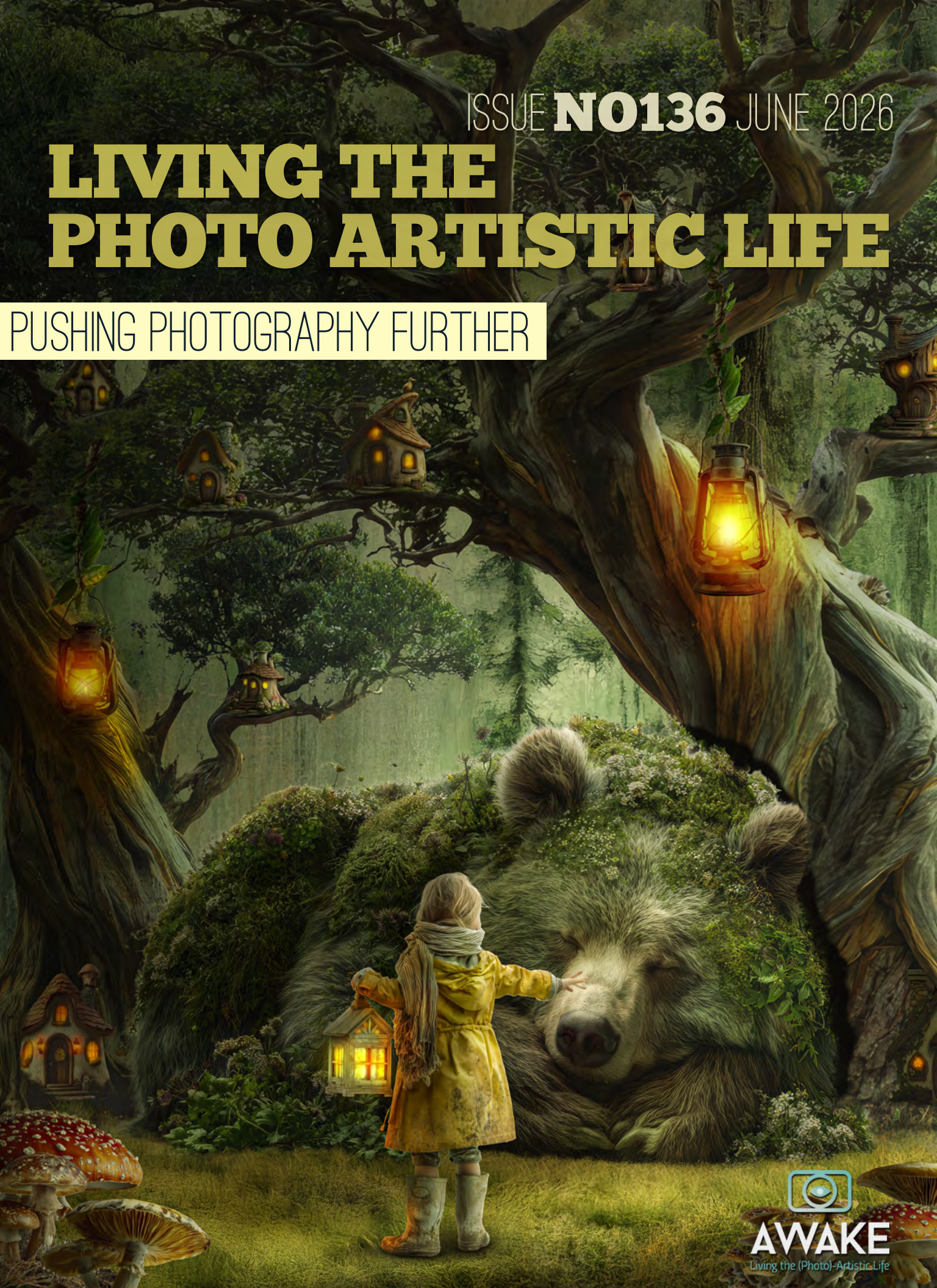


ISSUE **NO136** JUNE 2026

LIVING THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

PUSHING PHOTOGRAPHY FURTHER



AWAKE

Living the (Photo)-Artistic Life

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

SEBASTIAN MICHAELS

I meet lots of artists. Also lots of *would-be* artists.

And I've come to see that often as not, the would-be artist is simply a perfectionist. Because they feel everything needs to be perfect — and things never are — they end up putting off their creative work until some imagined "someday" . . . presumably when they have endless free time, unlimited resources, and zero problems.

Of course it's easier to daydream about the amazing art you'll create or the novel you'll write or the piano you'll master if it all remains safely tucked away in the future this way. Waiting on perfect, you never have to begin. You never have to take any chances.

The artists of *AWAKE* showcased here don't have time for "perfect."

One of the ideas I've pressed on our artists from the very beginning is that art happens when you're willing to just throw yourself into it and see what happens.

Maybe you don't have a completely free weekend, but how about 10 or 15 minutes just before dinner? That'll do. That's enough to get something started. Is it perfect? No. But it's good enough.

Or maybe you've been steadily working on a piece, a little here a little there for the past week, and you *think* it's finished (sure feels finished) . . . A perfectionist will continue fiddling with it for another

week, and not because it needs it, but more because, well, what if people don't like it?

Serious artists don't have time for that kind of wishy-washy fretting. Better to hit save one last time and dive into a new piece. Sure, maybe you take another fresh glance at the first piece the next day just to make sure nothing is glaringly wonky about it, but otherwise it's time to move on.

One lesson every ambitious artist eventually learns is that there's magic in *volume*. Especially early on. You develop your artistic skills mostly by moving energetically through one piece after another.

