

## COMPASS: New Directions in Nature Photography

“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.”  
Albert Einstein

Four women. Four friends. Four sets of eyes on the natural world. Four visual narratives. Four directions. Welcome to *COMPASS*.

*COMPASS* is a collective photographic exhibition that explore alternate views of the natural world surrounding us, a world in which we have always coexisted with nature, but also a world often replaced with “concrete jungles” that offer no quiet refuge. Have we been able to successfully adapt to the absence of nature? How do we find our way back to nature? Where do we go to seek tranquility? What direction do we take?

The exhibition seeks to redefine the subject of “nature” in a broader, perhaps more everyday, context. The natural world is often framed, especially by the traditional male photographer, as impressive landscapes – distant, powerful, mysterious, sometimes friendly but just as often threatening. What if nature is also something close to us – intimate, comforting, still mysterious but more welcoming? The sort of alternate framing that women photographers have more often brought forward.

Nature, in a woman's eyes, can be delicate flowers preserved in ice. Nature, in a woman's eyes, can be snow-blanketed fields that provide solitary feelings of comfort. Nature, in a woman's eyes, can uncover the sleight-of-hand that would hide technology amidst verdant forests. Nature, in a woman's eyes, can be simple remnants of ample growth cast in new light and texture. The vast, complex mosaic of the natural world has infinite possibilities, multiple directions, manifold interpretations. Sometimes, it takes a woman's eyes to see the trees amongst the forest.

In this exhibition, we encourage the viewer to disconnect from the outside world and just bathe in the simplicity of nature's smallest wonders, the serenity of the land, and the humor of man's intrusions. Immerse yourself in a simple walk around the compass rose. Clear your mind, let go, and feel.

