

Showcasing International Artists and Writers • Studio Spotlight: Priscilla Daniels

# ArtAscent

Art & Literature Journal 22 December 2016



FEATURE:  
Spooky





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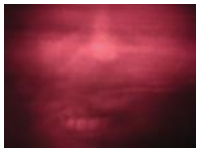
### Foreword and Artist Profiles

Oleksandra Osadcha is a freelance art historian and art critic living in Kharkiv, Ukraine. She earned her Master of Art degree in art history at Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts, where she is also currently researching her doctoral thesis. An active curator of art exhibitions in her hometown, Oleksandra is interested in the issues concerning visual representation of sacred motifs in contemporary art.



#### On The Front Cover

My Own Worst Enemy  
by Lauren Jenkins



#### On The Back Cover

Ghoulis  
by Robin Ay



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Art & Literature Journal

Showcasing outstanding  
artists and writers from around the world

# OSPOOK



# Foreword

Art aims to reflect the richness of our Universe. It encompasses a wide range of phenomena, and its intent is to trigger emotion. H. P. Lovecraft, the American horror writer of the 20th century, claimed, "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown." In fact, some researchers believe that fear is what moves us forward in culture and civilization. Our ancestors didn't paint animals on the walls of their caves without reason; they did so to depict the things that they both feared and admired.

Art brings order into the world. It helps us to overcome the panic and disarray brought into our lives by chaotic events, which often are key sources to our phobias and anxiety. Art often evolves when one faces disorder, illogicalness, and inanity of life. It doesn't eliminate these problems – it helps us to cope with them. An artist can structure negative information by giving it comprehensive and aesthetically pleasing form, which enables us to analyse it constructively without damaging our worldview. Thus, such great masterpieces, as Goya's *Los Caprichos* or Edward Munch's *Scream* are born.

Outstanding masters celebrate fear in all its forms – thanatic, mystical, folkloric, and futurological. And even today, in the globalized world of media-communications, humanity keeps phobias (like phasmophobia – fear of ghosts) alive. The first step toward overcoming these phobias is to become conscious of them. At times it can be challenging to do so. However, while working on the 22nd volume of *ArtAscent Art & Literature Journal*, we decided to ask artists and writers to share their visions of spookiness in all its forms. So, don't hesitate to begin your scary and cathartic journey into the obscure world of mystery and the subconscious!

By Oleksandra Osadcha



**Lauren Jenkins**  
www.laurenjenkinsphotography.com



My Own Worst Enemy  
Photograph | 20 x 20" | \$1,000





**S**ince the very beginning of its history, myths, legends, and false fears evolved about photography. For example, some religious people believed that a camera could steal a person's soul. There is certainly something eerie about this possibility, and to immortalize moments like this, young artists like Lauren Jenkins will talk about the shadow side of who we are – our identities, and how they work.

Lauren longs to think beyond the borders of genres. She is passionate about portraiture, and turns the art of portraiture into a visual laboratory for her creative depictions to show a correlation between darkness and light, creepiness and beauty. When she creates art, Lauren adheres to the main principles of conceptual photography; these principles are her main tool. Conceptual photography is a photography that investigates itself – the way the image functions and communicates with the public. It often carries a dialogue with a legacy from outstanding personalities in art history and makes self-reflection the central subject of the works.

In his treatise, *Poetics*, Aristotle connected art with the purification of hearts and minds, believing (fear) to be one of the essential parts of the process. Following this idea, Lauren allows her own deepest impulses into her camera work; she has the courage to visualize her struggle against anxiety and frights. Lauren explains that when she was growing up, she was "viewed as shy." This label kept her from moving on, so she felt it was important to find the relevant allegoric expressions of her individual experience to overcome it.

The featured digitally-composed self-portraits by Lauren immerse the viewers into a dreamlike atmosphere, close to surrealistic heritage. Surrealists were well aware that truly innovative pieces are born where two opposite realities meet. Thus, they build their paintings and photographs on illogicality, paradoxicality, and fusion of seemingly incompatible things. These methods are applied today by a range of famous contemporary conceptual photographers such as Brooke Shaden and

Lyndon Wade. Lauren shares their artistic approach, and produces compositions that remind of painting canvases. This parallel seems even clearer if you consider the square format of the images, which diverge from traditional photography and put a gap between reality and the author's narrative.

Lauren premeditates not only the theme of the work, but its composition and colouring, managing to leave space for improvisation and the element of surprise at the same time. She invites us into her personal "fairytale." It's not a fairytale in the modern sense, but rather in the dismal and spooky world of the Brothers Grimms' stories, full of tension, angst, and hope.

Lauren Jenkins is an American photographer currently residing in Valdosta, GA. She obtained her associates in Fine Art from Parkland College in Illinois. After that, Lauren graduated with a BA degree from Illinois State University in 2013. Her enthusiasm about conceptual self-portraits evolved in January 2016. Her work was immediately noticed by art connoisseurs and was featured in a range of journals such as *Stubborn*, *This*, and *Dark Beauty Magazine*, and was put on display at group exhibitions at Giertz Gallery (Parkland College Alumni Show 2016) and Southeast Center for Photography (Portal 2016).

*By Oleksandra Osadcha*

**Lauren Jenkins**

Confined

Photograph | 20 x 20" | \$1,000





# Artist

ArtAscent 11

Pouring Out  
Photograph | 20 x 20" | \$1,000



# Golda

**T**he living classic of horror genre, Stephen King, claimed, "We make up horrors to help us cope with the real ones." We can do nothing but agree with his thought as we note the growing popularity of horror literature, which attracts increasingly talented contemporary writers like Rachael Craigmyle.

Some specialists of literature history noticed that horror genre flourishes in pivotal epochs, and this seems to be true. Howard Phillips Lovecraft, "the father of modern horror," gained recognition during the Great Depression in the USA, which after a while faded. His popularity was reestablished at the end of the 20th century. In periods of crisis such as the depression, people see the imperfection of the world more clearly, believe in the unchangeable nature of dark events and give up hope.

The featured writing piece, *The Last Inn*, takes place in Rachael's native Scotland. Composing the text, the author sticks to the canons of the discussed genre. The reader's entertainment is horror's prime goal, as well as the aim of the other samples of mass literature. It is achieved by the means of fear. Three main types of fear are identified: 1) Fear of the unknown and the supernatural, 2) sublimed and exaggerated "real" fear (social, political, etc.), and 3) fear mixed with disgust. For her short story, Rachael refers to the first type of fear – fear of the unknown – which is probably the most ancient and deeply rooted type of fear.

The key element in writing a horror piece is providing the reader with a constant and tense feeling of the reality of the scene. Expressive, eloquently-presented atmosphere is crucial here. Rachael successfully completes this task in her lavishly descriptive, yet not overly detailed style. She feels which "button" to push to seize a reader's imagination and knows when to stop; she maneuvers between very explicit fragments and more vague ones, leaving certain nuances, so the reader has enough space for his own interpretation.

Telling this story "of being accidentally in the wrong place, at the wrong time," Rachael attempts to establish a direct connection with her audience by expressing events in such a manner that readers can feel themselves in the skin of the hero. Horror is tightly connected with corporeality. Not surprisingly, one of the authors researched for this genre was Barry Keith Grant who believes science fiction to be similar to horror fiction. Science fiction looks upwards to the sky, horror literature looks downwards towards the ground and the body. Science fiction portrays macrocosm while horror fiction portrays microcosm.

*The Last Inn* will carry you away with suspense, vividness of language, and an intriguing plot, reminding the readers of good Alfred Hitchcock movies. Rachael impels us to look inside our own souls, unveiling the darkest parts where fear is hiding. But the question still remains open, "Are we ready to meet it?"

Rachael Craigmyle is a Scottish-born writer. She moved to Canada in early childhood. She graduated from the University of British Columbia with a major in Spanish and International Relations. Rachael has always enjoyed writing in all forms, both for academia and for pleasure. She wrote her first piece of fiction as a child – *A Small Picture Book for My Mother*. Rachel fluently speaks English, Scots Doric, Spanish, and German. She is always open to acquiring additional knowledge about cultures, art, and literature.

*By Oleksandra Osadcha*





## The Last Inn

*Where on earth is the bus?* Sitting underneath an ebony sky, there was nothing around Jake save the bench he was perched upon. He felt engulfed by the mist and soaked beyond bones. He wound his scarf higher, trying his best to create a barrier against the raindrops that dripped relentlessly down his neck. *Screw it; I'll walk.*

Ten minutes later, Jake was convinced he might die alone on this barren country road. How had not one single vehicle passed him? *Come to Scotland, they said. Discover your roots, they said.* His family told him it didn't rain that much here in summer. It seemed as though July didn't qualify as summer in Scotland.

Through the rain, Jake glimpsed a teensy building with a solitary light hanging outside. He began to run, comforted by thoughts of warmth, and company. As he reached the premises, he saw a small sign, "The Last Inn." Jake pushed the thick wooden door open, and was greeted with hops-filled air, the sound of the incomprehensible Scots' tongue, and the unexpected, homey scent of molten butter and sugar. He inhaled deeply. He knew that smell from his childhood, and could almost taste his Nan's shortbread on his tongue. "G'on shut the damn door!"

Jake quickly closed the door behind him and sat on a stool at the bar, wiping the rain off his glasses. Seeing his drenched hair and clothes, the woman behind the bar said, "Och aye, misst the bus, did ye? Must be pishin' oot - yer fair drookit. A pint'll dae ye guid, loon."

## The Last Inn (continued)

Jake didn't know what she'd said, but was cheered at the thought of a beer. Judging by the rich scent in the air, perhaps a piece of fresh shortbread too. He felt surprised. He was comfortable, almost at home, for the first time since he'd stepped off the plane in the Aberdeen airport. He turned back to face the bartender who had returned with his pint. The beer was dark and thick, with a foamy crown. "*Slainte*." She held out her hand for the payment.

As Jake fumbled with the foreign coins, he asked the bartender, "Busy tonight, eh? God, it smells so good in here... Is there any shortbread for sale?"

"Oh aye, The Last Inn is always busy, loon, everybody comes tae wait for the bus with us. You just enjoy yer pint, an I'll see about the shortbreid. It's freshly bakit an all." As she spoke, the woman nodded slightly to a man standing in the shadows near the inn's front door.

Distracted as he attempted to decipher the money and her latest monologue, and deafened by the raucous patrons around him, Jake failed to see the signal, or hear the heavy clunk and thud made by the old, iron bolt on The Last Inn's door as he was locked inside.

"You ordered the shortbread, didn't you?"

