

ISSUE **NO137** JULY 2026

LIVING THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

PUSHING PHOTOGRAPHY FURTHER



AWAKE
Living the (Photo-)Artistic Life

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

SEBASTIAN MICHAELS

So I woke up today and headed out on the trails, and I started to think about what I'd write for this month's magazine. (And I have to admit, 137 months into this, it's not always easy coming up with something!)

By the time I got back home I didn't have anything clearly decided. But when I got to my desk I had a really fine email awaiting me. And the idea was right there.

I get emails like this now and then, but this one was especially moving, and it arrived at just the right time. It was from an extremely talented artist I'm confident you know, and what she reminded me of was just how incredibly fortunate we have all been to find one another here in the world of AWAKE.

Many of our artists have been here creating art alongside one another for eight, ten, twelve years already! And so many of us have become real friends over that time — mostly online, but many also out in the real world.

In the normal course of things (online or off), let's face it . . . this just doesn't happen.

People usually fade and drift away. All too often internal gripes and conflicts tear apart groups from within. Or politics rears its head and everything becomes impossibly divisive. Or you just end up with

mean, bitter people with big egos, looking to tear others down.

But we don't get that *at all* here in AWAKE.

Instead, we see very much the opposite: Our artists are invariably helpful and enthusiastic. They love being here, and they cheer each other along.

The world could do with more of that.

When I look back at all of the exciting things we've done over the years, or leaf through the pages of these magazines each month, I think: "How *lucky* are we to be surrounded by so much talent? And better yet, how wonderful is it that, after all this time, we're all still able to have so much fun together?"

I love that you turn up each month to enjoy the latest creations from the artists of AWAKE.

And I truly feel blessed that I get to write these Letters introducing their work.

Thank you for being part of the artistic family we've created here.

I know for certain I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

~ Sebastian

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

004 ROSA PERRY
005 BARBARA MIERAU-KLEIN
006 DAVE HATTORI
007 JILL JOHNSON
008 DEBORAH MORRISON
009 ROBZ LIPNER
010 MARGARET WER
011 JO CRANE
012 MERRILEE SOBERG
013 CHERYL PARRIS
014 ASHBY PRESLEY
015 RENEE PHOENIX
016 MAUREEN MAXWELL
017 RACHELLE R. VETTER
018 ESTHER BYRT
019 GITAMA DAY
020 MARIUS ELS
021 ANN LAVIN
022 LOU ANN DONAHUE
023 LOUISE SMITH
024 PAMELA WALDER
025 BEVERLY EVERSON
026 CATHY LABUDAK
027 DIANE EASTHAM
028 MARK LUTNES
029 MARILYN SUMNER
030 NANCIE ROWAN
031 ANITA HUBBARD
032 SHARON JENKINS
033 DOV FUCHS
034 DORI FLEMING
035 SARA SANDBERG
036 SHELLEY BENJAMIN
037 NINA IRVIN

038 BARBARA A LANE

039 DIANA HARONIS

040 BOB DESILETS

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045 **KAREN SORRELLS**

046 DEAN KELLEY

047 KEELEY MCCLEAVE

048 CHRISTINA BRUNTON

049 MARGO REASNER

050 PENNY DE JONG

051 S. H. LAYRE

052 ILONA ABOU-ZOLOF

053 AUGUST NAUDE

054 JANICE S. BATTERBEE

055 NANCY BRIZENDINE

056 DONNA WATERSON

057 JULIE MAE THIES

058 JOHN MOLINO

059 CHRIS HARRIS

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062 MARY ANN ROESLER

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076 JAN ROBINSON

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079 DON SCHIFFNER

080 INGE KLEMENT

081 PAULINE VAN DER SPUY

082 DOREEN FAIELLO

083 VIV BUCKLEY

084 VICKI ARDOIN

085 KRISTIN COUCH

086 DAN LAVERY

087 CAROL ABEL

088 TERRI BUTLER

089 CLARISSA WILSON

090 LINDA LEWIS

091 INGRID POMEROY

092 DONNA ELLIOT

093 PIERRE PEVSNER

094 JOHN T JONES

095 CJ SHANK

096 MARIE OTERO

097 JOYCE SIMPSON

098 JOY BUCKLEY FLYNN

099 DENISE MCDERMOTT

100 SUE JOESTEN MERRITT

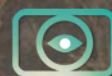
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103 KATHLEEN GREENWOOD

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111 **SPOTLIGHT**

FRONT COVER & BACKGROUND IMAGE
KAREN SORRELLS





Stillness Before the Song

Rosa Perry
(Australia)

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



Greek Windmill



Barbara Mierau-Klein
(USA / Germany)