This is also how you get good and build a serious body of work.

Not by hiding behind your perfectionism and endlessly putting your artistry on hold.

But by getting in there and having fun *making* things.

If you've been on the sideline waiting for all the stars to line up and everything to be perfect, I hope the wonderful artwork in the pages ahead will inspire you to just dive in and get started crafting a creative life for yourself.

You could be making art like this too. You just have to give yourself the permission.

~ Sebastian

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

004 PAMELA WALDER
 005 CHERYL PARRIS
 006 RACHELLE R. VETTER
 007 SHELLEY BENJAMIN
 008 JILL JOHNSON
 009 DORI FLEMING
 010 CATHY LABUAK
 011 JO CRANE
 012 MARY MILLER
 013 MAGGY R. THORVALDSDOTTIR PEASE
 014 REBECAH THOMPSON
 015 MARIUS ELS
 016 BEVERLY EVERSON
 017 MARIE FARMER
 018 JANICE S. BATTERBEE
 019 SHERRI REED
 020 KAREN SORRELLS
 021 CHRISTINA BRUNTON
 022 DAN LAVERY
 023 DEBORAH MORRISON
 024 ROSA PERRY
 025 DONNA WATERSON
 026 CJ SHANK
 027 DIANE EASTHAM
 028 CHRIS HARRIS
 029 ASHBY PRESLEY
 030 KRISTIN COUCH
 031 SUE WATERHOUSE
 032 KATHLEEN GREENWOOD
 033 MAUREEN MAXWELL
 034 HELGA BLANKE
 035 ANN LAVIN
 036 TRACY COOPER
 037 NANCIE ROWAN

038 JEAN HUTTER
 039 GITAMA DAY
 040 MERRILEE SOBERG
 041-045 **FEATURED ARTIST:
 TERRI BUTLER**
 046 LOU ANN DONAHUE
 047 RENEE PHOENIX
 048 NANCY BRIZENDINE
 049 MARGO REASNER
 050 KIM RICCI
 051 MARILYN SUMNER
 052 TINA CHRISTENSEN
 053 JOHN SCHULTZ
 054 DONNA ELLIOT
 055 DOV FUCHS
 056 DOREEN FAIELLO
 057 HELEN ANNE LEMKE
 058 ILONA ABOU-ZOLOF
 059 PIERRE PEVSNER
 060 JOY BUCKLEY FLYNN
 061 MARGARET WEIR
 062-063 LARRY BUCKLEY
 064 MAXI BALGER
 065 DAN BORGE
 066 JULIE MAE THIES
 067 DENISE MCDERMOTT
 068 DENISE HUNTER LOGAN
 069 MATTHEW BERBERICH
 070 INGE KLEMENT
 071 AUGUST NAUDE
 072 JOHN MOLINO
 073 VICKI ARDOIN
 074 MARK LUTNES
 075 MARIETJIE DU TOIT

076 NINA IRVIN
 077 ROBZ LIPNER
 078 PENNY DE JONG
 079 KEELEY MCCLEAVE
 080 BARBARA MIERAU-KLEIN
 081 DAVE HATTORI
 082 S. H. LAYRE
 083 DIANA HARONIS
 084 VIV BUCKLEY
 085 DON SCHIFFNER
 086 BOB RUDE
 087 LUANA LAUBSCHER
 088 CLARISSA WILSON
 089 DEAN KELLEY
 090 LINDA LEWIS
 091 RENEE KEEL
 092 MARY ANN ROESLER
 093 BOB DESILETS
 094 PAULINE VAN DER SPUY
 095 INGRID POMEROY
 096 GEORGE KONCZ
 097 JOHN T JONES
 098 KEITH G. HAWLEY
 099 JOYCE SIMPSON
 100 BARBARA A LANE
 101 PAULA D POWERS
 102 DIANE PINSART
 103 ANITA HUBBARD

104-111 **CONTRIBUTING DESIGNERS
 SPOTLIGHT**

FRONT COVER & BACKGROUND IMAGE
 TERRI BUTLER



AWAKE
 Living the (Photo)-Artistic Life



Ready-to-Wear, Ready to Fly

Pamela Walder
(UK)



The Exchange



Cheryl Parris
(USA)

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

The Last Train

Placidity



Rachelle R. Vetter
(USA)

<http://rachellerphotography.com/>

Eclectic Daydreamer





Companions on the Road

Shelley Benjamin
(USA)

<https://shelleybenjamin.com/>



Peekaboo

Jill Johnson
(USA)



Strange Companions



Dori Fleming
(UK)

Fish Out of Water

Ticket to Ride



Cathy Labuak
(USA)

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

The Waiting Ones





What Happens when We Break

Jo Crane
(Just Josie Photography)
(UK)

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



The Last Letter

Mary Miller
(USA)



Dawn's Keeper



Maggy R.
Thorvaldsdottir Pease
(USA)

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

House Sparrow



Sea Grass

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

Rebecah
Thompson
(USA)