Jake jumped as he felt a whisper effortlessly caress his left ear. He turned slightly to face the unknown speaker, but was stopped as the murmur turned into a sharp sibilate, berating him.

"Don't turn 'round, loon. If she sees me speaking to you, we'll both be in trouble. Forget the beer, forget the bus, and for God's sake, forget the shortbread. Just get up and go, now. Strangers aren't treated with kindness here for long."

Jake felt a chill pass by his ear in the absence of the warm warnings. The stranger's words hung thick in the air, mingling with the aromas of butter, sugar, and hops. He felt sweat starting to form on his forehead, just below his hairline. Had it always been this hot in here?

Disturbed, Jake pushed his stool back slightly from the bar. The sound of the three wooden legs scraping across the knotted old floor of the Inn broke the heavy air. He felt the eyes of every patron in the Inn slowly fixate on him. Another bead of sweat fell from his forehead. In the sudden silence, Jake heard a quiet click. He winced, expecting the lights to go out.

Underneath an ebony sky, a lone pair of headlights pierced the fog as a single vehicle rumbled quickly along the road towards The Last Inn. The wipers flailed from side to side, as if attempting to wrench themselves free. As she approached the Inn, the driver observed the little establishment. Without the lamp, she was scarcely able to make the inn out through the downpour. She knew the rules though. No lamp; no passengers.



# Barbara Weidell

[www.bweidell.org](http://www.bweidell.org)



Abbadon

Ceramic, mix media | 20 x 22 x 8.5" | \$2,500



**E**ach epoch has its own aesthetical criteria for defining beauty and ugliness. It seems we can easily tell one from another; however, the artist, Barbara Weidell, proves that the essences of beauty and ugliness cannot be defined or reduced to simple opposites of each other, as the borders between beauty and ugliness are more blurred than we may think.

In her art works, Barbara, a creator with a broad life experience, focuses on the relationships between humans, social norms, fears, and other realms that shape our personalities. She is particularly interested in explaining the sources of our attitudes towards ugliness and our perceptions of this phenomenon.

The growing attention to the enigma of corporeality marks our contemporary culture. This shift from soul to body probably began with Karl Marx's formulation about the dual connection between organic (man) and inorganic (nature) bodies. However, such a split is illusional since spiritual and material mutually influence each other. Our skin is the only barrier between the external world and us, and, at the same time, the only link with it. Thus, body is the most acute expression of our subconscious, our untamed natural side, and, consequently, of the fears that emerged from its antagonism with cultural stereotypes and frames. That is why the body becomes the main medium in the art of grotesque, so favoured by Barbara.

Grotesque images contain both poles of transformations – old and new, dying and nascent, end and beginning. The artist utilizes clay, strongly associated with archaic art, and masterfully combines it with other media, particularly in found objects and rusted metal. Hence, the author deconstructs human features in her sculptures. The variety of textures that bear marks of aging and weathering are meant to metaphorically express all transformations of one's psyche.

Barbara's pieces are reminiscent of Golem who suddenly woke up and realised its own unsightly, scary identity. Many of the great masters, such as Francis Bacon or Francisco Goya, used to fill their works with the same feeling of disillusion. However, in Barbara's art, she doesn't convert disillusion into despair. The artist wants us to see something sublime and grandiose behind abnormality and spookiness. As French poet and musician Serge Gainsbourg once said, "Ugliness is in a way superior to beauty because it lasts."

Barbara Weidell is an American visual artist. Born and raised in Montana, she majored in Art at Rocky Mountain College in Billings. She interrupted her college education, to enrol in the US Army during the Vietnam Conflict. Following her military career, she received her BFA in Sculpture from Sonoma State University in 1998 and an MFA in Ceramics from San Diego State University in 2002. Barbara is a Professor of Art/Sculpture and Assistant Chair at the University of Central Oklahoma. She maintains a studio in which she continues to create artwork in drawings, printmaking, ceramics, and sculpture. Her pieces were widely exhibited in the galleries across the country and received some awards.

*By Oleksandra Osadcha*

# Silver

**Barbara Weidell**

Announcer

Ceramic, bovine jawbone, doll arm | 21 x 16 x 15" | \$2,500





# Artist

Rune

Ceramic, wire, bones, mix media | 35 x 14 x 16" | \$2,500



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www.ArtAscent.com

**Melissa Wright**

[www.melissawrightphoto.com](http://www.melissawrightphoto.com)



On Hold

Archival ink print | 16 x 19" | \$100



**T**hough fear is one of the first feelings we experience, its nature still remains obscure to us. As we grow up, we develop the ability to rationalize and forget most of the things we had feared in childhood. However, rationalizing doesn't always eliminate all of our fears. Photographer Melissa Wright helps us to explore the fears that still trigger us and how they transform us.

Have you ever had a sensation that your reality has suddenly changed within a second and has become unsettlingly strange? These are exactly the emotions one gets when looking at Melissa's photographs. Her staged scenes depict situations that are just one step beyond normal (or of what are considered normal). The seemingly lifeless female bodies in strange, twisted positions evoke associations with a depicted crime scene. The rest of the composition strikes us with an overwhelming silence and the routineness of the settings – a bedroom, a courtyard, or a calm forest edge.

Melissa aspires to present habitual things in a different light. She tells us, "You may look at someone and formulate a preconceived notion about who they are, but in reality the exterior of an individual does not always tell their true story." She puts her models in odd, uncanny situations, which prompts the viewer's mind to compose his or her own narratives. The artist has adopted this method of portrayal from one of her favourite photographers, Giuseppe Palmisano, known for his absurdist and eye-catching nude images. Melissa dismisses the erotic side of Palmisano's art. Instead, she concentrates on the concept of contrast between common, everyday space, and weird subjects.

Melissa's images are defined by a slightly cinematic flavour in their atmosphere. She creates this through the selection of proper lightning. For *On Hold*, the artist used an external flash, whereas *Untitled* and *Let's Hang* were produced with natural lighting. With little fabrication, these profoundly grabbing photographs juxtapose beauty and creepiness. Without being straightforward, Melissa succeeds in getting a shocking pinch-like effect in her pieces. Daily routine immerses us into the anaesthetic state – we often go with the stream of life, being embraced with the feeling of boredom and passivity. In this case, only something distressing, affecting, and weird can bring us back to life. Melissa's final target isn't simply to give us the creeps, but to remind us of Marcus Aurelius' words, "It is not death that a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live."

Melissa Wright is a young American artist. Currently, she is a student at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, FL, studying there for a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a concentration in Photography. Her spheres of interests include portraiture, conceptual photography, and graphic design. Melissa aspires to connect her future with the photography field, using her creative skills.

*By Oleksandra Osadcha*



**Melissa Wright**

Let's Hang

Archival ink print | 16 x 19" | \$100



# Artist

23  
ArtAscent

Untitled  
Archival ink print | 16 x 19" | \$100



# Katrina Carey



## Lace and Bones

Her house was dark and damp. Like being in a tunnel underground, forgotten by anyone who cared and smelling like years of loss and silence. Strange noises at night, scratches and bumps. Sometimes clear and rhythmic, sometimes only just there.

With strained ears listening, she reminded herself that she didn't believe in ghosts. Well, not malicious ones anyway. She believed in the spirits of those who had passed - to keep from feeling lonely. The list of lost was long in this house. Husband - gone. Children - dead. It was just she now. Quiet, withdrawn, alone.

She kept that dark damp house clean, too clean probably. She still washed her children's clothes, tiny shirts no longer pulled over giggling heads, pairs of socks no longer worn on feet desperate to play outside. She carried them - clean, smelling of lavender, to the clothesline, hanging them carefully to dry in the warm November sun. "You can't catch me!" "Ready or not here I come!" She heard the voices of her children out there. She caught glimpses of auburn coloured hair flying in the wind as the ghosts that haunted her every moment played hide and seek in between trees that had outlived her family.

She made tea and toast for one each morning, spreading her jam evenly over the roughly sliced bread. Her husband had preferred coffee and eggs, and sometimes she'd make a brew and pour it out into his favourite mug. She'd boil some eggs just to hear the comforting sound of poultry banging gently against steel in a pot of boiling water. She served the coffee and eggs in the place opposite hers. His place. The chair with the tall back and legs that sometimes wobbled and needed to have folded paper slid underneath. She left the breakfast for his ghost untouched, until that time right before nightfall, the gloaming, when the swelling in her chest would begin and the aching in her heart was the worst. Then she'd sadly collect the neglected food and discard it, forcing herself not to think of the waste.

One night as she was lying in her bed, listening to the sounds of the house in the darkness, she heard something that made her sit up, her heart beating loudly in her chest. There was a door at the back of the house with a lock that clicked when it was opened. The sound of the door being opened now was what caused her to stir. She moved slowly to stand and found her way in the dark to the bedroom door. Stopping, she listened to the sound of silence. Surely she hadn't been mistaken? Then again, there it was, the silence of an empty house.



She was just about to turn in her nightgown, to shuffle back to her bed, back to her sleepless night, when she heard a second sound, this time a footstep or three crossing the house. She was certain now and continued on her way, slowly opening the bedroom door with a loud creak. She paused, expecting some reaction to the door's voice calling into the night, but when none came she moved to stand in the doorway, a silhouette of lace and bones. "Who's there?" she called into the night, her voice braver than she felt. She was answered by silence but for a muffled laugh.

"Who is it?" she called. Again she heard footsteps, light on the floor, moving quickly. She moved on her toes, her hand running along the walls of the hallway.

Pushing open the door to the sitting room, she noticed the subtle glow pouring into the darkness from the fire, which had not yet gone out. As she walked through the door, she strained her eyes to see and gasped when she felt something brush past. She fumbled for the lamp beside her and blinked it on, bringing the room to life with all its shadows. There, sitting on the old tattered couch, and on the red rug given to her and her husband as a wedding gift, were three figures.

The two on the rug were children who were engrossed in a game with each other, clapping their hands together and singing a silent song. The third was seated on one end of the couch watching the two children play. He lifted his eyes to hers. Those eyes. The same ones that had looked into hers morning after morning, over coffee and eggs at the breakfast table.

One of the children now looked up at her and smiled, then laughed as the other tickled her toes bringing her attention back to the game they were playing.

She walked carefully over to the man, her man, treading gently on the floor as to not disturb whatever beautiful force had presented her with this scene and invited her to be part of it. She sat down beside him and he took her hand. She looked down at his hand over her own; she could feel its warmth and its memories. She looked up and their eyes met. "Thanks for the coffee and eggs," he said. And with no more to say they settled back on the couch, warm in the glow of the ever burning fire, watching their children play until they all fell asleep together, never to wake again.