Greek Ocean Village

Soar



Dave Hattori
(USA)

Sunlit Snowy





Emerging

Jill Johnson
(USA)



The Mannequin

Deborah Morrison
(USA)



Sugar Current



Robz Lipner
(South Africa)

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

The Silent
Companion



Attemptress

Margaret Weir
(Canada)





The Weight of Water

Jo Crane
(Just Josie Photography)
(UK)

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



Aura of Gold

Merrilee Soberg
(Canada)



A Beautiful Day



Cheryl Parris
(USA)

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

Before the Day Begins

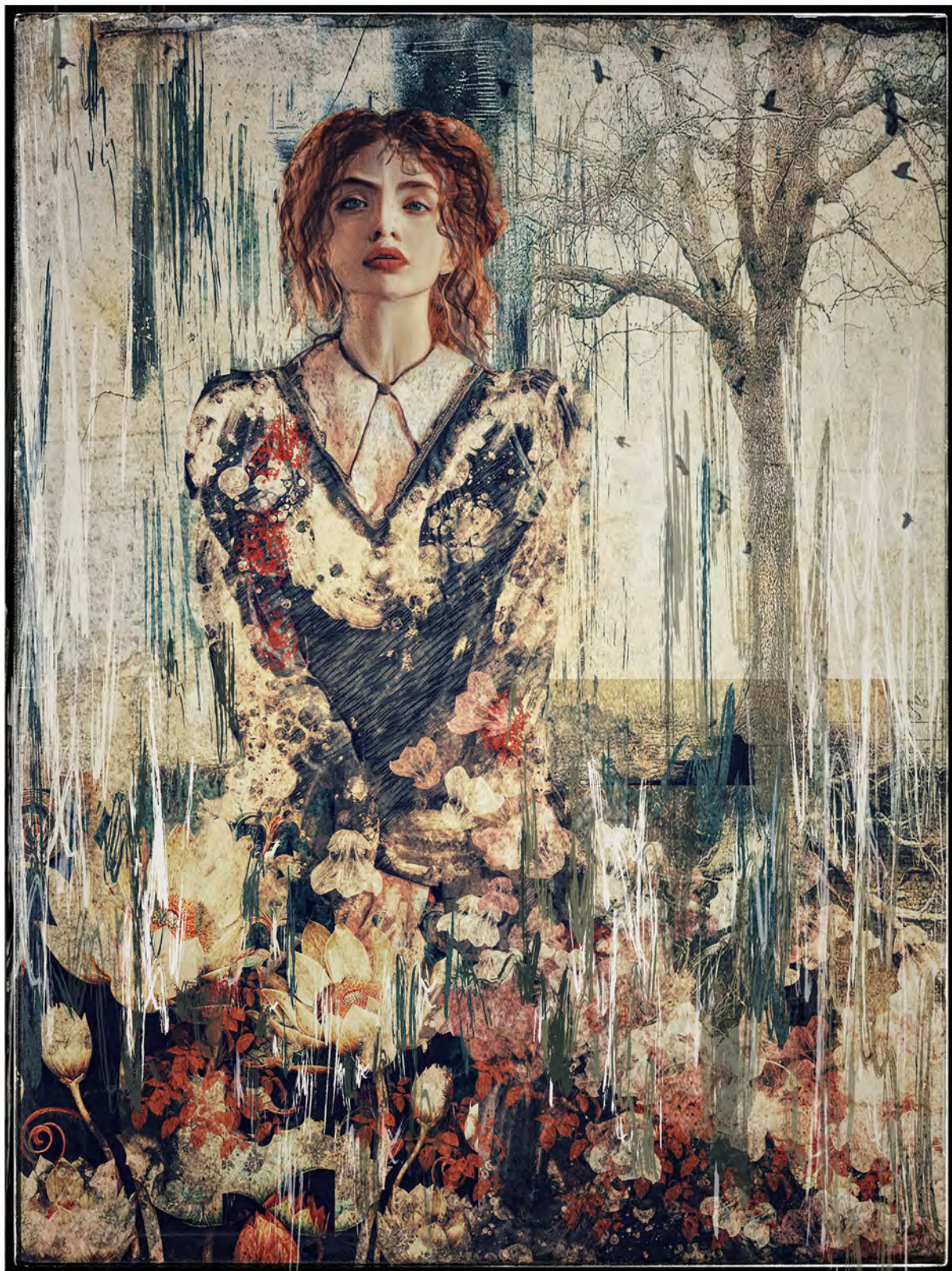
Walking the
Open Field



Ashby Presley
(USA)

Watching the
World Grow





Garden Patina

Renee Phoenix
(USA)

