



DARK RADIANCE
A JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY
NOVEMBER 2019

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Mission Statement

The purpose of Dark Radiance is to highlight interesting and innovative projects by photographers working primarily in black and white. In our media-saturated culture, it can be a challenge to get viewers to slow down and really *look* at images. Our aim is to provide a vehicle for artists to present new work, and get it in front of an audience that is eager to explore new ways of understanding the relevance of photography.

Please subscribe using the contact form on the website <http://darkradiancemag.com/contact-us/>. And don't forget to include some comments about the work, if you are so moved. Feedback of all kinds is important to people who create art for its own sake. We can be reached at DarkRadianceMag@gmail.com



Letter from the Editor

It's hard to believe that we are closing in on the end of 2019 already. That means that this is the last issue of Dark Radiance this year. Starting this month, we will be producing an issue every two months, which will allow time to create more innovative content and produce more substantial articles.

For the November/December issue, we have a series by Shirley Braley: *au Revoir, Fractals*. We are also pleased to be publishing an article by the renowned nature photographer Susanna Euston. Her article, *Tapping Your Creativity Through Abstract Techniques*, will give you an insight into how she produces her beautiful and powerful works. It should leave you feeling eager to get out there and try something new.

This month's *I've Been Thinking...* column is my most provocative yet. I hope you read and comment. The whole point of Dark Radiance is to get people thinking, so let me hear your responses to this.

A followup to last month's column on whether people buy prints. I just read a post by a very well-known photographer/blogger entitled "Here's a Way to Justifiably Get More Money for Your Printed Photo". This article perfectly proves (although unintentionally) the point I made: printing your photos is NOT the way to get people to buy your work. His first suggestion is: "Make it into a jigsaw puzzle". In other words, people won't pay for a print. They might buy a puzzle, or perhaps pony up for a photo if you: "Make it interactive in some way". He doesn't specify what he means by this head-scratching suggestion, which seems to be making an argument for *digital* art, not printed.

Your comments on this topic are welcome. If you are a photographer who has a successful business selling prints, let me hear from you. Our email is: DarkRadianceMag@gmail.com

And as always, if you enjoy reading Dark Radiance, please forward the email to your friends, or direct them to <http://DarkRadianceMag.com>, where you can view back issues as well.

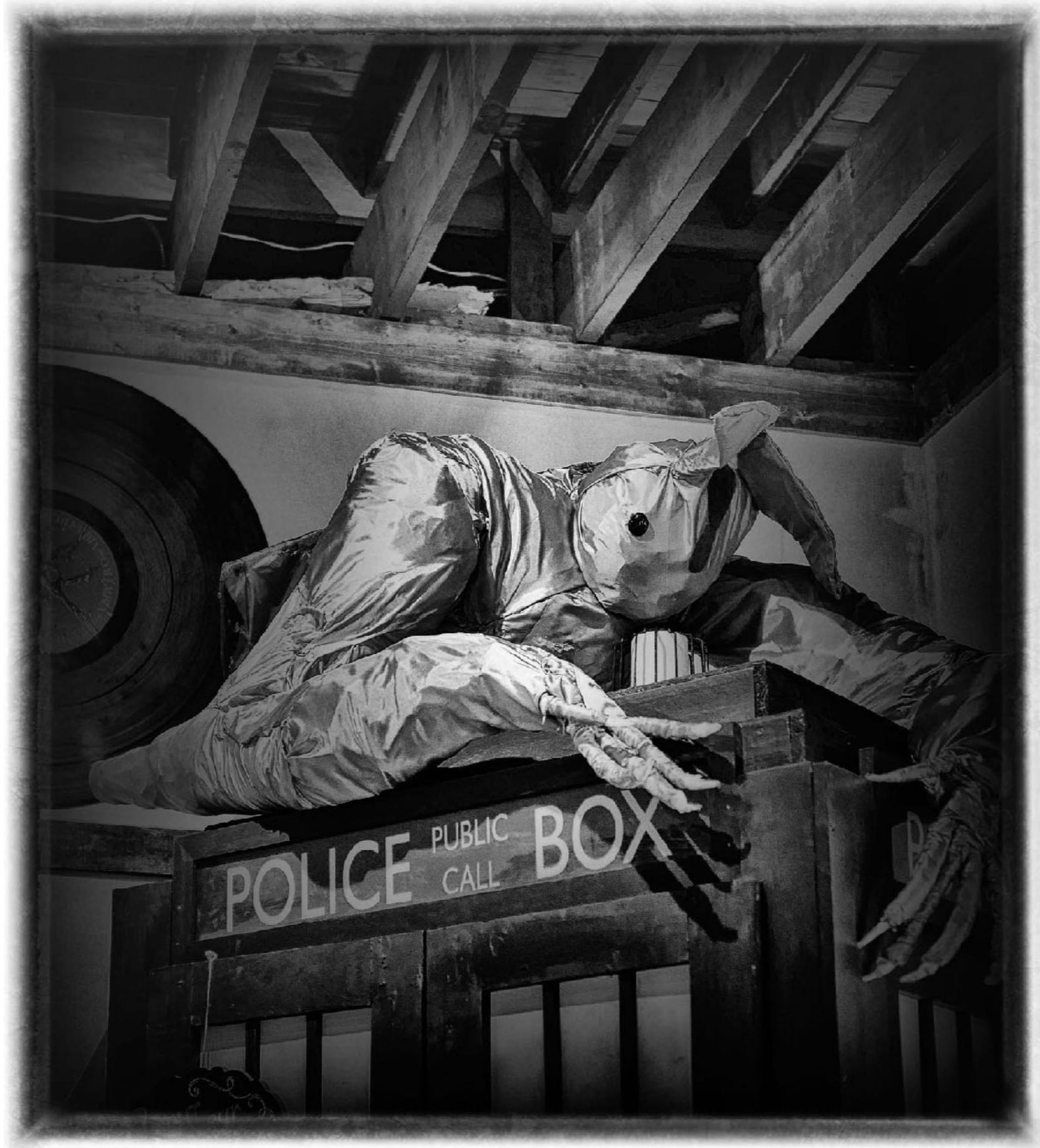
au Revoir, Fractals; a series by Shirley Braley