# Sharon Covert

[www.sharoncovert.com](http://www.sharoncovert.com)

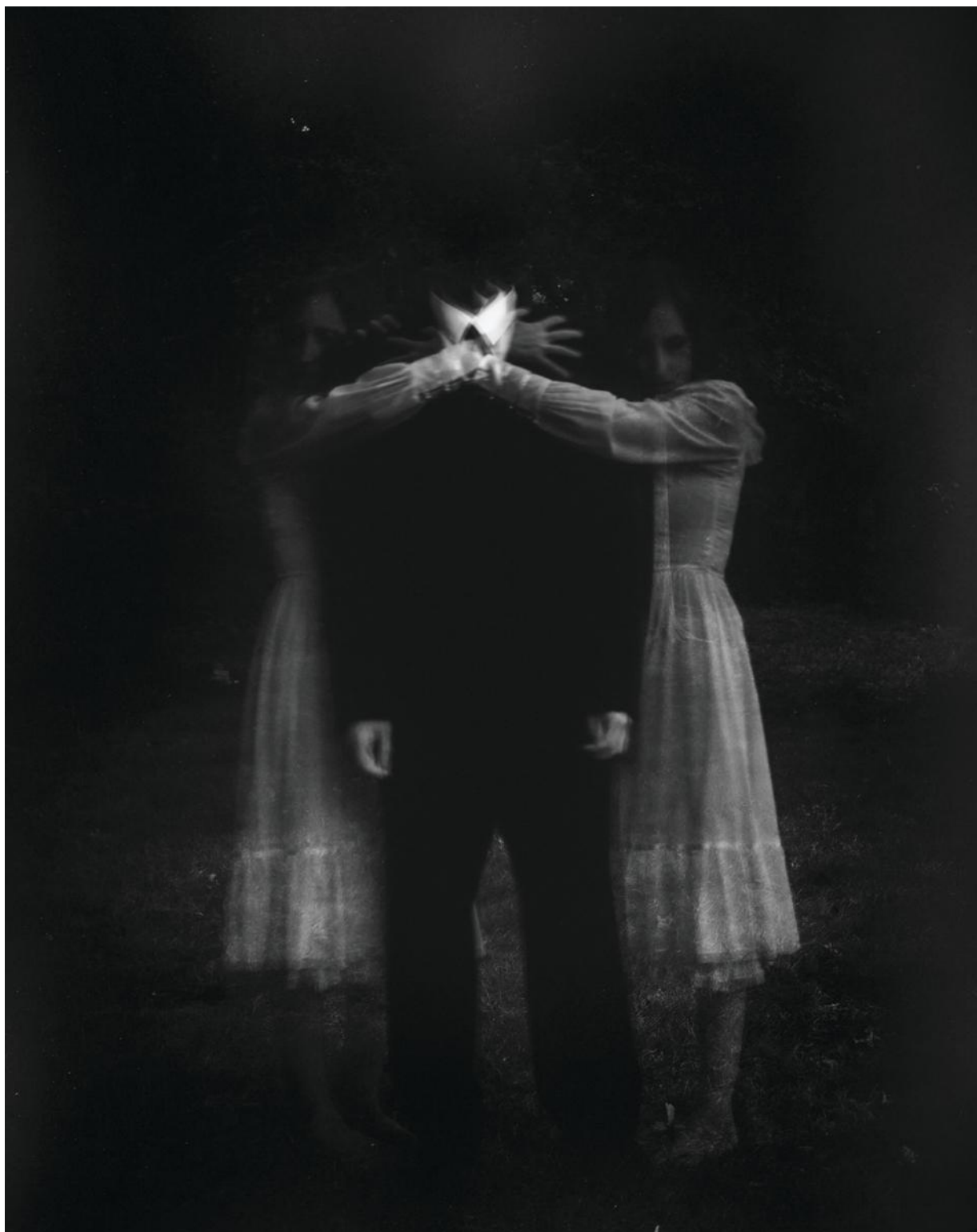


Turn Your Back on Me

Epson Hot Press Natural | 11 x 14" | \$350



Union  
Epson Hot Press Natural | 11 x 14" | \$350





# Etta J. Martin



Up Close and Personal  
Digital photography | 13 x 19" | NFS



They All Float  
Digital photography | 13 x 19" | NFS



**Etta J. Martin**

Stay Out of the Basement

Digital photography | 13 x 19" | NFS





Boogeyman  
Digital photography | 13 x 19" | NFS





## One Spooky Night

The wind howled in the stairwell. I shivered as a chill circulated the eighth floor wing of the trauma hospital. I wore a turtleneck under my scrubs, but it didn't help much. I swore the management turned the heat off at night. The patients slept and I felt restless. I jumped up and walked the halls for something to do.

Claire, a chubby-cheeked red head, complained she hated the night shift because the quiet grated on her nerves. She was a new graduate nurse and mischief rippled through me. As I passed the small room, where we kept the pumps for the I.V.'s, I got an idea. I set a pump's alarm to go off in a few minutes. I ducked inside the dirty utility room. I heard Claire hurry to the room and shut it off. Several minutes later, I appeared at the nursing station.

"Were you in the pump room?" Claire asked.

"I did my rounds. What are you talking about?"

"Nothing, must have been a fluke." Claire turned away and opened her computer. She paused in her typing and looked over at me. "Do you believe in ghosts?"

"I think it's possible. Why?"

"Never mind." She resumed her charting.

A call light came on in room 813. I thought that was strange. We didn't have anyone in that room. I strolled down the hall. The bed, closest to the door, elevated itself up and down. Had Claire done something? I'll fix her. I punched the call light off and sauntered down the hall. I slipped into the pump room and alarmed two pumps. I hid in the locker room.

Claire ran down the hall until she found me.

"Where were you?"

"I had to use the rest room. What's up?"

"Come see this." Claire brought me to room 813.

"Oh, that. The call light was on and I shut it off. I thought you had triggered the bed somehow as a joke."

She shook her head. "Maybe we have a ghost. First, the pumps went off by themselves and now this." Claire rubbed her arms.

"Well, Mr. Thorpe died the other day. Maybe he's haunting us."

"Don't say that."

"Okay, I'll call the engineer." I left her standing there and walked to the nursing station. I picked up the phone and punched in the number.

Fifteen minutes later, Darrell strode up to the desk.  
"Hey, Sarah, you got yourself a creepy bed?"

Darrell was from New Orleans. Some people thought he didn't have a brain in his head, just because he talked slow and walked like his shoes were stuck in molasses. Darrell and I got along fine though. We had worked the night shift together for ten years. I filled him in on my prank on the new girl. We laughed, until Claire came around the corner. She looked from me to him.

"Claire, this is Darrell, the engineer I called."

"Oh." She shot out her hand. "Nice to meet you."

Darrell shook her hand. "What seems to be the problem, Miss?"

"Follow me." Claire clopped down the hall.

Darrell watched her derriere. "Whew! She is one fine mama." He strutted down the hall.

A couple of call lights sounded and I felt glad for something to do. I answered room 810 first. Mrs. Johnson had a fractured hip and burns on her chest. She had dropped a pot of hot water and had slipped in it at home. She waved me over.

"How can I help you?" I asked.

"I hear water running in the bathroom. Can you take a look?"

"Sure." I opened the bathroom door and noticed the shower was on. That was strange. Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Miller were on bed rest. I shut it off. "Anything else, Mrs. Johnson?"

"No, thank you."

I left the room and answered the call light next door.

"Careful, dear. There's water all over the floor," Mr. Nash said.

I grabbed some towels from a shelf and mopped up the water. "Did you spill something?"

"No, I heard a noise and saw the water. It seemed to come out of the wall. I can't get up with this bum knee without help. Check the bathroom. Maybe something leaked."

I opened the door, but everything was bone-dry inside the bathroom. I walked back into the room and I couldn't believe my eyes. Water had pooled again next to the wall. I pulled off the covers from the empty bed and wiped up the floor. This was a safety hazard. I ran out of the room and called Darrell over. He couldn't figure it out either.

We decided to move Mr. Nash to another room, in case there was a plumbing issue. The mystery bed turned out to be a short in the wiring. There wasn't an answer for the shower coming on by itself in room 810.

It had been one spooky night. Maybe Mr. Thorpe had visited? We didn't have any more problems with rooms 810 and 811 after that. Claire refused to work any more night shifts. I stayed on though and entertained the new nurses with the stories.

# Rob DePaolo

[www.robdepaolophotography.com](http://www.robdepaolophotography.com)



Stoic

Photography





Cakewalk  
Photography



**Rob DePaolo**

Relic  
Photography



Dead Quiet  
Photography



# Candi S. Kalinsky

[www.kalinskyphotography.com](http://www.kalinskyphotography.com)



Inside Out, Imminent Fracture

Archival pigment print | 12 x 18" | \$300





From Out of the Hedgerow  
Archival pigment print | 12 x 18" | \$300



# Carolina Arellanos

[www.carolinaarellanos.com](http://www.carolinaarellanos.com)



Descartes

Digital print on metallic paper | 33 x 22" | \$150



Logos

Digital print on metallic paper | 33 x 22" | \$150



**Carolina Arellanos**

**Zaara's Skull**

Digital print on metallic paper | 33 x 22" | \$150







Jessica Carder

[www.jessicacarder.com](http://www.jessicacarder.com)

43

ArtAscent

Keep Your Eyes Peeled  
Digital photograph | 20 x 30 x 1.5" | \$500





## The Angel in the Apple Tree

His sour odor washes over me until my guts shrivel and my soul screams. His cruel demanding fingers dig into my face. "Look me in the eye, Branca. Look at me! Say it! Tell your daddy how much you love him."

He isn't my father. My dad died a couple of years earlier. Two years ago, Mom met and married him, and the assaults began. During the rapes, I fled to faraway places—became Heidi, hidden away in the Swiss Alps with my adoring grandfather. Sometimes I'd soar across the night skies on my way to Never Never Land, hand-in-hand with Peter Pan.

I cling to my hatred, allow the venom to sluice bone-deep, to grip my lost soul, and save me from certain insanity. Every night I pray for God to send one of his powerful angels to strike him dead.

As I gaze out the second story window of my prison, a branch of the apple tree bounces then scrapes against the pane. I jump. When my heart settles, I creep back to the glass and squint out into the night and through the tree branches. A small shape comes slowly into focus. A little girl munching on pilfered fruit perches up against the tree trunk with her legs dangling from either side of the highest branch. She stares back at me from her roost, smiles, swipes at her nose with the sleeve of her jacket, waggles her fingers at me, and motions for me to open the window.

