

ICMPhotoMag Network

**A Continuous Learning Community for
Developing Creativity and Nurturing Artistic Vision**

with Kaisa, Morag, and Stephanie





ICMPhotoMag Network:

A Continuous Learning Community for Developing Creativity and Nurturing Artistic Vision

Kaisa, Morag, and Stephanie have collaborated to bring this **first-of-its-kind ICM membership community** to the ICMPhotoMag project, borne out of their individual passions for ICM photography and for bringing ICM into the mainstream as a valid form of photographic expression. The idea for this membership community **came as a result of the Beginnings workshops**, which has had an overwhelming positive response, as a way to make the workshop environment accessible to more people, but on a more relaxed timeline. Offering this as a membership model also makes it more cost effective to the individual member. Plus, there is a greater opportunity to interact and network with a larger, growing community of more serious ICM photographers.

With Kaisa, Morag, and Stephanie leading the membership community, you will explore creative image making through connections and stories, on a journey of discovery and self-expression, in a friendly co-learning environment, with new themes, concepts, ideas, and exercises each month, along with downloadable content...all with the aim of helping you learn, grow, and evolve along your ICM journey, in a nurturing, continuous learning community.

The **community is based around the concept of helping you discover your own path to creativity and storytelling through ICM photography**, but also in nurturing your artistic vision as it develops and evolves. Another aspect of the power of this community also lies in its mutual interaction, collaborative sharing, and immersive discussions with the other members, as well as with the mentors.

While there will certainly be a place for technical exercises and tutorials, the heart of this workshop is meant to encourage and nurture you as you tap more deeply into your own creativity, through concept-based exercises, above and beyond technical exercises. The primary value of this community lies in the members'-only content, live sessions, mentoring, inspiration, and encouragement, as well as interaction in a focused, stand-alone platform of like-minded creatives. There are also plenty of feedback opportunities, however, **the intention of this community is not specifically feedback-driven or feedback-intensive, and the value comes more from the tools we provide.**

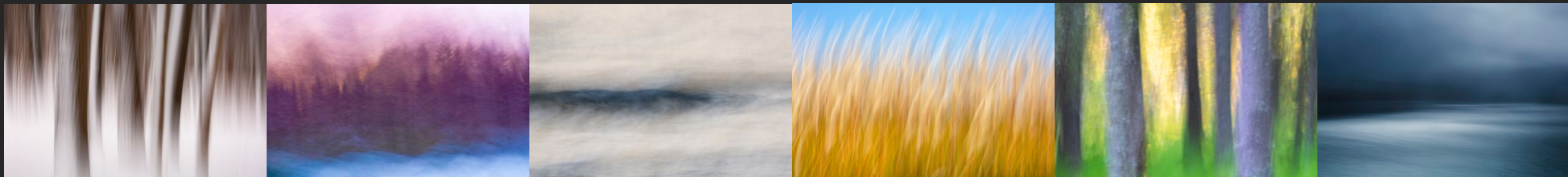
You will develop a deeper understanding of your own photographic and artistic processes through immersion, reflection, and self-expression, as we explore ways to answer questions about how to use ICM photography to tell more meaningful stories and to bridge connections to both the inner landscape of the spirit, as well as to the outer landscape of the world in which we live.

Using poetry, other writings, music, imagery, and concepts as prompts, these starting points will guide you on **a journey of exploration**, through the creation of new ICM work each month, and we encourage you to journal your progress, to help you **build a meaningful, personal relationship with your ICM work, your creativity, and your artistic vision**, as well as the opportunity to create project-based bodies of work around bi-monthly themes.

Membership in the ICMPhotoMag Network Includes

Each month you will receive:

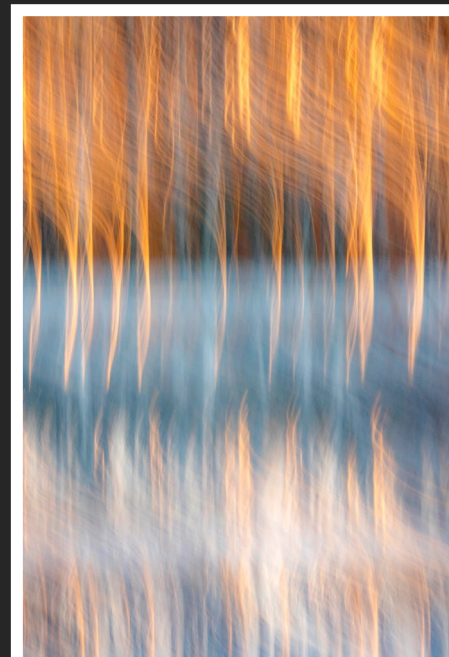
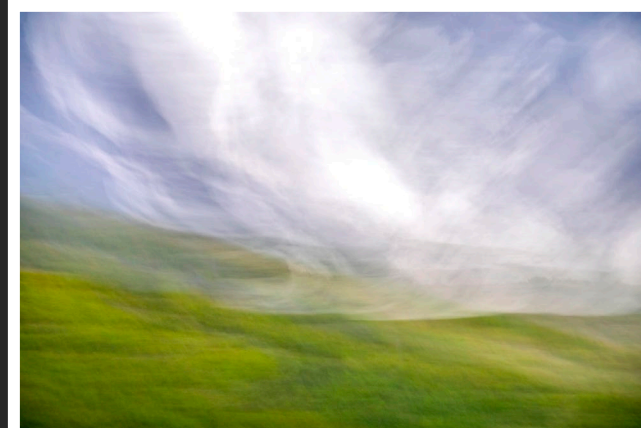
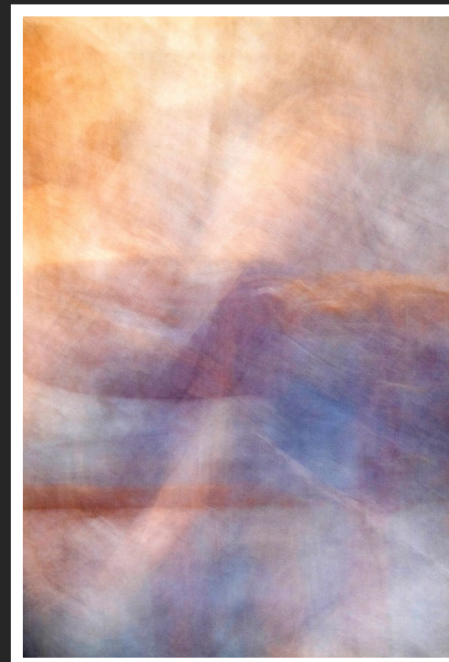
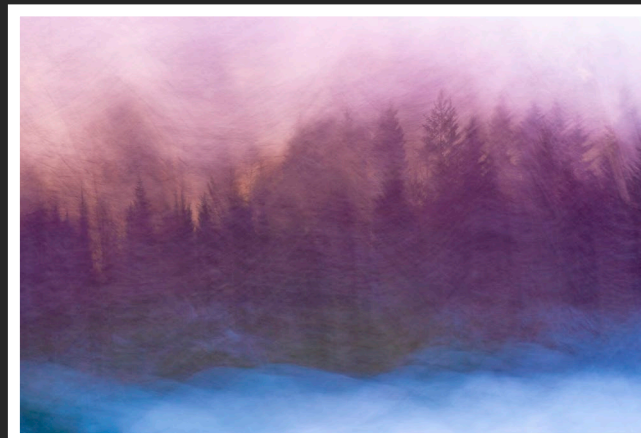
- **3 Leading ICM Photographers** as Leaders of the Membership Community
- **ICM Photographers Network** – outside of Facebook on a stand-alone platform...create a profile, add photos, interact with other members, join specific topic/theme/concept-based learning groups, and participate in forum discussions and Q&As.
- **Themes/Concepts** – Exercises, concepts, themes, and ideas to work on each month, with downloadable members' only content, to help learn, grow, and evolve with ICM
- **Live Zoom Sessions** – To present and discuss the themes...similar to what we do with our workshops - the live sessions are held to accommodate the US/Europe time zones and also an additional live session to accommodate the Australia/New Zealand time zones each month. The sessions are recorded for playback, so if you miss the live sessions, you will still have the benefit of watching a recorded version.
- **Live Feedback/Q&A Sessions** – To provide feedback on a selection of member images and to answer any questions members have...same plan for time zones as with the live sessions above
- **Additional Content Each Month** – Videos, articles, podcasts, etc., by Kaisa, Morag, and Stephanie, as well as guest photographers, additional theme-based creative content to help inspire you along your journey, and more
- **A collaborative, encouraging, learning community** of like-minded photographers who are serious about ICM photography
- **A deeper dive into your ICM image making** to enhance your creativity, to develop your artistic vision, to learn the value of storytelling, and to find deeper personal connections through your imagery
- **Practical application tips, prompts, and additional material** to help facilitate the creative process of building a personal body of work
- **Encouragement and nurturing to think conceptually** about the aims of your image making in order to frame the deeper meaning of why you create the work you do