## COMPASS: Images and Themes

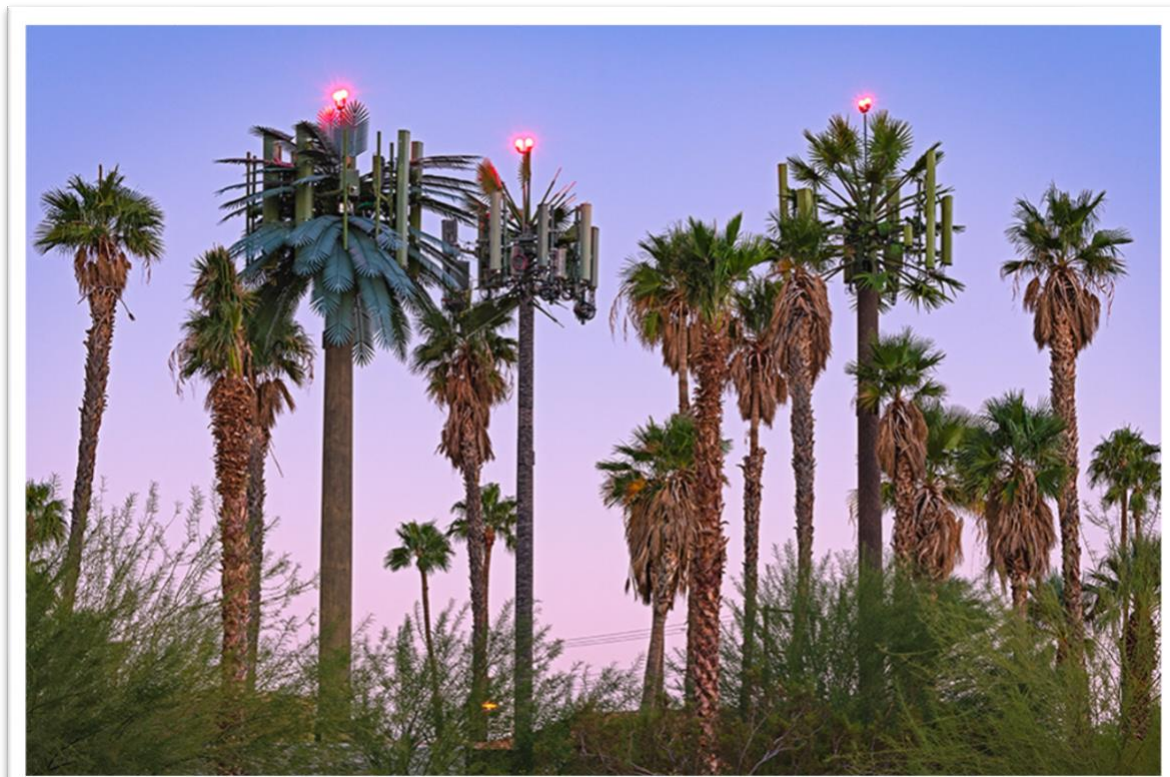
Annette LeMay Burke

### ***Fauxliage: Disguised Cell Phone Towers of the American West***

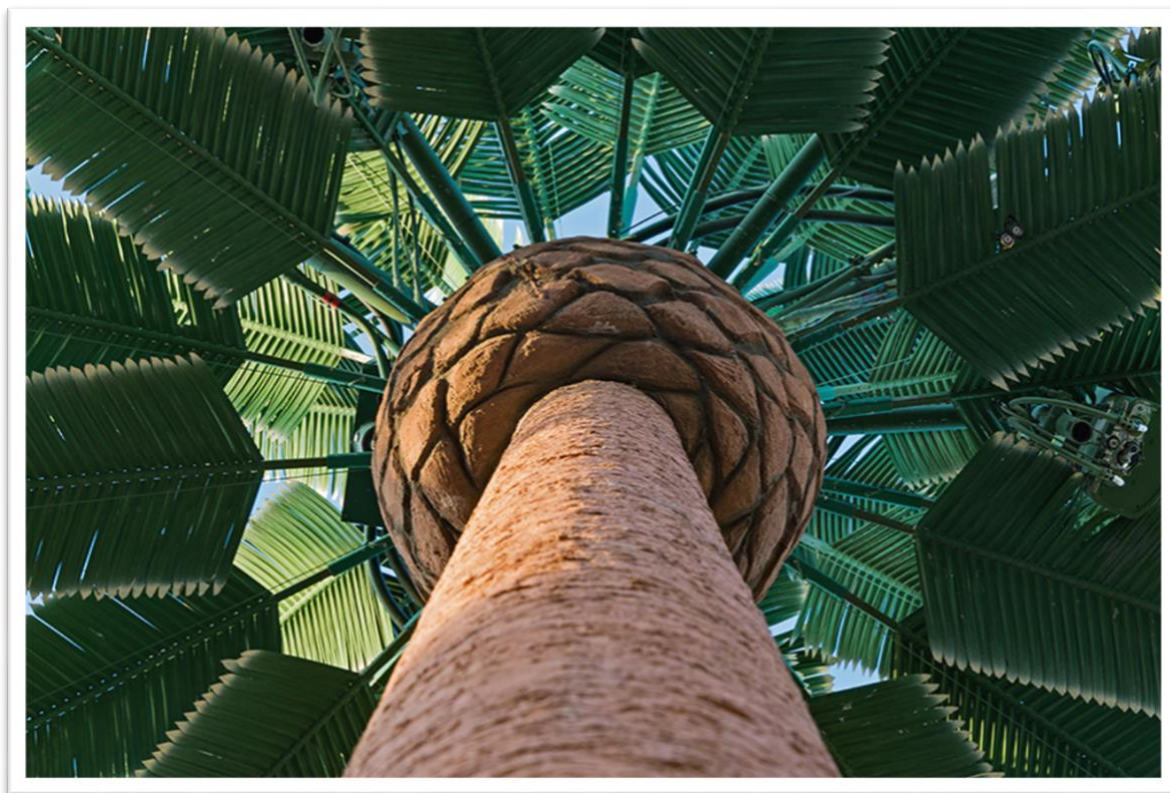
*Fauxliage* explores the proliferation of disguised cell phone towers across the American West. Designed to blend into the terrain, these camouflages—primarily in the form of trees—expedite installation approval from local municipalities. The result is a modern landscape adorned with a quirky mosaic of palm, conifer, eucalyptus, and saguaro simulacra.

E. O. Wilson's concept of biophilia describes our innate affinity for nature. Are these "costumed" towers a form of *technobiophilia*—our tendency to find comfort in technologies that mimic or incorporate natural elements (like a mouse, virus, cloud, web, or bug)? And do these faux trees truly keep us connected to nature, or do they distort it?

*Fauxliage* examines technology's dual role as both disruptor and unifier within the landscape. These towers raise an essential question: How much manufactured nature and uncanny landscapes are we willing to accept for the sake of connectivity?