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





Time of Reflection

Rachelle R. Vetter
(USA)

<http://rachellerphotography.com/>



Parting is Sweet Sorrow

Esther Byrt
(Canada)

<http://www.estherbyrt.ca/>



Gitama Day
(Australia)

The Next Act



White Lotus

Marius Els
(UK)

<https://mariuselsphotoartistry.com/>



Frayed



Ann Lavin
(Australia)

Steampunk Chic

1 or 2



Lou Ann Donahue
(USA)

The Optometrist





X Factor

Louise Smith
(Australia)

@lksmithphotography

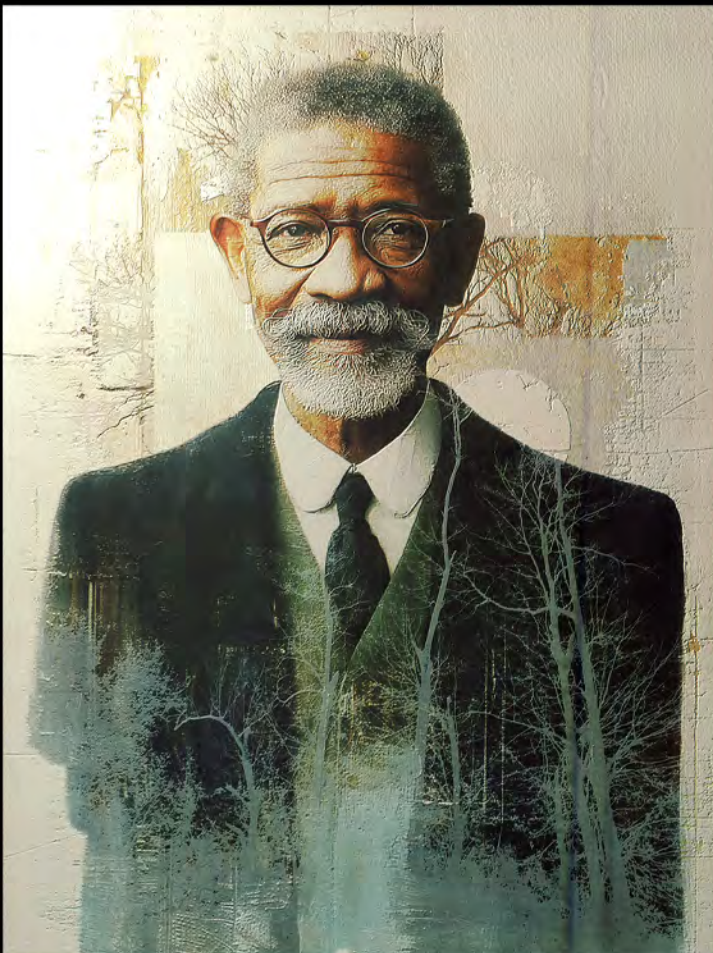


The President of the
Society for Lost Constellations

Pamela Walder
(UK)



Paper Moon



Beverly Everson
(USA)

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

The Botanist

You Are My Peace



Cathy Labudak
(USA)

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

The Embrace





Me and My Friends

Diane Eastham
(Canada)

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



Empath

Mark Lutnes
(USA)



The Last Dance



Marilyn Sumner
(USA)

Daydreaming

A Portrait
of Noise



Nancie Rowan
(USA)

The Painter's
Imagination





Moon Flower

Anita Hubbard
(Canada)

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



Draw Near

Sharon Jenkins
(Canada)

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



Reflection



Dov Fuchs
(Israel)

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

The File Cabinet of
Forgotten Images



Ethereal Wings

Dori Fleming
(UK)

The Heart Will Soar





The White Queen

Sara Sandberg
(Sweden)

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



The Butterfly's Secret

Shelley Benjamin
(USA)

<https://shelleybenjamin.com/>



Garden Party



Nina Irvin
(USA)

Ray of Sunshine

Pink Frost



Barbara A Lane
(USA)

<https://barbaraalane.com/>

Pearlescent Wings in Bloom





Sea of Love

Diana Haronis
(USA)

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



FEATURED ARTIST

Karen
Sorrells



Sly As a Fox

“ I recently experienced an "Aha!" moment when I stumbled across a Japanese word, "ikigai," which loosely translates to "the reason you get out of bed each morning." I suddenly realized this word perfectly summarizes what **Living the Photo Artistic Life** means to me. ”

“ I'm sure I'm one of the oldest members of Sebastian's wonderful community, yet I wake up every morning with childlike enthusiasm for my next session of digital creativity. I leave the bed feeling like a five year old, my mind dancing with ideas as I head toward the computer. ”