Kaisa Sirén

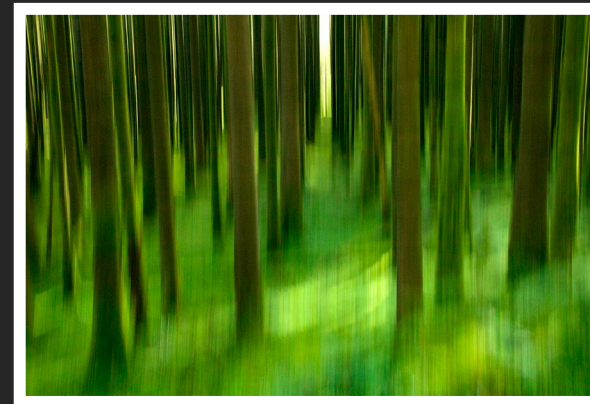
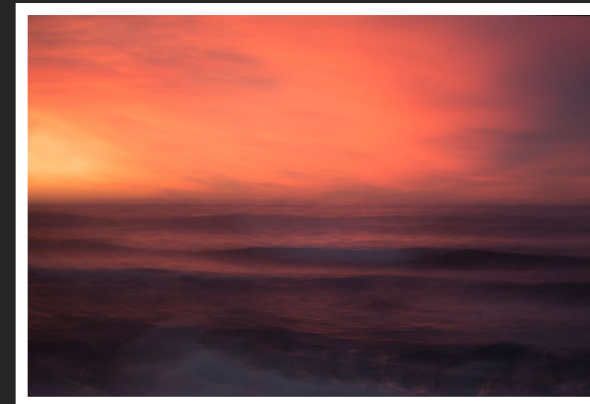
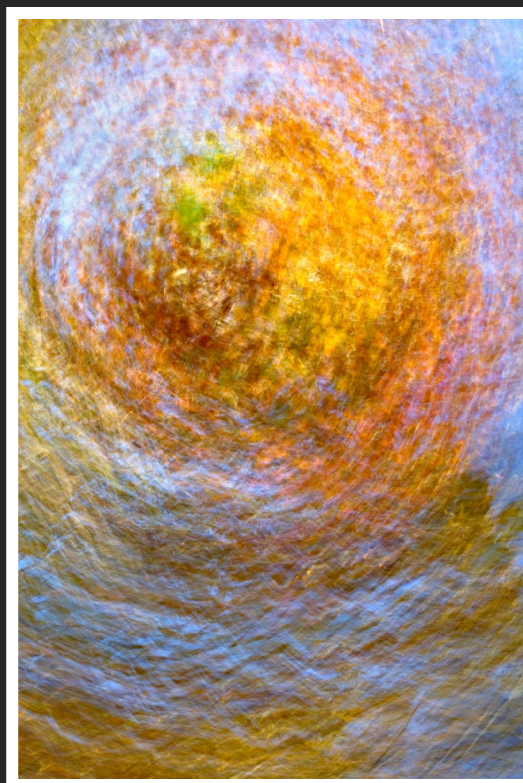
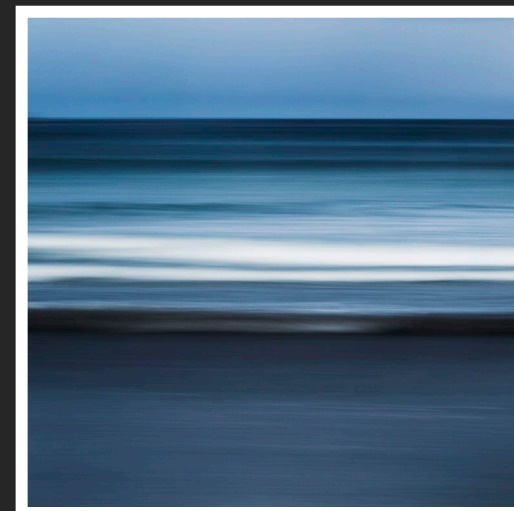
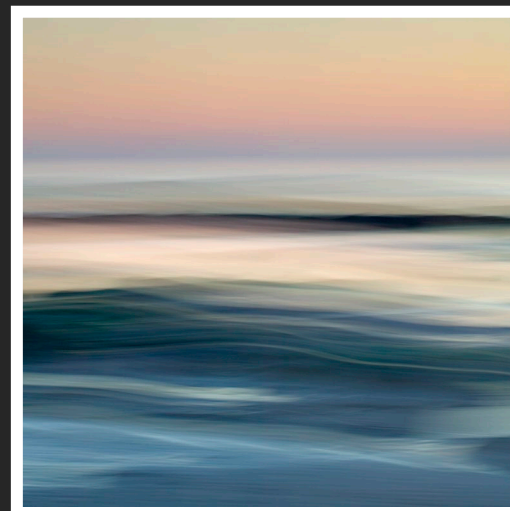
Kaisa Sirén lives and works at the Arctic Circle, in Finnish Lapland, and has been doing ICM since 2004. She was featured in the first issue of ICM Photography Magazine in June 2020 and runs a quarterly exercise for beginners in the magazine. Kaisa works full time as a freelance photographer and a photojournalist, doing ICM art in her free time. She is currently working on three different series ~ *Dancing My Nature*, *Seven Siblings*, and *Art Saves the Trees*. Kaisa also owns an art gallery, and one of the strengths she brings to mentoring is the art of storytelling.





