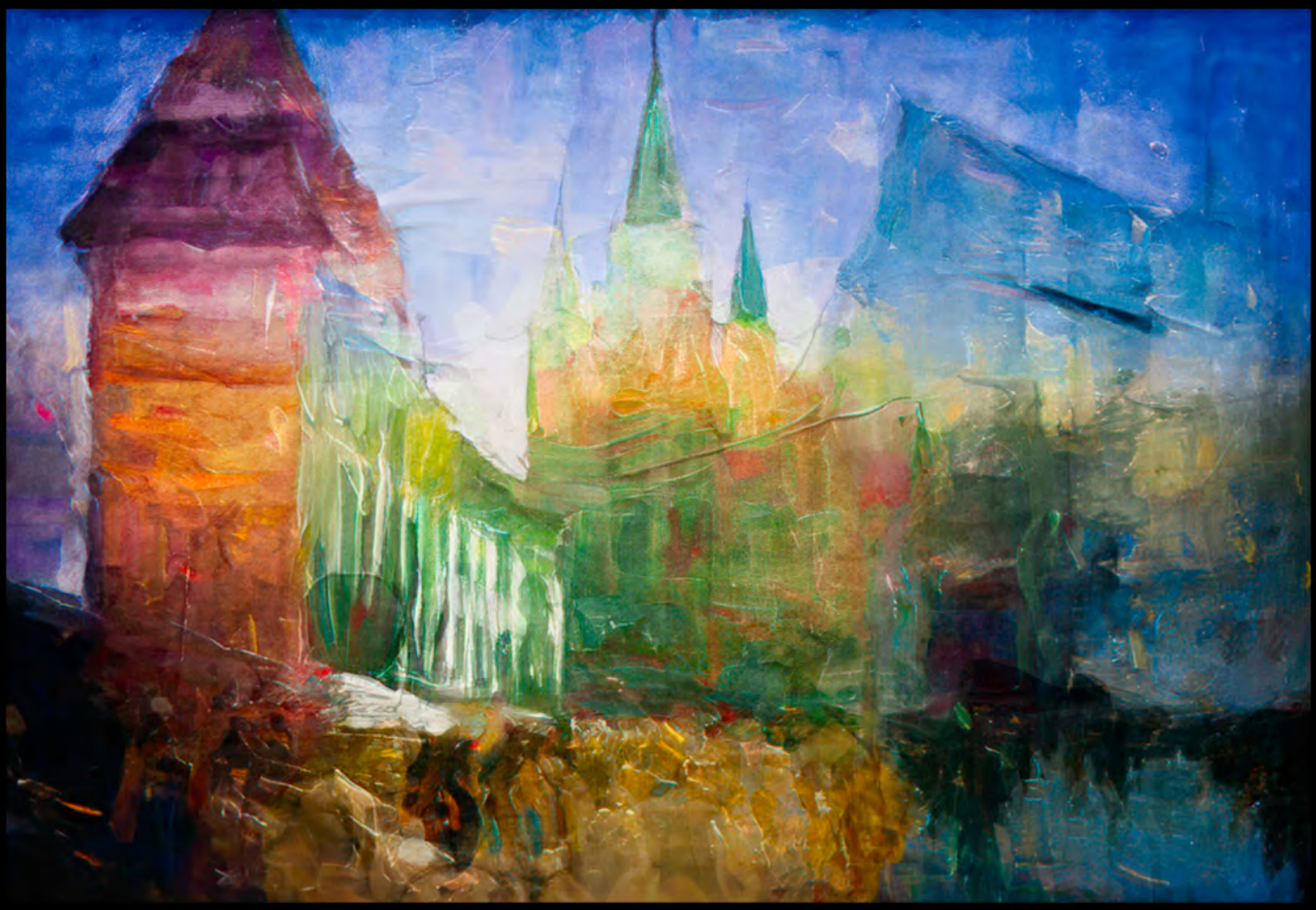
http://www.bylarrywbuckleyphotography.com/



Cosmic Revelations Turquoise

Linda Carruth
(USA)