Standing Tall

A Good
Hare Day



True Blue





Into the Woods

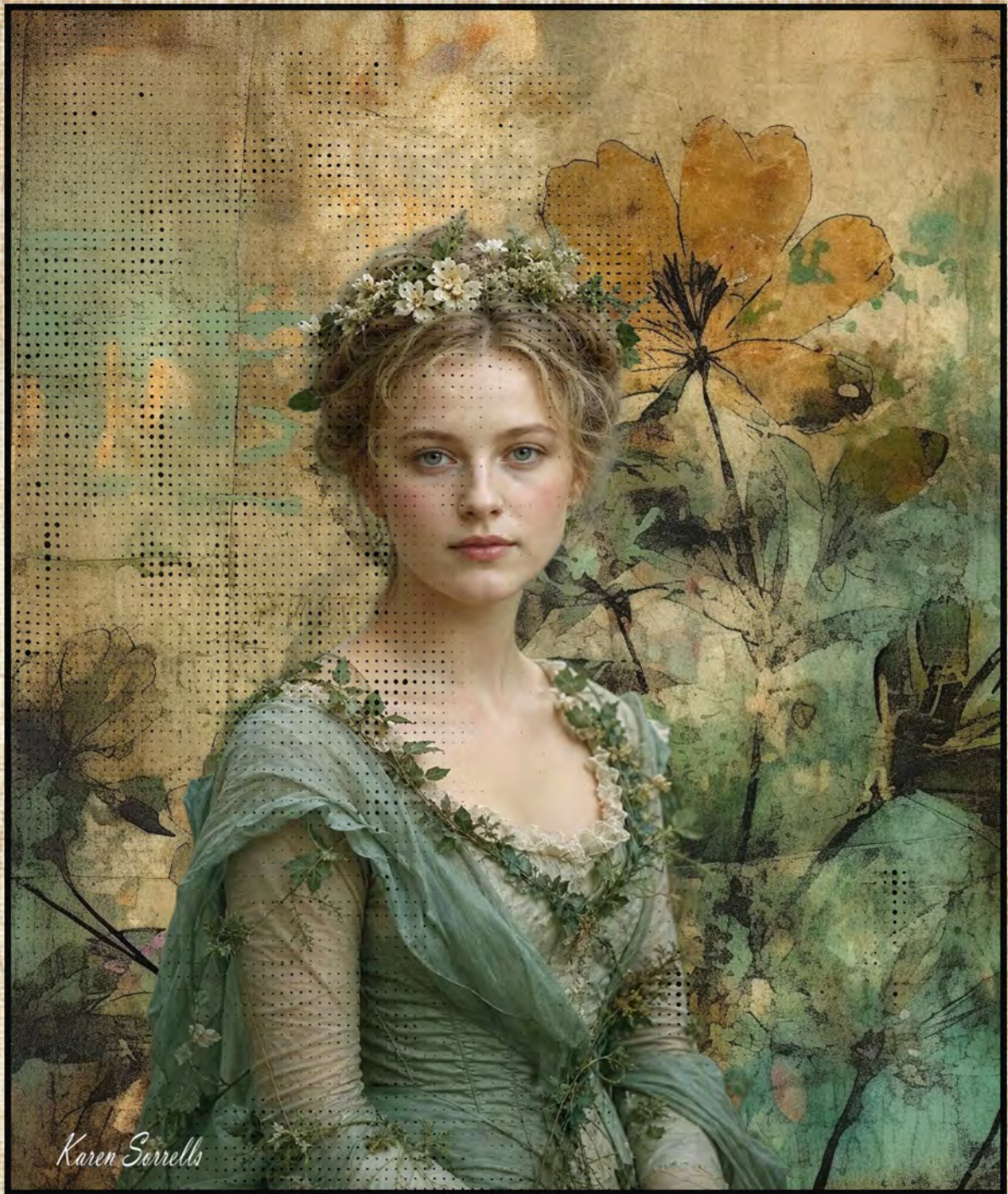


The Trickster

“ As I conduct my daily
artistic experiments and
slip into a state of creative
flow, I am always grateful
for such a fulfilling way
of life. ”