"Meet me in the yard," she says.

"I'm locked in. It's my step-dad, he..."

My bedroom door swings open. I peek around the corner and creep down the back stairway. He is closing up the restaurant so I have a little time, but am still terrified he'll catch me and hurt her. We meet near the alley that borders our dark backyard. She is about the same age as I, but much tinier. Her hair was all different shades of blonde, cut in the shortest of pixies. She has the roundest brown eyes imaginable.

Her name is Sattina. My new friend, my only friend, comes around almost every night now. I jimmy the lock as she'd taught me and sneak down to the back yard where we whisper and giggle. She reintroduces me to life.

I lie in my bed after a particularly horrible attack, waiting for him to descend the stairs. Then I run to her and throw my arms around her.

She stares at me for a moment then grabs hold of my shoulders, leans in and whispers into my ear, "Branca, it's time."

"Time for what?"

"I know that your dad, I'm sorry, you're step-dad—I know that he hurts you."

I blinked back tears. We'd talked about everything in the world, but not that—never that.

"Do you trust me, Branca?"

I nodded.

"Good, because I have a plan."

Sattina talks and I listen. That's when the back door crashes open with such force, it smashes into the house and shatters the window. He is drunk—very drunk, and in one of his dark rages.

"Get away from my daughter!"

He pushes tiny Sattina to the ground. Without an inkling of fear in her enormous eyes, she glares back at him and warns, "If you ever do that again, I'll kill you." Her cute little face dimples when she adds, "And nobody will *ever* find your body!"

Fear eclipses his eyes for just an instant, but he quickly recovers and pulls back his leg to kick her. Sattina scrambles away and into the shadowed alley. He grabs me by my arm and drags me back into the house where he takes his fury out first on mom and then on me.

He works me pretty hard in the restaurant and I often lug liquor and supplies up from the basement. That's where I find exactly what I'm looking for.

Wild Turkey is my step-dad's alcohol of choice and the kitchen pantry is well stocked. Mom isn't a drinker. If he entertains friends, he parties in the restaurant. The rat poison takes a little longer than a week, but patience is the one virtue I still own.

His last few hours on this earth entail cluster seizures and the puking up of copious amounts of blood. As he lay upon the worn red and white tiles of that kitchen floor, screaming and bleeding from every orifice in his body, I stare down at him until I see the realization dawn in his perverted eyes.

I grab hold of his blood-slicked face, dig my fingers into his cheeks, and turn his piggy eyes to mine. "Look at me, step-daddy! Look me in the eye. Tell your step-daughter how much you love her."

When it's over, I run up to my room. Sattina is there in the apple tree waiting for me, just like I knew she'd be.

"It's done," I whisper. "He's dead."

"Wow," she says. "That was a lot easier than I thought it would be. Two for the price of one."

"What? What do you mean?"

"Souls—the pig's lying on the kitchen floor and yours."

Sattina opens her mouth, flicks her serpent's tongue at me, and howls. She creeps along that branch toward my bedroom window with red eyes glowing and a fountain of maggots erupting from one of those adorable dimples.

# Xuange Wang

www.crowned-crow.com



Before the Kill  
Digital | \$300







Alfonso M. Rodriguez

[www.alfonsomrodriguez.com](http://www.alfonsomrodriguez.com)

Arachnid Mother  
Digital image | 30 x 24" | NFS

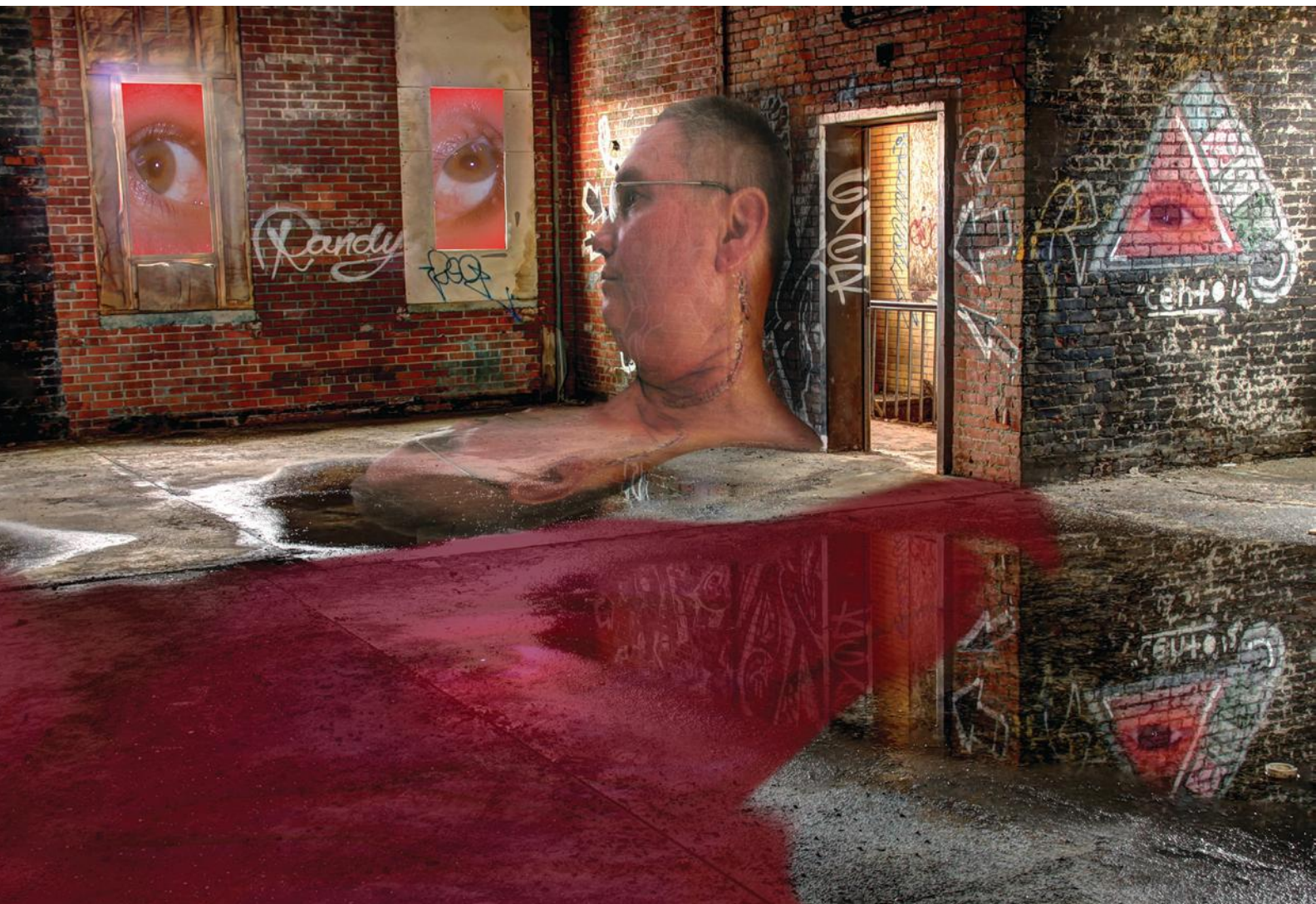


# Ken Moran



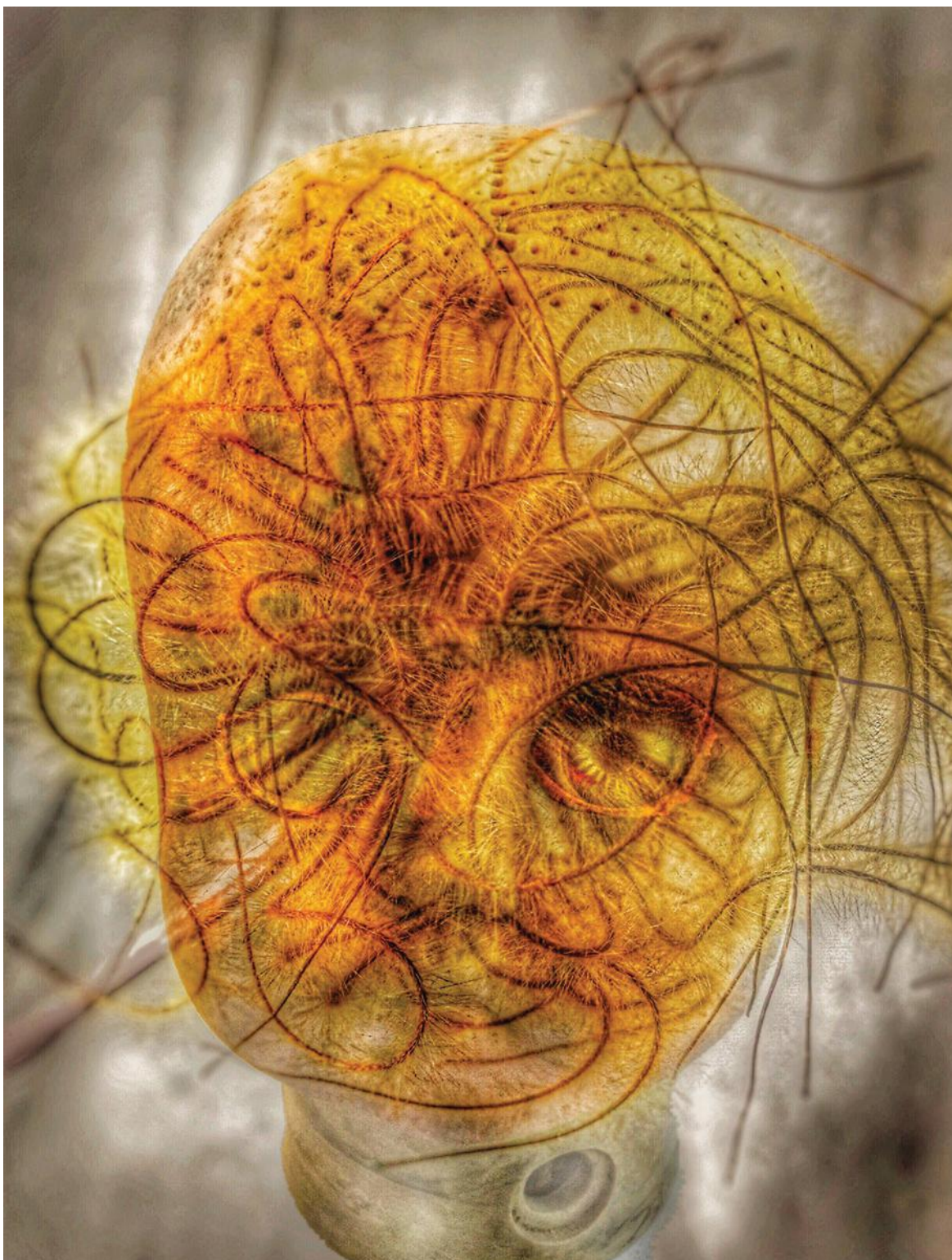
Derelicts Corner

Photographic collage | 15 x 10" | \$350





Old Flower, Old Dolli  
Phonography collage | 8 x 11" | \$200





# Tom Acevedo

[www.tomacevedoartstudio.com](http://www.tomacevedoartstudio.com)



Cloistered

Acrylic on canvas | 20 x 28" | \$2,400





The Visitor  
Acrylic on canvas | 24 x 30"





## Zombie Messiah

I have no idea how long I've been here, hiding under this dingy white sheet. Stained and threadbare, it feels cool against my sweaty skin as I crouch in the corner of the upstairs bedroom. I pray that I look like a forgotten pile of laundry and no one will find me.