Morag Paterson

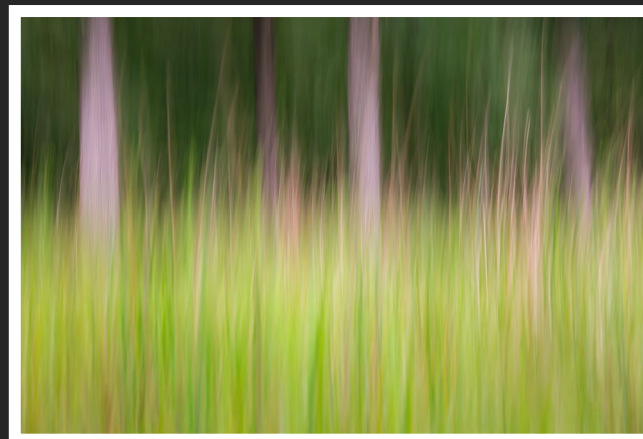
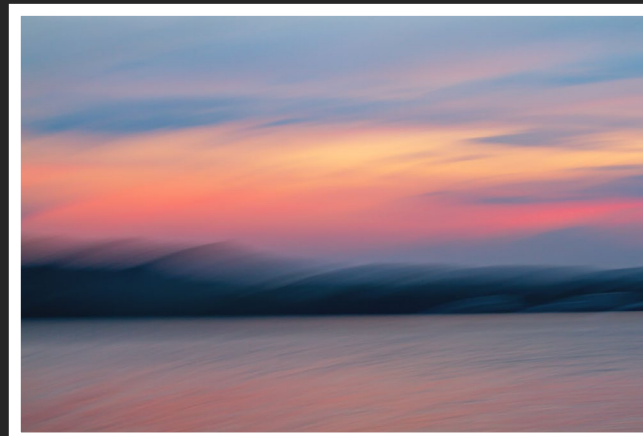
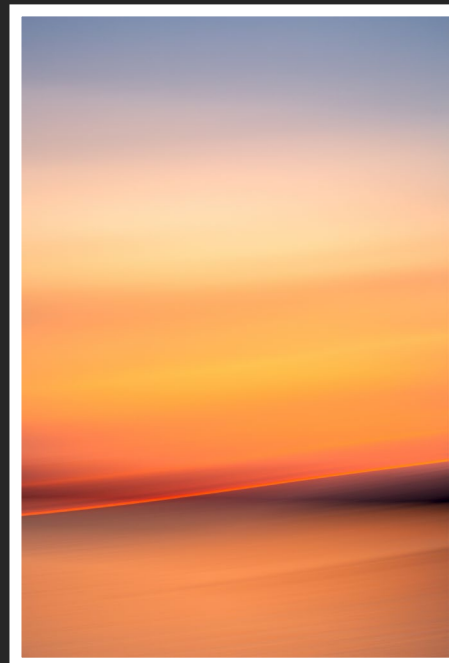
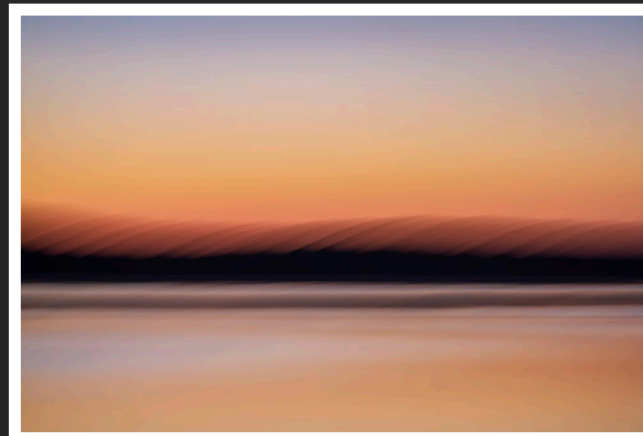
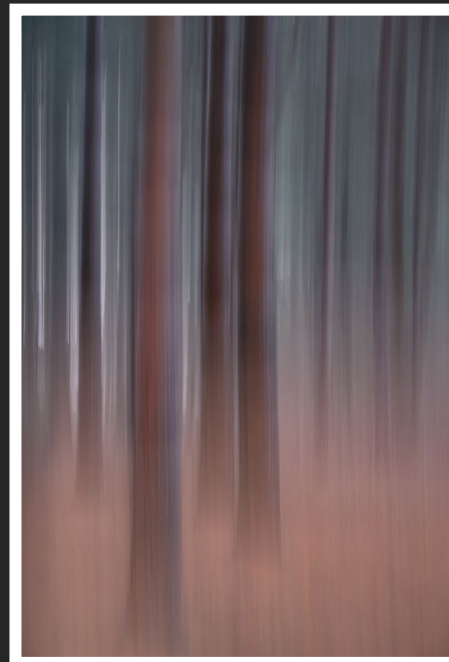
Morag Paterson has been exploring ICM photography for fifteen years. Her work explores the natural world, with a keen eye on how we as photographers and artists can discuss themes around environmental challenges and keep our carbon footprints low, by learning to embrace shooting local and making the most of our surroundings. Morag has mentored many people over the years with both practical aspects of photography, such as curating and presenting work, exhibiting, marketing, etc., and also with developing creative vision and working collaboratively.





Stephanie Johnson


Stephanie Johnson is the founder and creator of ICM Photography Magazine and has focused primarily on ICM photography since early 2017. She is a very passionate advocate for encouraging others to 'see things differently' and for helping them find their artistic voice through less conventional methods, breaking down the traditional lines of visual communication and asking photographers to tap more into their inner lives to make more meaningful connections to the outer world with their imagery. Stephanie brings a mindful, contemplative, and artful approach to ICM photography and mentoring.





Member Dashboard

Easy access to pertinent areas of the community, including links to view the recordings for all live theme sessions and feedback/Q&A sessions.

All videos and playback recordings remain available throughout your membership.




Stephanie Johnson

DASHBOARDCURRENT CONTENTFORUMSGROUPSACTIVITY FEEDLIBRARY

Member Dashboard


The Member Dashboard is a quick-reference place to find the Roadmap for getting started and for navigating to other frequently visited areas of the site. Here you will also find the most recently released content to the site, as well as information about any upcoming live sessions, events, or Feedback/Q&As.



Roadmap

Roadmap to Get Started


ROADMAP



Theme Sessions

Live Theme Sessions Info


THEMES



Feedback/Q&As

Live Feedback/Q&A Info


FEEDBACK



Videos

Video Library


VIDEOS



Podcasts

Audio Library


PODCASTS



Community

Connect with Members


COMMUNITY



Groups

Share Images

GROUPS



Forums

Ask Questions / Get Answers

FORUMS

Themes

A content grid page for easy access to all current and previous themed content.

All content remains open and available for the duration of your membership, and you are free to work on themes, both past and present, at your own leisure.

It is not a requirement, however, to work on the themes. Themes are provided for inspirational purposes, to help inspire new creative thinking and experimentation.

The content provided for each theme is easily transferrable to any topic or subject you might wish to explore.

ICMPhotoMag Network

Stephanie Johnson

DASHBOARDCURRENT CONTENTFORUMSGROUPSACTIVITY FEEDLIBRARY

Themes


Every two months, we will provide a new bi-monthly theme to help inspire creativity with a variety of subjects.

The idea is for you to work with these themes in a way that encourages and inspires new ways of experimentation and playfulness with your ICM photography, which will ultimately help develop your creativity and nurture your artistic vision. Working with the themes is entirely optional and is not a requirement. It's just a way for us to help you think outside the box and push your creative boundaries.

We also encourage you to think conceptually about the themes in your interpretations. Your work with the themes does not need to be strictly literal. For example, with a theme of Blue, your work does not necessarily have to literally be blue in its appearance. You could interpret Blue as a concept...such the blue hour or as a mood. We want you to expand your creative vision and thinking conceptually, rather than literally, is a great way to do that.


Themes will be **revealed on the 1st day of every second month**. And, all previous themes will remain open and available for you to work on at anytime you choose.

VIEW ALL	ART	COLORS	ENVIRONMENTAL
LITERARY	MUSIC	NATURE	URBAN




June 2021 -
Trees/Forests

VIEW JUNE THEME
HERE




July 2021 - Blue

VIEW JULY THEME
HERE



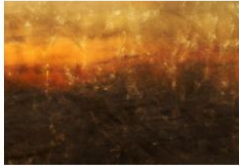
August 2021 -
Urban/Architecture

VIEW AUGUST
THEME HERE




September/October
2021 - Water

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER
CONTENT




November/December
2021 - Environmental

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER
CONTENT




January/February 2022

COMING SOON



March/April 2022

COMING SOON




May/June 2022



COMING SOON

Content Libraries

We offer a variety of non-theme related content, as well, and we continually add new content as it becomes available.

All libraries remain open and available to you throughout the duration of your membership.




Stephanie Johnson

DASHBOARDCURRENT CONTENTFORUMSGROUPSACTIVITY FEEDLIBRARY

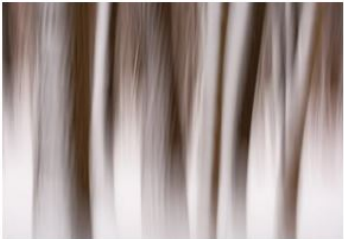
Member Content Libraries

Visit any of the libraries below to access member-only content.