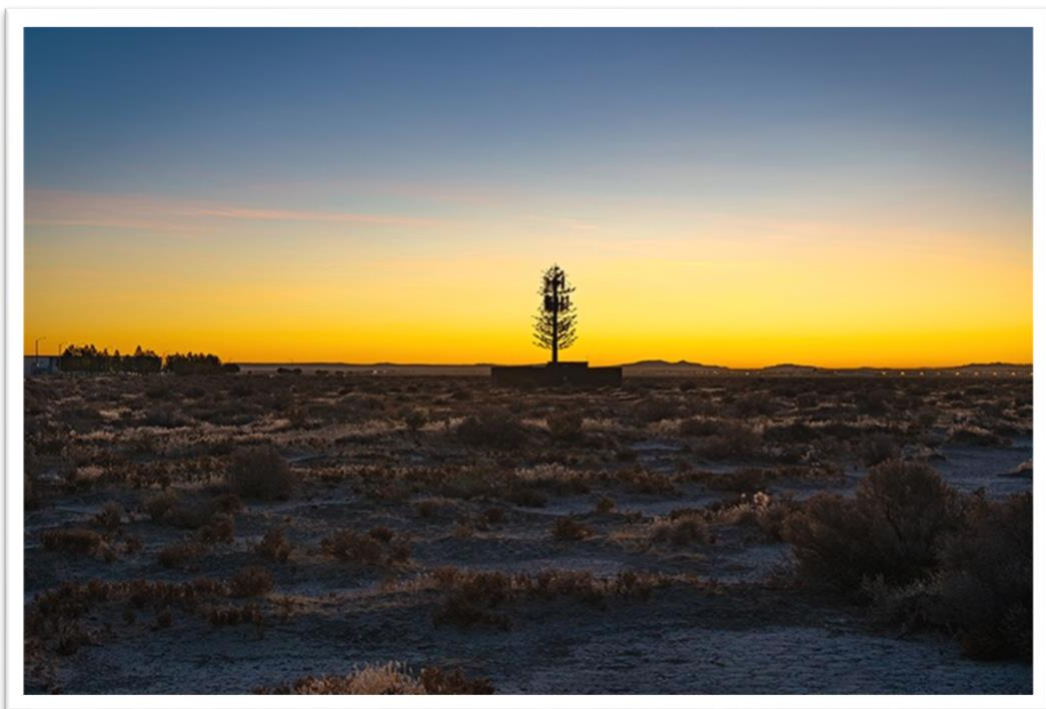








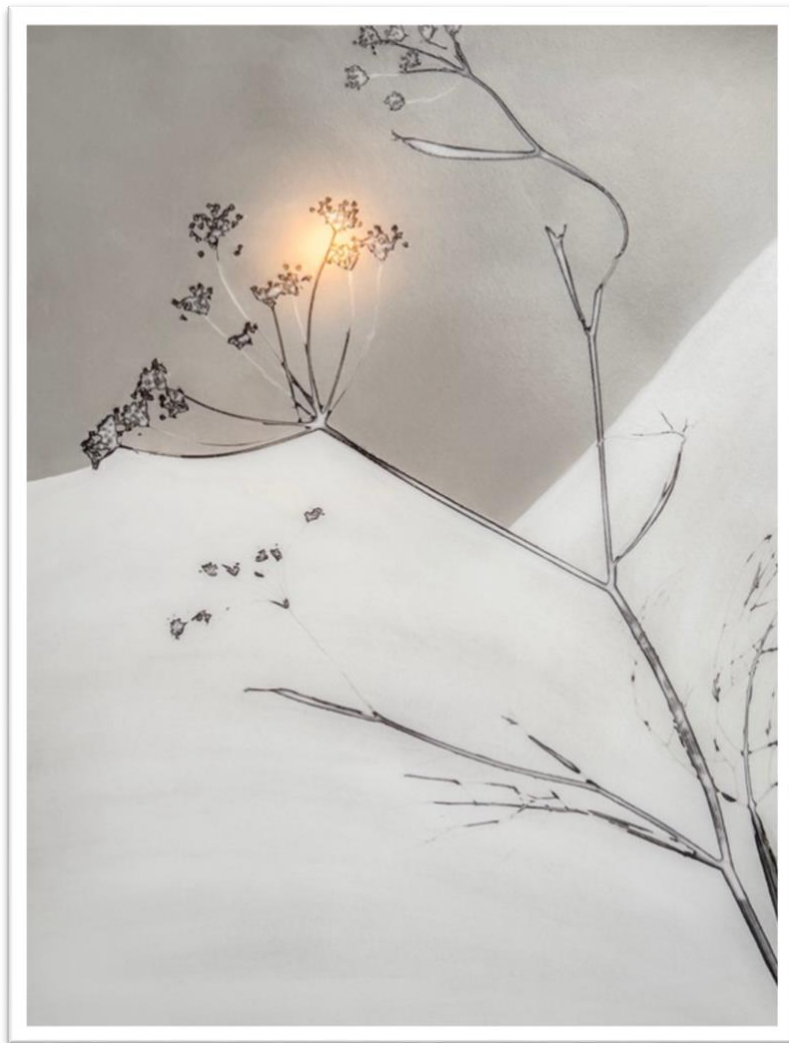




Elizabeth Opalenik

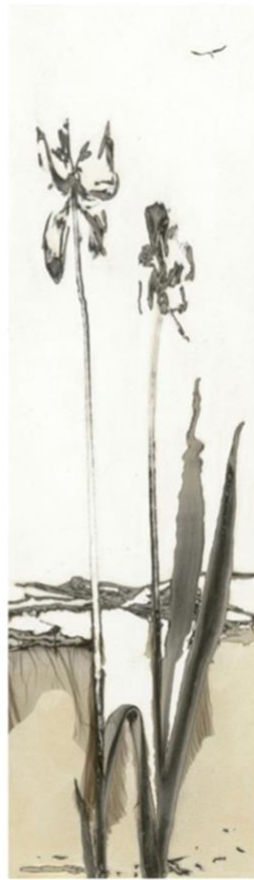
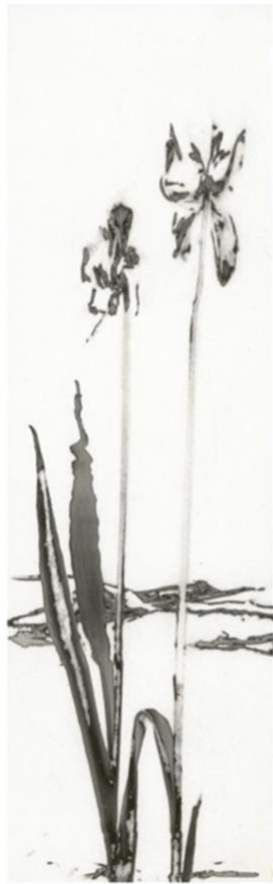
***Veils of Illusion***