Cygnus Olor



Bemused

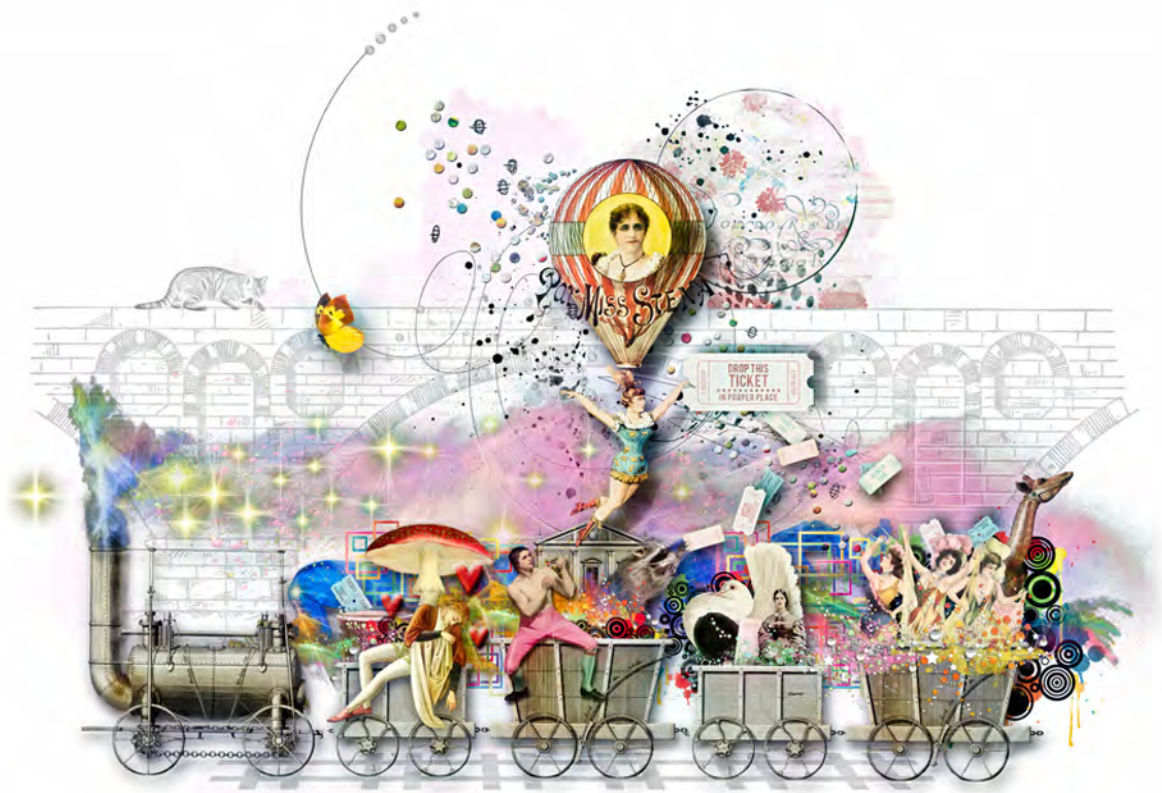
Karen
Sorrells
(USA)



The Way I Remember You

Dean Kelley
(USA)

<http://deankelleyphotography.com/>



A Ticket to Ride



Keeley McCleave
(England)

Fabulous
Fashionista No.2

Three Cuties



Christina Brunton
(Australia)

<https://chrisbrunton.com/>

Winny's Books





Georgia's Dream

Margo Reasner
(USA)



Royal Moments of Calm

Penny de Jong
(Australia)