Until recently, there was a very hip little cafe in West Asheville called Fractals. Sadly, they lost their lease and are looking for a new location. Fractals was unique, brainy, fun, creative, eclectic, and there was always something new to make you think, play, and observe. I love anything openly geeky, which Fractals was, from the nerdy puns on the chalk board to the robots, lock-picking kits, and stacks of books on philosophy, mythology, and general arcana.

I held a particular fondness for Fractals because the owner, Nicholas Altman, gave me a display wall for five of my prints. It wasn't just "five prints". I showed him a portfolio of 20 images, and he picked *the five weirdest ones*. I didn't cue him; he picked the ones he liked best, and it was the offbeat ones. Which were, of course, also my favorites.

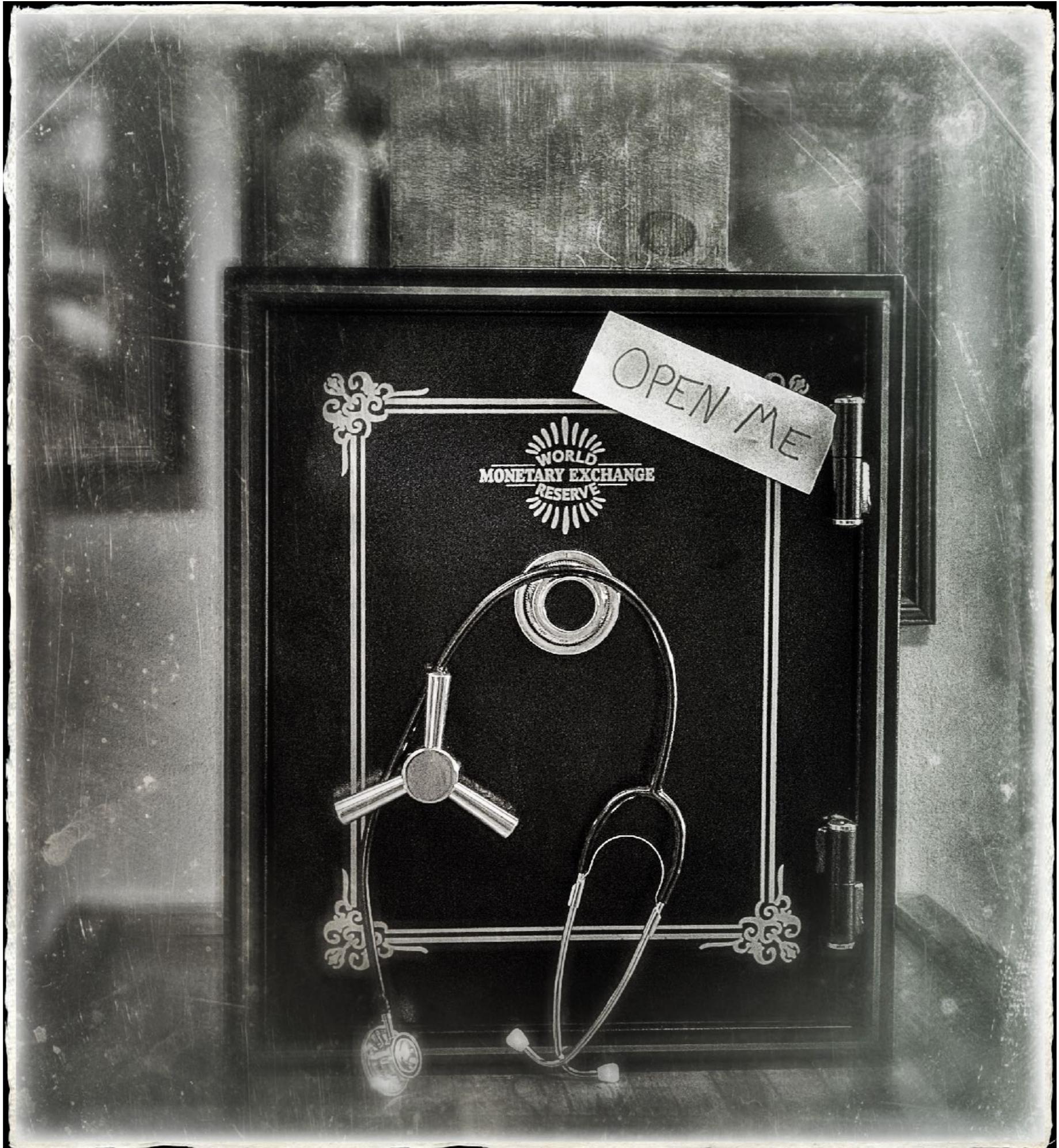
For me, Fractals was a place that I felt completely myself. I felt understood artistically. I would go there for a dose of coffee, braininess, locally sourced and awesome food, and of course all the art.