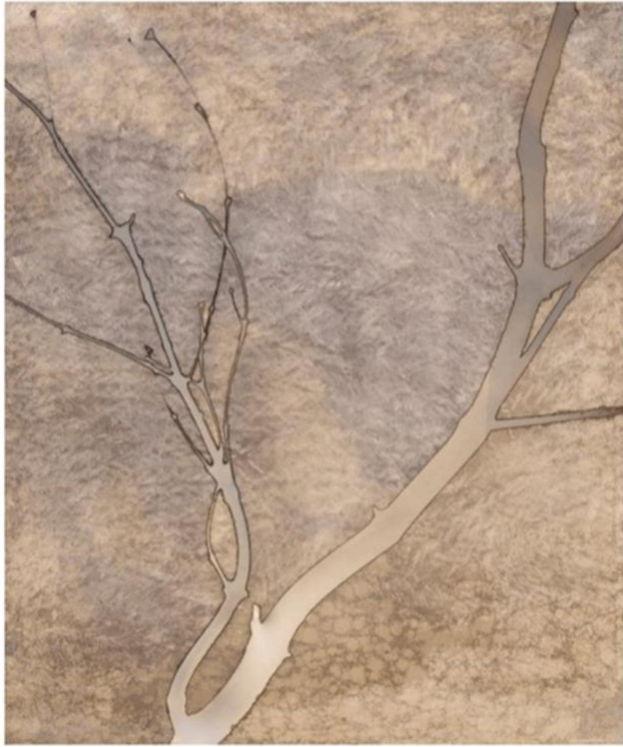
I knew I had come home photographically from the moment I learned the Mordançage process in that magical Provencal setting with the cicadas chanting in the midday heat. They beckoned me to the landscape of wild herbs and exotic scents, and it was there I discovered that in Mordançage, like life, you have possibilities. It was a visual smorgasbord that stroked the imagination and inspired. From the fields I gathered wheat, oats, fennel, and bits of the landscape to memorialize in a photogram. Today, we all want instant gratification but in Provence, it was about the journey to find it while using all five senses to process the information as a photographic artist. Shouldn't that be the goal of an artist? That week changed and shaped my life as I continue to observe, share, and interpret the gifts of the universe.





















Elizabeth Sanjuan

### ***Silent Snow***

The distinct spirituality of Hokkaido is palpable. Evidence of order and planning is seen on the rolling hills and fields. The frozen dormant landscape will give way to crops and livestock by spring, but during the long winter season, the island rests under downy blankets of snow and ice. There is a peacefulness in the winter that returns to the island. The bustling farms are still, and the throngs of tourists have departed. Winter shows us the resilience of trees, the hardy determination of the wildlife, and the stoic resolve of its people. Through one of the harshest winter seasons on our planet, the island retains its calm demeanor. My mind returns often to the quiet, serene, majestic stillness of this magical land.