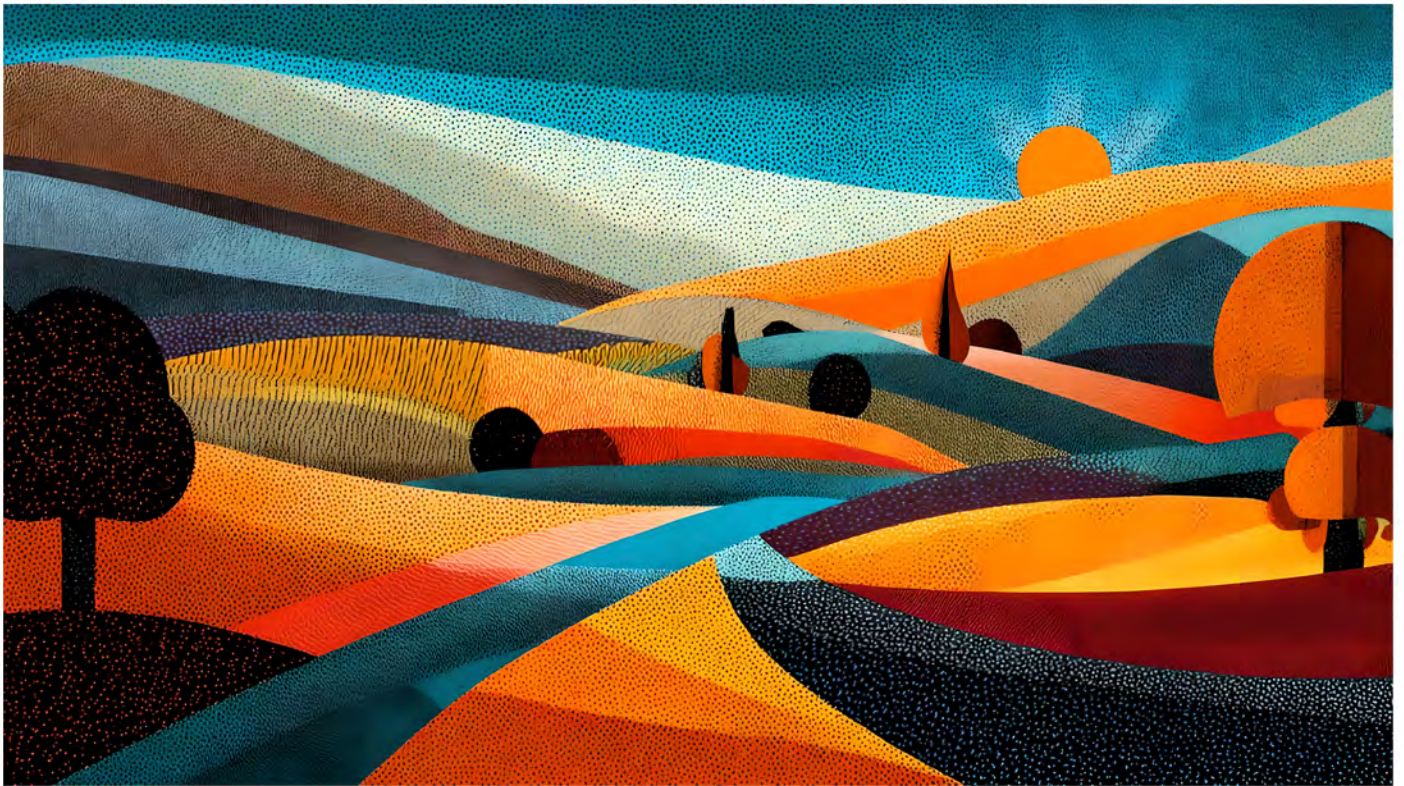


A Long Walk Home



S. H. Layre
(USA)

Irish Mist



Warm Drift

Ilona Abou-Zolof
(Australia)

<https://gigglegallery.design/>

Hidden Face





Wind of Change

August Naude
(South Africa)

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



In Wonderland

Janice S. Batterbee
(Spain)

@janicebatterbee1695



Iris at the
Minuet Party



Nancy Brizendine
(USA)

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

Peeping Tom

Silent Yearning



Donna Waterson
(USA)

Bowl of Plums





Architecture of Reverie

Julie Mae Thies
(USA)

@teasingimages



Better Days

John Molino
(USA)



The Last Keeper of Stars

Chris Harris
(USA)

@allshapeofartistry





Production Line

Dan Borge
(USA)



The Bird's Spring Visit

Mary Ann Roesler
(USA)

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



The Peach Rose

Helga Blanke
(The Netherlands)

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



Style Is Knowing Who You Are

Denise Hunter Logan
(Australia)



Watching



Bob Rude
(USA)

Looking Out
of the Fog

Invisible Things



Jean Hutter
(USA)

@jeanhutter1

Fourth of July





The Mourning Path

CatBeagle Creations
(Australia)



Rose on Hessian

Sharon Sawyer
(UK)

<https://sharon.sawyer.photo/>



Sasha



Maxi Balcer
(USA)

Rosalie



Content

Rebecah Thompson
(USA)

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

Summer Keeps It





Long and Desolate Road

John Schultz
(USA)



Perambulate

Larry Buckley
(USA)

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



On Second Thought

Diane Pinsart
(USA)



Blue Flower Abstract

A Head to Head Discussion



David Walker
(UK)

<http://vista-foto.com/>

Preparing for the Performance





I May Have Lost My Way

Paula D Powers
(USA)

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



Watching

Jan Robinson
(Australia)



Family Portraits



Keith G. Hawley
(Australia)

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

Warrior's Heart



The Fifth Life

Matthew Berberich
(USA)



The Silent Watchers

<http://matthewberberich.com/>



The Poet

Don Schiffner
(USA)



In Solitary Majesty

Inge Klement
(Norway / Austria)

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



Pauline van der Spuy
(South Africa)

Torments of My Mind



Why are You Looking at Me?