I look forward to seeing Fractals reopen in a new location. If you never visited the last location, these images are a sampling of what you were likely to experience there.























WHATEVER
JUST WASH YOUR HANDS



PUBLISHER, EDITOR AND CONTRIBUTOR: SHIRLEY BRALEY



Photography allows me to capture the richness of what I see around me, and to encourage a closer vision of it. It is my way of showing the world to myself in new ways. With my images, I explore ways of depicting something essential about a scene, and challenge the viewer to think about what they are seeing.

Adding elements of mixed media allows me to create unusual visual landscapes, reflecting what I see right under the surface, and bringing out elements of mystery. I like to explore the boundaries between what is real and what is in my imagination. My work often includes elements of the mystical and the fantastic, combined with what is so commonplace that we have stopped looking at it closely. Often the story I want to tell is one of texture, of the impact of time on the subject. The patina of wear can be beautiful as well as thought-provoking.

I mostly shoot with wide angle lenses that get me close to my subject. I frequently capture images with my iPhone, because it is always with me. Any moment can provide an opportunity for me to explore what is around me.

Photo credit: Rimas Zailskas

I've Been Thinking...

Social media is evil!

Social media, we are told, is important for artists today. I've even made that point in this magazine.

But - does that mean that you should do it? Does it mean that it will be good for your business? Good for your art? Good for you as a person?

The answer to the first question: yes. The second: maybe. The third: maybe, maybe not. The fourth: no.

Here is why.

First question: should you do it? Unquestionably yes. As a professional in our modern world, you *must* have a social media presence, or risk being judged irrelevant. To quote photographer David Ingraham: "... the vast majority of my marketing [is] done through Instagram and Facebook. I can't imagine being a photographer in the new millennium and not using these platforms. It's almost mandatory at this point."

Second question: will it be good for your business? Maybe. This depends mostly on the effort that you put into it, but it will rarely bring you any business.

Of course, if your business includes seminars, webinars, online classes etc, the opposite might be true. Click-throughs on these kinds of posts are opportunities for you to convert to a sale. But if you want to sell prints of your work, this is probably not the way to do it. I would challenge someone who uses this business model to comment on how much money they've made this way.

Third question: is it good for you as an artist? This answer depends entirely on why you do it, and what you hope to get out of it. If you are posting images because it's part of your brand, then it's good for you. But if you are doing it because you want to accumulate likes and comments which will boost your ego - this is one of the WORST things you can do. Sorry folks, but people do not look at social media to enjoy fine art. More on that below.