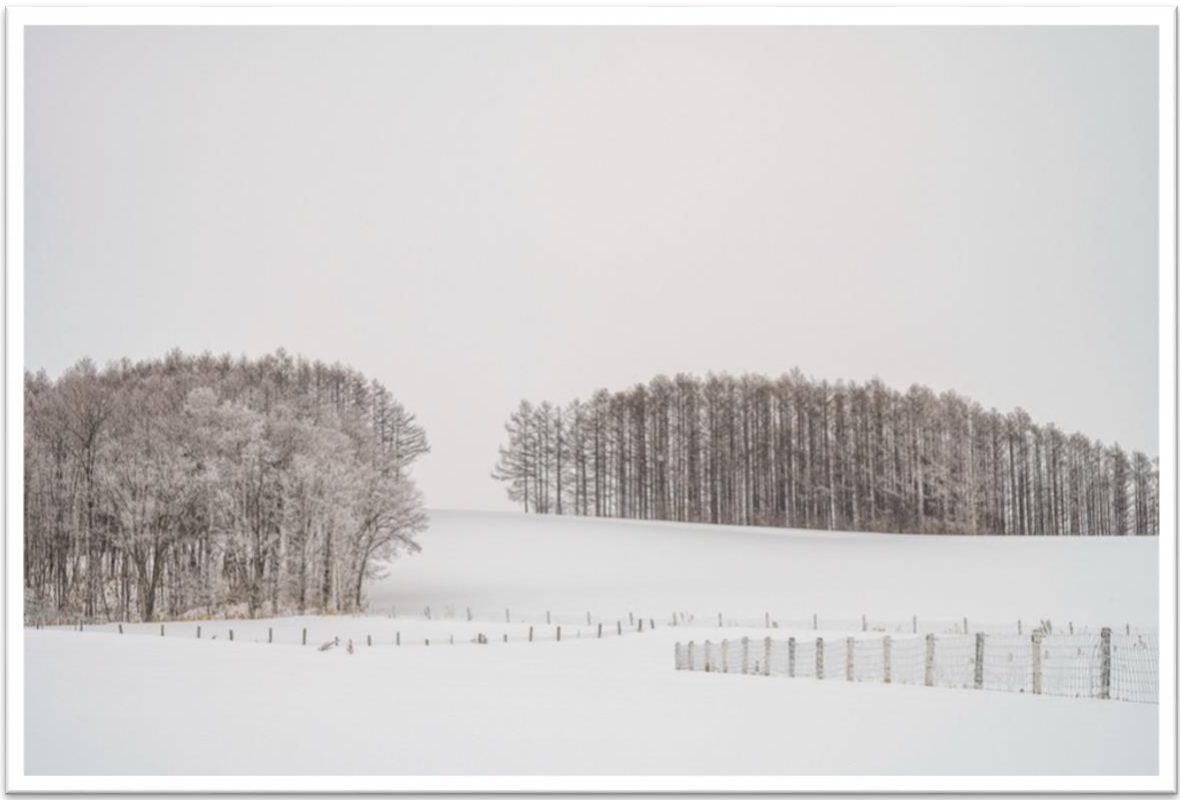










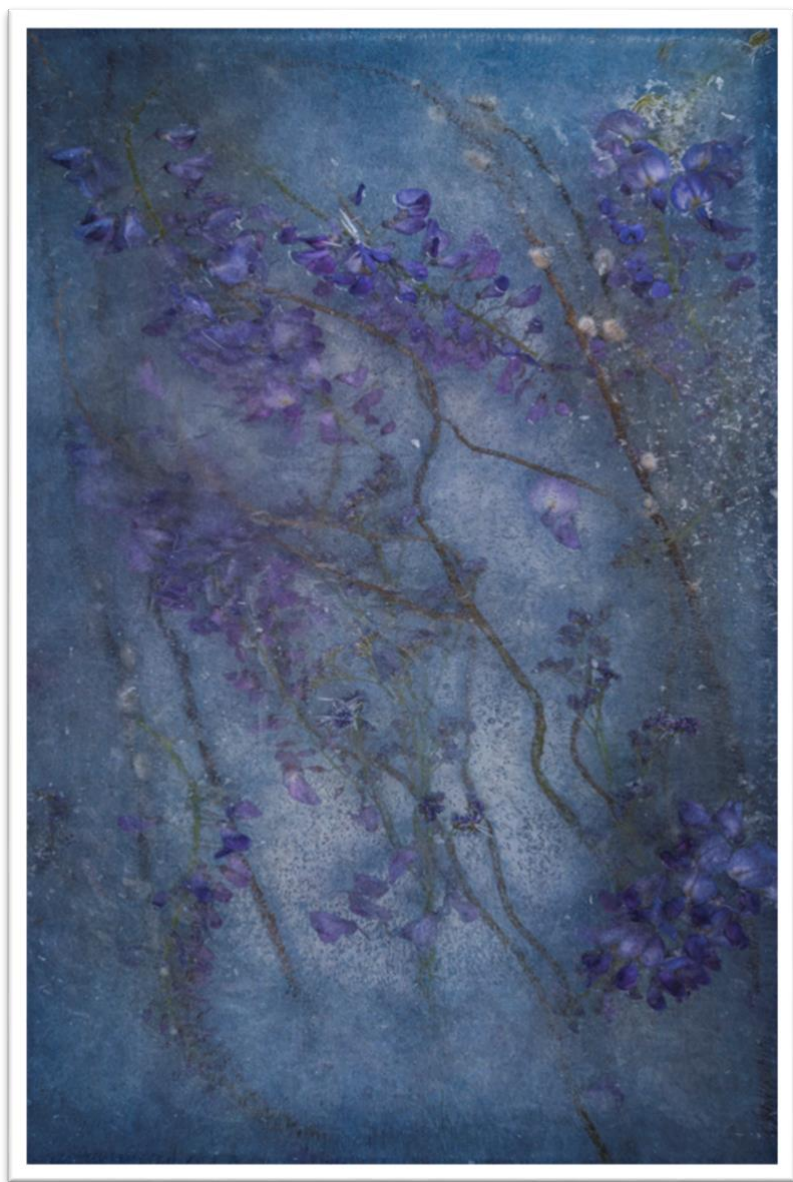




***Edge of Revelation***

*Edge of Revelation* was born of a desire to hold on to fleeting beauty. As a gardener I lived for the moment of bloom, the moment when all the preparation and hard work would burst into color and form and then watch as the blossoms and plant matured, morphed into another form. As a lover of paintings (a gallery stalker from my teens until today) I consume the shape, line, color, and expression in all the ages of fine art. As a photographer in my *Edge of Revelation* series, I want to bring all those impulses to bear, all the form, emotion, expression that I cherish, make it visible, and hold on to it forever! Choosing, painstakingly arranging, freezing (through so much trial and error), and photographing the flowers through the entire process allows me to create the final portrait. It is most gratifying to see my thought and desire take form, and more gratifying still when the ice gives me a surprise that underscores my original intent. It is as if there is an understanding, an exchange that happens when my thought is fully formed, and the ice takes over. Then I dance on that edge of revelation. I want to reveal, and hold, what is and nod to what will become. Fully inhabiting the present moment while living with the awareness of inevitable change is that edge of revelation.