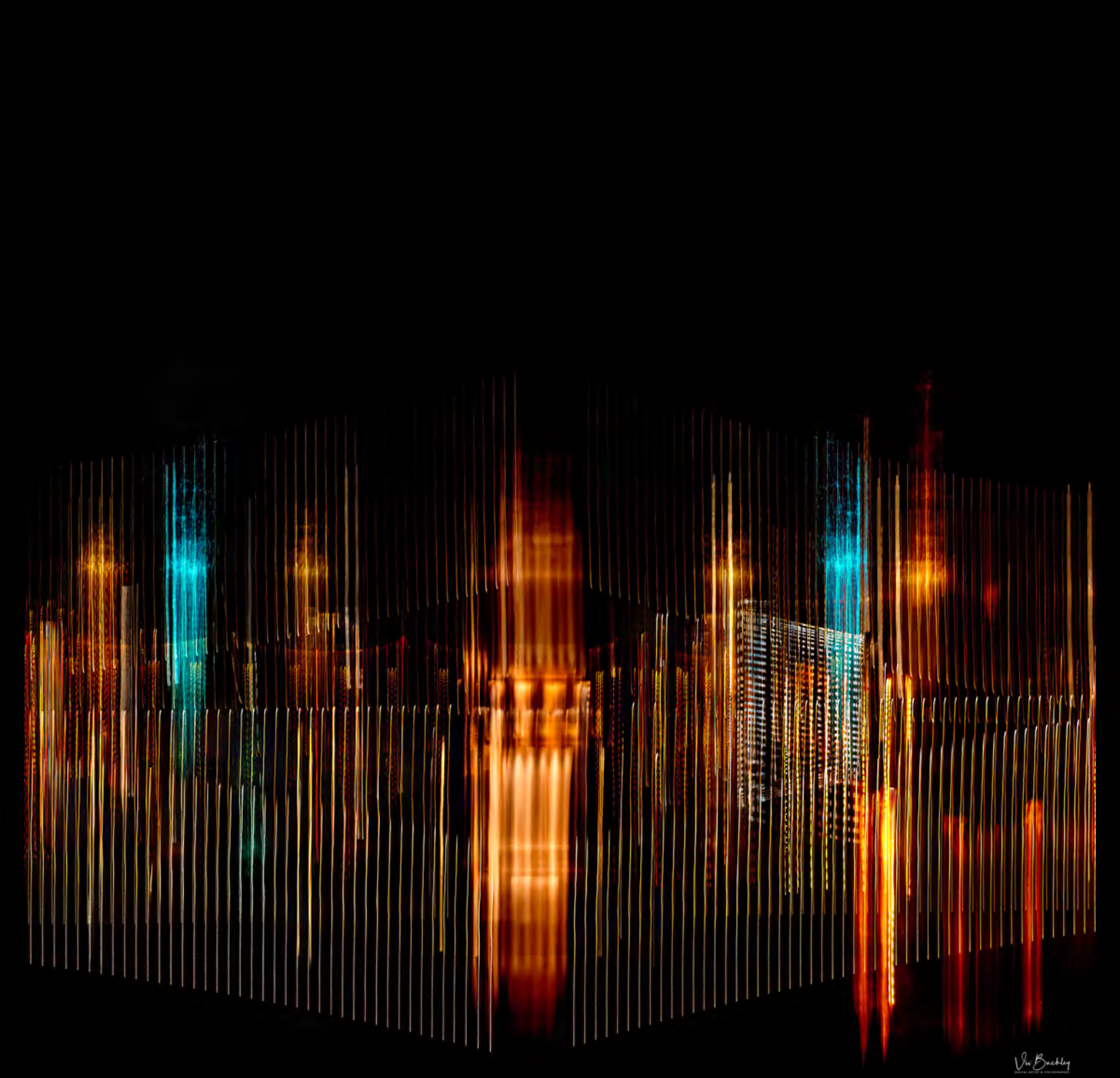
Skyborne
Metropolis Flight
from the Void



Doreen Faiello
(USA)

Cosmic Geisha





Viv Buckley
PHOTOGRAPHY & FILMMAKING

The Bridges of Budapest

Viv Buckley
(Ireland)

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



Some Like It Hot

Vicki Ardoin
(USA)

<https://vickiardoinfineart.com/>



Succession



Kristin Couch
(Sweden)

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

The Butterfly Gentleman

Poppy In
Her Element



Dan Lavery
(Canada)

<http://danlaveryartist.ca/>

Meditation





Summer in the Country

Carol Abel
(Luxembourg)



When the Dry Earth Dreamed

Terri Butler
(USA)

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



Valor



Clarissa Wilson
(USA)

<http://clarissawilson.com/>

Nature's Crown

Looking Out



Linda Lewis
(USA)

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

Anatomy Class





Realm of Dreams

Ingrid Pomeroy
(USA)