When I came home from school, I fell, like Alice did, down an endless rabbit hole where up is down and over is under. The drugged-out empty sockets of my brothers' eyes proved I wasn't in Wonderland after all; I had landed directly in the Hell of addiction.

These strangers aren't Mad Hatters or White Rabbits. They're Zombies wearing the skins of my brothers and their friends. Stephen pulls creepy-crawly hallucinations off his face, flings them against the wall, then stomps on them when they hit the floor. Brian, two years younger at fifteen, stumbles about trying to light a cigarette. Life and time are distorted in this house of mirrors but one thing is sure. I'm twelve, drenched in fear and lying low among the walking dead.

The sun filters through the thin fibers of my hideaway, protecting me in a layer of warmth, yet still I shiver. I poke my finger through a small tear and make a window to watch them. They soak gobs of toilet paper with clear liquid then stuff it into the bottoms of brown-paper, lunch bags. They bring the bags to their faces, cover their noses and mouths, then inhale. Breathe in, cough. Breathe out, drool. Breathe in again. The toxic fumes are so strong that I retch and stop breathing. A red and silver can clangs to the floor, and signals it's empty. There before me, in bold, black letters, glared the words, **Sterling Paint Thinner**.

"Have you seen the Messiah?" Stephen shouts. No one answers. "I have a message for the Messiah, has anyone seen him?" Still, no response. "Goddamn it," he screams, grabs Brian by his Celtics tee shirt, and slams his head into the wall. "I am the Messiah, you stupid son of a bitch." Blood pours from nose to floor. No one notices but me. I think of Jefferson Airplane's song, White Rabbit, and its new meaning.

*When logic and proportion, have fallen sloppy dead  
And the white knight is talking backwards  
And the red queen's off with her head.*

Stephen paces the floor, agitated and frothing at the mouth. Choking, then gagging he makes his way to the window and sticks his head out. I wait for his vomit to spew. Instead, he spits. "Wow, man, did ya see that green parrot?" he asks, his voice rising with excitement. "It flew right out." The other zombies stare in wonderment.

The loud, sudden hammering startles me. I fear the cops are banging the door down or those drug dealers have come for their money. *Oh please, don't let them arrest us. Don't let those druggies beat us up. Come home, Mom. Please.*

I hug my knees and pull them to my chin. Back and forth, back and forth I rock, singing silently in my head to ease my fear.

*One pill makes you larger,  
and one pill makes you small.  
And the ones that mother gives you  
don't do anything at all.  
Call Alice. When you're ten-feet tall.*

I suddenly realize the hammering is only my heart, beating out the rhythm.

I turn up the volume in my head when I hear Stephen say he can fly, wondering if a fall from the second floor will kill him. The zombies cheer him on, "Fly away Messiah, fly away."

I hear him scream when he hits the ground and I leave the comfort of my sheet to look out the window. The twisted bone that protrudes from his bloody leg is evidence that he's alive, because zombies are the walking dead, and the dead don't bleed. Go ask Alice.



# Annie Smith

[www.facebook.com/AnnieSmithPhoto](https://www.facebook.com/AnnieSmithPhoto)



Fright

Digital scan of film | 8 x 10" | NFS





Sweets

Digital scan of film | 8 x 10" | NFS



# Jane Dickson

<http://www.mysticalspiritstudio.com>



The Veil is Thin on Devil's Night

Acrylic ink and pen on art board | 12 x 9" | \$100





You Hold Endless Possibilities  
Acrylic on canvas | 40 x 30 x 1.5" | \$500



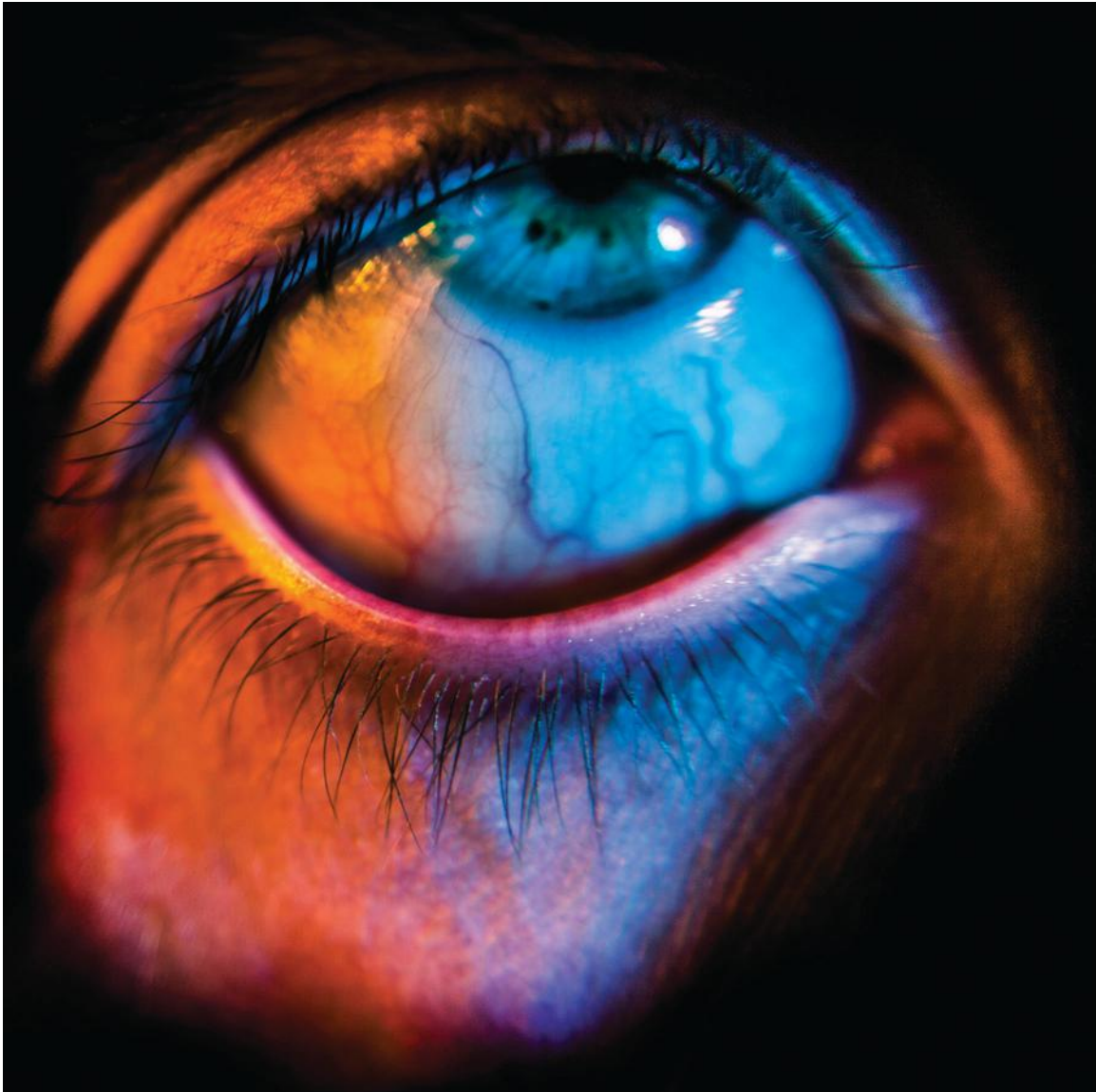
# Zachary Ruddell

<http://www.ruddellaesthetics.com>



Eye 1

Photograph | 22 x 22" | \$750







Brandin Barón

[www.brandinbaron.com](http://www.brandinbaron.com)

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ArtAscent

Frontispiece to Berenice (Mouth Open)

Photo-illustration print on vellum with linocut overlay in enamel with gouache and metallic ink | 8.5 x 11" | \$300



# Anita Wexler

[www.anitawexler.com](http://www.anitawexler.com)



## Lost Innocence

Digital photo of sculpture | 11 x 14" | \$300





What's Wrong, Mommy?