Silent Watch

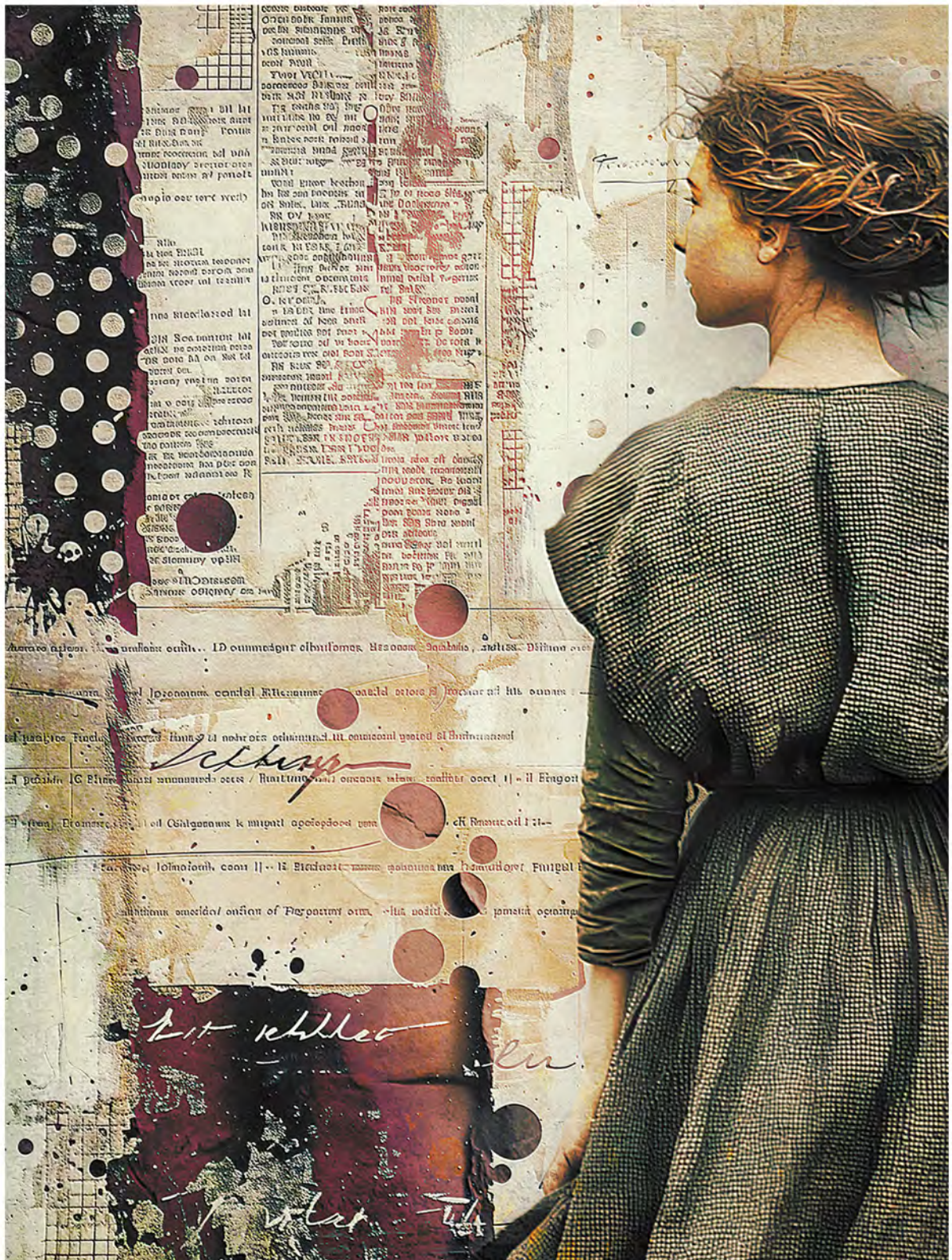




Pink Lotus

Marius Els
(UK)

<https://mariuselsphotoartistry.com/>



A Soul Beside Me

Beverly Everson
(USA)

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



Rihla of the Dreaming Nomad



Marie Farmer
(USA)

Swan Lake



The Chess Game

Janice S. Batterbee
(Spain)



18 At the Theatre

@janicebatterbee1695



Ordinary Life

Sherri Reed
(USA)

@Sherri_Reed_Studios



Hold Your Horses

Karen Sorrells
(USA)



Boomerang



Christina Brunton
(Australia)