Video Library

ACCESS VIDEOS




Audio & Podcast Library

ACCESS PODCASTS




Tutorials & How-To Guides

VIEW CONTENT




Library of Articles

VIEW ARTICLES



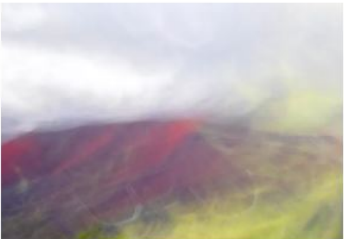
Guest Interviews

ACCESS HERE




Prompts & Inspiration

PROMPTS LIBRARY



Forms, Checklists, & Worksheets

ACCESS HERE



Ebooks & Downloads

ACCESS CONTENT

Personal Profiles

Similar to other social media platforms, all members will have a personal profile and are able to interact socially with other members of the community.

Members may also join theme learning groups, share their own images, and join in forum discussions.

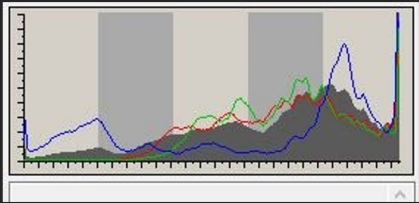
All of this is done in a safe, warm, and encouraging environment of like-minded ICM and creative photographers. The platform is free from advertising, free from web tracking and algorithms, and free from distractions.

The screenshot displays the user profile for Stephanie Johnson on the ICMPhotoMag Network. The header includes the site logo and navigation links: DASHBOARD, CURRENT CONTENT, FORUMS, GROUPS, ACTIVITY FEED, and LIBRARY. The profile section features a large banner image, a profile picture of Stephanie Johnson holding a camera, her name, and her handle @Stephanie, which indicates she joined in January 2021. Below the profile picture are social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. A left-hand sidebar lists navigation options: Timeline, Profile, Account, Notifications (5), Messages (1), Connections (101), Groups (12), Photos (48), Forums, and Documents. The main content area shows the 'Personal' tab selected, with a text input field for writing or mentioning someone. Below this, a post is shown where Stephanie Johnson started a new discussion in the forum titled 'November/December 2021 – Environmental' a day ago. The post content includes an 'Environmental Theme Discussion Prompt' asking for user thoughts and challenges, and a 'Read More' link. An orange 'LIKE' button is visible at the bottom of the post.

Kaisa's ICM Technique

My basic camera settings start with:

- 0.6 seconds, ND filter 3-10 stops
- ISO 50
- Adjust aperture accordingly (f/11)
- Manual settings
- Autofocus
- Histogram visible / Highlights
- No tripod
- Telephoto lens, min 200mm



The Art and Beauty of Intentional Camera Movement (ICM) Photography

An ICM Photography Tutorial

By

ICM Photography Magazine (ICMPhotoMag)

All Images © Stephanie Johnson Photography (StephJohnPhoto)

Workshop Pro Tip

IMPRESSIONIST PHOTOGRAPHY

If you are looking for a way to express yourself more creatively with your outdoor images, **Morag Paterson** suggests you leave your tripod behind and start panning

Ever thought of trying something completely different? Taking impressionistic style photos requires an open mind and a willingness to bend some of the traditional rules of landscape photography (for once you can leave that tripod at home!).

Despite this, the importance of good exposure, composition and technique remain paramount. Interesting light still also plays its part in the final image. The first things to do are to think 'out of the box' and be patient. Try to slow down and

give yourself time. You're not always looking for an obvious or classic view or perspective. It is often an unexpected subject that gives the most spectacular result. Look for colours, texture, pattern and/or symmetry that you can get creative with.

STEP-BY-STEP

1 Set the camera to shutter priority or manual with a shutter speed of around 0.4sec. Then make small speed adjustments as necessary from this point.

2 Shoot using a movement that mimics the strongest lines in the subject, e.g. vertical for trees, side to side for horizons.

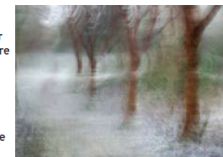
3 For a smoother effect commence your movement before you click the shutter.

4 Review results in the LCD and adjust your movements as necessary – zoom in on areas of the image to see details.

5 To alter the effect try different types of movement; side to side, up and down, backwards and forwards.

6 Because you are dragging one light source across another, shadow and highlight areas may be less intense than you normally get. You can compensate by increasing contrast levels in post-production.

This seascape was taken using a short telephoto lens just after the sun had set, resulting in cooler colours at the bottom of the picture and warmer ones at the top. The camera was moved from side to side, covering an angle of view of about 20-30 degrees. A longer shutter speed was used, so less movement was required to achieve the softness. ISO 50, 2sec at f/32



Trees offer a wealth of opportunities to explore with this technique. This example was captured in a swirling mist. A long, gentle, up and down movement with a very slight sideways wave was used following the lines of the trees. ISO 50, 0.4sec at f/11

Morag Paterson is a landscape photographer based in Dumfries and Galloway. For details about her photography workshops visit www.leemingpaterson.com

Wanders with Morag

Bike Ride to Bosco di Rezzo

Text and Photos by
Morag Paterson



For my inaugural ICMPhotoMag Network community local outing, I decided to head up to the famous Bosco di Rezzo, which is a vast beechwood, high on the mountains close to my house. In fact, it is the largest beechwood in Liguria and is home to a wide range of flora, including gentians, orchids, and fauna that includes chamois, wolves, eagle-owls, sparrowhawks, and black woodpeckers.

The woodland touches a beautiful high level pass called Mezzaluna (Half Moon), named after its clear semi-circular shape, and it traverses the ancient Via Marenga - an ancient salt trade route between the Italian coast, France, and Piedmont. These upland forests were a key battleground in the second world war and rich in stories of the Partisans.

I've been enchanted by it since my first visit and wanted it to be the first place I shared with you here.

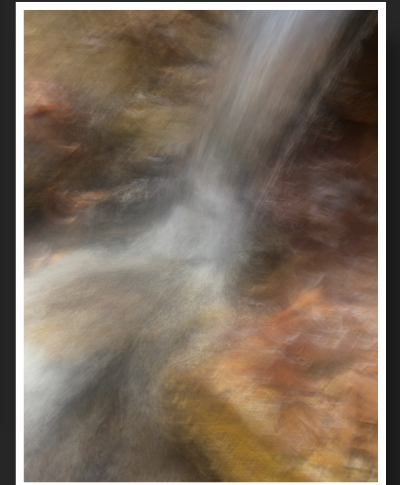
These woods are magnificent, a high canopy and beautiful forest floor covered with the orange of last year's leaves, deep enough, in places, to sit in. I remember one year Ted and I playing at burying ourselves under them, then leaping out like wild beasts. My original plan had been to make a video, but when I reviewed the footage and saw how sweaty I was, I decided to switch to a written format instead.

It was a great day for shooting in the woods, nice light, some contrast and shadows, and I was blessed with a good down-slope, which meant I could easily exclude the sky if I wanted to. The sky can be problematic when shooting trees, especially if very bright.

I spent a little time there, experimenting with movements and angles, looking for a nice composition, changing my position to see how the trees lined up from different angles. Once I had an angle I liked, I played around with slight tweaks to my movement and shutter speed until I came away with the image you see on the next page.

I'm only including one final tree image because I think it's important to stress that you often only get one nice piece of work from a shoot, and sometimes nothing at all. Recognising this and learning to enjoy the process is a really important step in moving on from frustrations with ICM. Everything you learned on a day when you got no satisfactory results will manifest itself in a wonderful image that you take days, months, or years from now, and your time wasn't wasted.

I will give you three little bonus shots from the path that winds through the woods, just to remind you to always look around and see what else is there. The first one is sparkling light on a small stream. The second is an outflow from a drainage pipe creating a small waterfall, and the third is a woodland ICM selfie. Best of all, I saw a huge fox on the way home. We made eye contact and shared a moment before he slinked away up the hill.