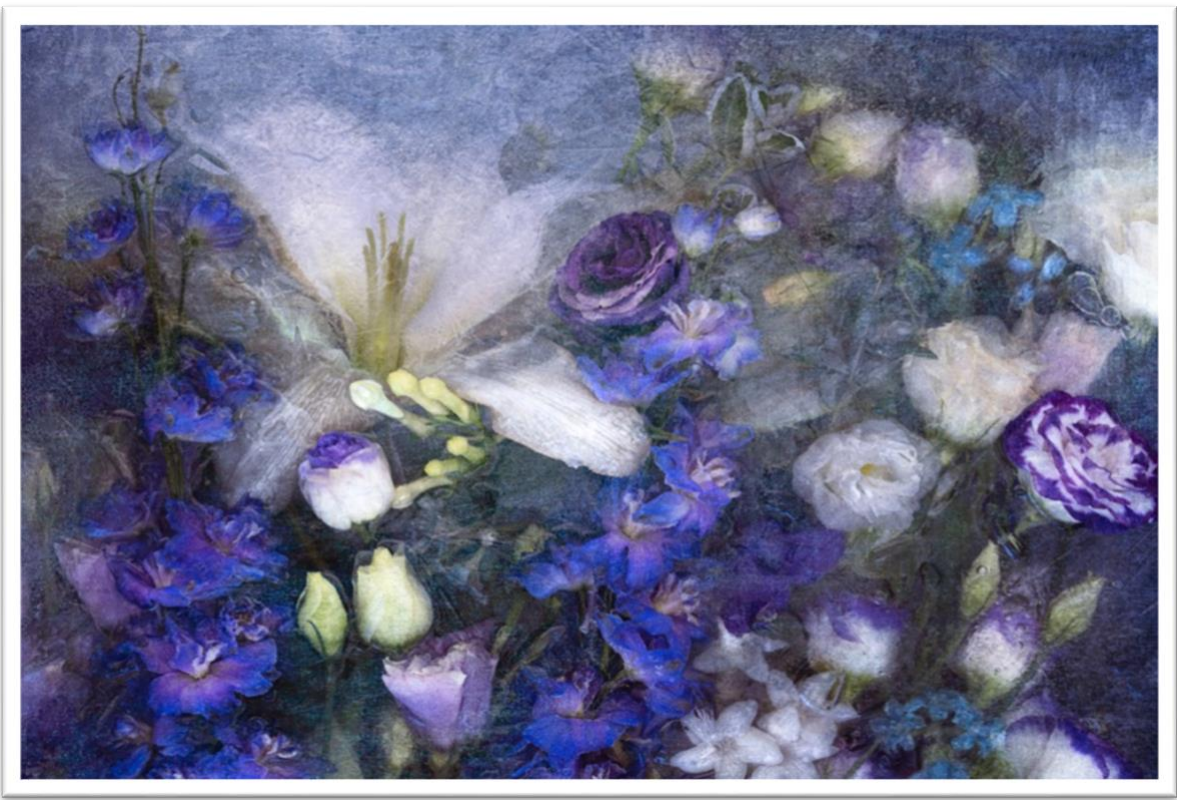




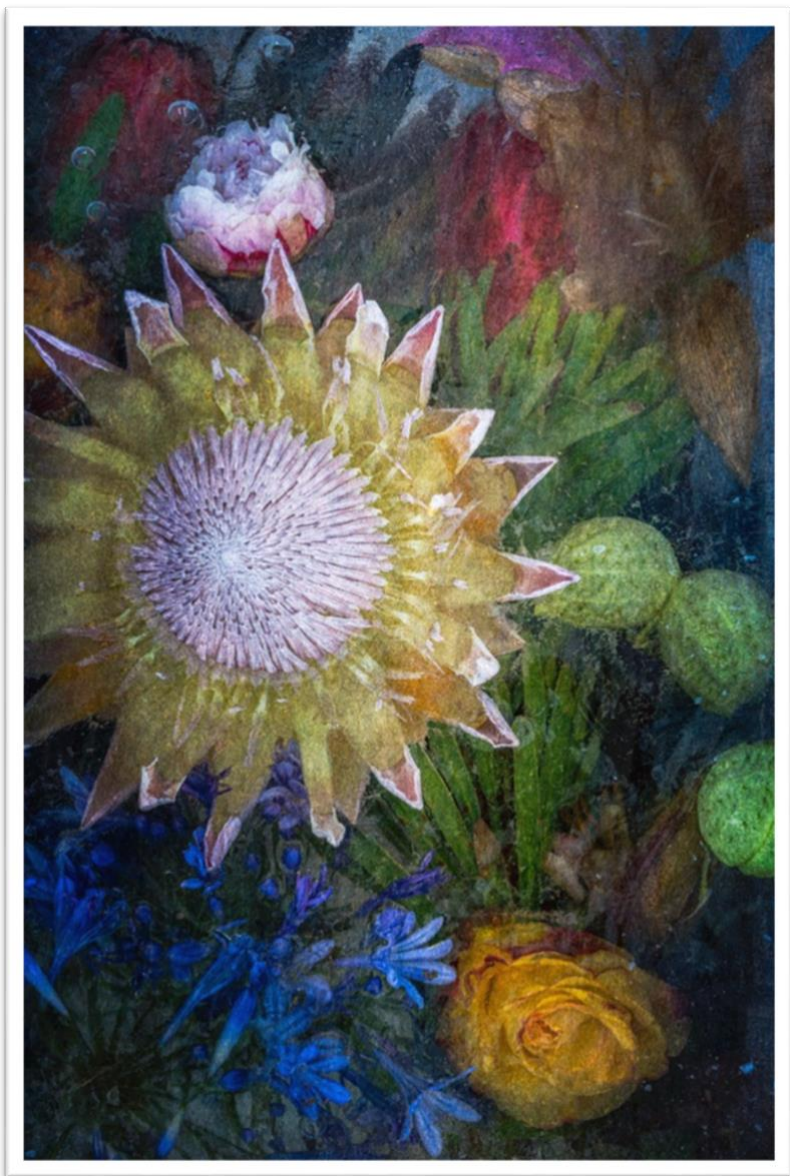




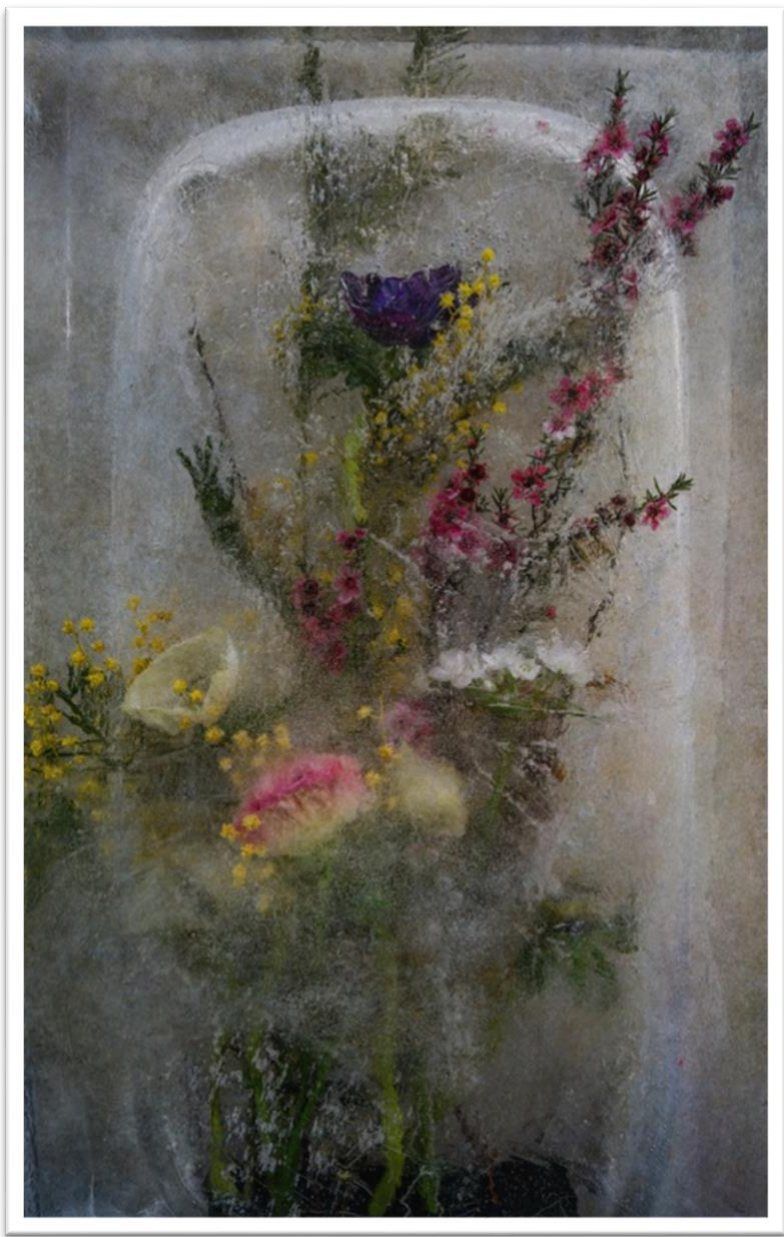














## COMPASS: Artist Biographies

### Annette LeMay Burke

Annette LeMay Burke is an award-winning photographic artist and Northern California native who resides in the innovative hub of Silicon Valley. With a background in geology from the University of California, Berkeley, Burke's lens has been finely tuned to the ever-evolving contours of the western landscape. Formerly immersed in a career in high-tech, Burke now channels her passion into her artistic practice, often exploring the presence of technology as both a disruptor and unifier within the landscape, echoing the complexities of the modern human experience. Burke's work has been exhibited widely through the US and internationally. Her images have been featured in The New York Times, L.A. Times, The Times, Hyperallergic, Sierra Club Magazine, Newsweek Japan, Elle Decor Italy, All About Photo, Katalog Journal, Dezeen, Il Fotografo, and Australian Geographic. Her work is held in public and private collections including the Wieland Collection in Atlanta and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Her monograph, *Fauxliage*, is included in over 45 libraries worldwide.