<https://chrisbrunton.com/>

Gatherer

Red Vest

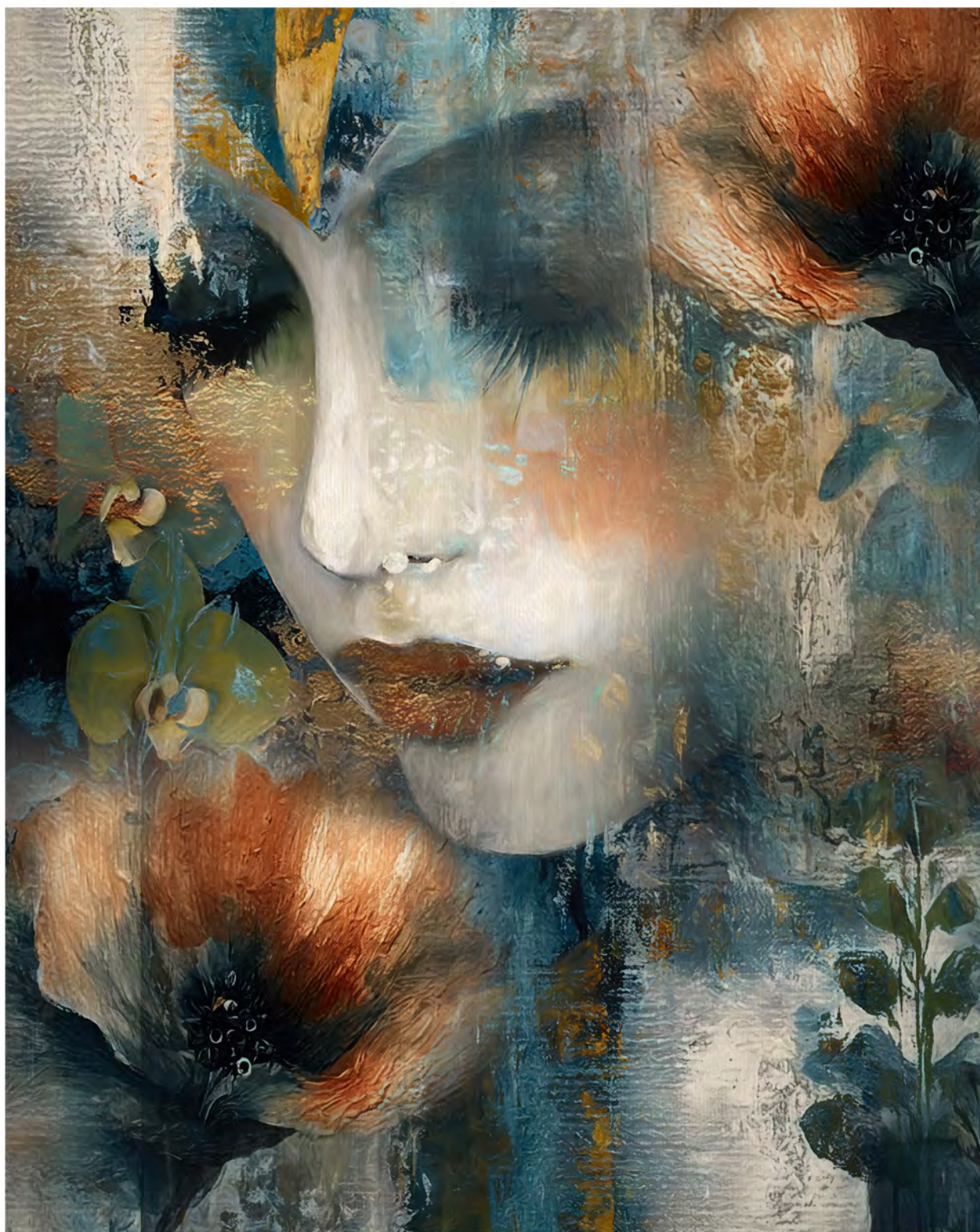


Dan Lavery
(Canada)

<http://danlaveryartist.ca/>

Waiting





Summer Dream

Deborah Morrison
(USA)

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



The Weight of Home

Rosa Perry
(Australia)

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



Partly Cloudy Skies



Donna Waterson
(USA)

Magic Moments

The Note



CJ Shank
(USA)

Solitude





The Song My Soul Sings

Diane Eastham
(Canada)

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



Confidentes

Chris Harris
(USA)

@allshapeofartistry



Kunstcollage



Ashby Presley
(USA)

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

It's All About the Look

Between Two
Breaths



Kristin Couch
(Sweden)

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

The Quiet After
Everything





Through the Window

Sue Waterhouse
(England)



Emerging Summer

Kathleen Greenwood
(USA)

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



Maureen Maxwell
(Australia)

From the Darkness into the Light



The Caregivers

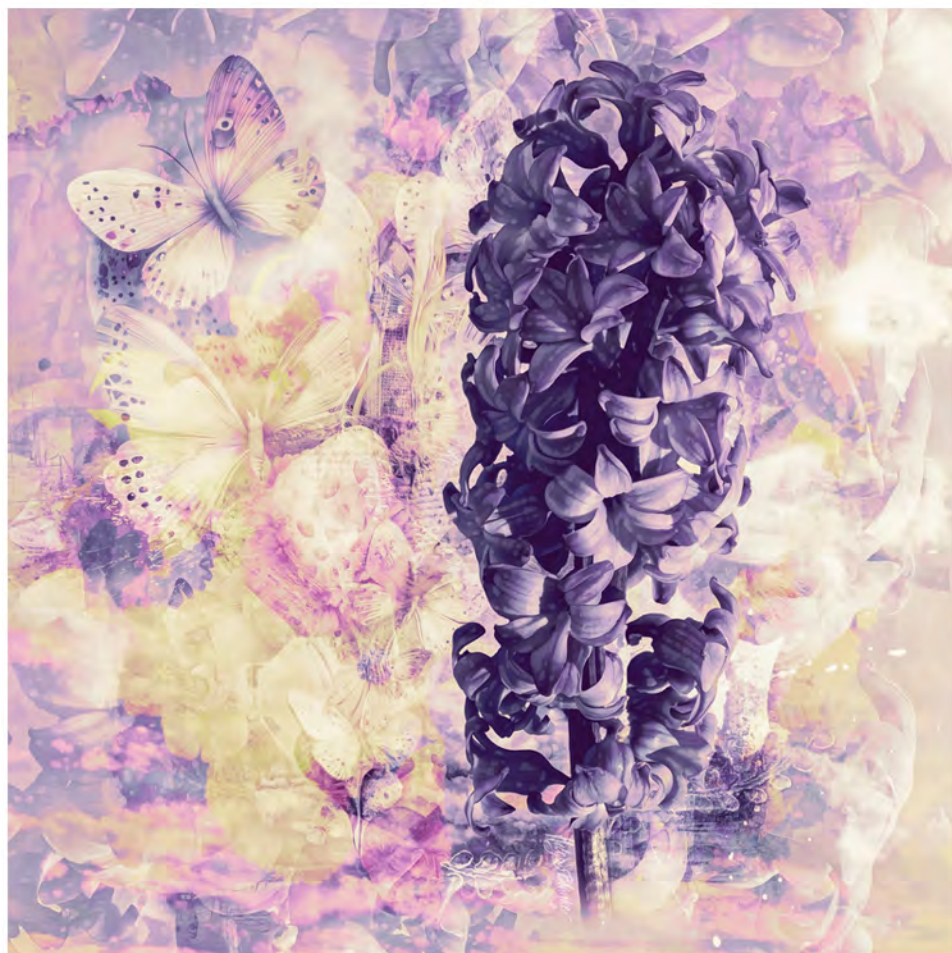
Her Memories of a Cup



Helga Blanke
(The Netherlands)