Digital photo of sculpture | 11 x 14" | \$300

NEXT PAGE: Life's Torture

Digital photo of sculpture | 11 x 14" | \$300









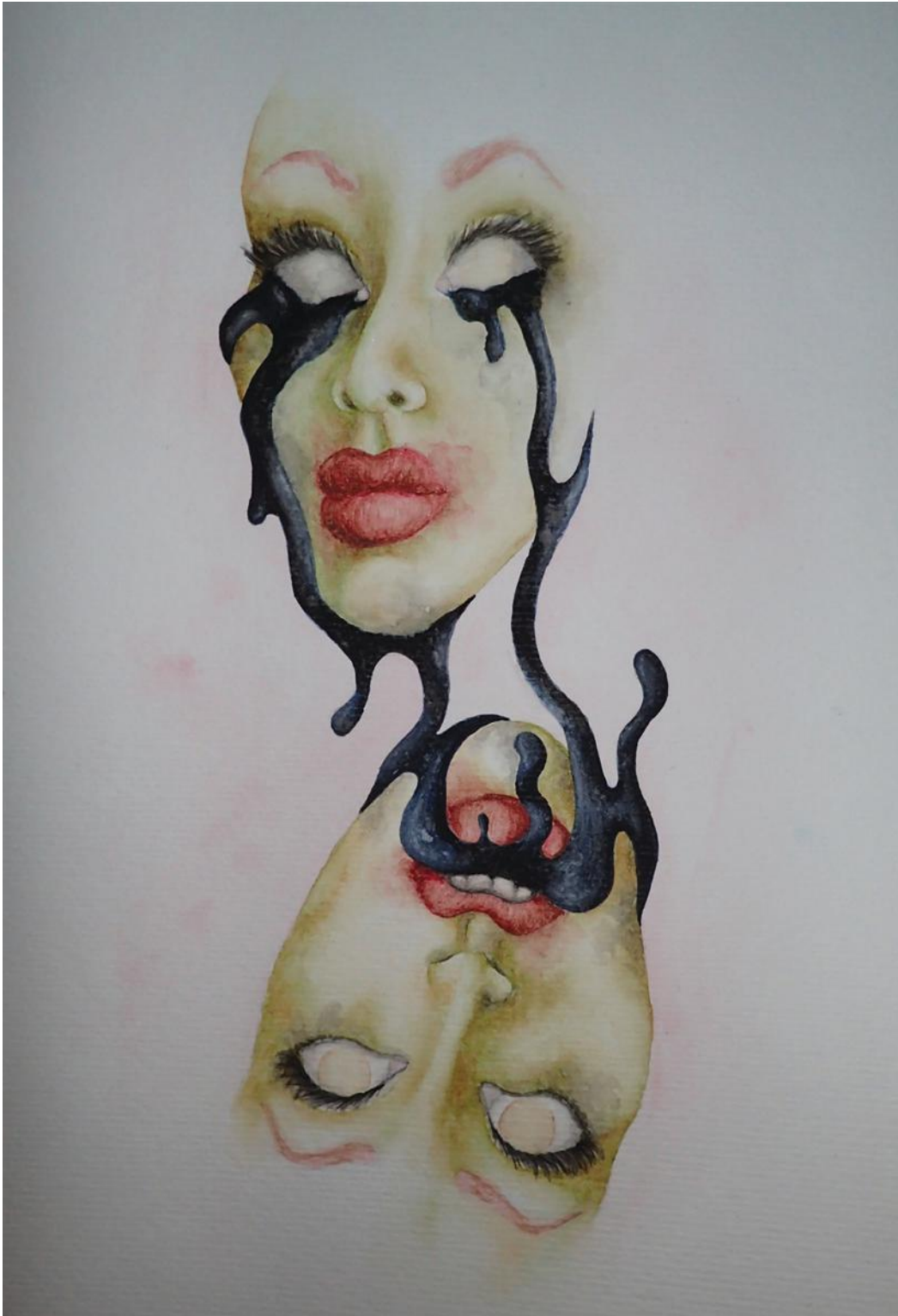


# Morgan Ryan a.k.a. Cross-Eyed Morgan

[www.facebook.com/morgan.ryan.art](https://www.facebook.com/morgan.ryan.art)

Fluid

Watercolour on paper | 8.27 x 11.69" | \$140





## In the Wrong Movie

Bee has been thinking about it for a while, rehearsing, dreaming, plotting. It fills her mind, heart, soul. That's what her friend says, when speaking about it, that's what she sees when looking at her face in the mirror; shiny eyes, an explosive whiteness of teeth.

"It's not time yet," her Teacher-Friend says. "You must be patient, build up speed, firm up your resolve, and watch yours and others' families, for the unrepentant who follow the call."

And she waits, though patience isn't what she's good at. Bee watches everyone but even more so, she watches her DVD - *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. She watches it in the morning and before bedtime, after homework and when Mum doesn't insist on praying. Bee imagines herself to be Buffy, she's the hero, while the vampires are the ones who don't follow the sacred texts.

Today is special. Bee is in Teacher-Friend's (TF) living room. There are other girls and TF addresses them as "cell-friends," but Bee didn't know of the cell's existence, thinking she was the only Buffy TF taught.

Now, she's one of seven.

But she must trust, must accept, and be happy that there are others; that she's part of an army of budding Buffies training in the art of slaying non-believers.

They leave the house; gumtrees are still in the morning heat, soft prayers at their backs.

When in the open, TF draws a line on the ground, a bush at each end. "Get ready for a test run," he says, "speed and fitness are a must."

And running is where Bee is at her best. She runs with Ralf, her dog. When Ralf's too tired, she takes the furry ball in her arms and carries him home. When his smell isn't too bad, Bee buries her face in his fur, feeling close to this breathing being.

There are no dogs here, only their group of seven girls and a smiling TF.

Taking off her sandals, Bee chants her prayers silently. She wants to get to the closing line within a flicker of a second, proving that she's the fastest, the one and only true Buffy.

The sharp whistle sound startles her out of reverie. She fly-runs, others don't matter, TF's arms are spread, his sleeves flapping like angel's wings. He's shouting encouragements, smiling, embracing, embracing, embracing the universe, the whole goodness of what's to come.

He's embracing her now. Her - Bee, the winner.

She'd never been embraced by a man. And this man is close to her skin, the smell of his body unfamiliar; he's hot and firm, different from her mother's softness and Ralf's bony spine.

The scriptures forbid this kind of closeness and she slips away. TF's pleased, she can see it in his smile, in the way he expands his chest and rearranges the teacher's cap on his blonde head.

They sit down to feast and Bee is quiet, biting into the smallest of morsels, her elation tainted. And when all is cleared TF demonstrates tactics of looking innocent or hiding sharp instruments in fabric folds. He play-acts getting close and friendly when approaching a man, a woman, young, old, even a child.

Bee imagines a child as a vampire, a child as one who doesn't follow the holy books, her question marks jostle for answers. Yet, she's too shy to ask, and anyway, "girls don't talk unless they're spoken to," Mum's words.

TF opens his bag and shiny sparks dance in front of her eyes. He empties the bag onto a white cloth scattering golden scissors.

★

Bee arrived this morning and the city is awake. The buildings are enormous unlike the homes of her neighbourhood. The roads are busy with cars; pavements, filled with vampire-non-believers. She knows that the vampire-police are on the lookout and she must be cunning and slip through their net.

She wants to live, to finish school, to help mum and... and...

Bee asks for directions, following well-rehearsed procedures. The woman smiles and points to the destination. She's nice, quiet, softly spoken, definitely not a vampire, and Bee doesn't feel like Buffy, doesn't feel the hate she was taught to feel. She slips her hand, touching the scissors, their hardness familiar, but this woman is like one of her aunties.

Bee spots a new potential, a young man, determination in his steps. She must be quick and follow instructions, "don't look, don't feel, don't connect..."

TF's smell fills her, his firmness, embrace, and conviction that even little ones are dangerous, sucking the blood of true faith. And Bee feels dirty, confused, like she's in the wrong movie.

Second attempt - the hurried man, not so nice, directions in short, sharp sentences... and even here, she can't pierce his throat, his chest or... No!

The training of stabbing pillows and red paint cans, the cheering cell-friends and TF's delight fade into insignificance.

The NO takes over, reverberating in her body, filling her muscles with electricity she'd never felt before, and makes her pass blurred structures, overtake people whom she's unable to imagine as vampires, as dangerous non-believers, deserving of death.

# Holland Houdek

[www.hollandhoudek.com](http://www.hollandhoudek.com)



Humerus with Flexible Deltoid Tuberosity (Shoulder & Bone Replacement)

Hand-fabricated copper, raised, pierced, plastic, Swarovski crystals (842), bead-blasted, patina | 9 x 3 x 3" | \$4,750





## Pinnacle Shell in Threefold Form (Triple Hip Replacement)

Hand-fabricated copper, raised, pierced, Swarovski crystals (2,466), bead-blasted, patina | 6.5 x 5.25" | \$15,300



# Dorina Kappatou

[www.cargocollective.com/velvetvortex](http://www.cargocollective.com/velvetvortex)



Gruesome Gertie

Meranti wood | 15.75 x 15.75 x 66.93" | \$5,500



Old Betsy  
Various wood | 26 x 26 x 47.25" | \$2,750





# Lily La Bare



Bosou and Zo

Found object sculpture | 15 x 10 x 4" | Sold



Telekinesis  
Found object sculpture | 8 x 6 x 4" | Sold





# Ayanna Proctor



Jonathan Corwin House

Pen & ink | 14 x 17" | \$200







**Robin Ay**  
[www.RAconcepts.com](http://www.RAconcepts.com)

73  
**ArtAscent**

Resting Place  
Archival ink on archival luster | 8 x 8" | \$75





## The Lazarus Dialogue

He was never the same, afterwards.

*Who? After what?*

You know: Lazarus.

*How do you mean?*

Well, strange: his mind seemed to be somewhere else.

*Never had been a deep thinker, in my opinion. Witless from the get-go. Never stayed with anything long enough to finish it. No opinions of his own.*

You knew him well?

*Nobody knew him. Not really.*

Why do you say that?

*If you have to ask...*

To go back to what I said first — he never really came back, never was the same as before.

*What does that matter now? It was all so long ago.*

I don't care how long ago it was — nobody said anything either then or later. Nobody cared what happened to him or with him afterward. History will remember only one tiny bit of the story.

*History doesn't matter.*

How can you say that?

*You're becoming repetitious. I can say what I please.*

And I can say how I saw it. Nobody else has the guts to.

So?

What makes you think it was about Lazarus at all, ever, in any way? He just happened to be handy.

*But the sisters: what about the sisters?*

What about them?

*They were devastated, lost. And they were so happy when he came back.*

For how long were they happy? What did it really gain them?

*Their brother was dead. And then he was alive again. That was everything to them.*

That was very temporary. It did them no good in the long run.

*But for a little while he lived again. That was a miracle.*

Lazarus briefly lived as a stumbling caricature of what had already been a pathetic, useless creature. That was a miracle? You-know-who didn't even have the imagination to start with good material.

*How dare you criticize him for what he did?*

How could I praise him? I don't care for grandstanders. And remember: afterwards Lazarus never did stop stinking of the grave. Where he belonged and should have stayed.

*Maybe you're no better than what's-his-name. Digging up what's best left buried?*

Time's getting short. There aren't many of us left, now.

*All to the good, perhaps.*

No. I refuse to stay quiet any longer. It's beyond time to speak out: history belongs to the teller!

*I've already said it. What does history matter?*

History's the remembered version of whatever really happened. It's all we have to go on, all we've ever had. Too much of it is already lies.

*So how can we ever know what really happened, based on what somebody thought or hoped might or should have happened? Let Lazarus rest. Move on. Get over it. Death is always final - Lazarus just happened to have had an unusual interlude.*

Yes, an interlude that provided big professional profit for someone else.

*"Professional profit." that's a good one! More like a boost toward an all-too-common nasty end, if you ask me. And one way or other, that's how it goes for all of us: Bang, hallelujah, poof! and it's all over. Done. Finished. We're dust with Lazarus and that other one, and the two sweet sisters, and all the rest. Small wonder we prefer to stop with the happy ending when it does come.*

Which, I remind you, was not really the ending at all; only a semi-optimistic moment. Which was only briefly, marginally successful. As I've been saying all along. I don't choose to leave a wash of sugar coating on the one bit of history I have witnessed.