A Piece of Content from the Tree Theme

Kaisa Sirén

Finding Blue in Ice

Ice is a tricky subject for ICM photography. Having very little contrast, as well as a monochromatic colour scale, makes it difficult to find something to grasp. However, when you find ice which has that beautiful turquoise blue and a bit of shadows here and there, it also makes for an irresistible subject.

I have been photographing ice quite a lot, living at the Arctic Circle where we have snow and ice at least six months out of the year. Here, the ice is usually white or grey, lacking the blue and the turquoise which the ice on the polar regions and glaciers often have. Therefore, most of my ice images are not ICM. However, after having travelled to the polar regions, both in Antarctica and Spitzbergen, I found that blue ice also works relatively well in ICM. If I ever have a chance to revisit those areas, I definitely will concentrate on ICM fully.

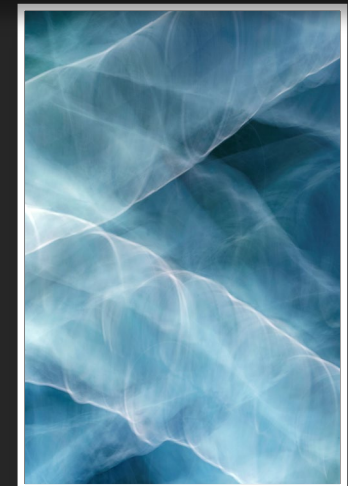
In polar regions, and in glacial areas in general, the ice is very, very old. It has been under great weight and pressure for perhaps thousands of years, and all the air bubbles have been pressed out. Therefore, the ice has the pure and original colour of water—turquoise. As light travels and passes through the ice, it absorbs all other colours of the spectrum except blue, which is reflected to our eyes. Ice that has a lot of cracks and air bubbles mostly looks grey or white.

I have included in this article a few images from my attempts to capture the spirit of glacial ice with ICM photography. I hope this can be a source of inspiration for you to look for blue in out-of-the-ordinary, even if you are living through the hottest summer at the moment.

- 1 -



- 2 -



A Piece of Content from the Blue Theme

Stephanie Johnson

ICM Fun in Chicago's Millennium Park

One of the treasures of Downtown Chicago is Millennium Park, which is home to a number of popular attractions, such as Cloud Gate (aka The Bean) and Crown Fountain. No visit to Chicago would be complete without spending time in Millennium Park, taking in and absorbing all that this urban setting has to offer.

Cloud Gate is a stainless steel sculpture by Indian-born British artist Anish Kapoor. It gets its nickname from its shape, and the sculpture measures 33x66x42 feet and weighs 110 tons (or 220,000 pounds). It is a centerpiece in Downtown Chicago, and scores of people from all over the world make their way to this feature to see their reflections in the sculpture, as well as to marvel at the reflections of the Chicago Skyline.

Crown Fountain is a public piece of art that consists of two rectangular glass-block towers displaying videos of faces. The two towers sit across from one another, facing each other, with a reflecting pool in between them. Water cascades down from the two towers during the summer months, and children of all ages flock to cool themselves on hot, humid days.

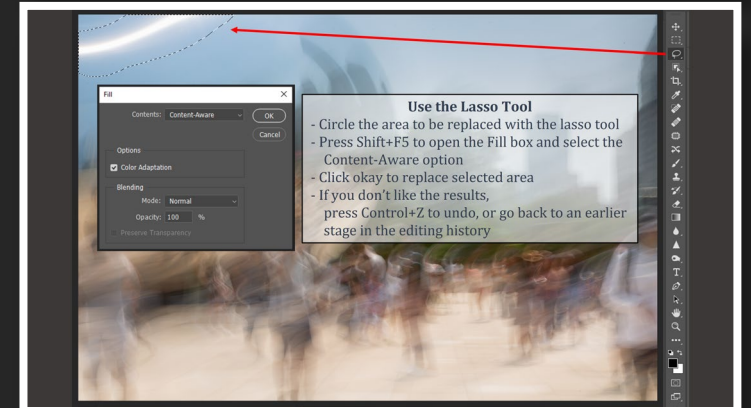
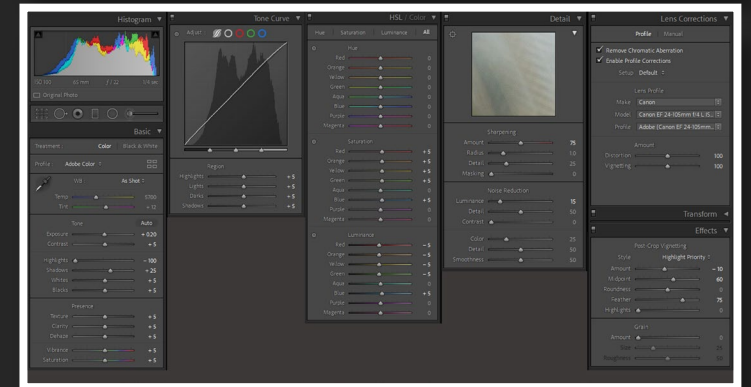
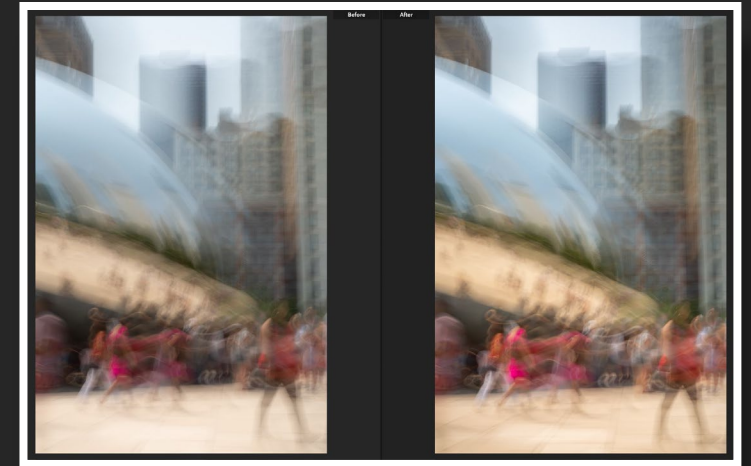
The images seen here on these two pages are my own original images, from a visit to Chicago in August 2017. I've never been able to do these two subjects much justice with my traditional photographic approach, and unfortunately I don't have any traditional images of Crown Fountain to share. But, this link will give you a better idea of what it is, as a bit of context for the ICM images I will share later in this article - [Crown Fountain](#).

During my visit to Chicago a few weeks ago in July, I spent time focused on capturing these two prominent Chicago features with ICM, and I hope you enjoy the results.



~ Cloud Gate ~

Downtown Chicago
Images Taken 18 August 2017
Canon 5D Mark III, Canon f/4L 24-105mm Lens
ISO 200, 24mm, f/11, 1/250 second



A Piece of Content from the Urban/Architecture Theme

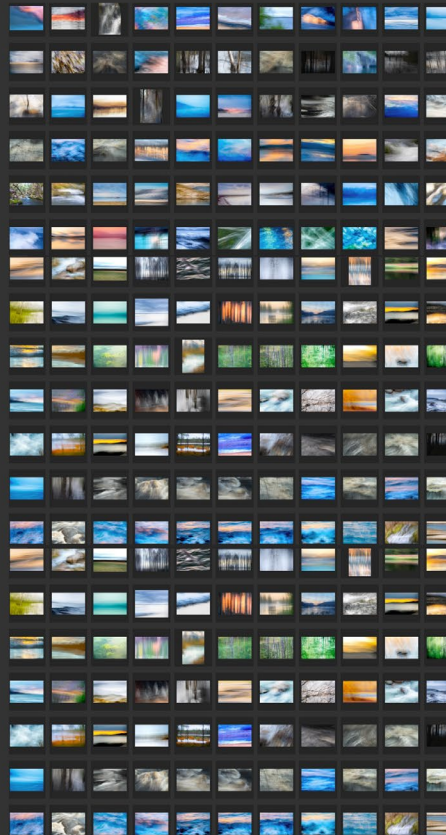
Kaisa Sirén

Building a Portfolio from Your Archived Water Images

Water and water landscapes are two of the most photographed subjects by ICM photographers. I am sure most of us have thousands of water images on our hard drives, just sitting there waiting to be discovered. Why not take some time to go through your images in order to find the hidden gems? Building a portfolio of your images is a big help. It also helps you to evaluate your own work and see where you are going as an artist.