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

Spring and the Hyacinth





Ann Lavin
(Australia)

Fairy Land



@tracycooper0825

Tracy Cooper
(Portugal)

Museum Collection



Time Takes Wing



Nancie Rowan
(USA)

The Lady and
the Flamingo

The Voice of the Heart



Jean Hutter
(USA)

@jeanhutter1

Two Tickets to Paradise





Big Top Audition

Gitama Day
(Australia)



Rosemobile

Merrilee Soberg
(Canada)

FEATURED ARTIST

Tenni
Butler



The Bloom Merchant

“ When I discovered the courses in **My Photo Artistic Life** my world changed! I joined **AWAKE** right away and later the **KAIZEN** group. Photography taught me the importance of impact, storytelling and lighting in my art but these communities gave me the freedom to be creative again. ”



A Barefoot Traveler



Words Woven in Wood



Haida Warrior

“ I do a lot of complex compositional work and I think my artwork reflects the blending of my two worlds, photography and photo artistry. I try to merge the best of both worlds into my work to create something unique . . . sometimes photorealistic and sometimes otherworldly. ”



The Watcher's Chamber



From Earth and Fury



The Curator of Tempests



The Cartographer of Cloud Seas

Terri
Butler

(USA)

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

“ I still compete regularly in juried art shows at state and national levels, but my inner artistic muse really loves to create the photo artistry works for the AWAKE and KAIZEN groups. Here, perfection is optional and the release of one’s artistic soul and energy is possible. No judges, no scoring, no rules, just art! ”

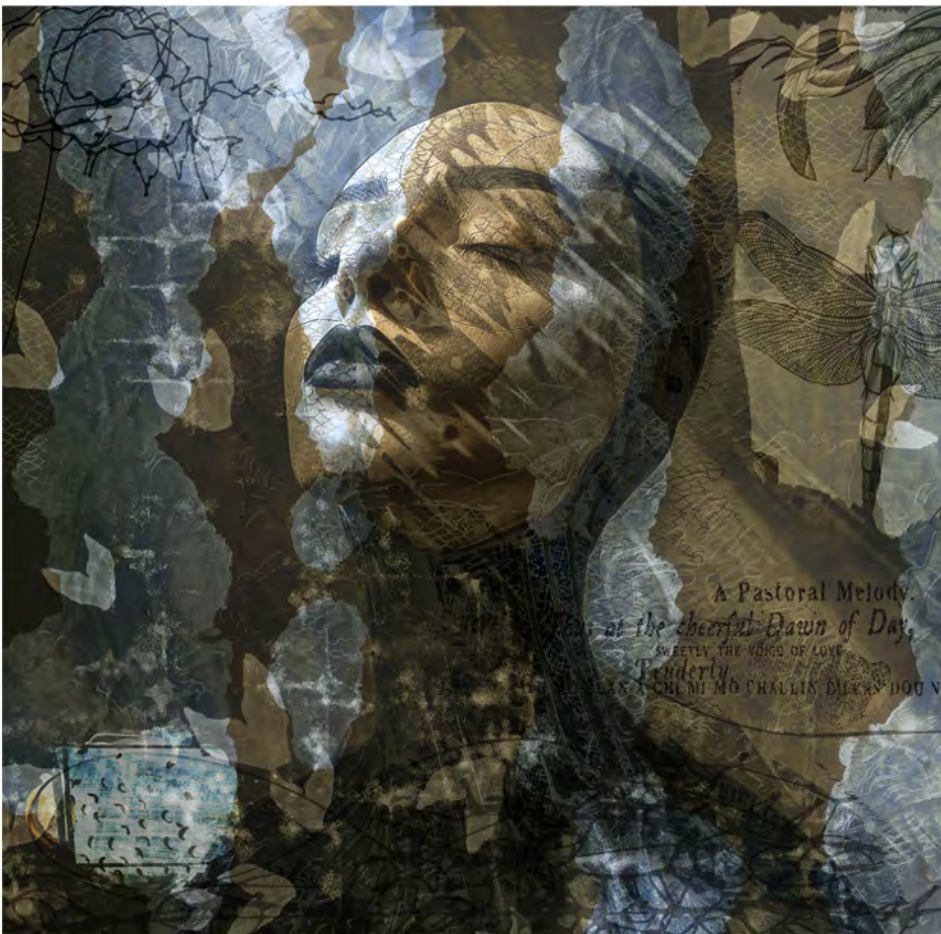


The Traveler

Lou Ann Donahue
(USA)



Mind Storming



Renee Phoenix
(USA)