*Ah, "sugared Lazarus." Not a tasty picture.*

Don't be flippant. You know very well what I'm saying.

*Understanding need not imply agreement...*



# Kristin L. Ware

[www.whiteislandphoto.com](http://www.whiteislandphoto.com)

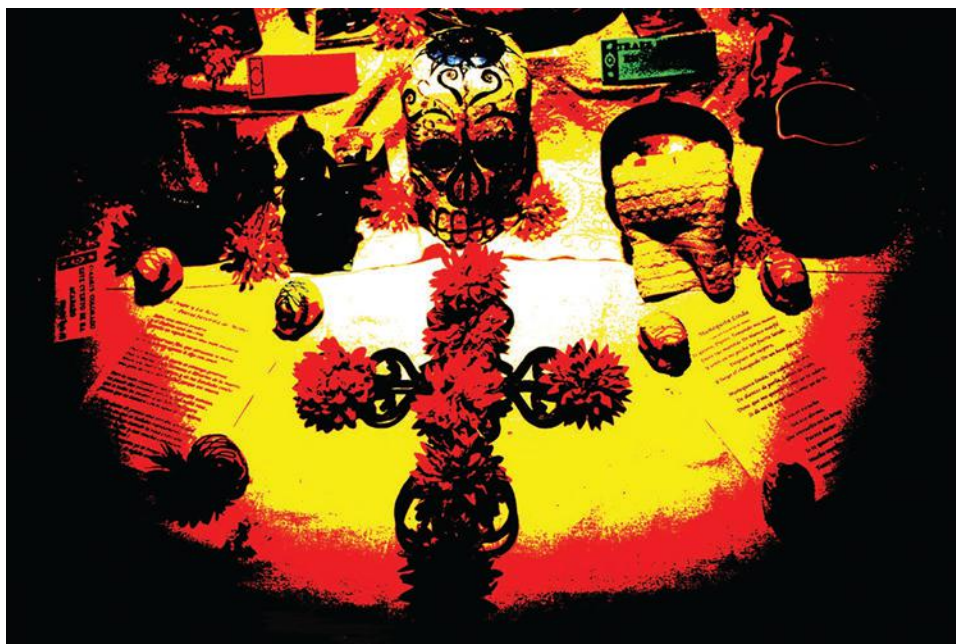


Skeletons on Parade

Digital pigment print | 8 x 12" | \$150



Rose Croix and Skull  
Digital pigment print | 8 x 12" | \$150



**Kristin L. Ware**

Ghostly Visions 1 (Jean 1)  
Type C print | 8 x 8" | \$175





Ghostly Visions 2 (Jean 2)  
Type C print | 8 x 8" | \$175



## Bryan Wood



### You Can Be Famous Too

It was a cool, crisp night when Devon first saw the ghost.

The high-school student was watching television in the den of his house, trying to wind down after a hard night's schoolwork, when he saw a figure running along the street in front of his townhouse. A late-night runner wasn't unusual, but this runner seemed to be indistinct and glowing with a soft light.

A bit surprised, Devon idly watched the figure run from the left of the picture window to the right. He'd seen videos of ghost sightings on the internet before, and two of his friends had run into one while exploring an abandoned warehouse. But he had never expected to see one with his own eyes, nor that it would be just outside of his own home. He turned his full attention to the picture window and began watching the road intently, wondering if and when the ghost would return. He waited for over an hour before returning to the television, but he had already decided to resume his lookout the following night.

As he'd anticipated, the ghost ran past his house at exactly quarter-after-seven, the same time as the previous night.

On the third night, Devon stood on the front porch of his house with a smartphone in hand. This gave him the perfect vantage point to watch the ghost as it ran along its usual path in front of his house, and he traced its movement with a steady hand. Then he uploaded the video, entitled "Creepy Ghost Runs Down Suburban Avenue," onto his personal "YouTube" account. By the following morning, it had netted him over twenty-thousand views, an amount greater than every one of his amateur "Let's Play" videos combined. Devon couldn't help but crack a grin every time he checked on the ever-rising view count throughout the day.

When Devon next looked out of the front picture window three days later, he saw a crowd of his high school classmates wandering in front of his house. Most of them had their smartphones out and all of them were staring at the road and chatting with excitement. They were probably there to see the now-famous running ghost for themselves. Devon stood by the window and watched the scene with passive interest.

The spirit appeared at its usual time, but this time around, its arrival was marked by dozens of cell-phone cameras going off at once and the chatter of the excited students. Several of the students walked onto the roadway and began crowding in front of the Ghost to get a better camera shot, blocking its path in the process. The ghost stopped dead in its tracks and looked at the crowd surrounding it. Then it began blurring even more than it had before, like a low-resolution video on a lagging connection.

Devon calmly pulled out his own smartphone and pointed it at the developing scene.

More people moved into the ghost's path. The ghost blurred even further, turning into a patchwork of indistinct colours in a roughly humanoid shape. As if in response, the crowd whipped themselves into a frenzy of shouting, cheering, and jeering at the lost soul. One lanky young man in skateboarder attire guzzled down a bottle of soda before throwing it at the spirit, apparently trying to get a response. It flew through the ghost's head in a perfect arc.

The crowd fell silent.

The ghost came into crystal-clear focus for one second, and Devon caught a glimpse of a tall and skinny man, middle aged, and dressed in running clothes, with his face contorted into pure rage. Then it let out a high-pitched scream, like a plastic recorder being blown into a microphone, becoming even more distorted and blurred than it had been before. Alongside the screaming came high winds, and as they picked up they kicked up stray sidewalk dust, caught fallen leaves in a mini-tornado, and caused nearby tree branches to shake and sway. A crack ran up Devon's front window as a stray pebble was kicked up by the high winds and shot into it like a BB pellet. The crowd scattered in all directions to escape from the site of the growing chaos, shouting and screaming themselves. Devon continued to watch the enraged spirit until it finally calmed down and returned to its normal state. It then resumed its run down the street.

A tainted, unnerving silence lingered over the street. Devon drew the curtains down, went over to his computer, logged onto his YouTube account, and took another look at his first ghost video. Its current view count had just surpassed ten million views and was still climbing, and he smiled at this. Within minutes, he'd uploaded a second one entitled "Ghost Flips Out, Attacks Crowd." Devon knew that the video would put the ghost on the radar of local "Paranormal Activity Investigation Groups," but that wasn't his problem.

Some things just couldn't be helped.



# Tina Ybarra

<http://tybarra23.wix.com/tinaybarra-artshow>



And the Shadows Come to Stay  
Charcoal on paper | 18 x 24" | \$1,000





Stirs the Culprit  
Charcoal on paper | 16 x 20" | \$1,000



## Irja-Liisa Kiiskinen



No Name

Aquarelle on paper | 17.71 x 23.62" | \$450





HPE  
Acrylics on canvas | 19.68 x 27.55" | \$555





# Jacqueline O Young

[www.jacquieophotography.com](http://www.jacquieophotography.com)



Trapped...Within

Photography using merged infrared images | 16 x 12" | \$185





Perished Memories  
Photography using merged infrared images | 12 x 16" | \$185



# Stephen A. Roddewig

www.stephenaroddewig.com



## The Traveler

The moon rose into the night,  
The woodland creatures shrunk away,  
Recoiling, the darkness was slashed by gray light,  
Silence fell over the meadow with the dew,  
All animals caught in the talons of fright,  
The nightmare had begun anew.

Before the full moon, the townsfolk shuddered,  
Axes sharpened, rifles loaded,  
Doors locked, windows shuttered,  
Lanterns smothered, the stillness foreboding,  
Prayers for mercy quickly muttered.

Far off, amongst a thicket of pines,  
Deep in the rolling, creeping hills,  
A gaping maw opened, a long abandoned mine,  
In the air, full of fear and chills,  
Gray beams plunged down into the dark recesses,  
A howl ripped through the night, the call of the kill.

All heard the ghostly dirge,  
Knowing the end was nigh,  
The beast had come to purge,  
There was nowhere to hide.

Rising, the corpse crawled from the muck,  
Flesh and bone growing strong,  
Fate had never shown the abomination luck,  
For it was dead no longer,  
Dull eyes glistened, gray arms shook,  
For it began to hunger.

Its eyes sliced far into the gloom, seeking victims,  
Snout rooting them out as their fear scent thickened,  
Charging forth, the beast lumbered through the trees,  
Vast shoulders, teeth, and claws killing all it sees,  
Deer, rabbits, birds, even sheep it ate,  
All living creatures were its bait.

Aye, but for one it had gained a taste,  
A hunger no woodlander could slate,  
The human's flesh, warm in its teeth,  
Of this it had raving need,  
Nearing the village, its jaws salivated.

A volley of shot greeted the gruesome visitor,  
But black powder and Winchesters only made it move  
quicker,  
Rushing forth, the bravest attacked with shovels and  
axes,  
Death feasted, bodies flying as his claws slashed,  
The roar of Satan's minion tore through the glen,  
Every mortal knew the bell tolled for them.

Leagues away, upon a trodden woodland road,  
A traveler rode, his horse whimpering at the call of wrath,  
Picking up the reins, the man galloped down the path,  
Along the river stood a church, decrepit and old,  
Yes, this would do, as lure and stronghold.

Windows, doors, walls,  
All meant nothing as the beast stood tall,  
Blood covered its muzzle, bodies littered at its feet,  
But years had made it insatiable;  
the hunt was not complete.



As the iron bell tolled, red eyes turned around,  
Massive paws pummeled the ground,  
leaving the ruined town,  
Tree trunks, vines, streams,  
and clearings passed as it ran,  
Seeking another victim, this blight of the land,  
The enemy of man.  
Atop the steeple, the traveler waited,  
His horse tethered below, the hook baited,  
Thunder charged towards the churchyard,  
The man shouldered his rifle, aiming down the sights,  
One, two, three conical rounds took flight,  
It stumbled; the beast had been scarred!

Slinging his firearm on his back,  
His boots thumped down the stairs,  
Instinct and ferocity it didn't lack,  
Now was not the time to be careless,  
He found it stalking toward his horse,  
He answered with fiery discourse.

The shot caught the beast in the head,  
But not a drop of blood was shed,  
The traveler felt his boots turning to lead,  
No creature could survive silver, it was said,  
Its paws lashed out in rage, the fencepost broken.