Why a portfolio?

The goal of an art portfolio is to showcase your abilities as an artist and to demonstrate your skills as a photographer. It should show your key strengths, as well as your artistic range and experience. A portfolio highlights these concepts by showing your best work, and it sends the message that you are outstanding in your field. Because your portfolio is the only thing that speaks for you, it is important to show all your skills, techniques, and artistic expressions with a variety of images. A portfolio can be a group of photographs taken to be a series, or it can be a number of images taken individually, but always showcasing your skills.



This is the starting point...hundreds of water images to choose from. At this point, it takes good determination to decide on the approach you are going to take, as well as what to start choosing—keeping in mind who the portfolio is built for.

- 1 -

- 2 -

A Piece of Content from the Water Theme

What is a portfolio for?

A portfolio can be used to advance one's career, for example, to apply for jobs, to a college, or to training programs. A portfolio is different depending on what it is used for. If it is, for example, to apply for gallery time or for an article in a magazine, a printed series might be appropriate. A portfolio may be a digital presentation showcasing your images to be presented in your camera club. Or it may be a series of water images you wish to put on your website to display your work to the general public or a potential buyer. These examples show how important it is to design a portfolio for each specific purpose.

Where to start?

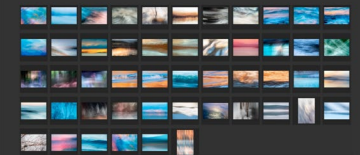
Simply sit down at your computer and start going through your water images. If you do not yet have a specific folder called "Water," create one. Then, create a subfolder called "Water Portfolio." Move all the images you like and are meaningful to you under those two folders but leave out the ones that are technically not perfect, no matter how much emotional attachment you may have to them. Remember, the viewer does not know that it is the badly underexposed shot there was your favorite childhood pond, which has since disappeared under a housing development. Think of wearing the glasses of the viewer when you are selecting images. It is quite a job to go through thousands of photos, but you can limit your search for example to the previous year and only select from new images.



How to choose images from your big batch?

Decide first who the portfolio is built for and how you are going to present it. Is it to sell images in the future or to demonstrate different shots to your friend? Is it going to be a printed version or a digital presentation? The purpose may affect whether or not you want to choose only horizontal images, for example.

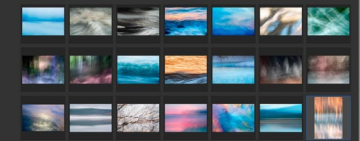
Next is a longlist of my best water images. From this mess and uneven material, I need to find the very best 10 which represent my skills to shoot water. From these images, I choose the best 10 which would represent my work when applying to an imaginary photo shoot job for a hydro power company for their environmental campaign.



Make a selection that represents your skills well. Show how you control different movements, how you see and control the light. If you have a nice, well-exposed, backlit image, add that, as well, because it demonstrates your technical skills. Include lots of variations of movement, light, angle of view, perspective, and composition. Make sure you include close-ups and long shots to make the portfolio interesting and inviting. Watch out for repetition, as the shots should be different from one to another, and each one should bring some added value to the series.

Making final decisions is very difficult, so if you have someone who can be an 'external eye,' ask their opinion and value it. This way, you can easily get rid of weak images which simply have emotional value for you. Make sure you build a strong and compact display of your best work. A portfolio should have no more than 10-12 images.

This is my short list of the 20 best water images from this series. I tried here to convey my abilities to shoot water under different circumstances and using several different movements.



- 3 -

- 4 -

How to present your portfolio?

As mentioned earlier, there are several different ways to present your portfolio. It all depends on what the purpose is and which presentation is most appropriate for that purpose. Whatever the presentation will be, it is very important that it is done in a professional manner. If you have strong images, but they are digitally sloppy in their layout, or the are printed on cheap paper, they will never convey the skills you have.

You might consider presenting your portfolio:

- Digitally on your website or social media
- As a PDF or a PowerPoint presentation, which is easy to show quickly from your iPad or tablet
- Prints of your images presented in a neat portfolio folder or case

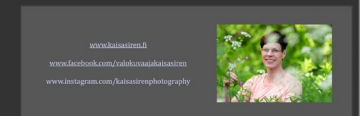
Whatever the presentation is, make sure it does justice to your work and shows the high quality of your images and you as an artist.

A good article about building an online portfolio:

<https://www.artsonkick.com/blog/building-the-best-online-portfolio-for-your-art>



Here is an example of a physical portfolio with the images nicely printed in a neat box.



- 5 -

- 6 -

Morag Paterson



- 1 -

Behind the Scenes

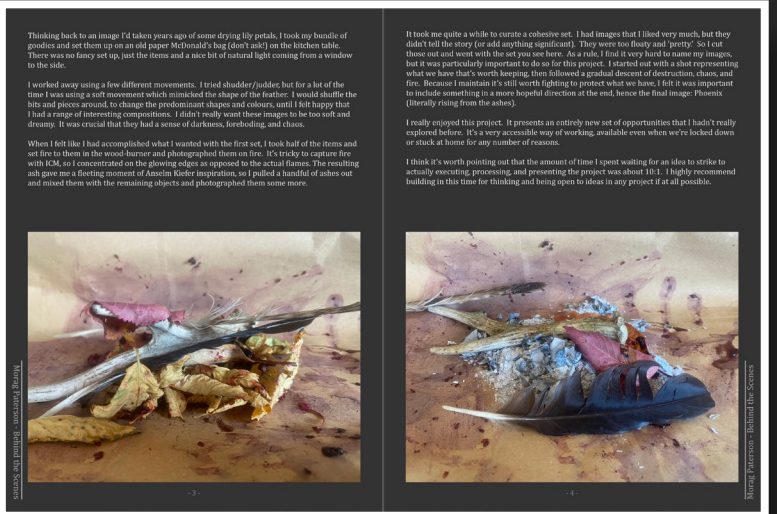
The Making of "Think Local"

"Think Local" is a project that explores problems caused by climate change and biodiversity loss in a local context. I wanted to express concerns around rain and windstorms, floods, fire, landslides, pest and disease spread, climate-change induced migration, and habitat loss.

Doing this through an ICM photography project proved a challenging task. I didn't want to literally portray these topics and therefore had to consider other ways of addressing the story. It took me weeks to come up with an idea, but I finally settled on working with metaphors.

Inspiration struck one day when I was out picking blackberries on a dog walk. My fingers were stained this incredible purple colour, and I immediately knew I could use it. Following this first spark, the other elements quickly fell into place. I found a yellow leaf that I knew would make a pleasing contrast with the purple, then a pink one, and a red one. On a subsequent walk I found two feathers—one eagle, one raven. Then, a small deer antler. I had a good portion of the elements I wanted represented here—water on the leaves, earth represented by berry juice and leaves, animals and birds signified by the feathers and horn, and I would use my movement to represent the wind.

- 2 -



Thinking back to an image I'd taken years ago of some drying lil' petals, I took my bundle of goodies and set them up on an old paper McDonald's bag (don't take!) on the kitchen table. There was no fancy set up, just the items and a nice bit of natural light coming from a window to the side.