Here is why social media is bad for you as an artist: if people don't give you likes for an image that you think is really good, you can easily get an impression that the image is not good. Then a *really bad thing* can happen: you start posting things that will get likes. It's an easy trap to fall into: you go for likes, comments, shares, in the belief that these will prove your merit. False, false, false.

As soon as you create images with the goal of being liked, you have lost your integrity. When you are trying to please an audience, you are risking losing your judgement about your own art.

I've Been Thinking

... continued

cont. from pervious page

Which brings us to the ***fourth question: is it good for you, as a person, to post on social media?***

There are many scientific studies, and many commercially funded ones, that have examined this. I'm not claiming to be breaking new ground.

Social media news feeds have been carefully designed by user experience experts, who make a lot of money doing this, and understand the psychology of it really well.

You do not stand a chance against this model! When a person starts scrolling through their feed, they are looking for that hit of dopamine their brain shoots into their bloodstream when they stumble on something that satisfies. They skim, skim, skim, and pause to get that little reward when they see something that is familiar (food, scenery), something that kindles desire, or that stimulates sympathy (or outrage).

Most people don't put much thought into their social media habit. Social media companies count on you being, in fact, quite mindless about it. That's because the more you scroll, the more advertising they can show you. That is the reason for social

media. It's not to help you socialize, or learn about stuff, or look at someone's dinner in a hip bistro.

The purpose of social media is: ***to show you advertisements for stuff that you will want to buy. The more you scroll, the more ads you see.***

Since viewers are being manipulated to look at ads, they are not looking at your creative output. Most people do not understand photography as art even if it is hanging in a gallery, and much less so on Facebook. If they have to expend effort to absorb what they are seeing, they automatically scroll past.

These are hard truths. As soon as you use social media as a referendum on your value, you are screwed. You might adjust what you post to get positive feedback, and devalue images that you love but nobody else seems to.

So please think before you post. And think before you mindlessly like, OR mindlessly skim. You might imagine you are helping an artist to understand what works and what doesn't - but you might be doing the opposite and encouraging them to go for the lowest common denominator.

Tapping Your Creativity Through Abstract Techniques; by Susanna Euston



Do you recall your journey in photography, possibly beginning with snapshots of family and friends, travel, then moving on to early explorations of genres such as nature or street photography? I'll bet that most of that journey was expressed through photo-realistic images of landscapes or creatures, people or street scenes.

My journey took a similar route. After childhood and teenage photo adventures, then work with a major computer company, I began architectural, studio and portrait photography in my early thirties, with landscape included when I had time.

I didn't just spring into that work. I have always loved photography as a medium and was lucky to grow up watching my dad develop his beautiful images in the darkroom. But a few years ago, after so many years of classical documentary work I began to feel stifled and, frankly, bored. So I took a break to reassess.

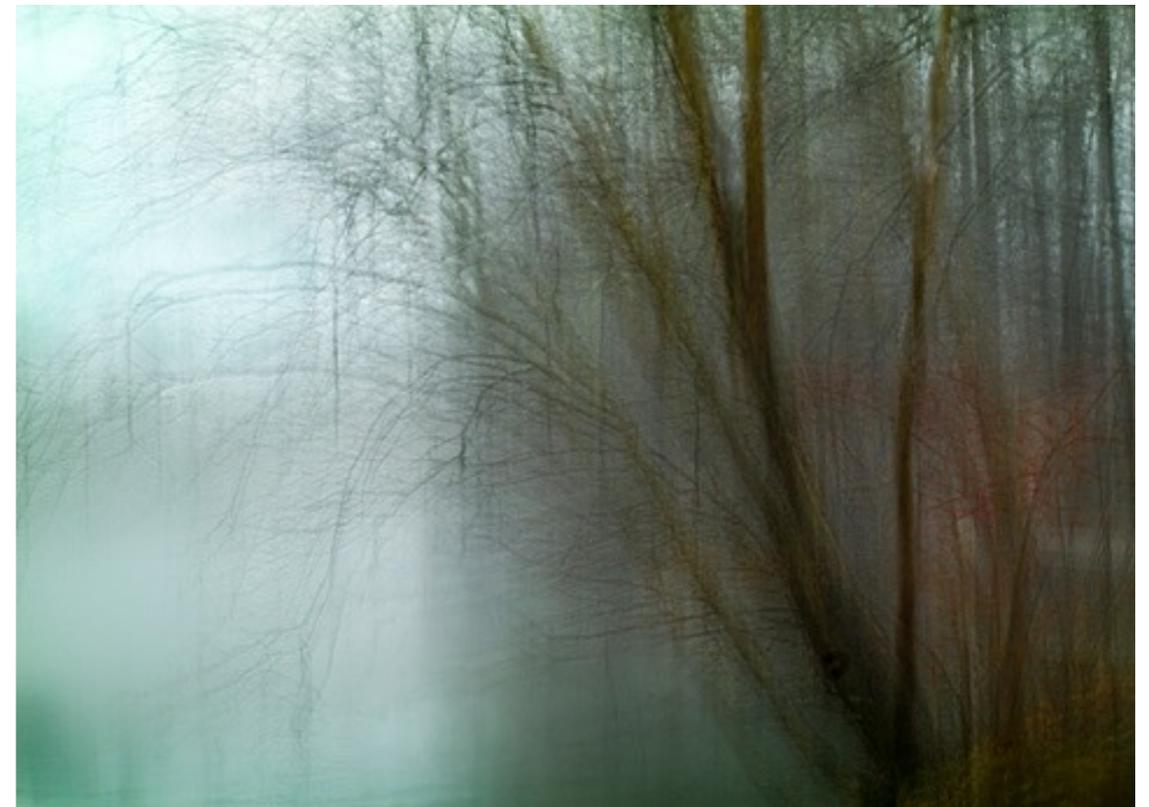
In 2012 I again picked up the camera, but more seriously this time. I had a camera converted to Infrared (I had shot infrared film during my film days) then, because of a show I wanted to enter, had to come up with abstract images. With Topaz Lens Effects' Motion Filter I created abstracts from existing landscape images, but I wasn't thrilled with the effects.