### Elizabeth Opalenik

Elizabeth Opalenik left home in 1969 to the sound of peace marches and my mother saying, "I knew you were different from the time you were two." From the farm in western Pennsylvania to the shores of Connecticut, she evolved as an artist while making a living as an accountant and jazz club manager. In 1979, after a two-week photographic workshop in Maine, she sold everything and never looked back. She went to France, learned the Mordancage process from the masters, and freelanced around the globe, including many years supporting philanthropic organizations in the most remote corners of the world. She is a renowned instructor in the Mordancage process and a recognized photographic historian.

### Elizabeth Sanjuan

Elizabeth Sanjuan is a first-generation Cuban American and an avid world traveler. She has been photographing for over 30 years, during which time she has exhibited and sold her work at galleries in ten states and two countries. She has been an art gallery owner, and avid art collector, and is director of the International Photographic Hall of Fame. Elizabeth is a champion for women's rights and environmental issues, and regularly takes on those who would infringe on the integrity and beauty of the natural world. She is currently focused on three major projects: *Recuerdos de mi Abuela* which explores the culture, heritage and influence of her strong maternal grandmother in shaping the woman she is today; *Small: Journeys to Places Left Behind*, an in-depth look at the rise and fall of small-town America; and *Silent Snow*, a chronicle of multiple visits to Japan's northernmost island in search of the secret to the peace, beauty, strength and resilience of one of the harshest winter environments on the planet. In the fall of 2025 Daylight Books will release "Silent Snow, a photographers search for serenity.

### Keron Psillas

Keron Psillas Oliveira is a photographer, writer, instructor, and mentor, with an extensive background in the print and publishing industry. She grew up in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, where she learned the printing and publishing industry first-hand after purchasing the family business. Keron became a professional photographer in 2006. She teaches photography courses, book making classes, equine photo workshops, and maintains a robust mentoring program for students in the US and abroad. She is the former director of the Art Wolfe Digital Photography Center and is a longtime assistant to photographic legends Sam Abell and Arthur Meyerson. She leads bespoke photography tours throughout Europe and Japan. Her work on the Holocaust (*Loss and Beauty*) has been exhibited extensively; as has her horse photography (*Cavalo Lusitano: The Spirit Within* from Veritas Editions), most notably at the Griffin Museum of Photography. Each of these projects has received international awards and *Cavalo Lusitano* resides in the Rare Book Collections of the Library of Congress and the Getty Museum among many other esteemed collections. She was the featured solo artist in the Pingyao International Photography festival of 2024 for her work *Edge of Revelation*, her new collection of floral exploration. She has also created a new collection of floral portraiture that is receiving rave reviews and is scheduled for exhibition in several venues in Europe and the US in 2025. Her latest book, *A Song of Death and Dying*, the culmination of 16 years of work in the bloodlands of Eastern Europe, will be released by Schilt Publishing in winter of 2025/2026.



## **COMPASS: Programming Notes**

### **OPENING RECEPTION**

- Introduction to the COMPASS concept and the exhibition themes and content by each Artist. Spoken presentation of 15-to-30 minutes, including PowerPoint or video as appropriate to audience and venue.
- Artists will provide marketing support by providing access to mailing lists and promotional material pertaining to the project.
- Artists will cooperate in the production of publications, catalogues, and other materials as appropriate.

### **EXHIBITION**

- Gallery may select from images already printed and mounted and in the printed inventory. Requests for additional or different images from the digital inventory of the exhibition will be subject to agreement between Artists and the Gallery as to sharing of costs and ownership of the additional prints.
- Artists must authorize modifications of mounting or hanging in advance, and the costs of such modifications will be borne by the Gallery.

### **LECTURES (Artist's Talks) – Dates and times to be determined**

- Each artist will provide a 30-minute artist talk covering the evolution, process, technical aspects, and thematic development of the project, including subject's reactions, testimonials, and comments on their participation in the project. Artists will focus particular attention on the techniques employed to produce images (where relevant), such as Mordançage, ice-bound photography, mylar photography, etc.
- As appropriate, Artists may provide additional PowerPoint presentations that will provide a glimpse into aspects of the project that may not be part of the Gallery's exhibition display.
- Artists will field questions and answers after and during the Artist's Talk. Expected total duration between 60 and 90 minutes.

### **(OPTIONAL) ADDITIONAL WORKSHOPS OR PRESENTATIONS – Dates to be determined**

- The Museum may elect to offer additional workshops, panels, or presentations during the time of the exhibition.
- Additional educational sessions, if requested, will be subject to mutual agreement between the Artists and the Gallery. The Gallery will be responsible for additional Artist fees and expenses associated with these events.