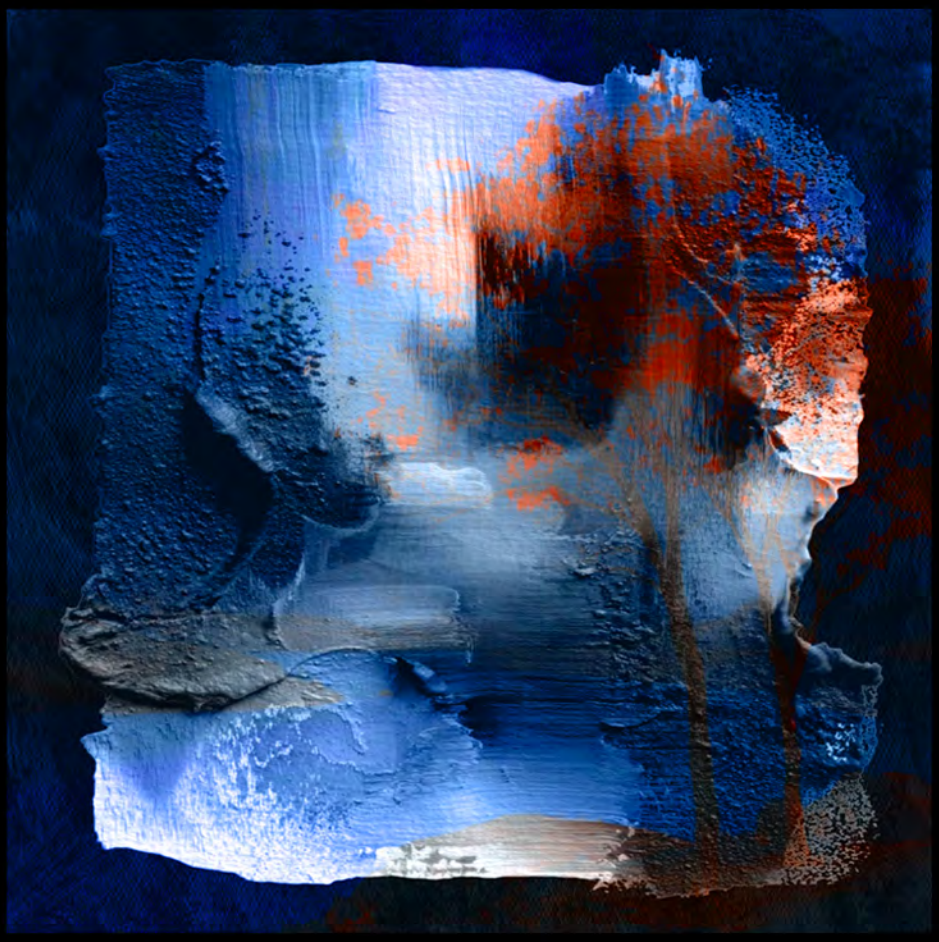
https://linda-carruth.pixels.com/



Leiden

Scott Clements
(USA)

http://clements-images.com/



Trees at Water's Edge



Marie Farmer
(USA)

Shattered Identity



Luminous Passage

Ilona Abou-Zolof
(Australia)



Savanna Gathering

https://gigglegallery.design/



Evelyn Elwan
(USA)

The Numbers Don't Add Up



City Beauty

Deborah Morrison
(USA)



The New Year's Words Await a New Voice



Diane Eastham
(Canada)

https://diane-eastham.pixels.com/

The Traveler

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.

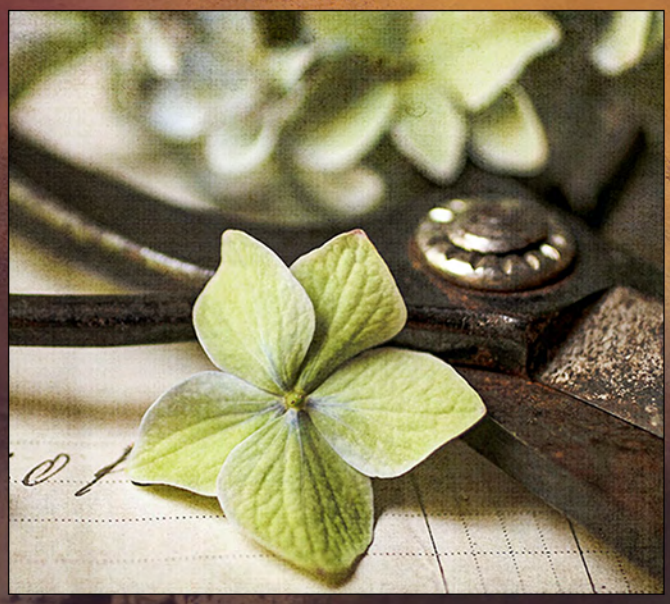
Caroline Julia Moore

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.

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.foxeysquirrel.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/itKuPiLLiimaginarium

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.



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 creativesuccess 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.

Miles Beyond The Moon

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



Mary Baileyis 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 artiststo 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











l 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:
Rachelle R. Vetter (USA)

LIVING THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

PUSHING PHOTOGRAPHY FURTHER



INTERESTED IN CREATING PHOTO ART OF YOUR OWN?
GET STARTED HERE:
HTTP://PROPHOTOSHOPARTISTRY.COM

COPYRIGHT 2026 CONCERTO3, LLC

* ARTISTS IN THIS PUBLICATION ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN WORKS AND ANY RIGHTS APPERTAINING