I'm Bein' Followed by a Moonshadow

Donna Elliot
(USA)

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



Crime Scene
Reconstruction



Pierre Pevsner
(France)

<http://pierrepevsner.com/>

How To Become an
Enlightened Being

Savannah



John T Jones
(USA)

Broken Feather





Blinding Innocence

CJ Shank
(USA)

<http://tothetopcj.myportfolio.com/>



Stripes and Stars

Marie Otero
(Australia)

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



Joyce Simpson
(UK)

Water Play



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

Nothing to See Here



Smile at the Edge of Time

Joy Buckley Flynn
(Ireland)



Passion for Dance



Unmasked

Denise McDermott
(Unmasked)



Pine Harbor

Sue Joesten Merritt
(USA)

<https://suemerrittphotography.com/>



Ordinary Life



Sherri Reed
(USA)

@Sherri_Reed_Studios

Hope

The Silent Watcher



Maggy R.
Thorvaldsdottir Pease
(USA)

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

Geoffrey





Searching

Kathleen Greenwood
(USA)

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

CONTRIBUTING DESIGNERS

"AWAKE" : LIVING THE PHOTO ARTISTIC LIFE

Amanda Rockwell

<http://www.brushworkshop.com>

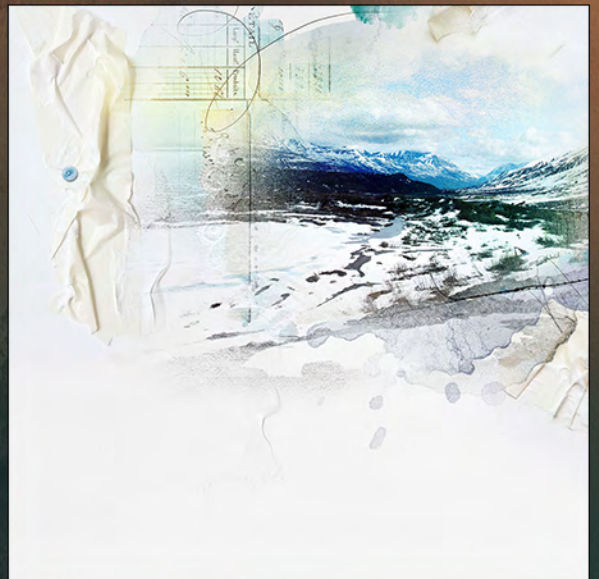
A professional designer with ScrapbookGraphics, Amanda Rockwell creates fantastic content for the AWAKE and KAIZEN groups. But I think her greatest contribution is in encouraging digital artists to get away from their screens and break out the art supplies now and then and actually have fun creating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

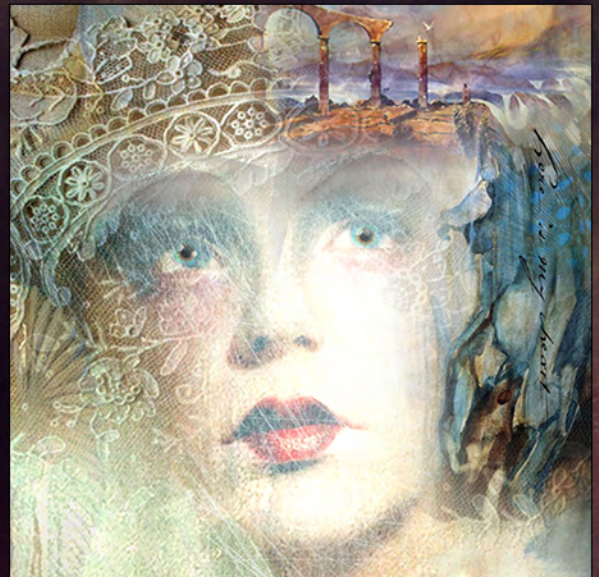
The textures and backgrounds from 2 Lil' Owls are some of the finest in the digital art industry, and indeed many of the works in this magazine feature Denise's textures – often several in one piece. Without question the photo-artistic community is so much the richer for the love and care Denise brings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

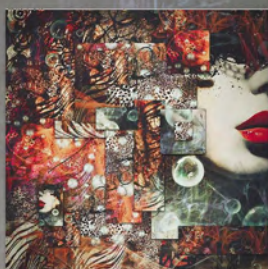
The Colby Files is the intriguing moniker of a celebrated professional photographer located in Scottsdale, Arizona, specializing in female portraits, fashion art, model portfolios and fine art nudes. He has become our resident pro model photographer, providing an amazing library of images for our artists 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:
Marie Farmer (USA)

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PUSHING PHOTOGRAPHY FURTHER



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