Then it dawned on me that I could create my own – in-camera, not in Photoshop – just by moving the camera itself. As I developed my own unique "Intentional Camera Movement" (ICM) techniques I began tapping into creativity in a way not previously imagined.



It was after this beginning that I discovered other photographers, including Michael Orton and Freeman Patterson, who used these techniques, even with film.

Today, digital technologies make it less costly and easier to experiment with ICM and other creative techniques. While in the learning process, one will toss a lot of images away. Be ready for that. But, we always learn from our "failures," so I urge you to persevere. These days, after an increased awareness of what works for different scenes, very few go into the trash and I have much more to show for my efforts.



As a landscape photographer, nature is usually my ICM focus. Over a couple of years, with an expanding ICM technique toolbox I developed a body of work that was just featured at the North Carolina Arboretum's Gallery for three months this summer. When I visited the show, it was fascinating to listen to the comments of viewers! They were intrigued that the canvases they viewed were photographs and not "Photoshopped."

Another favorite abstract technique that can be thrown into the mix is multiple exposure. Many cameras today allow one to create them in-camera. Cameras vary from a couple to eight or more exposures compressed into one image. Multiple exposure can create fascinating images, such as the ones included here.

Would you like to try ICM or multiple exposure techniques? ICM works with any subject, really. And in light ranging from overcast and rain to bright sunny days (backlighting is particularly effective). The basic ICM strategy is to move your camera while capturing the image. Depending upon the light, neutral density filters may be necessary to slow your exposures.

Multiple exposures require viewing the LCD on the back of your camera to reposition the elements of the scene in a way that interests you, so they merge into one image that makes some sense. Your camera should give you

different exposure options. Study the handbook for more information on that.

You can see additional examples of Intentional Camera Movement images at my website: <https://www.susannaestonphotography.com/p814337233>, and learn more about upcoming workshops that focus on abstract photography.



Susanna Euston is a long-time, award-winning photographer, an artist, and graphic designer. Genres that she explores to express the beauty in front of her include Classical Photo-realistic and “Ethereal” (in Black & White); Abstract and Intentional Camera Movement (mainly in Color); Infrared; and Macro (Black & White and Color). Through her Photographic Artistry Workshop program she loves to share these techniques with intermediate to advanced photographers.

Her work can be seen in shows and exhibits in the Western North Carolina region. Her collection, “Nature in Abstract,” will be at the The North Carolina Arboretum between July 27, 2019 and October 13, 2019. Susanna's work is shown year around at Trackside Studios in Asheville, North Carolina’s River Arts District.

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Submission Guidelines

10 - 15 images, which should be a series exploring a subject, style, or technique

JPG format and saved at size 5-7, or medium size

180 ppi and up to 1400 x 1050 (or square)

Has your full name at the start of each file name: jane-smith-UNIQUE-
FILENAME.jpg.

File size should be approximately **500K**

Converted to black & white

The editor reserves the right to resize images (without cropping) which are
accepted for publication.

For more information, contact us at DarkRadianceMag@gmail.com

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