A New Light



As Time Goes By

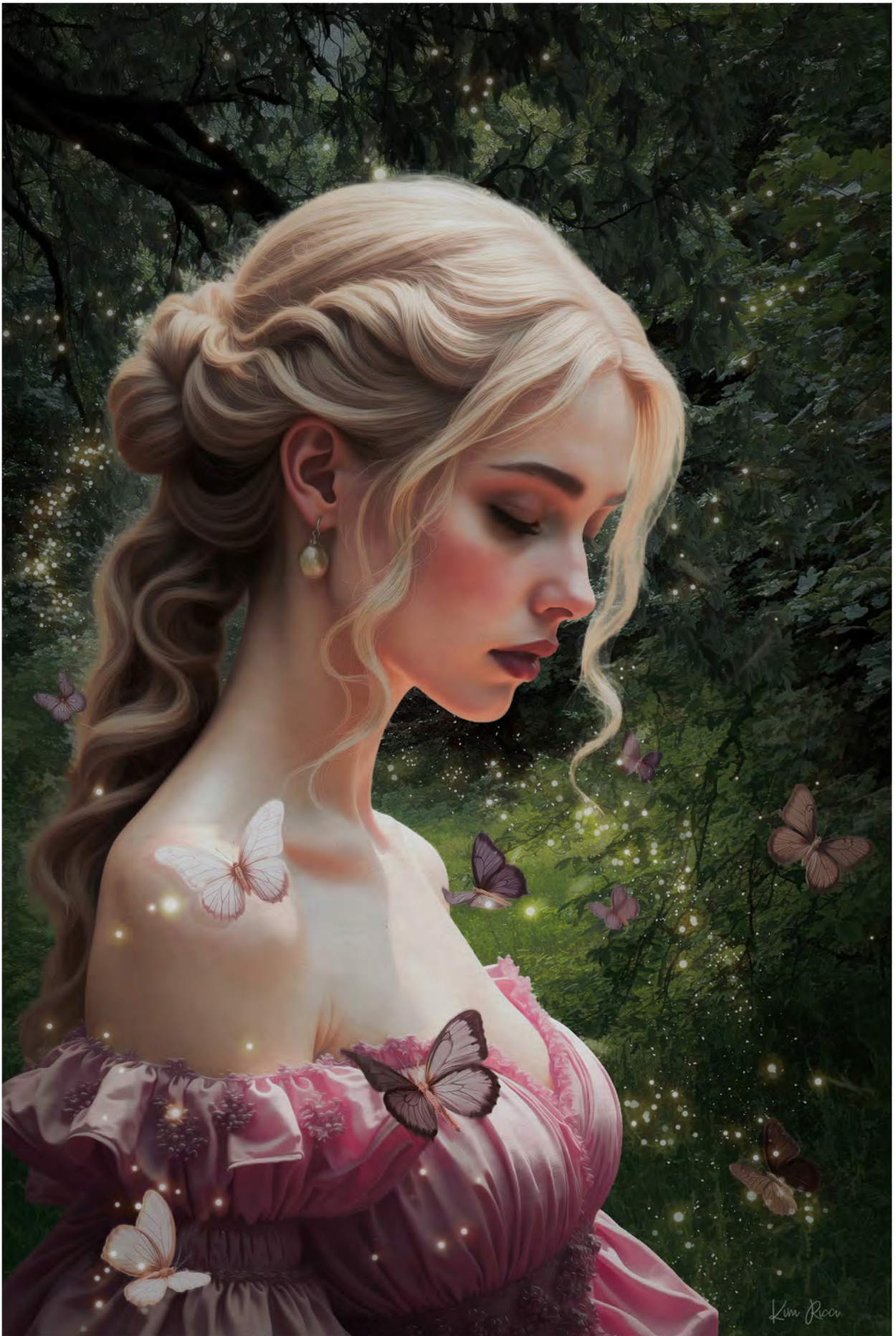
Nancy Brizendine
(USA)





Regret

Margo Reasner
(USA)





Lotus Flowers

Marilyn Sumner
(USA)

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

American Bald Eagle



My Sketchbook -
American Bald Eagle

Tina Christensen
(USA)



John Schultz
(USA)

Ready to Ride





The Inner Stalker



Dov Fuchs
(Israel)

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

The Day the Train Came Twice



Keepers of the Light

Doreen Faiello
(USA)

Left on the
Prospector's Table





Contemplating 3

Helen Anne Lemke
(Canada)

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



Dreaming
Forward

Ilona Abou-Zolof
(Australia)



Transmutation



Pierre Pevsner
(France)

<http://pierrepevsner.com/>

Waiting for the
Resurrection

Aquarius



Joy Buckley Flynn
(Ireland)

Electric Blue





Bejeweled

Margaret Weir
(Canada)

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



Larry Buckley
(USA)

Protectors



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



We are the Timekeepers

Maxi Balcer
(USA)



Stochastic
Parrot



Dan Borge
(USA)

Robot Sage



Ulysses S. Grant Home

Julie Mae Thies
(USA)





Lines of Grace

Denise McDermott
(Australia)



A Garden to Dream In

Denise Hunter Logan
(Australia)



Blue Morning



Matthew Berberich
(USA)

<http://matthewberberich.com/>

Fading Gaze



The Secret Sanctuary

Inge Klement
(Norway / Austria)



Don't Come Any Closer

<https://www.deviantart.com/ingeklem>



Letting Go

August Naude
(South Africa)

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



Guarding Life

John Molino
(USA)



Afternoon Nap



Vicki Ardoin
(USA)

<https://vickiardoinfineart.com/>

This Music Takes Me Back

Dream Catcher



Mark Lutnes
(USA)

The Forever Runway





The Breathtaking Stillness of Love in the Spaces Between Thoughts

Marietjie du Toit
(South Africa)

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



Out of the Darkness

Nina Irvin
(USA)



When the Sun
Softens



Robz Lipner
(South Africa)

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

The Distance
Between

Lady In Red



Penny de Jong
(Australia)