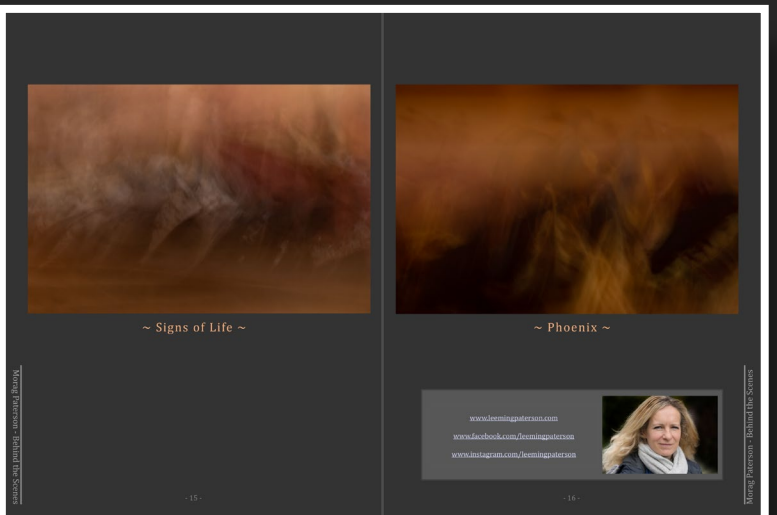
I worked away using a few different movements. I tried shudder/judder, but for a lot of the time I was using a soft movement which mimicked the shape of the feathers. I would shuffle the bits and pieces around, to change the predominant shapes and colours, until I felt happy that I had a range of interesting compositions. I didn't really want these images to be too soft and dreamy. It was crucial that they had a sense of darkness, foreboding, and chaos.

When I felt like I had accomplished what I wanted with the first set, I took half of the items and set fire to them in the wood-burner and photographed them on fire. It's tricky to capture fire with ICM, so I concentrated on the glowing edges as opposed to the actual flames. The resulting ash gave me a fleeting moment of Amelia Kester inspiration, so I pulled a handful of ashes out and mixed them with the remaining objects and photographed them some more.

It took me quite a while to curate a cohesive set. I had images that I liked very much, but they didn't tell the story (or add anything significant). They were too floaty and 'pretty', so I cut those out and went with the set you see here. As a rule, I find it very hard to name my images, but it was particularly important to do so for this project. I started out with a shot representing what we have that's worth keeping, then followed a gradual descent of destruction, chaos, and fire. Because I maintain it's still worth fighting to protect what we have, I felt it was important to include something in a more hopeful direction at the end, hence the final image: Phoenix (literally rising from the ashes).

I really enjoyed this project. It presents an entirely new set of opportunities that I hadn't really explored before. It's a very accessible way of working, available even when we're locked down or stuck at home for any number of reasons.

I think it's worth pointing out that the amount of time I spent waiting for an idea to strike to actually executing, processing, and presenting the project was about 10:1. I highly recommend building in this time for thinking and being open to ideas in any project if at all possible.



~ Signs of Life ~

~ Phoenix ~

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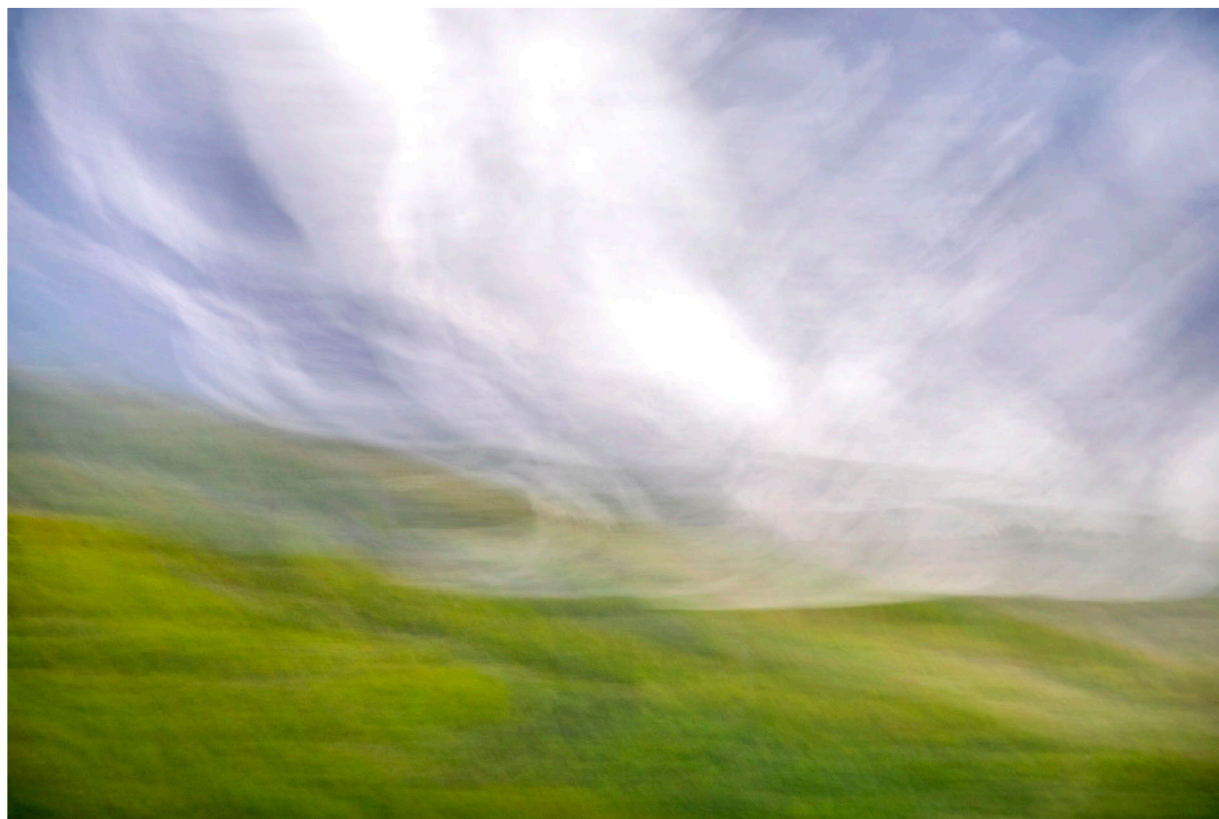
A Piece of Content from the Environmental Theme

Take a word from your native language and translate it into another language which you have no knowledge of. Then, start to repeat the foreign word and see what kinds of images begin to form in your mind. Repetition helps bring about creativity in the brain.

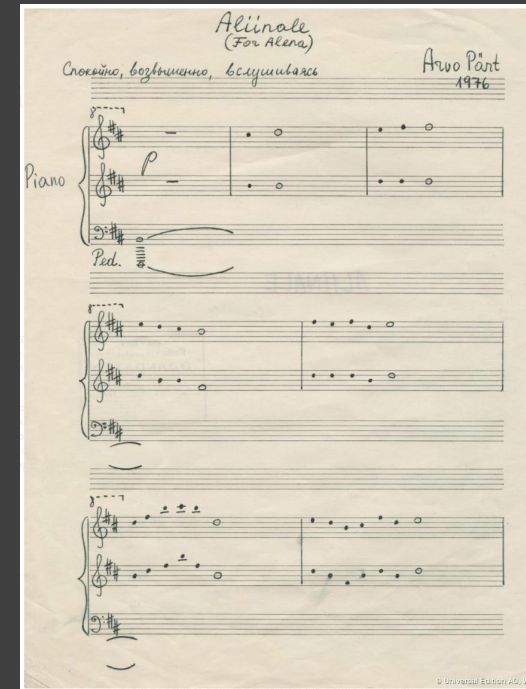
Repeat these new words while listening to the music of Arvo Pärt.