Full of panic, the narrowly-spared horse fled,  
The traveler leaped as the stallion crashed into him,  
Head spinning, he laid on the ground as his nose bled,  
Watching as the beast approached with a crimson grin,  
It opened its jaws, ready to swallow him whole,  
Grabbing his rifle, he smashed it against the skull.

Rolling away from the behemoth,  
The traveler scrambled to his feet,  
A paw seized the gun; it'd had enough,  
He released it, fighting the urge to flee.

There! As it stumbled backwards,  
An axe in its side, it revealed,  
It swung as the man rushed forward,  
Ducking, he tore the pole out with zeal,  
Winding back, with fire he yelled,  
Striking once! Twice! Until it stilled,  
The enemy of man, man had felled.

In the crimson dawn, the trees swayed,  
A pair of boots broke the silence,  
Amidst the shattered structures, the stillness,  
Amongst the legions of the slain,  
With the utmost reverence,  
A gray, gruesome head was laid,  
So the dead would know,  
Justice was done that day.

# Cerridwen Sage Hicks

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The Werewolf

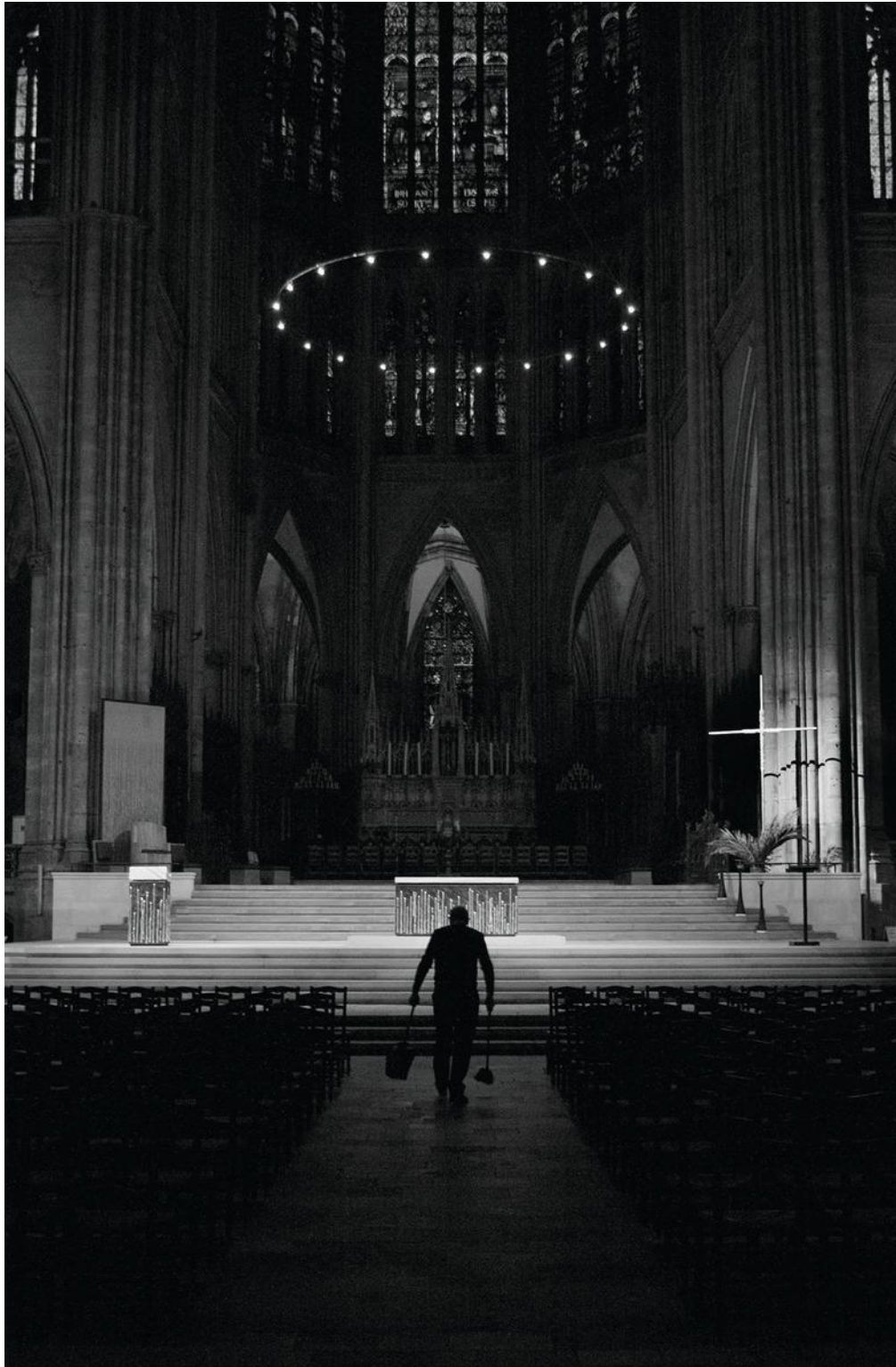
Acrylic on canvas | 24 x 24 x 1" | \$387





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## Studio Spotlight

# Priscilla Daniels

**C**atch a glimpse of the space in which creativity is born in this artist studio tour.

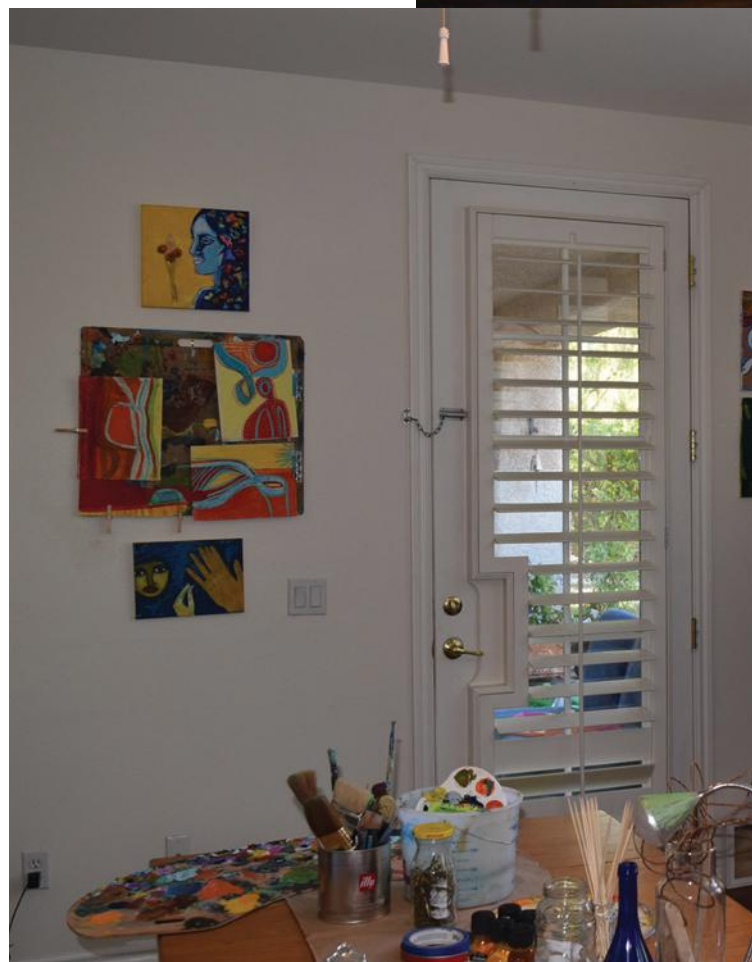
When I am in my studio, it's like a meditation practice. It's just me, my canvas, and my paints. Whatever it is I am thinking about eventually comes to light if I search hard enough. I resolve things as I go and allow myself to make mistakes. It's such a reward when everything surfaces through my work. I use different colours and textures to evoke emotion and realness within my work.

Creating is something I could always turn to in different times in my life. It has been a healthy rewarding release. I was a very young child when I first started to experiment with creating and using my imagination. I remember using salvaged things around my house as a child. like hangers and cardboard. And no matter what, I could pretty much always find a pencil or pen and writing material.

Now living in Las Vegas Nevada with my 13-year-old daughter and fiancée, having a studio space of my own means that I have a place of my own to gather my thoughts and create things that inspire me and hopefully will inspire others outside of my studio as well.

*By Priscilla Daniels*

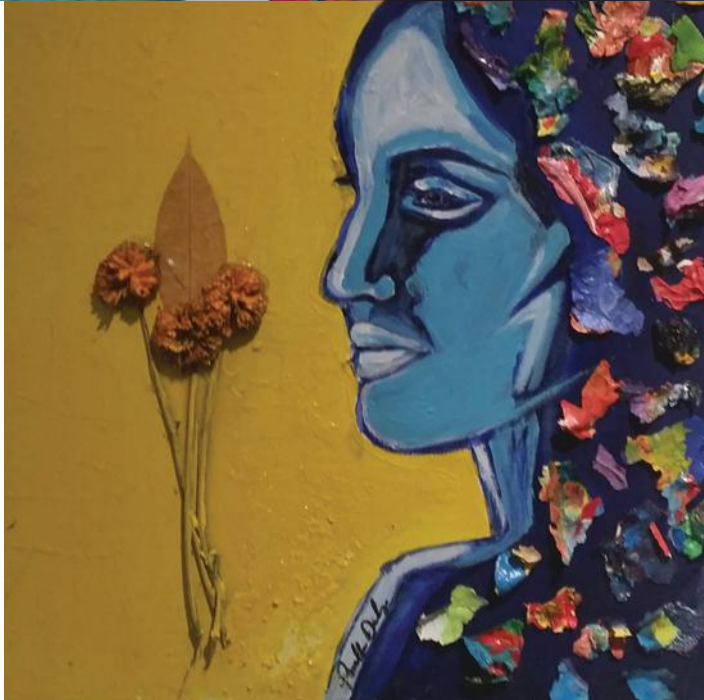
*Priscilla Daniels is a US citizen, was born in San Diego, California, and is currently based in Las Vegas, Nevada. Visit [www.priscilladanielsart.com](http://www.priscilladanielsart.com).*







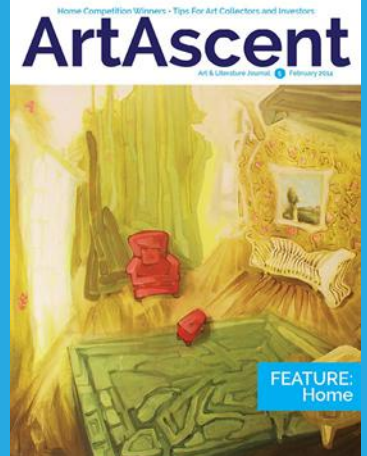








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