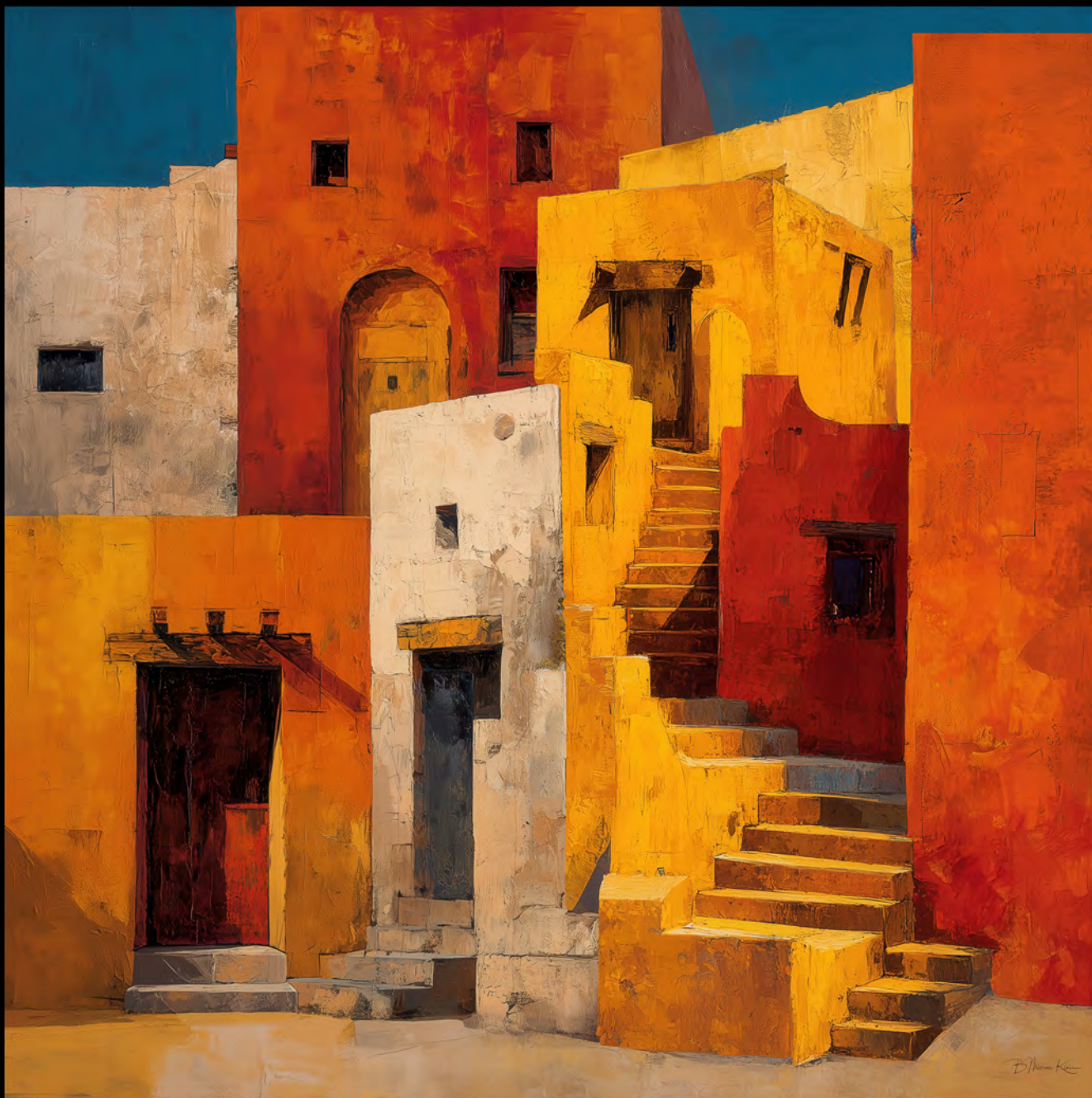
Tea Leaf Ritual





Marina

Keeley McCleave
(England)



Southwestern Abstract

Barbara Mierau-Klein
(USA / Germany)

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



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

Lime Kiln Light Sunset



Dave Hattori
(USA)

Backyard Birds



Sailing Celestial Seas

S. H. Layre
(USA)





Archangel Metatron

Diana Haronis
(USA)

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



The Viking

Viv Buckley
(Ireland)

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



Grist Mill



Don Schiffner
(USA)

A Clown & His Dog



Old Building

Bob Rude
(USA)





Time Constraints

Luana Laubscher
(South Africa)



Nature's Embrace

Clarissa Wilson
(USA)

<http://clarissawilson.com/>



Dean Kelley
(USA)

Engine 7005 on the Main Line



<http://deankelleyphotography.com/>

The Dock where Time Dissolves

Wayang Theater



Linda Lewis
(USA)

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

Plato's Cave





Nautical Nostalgia

Renée Keel
(USA)

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



Meet Me in the Garden

Mary Ann Roesler
(USA)

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



Bob Desilets
(USA)

Stormy Seas



Passage of Time

At the
Drinking Hole



Pauline van der Spuy
(South Africa)

High Rise





Ingrid Pomeroy
(USA)

Abstract Collage



Soldiers Entering Reichsburg
Castle Cochem in Germany

George Koncz
(Australia)



Noise at Night



John T Jones
(USA)