Examples:

Aamu	Dawn
Aisti	Sense
Ajallaan	In Its Time, or Just in Time, or On Time
Ajatella	To Think
Avanto	Opening

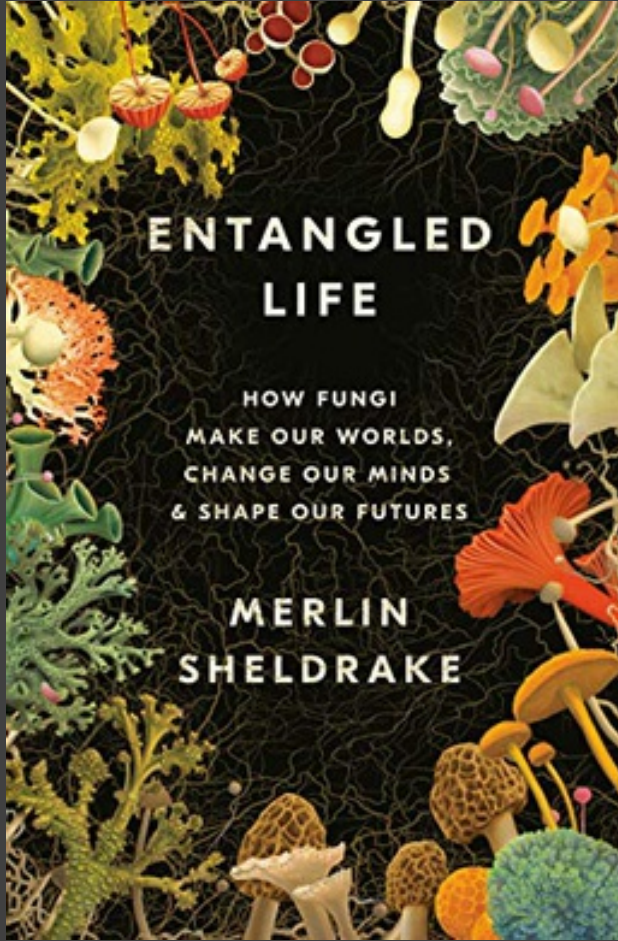


Arvo Pärt ~ Estonian Composer (1935)



Click the Images to Listen to the Music on YouTube

Merlin Sheldrake ~ English Biologist and Writer



"The magic tricks were changing the way people experienced the world. David (Abram) explained to me why he thought this happened. Our perceptions work in large part by expectation. It takes less cognitive effort to make sense of the world using preconceived images updated with a small amount of new sensory information than to constantly form entirely new perceptions from scratch. It is our preconceptions that create the blind spots in which magicians do their work. By attrition, coin tricks loosen the grip of our expectations about the way hands and coins work. On leaving the restaurant, the sky looked different because the diners saw the sky as it was there and then, rather than as they expected it to be. Tricked out of our expectations, we fall back on our senses. What's astonishing is the gulf between what we expect to find, and what we find when we actually look."

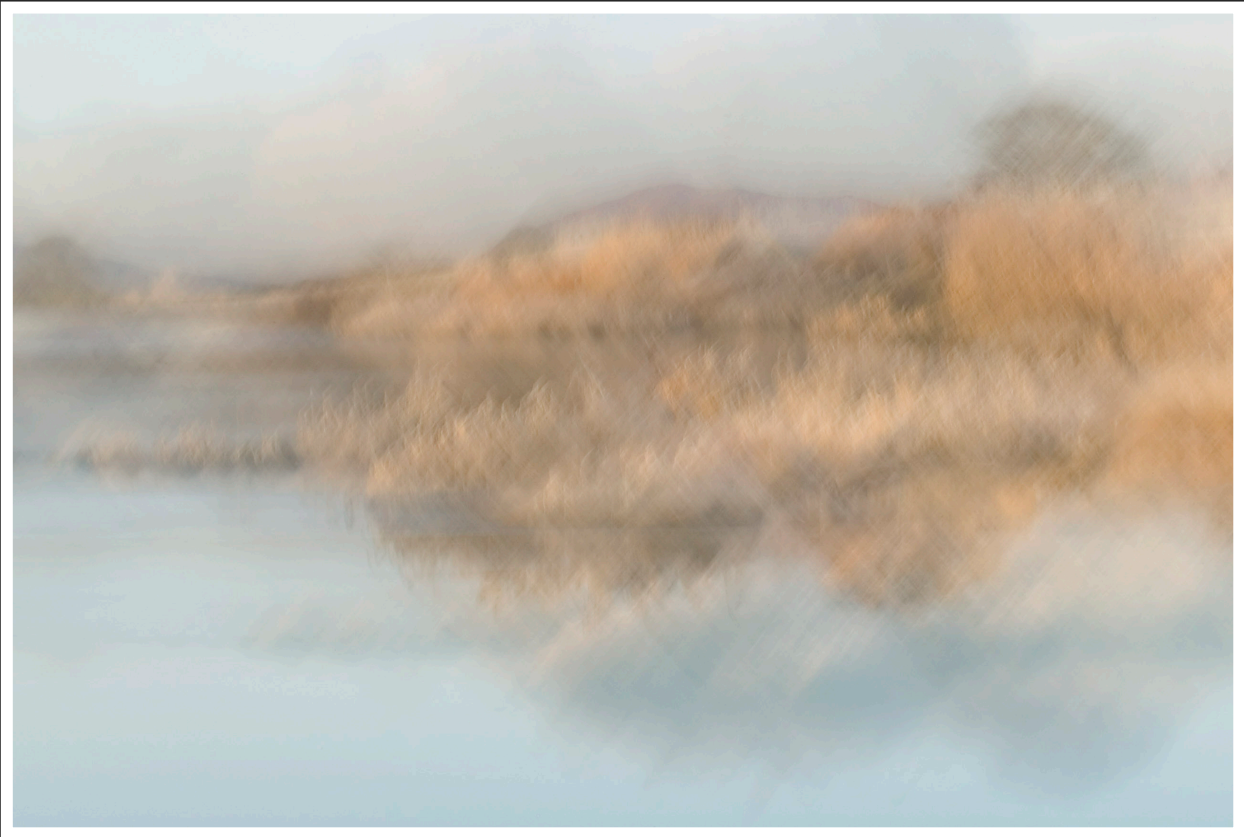
"I wanted to understand fungi, not by reducing them to ticking, spinning, bleeping mechanisms, as we so often do. Rather, I wanted to let these organisms lure me out of my well-worn patterns of thought, to imagine the possibilities they face, to let them press against the limits of my understanding, to give myself permission to be amazed – and confused – by their entangled lives."

Use the quotes from Merlin Sheldrake's book, *Entangled Life*, to help lure you out of your well-worn patterns of thought about your ICM work and give yourself permission to free your imagination.

Consider the concept of how perceptions are formed by expectation.

- Experiment with looking at familiar objects without preconceived expectations. Did this change how you saw these objects?
- How can the release of expectations help you to create more emotive and meaningful ICM work, especially with familiar, mundane, or even unattractive subjects?

Journal about your experience. How did giving yourself permission to free your imagination help you to press against the limits of your own understanding and to see possibilities where they might not have existed before?



Consider the abstract style of color field painting.

- How might you use color as an instrument to express your artistic vision?
- In what ways can the use of color fields in your ICMs help you to reflect feeling and emotion?

As you study works by some color field painters, such as Rothko, find a deeper connection that will allow you to create new ICM work that reveals the balance of energy, the harmony of color, and the emotions you experience in the environments you choose to create in.

Journal about your experience. Allow your thoughts, feelings, and emotions to flow through your writing, as a way to connect your image making more deeply to your experiences in your chosen environment. What did you discover, or what was revealed to you?



Mark Rothko ~ American Painter (1903-1970)





Be part of this meaningful ICM photography community, to enhance your creativity and nurture your artistic vision.



Kaisa
Sirén
(Finland)



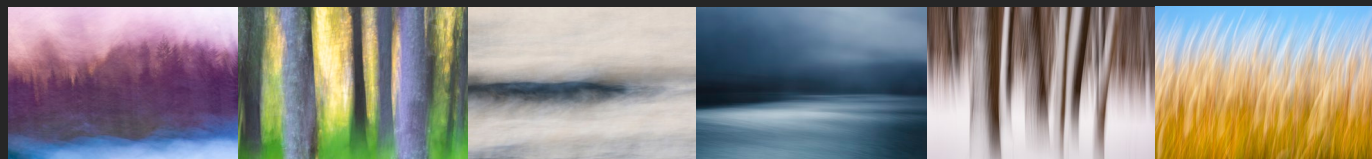
Morag
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