Ranger John

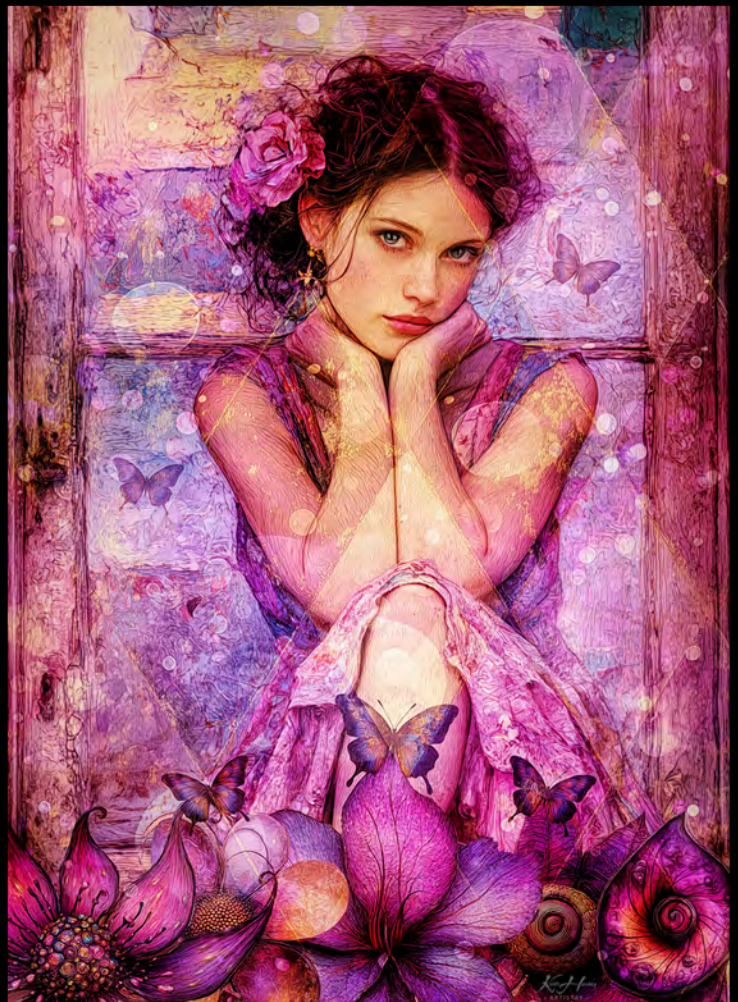


Sunday

Keith G. Hawley
(Australia)

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

Pensive





Inside Out

Joyce Simpson
(UK)

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



Vibrant Hues

Barbara A Lane
(USA)

<https://barbaraalane.com/>



At the Station



Paula D Powers
(USA)

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

Eye Spy

Meet Me
for Lunch



Diane Pinsart
(USA)

Going for a Stroll





The Reflection

Anita Hubbard
(Canada)

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

CONTRIBUTING DESIGNERS

"AWAKE" : LIVING THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

Amanda Rockwell

<http://www.brushworkshop.com>

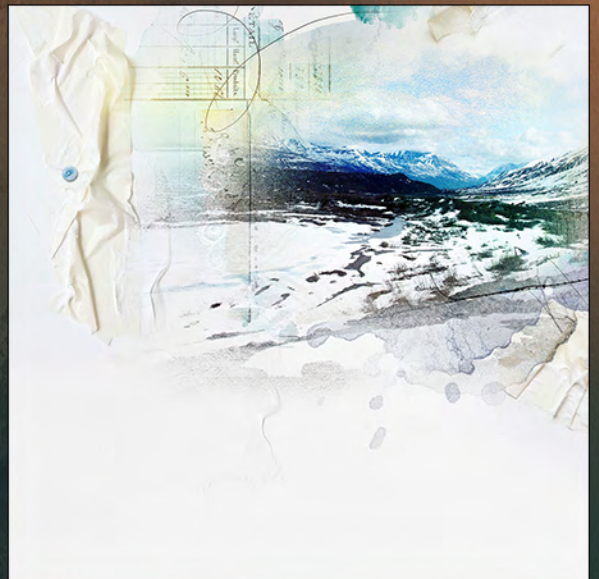
A professional designer with ScrapbookGraphics, Amanda Rockwell creates fantastic content for the AWAKE and KAIZEN groups. But I think her greatest contribution is in encouraging digital artists to get away from their screens and break out the art supplies now and then and actually have fun creating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

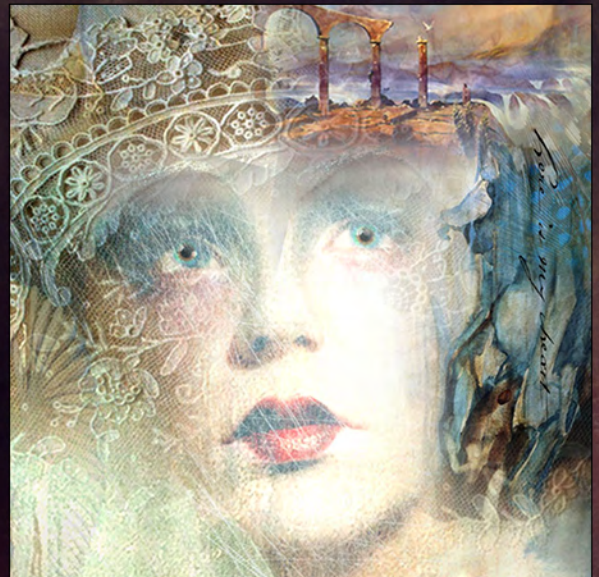
The textures and backgrounds from 2 Lil' Owls are some of the finest in the digital art industry, and indeed many of the works in this magazine feature Denise's textures – often several in one piece. Without question the photo-artistic community is so much the richer for the love and care Denise brings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



Foxeysquirrel

<http://www.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/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:
Terri Butler (USA)

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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