



Artists On The Bridge  
Photo LA 2017

Fatemeh Burnes  
Clayton Campbell  
Kate Johnson  
Kubo



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## Artists on the Bridge

*Artists on the Bridge* refers to a group of mature artists who understand that we live in a time that has happened before. This moment can be thought of as a time of reassessment followed by a proactive burst of activity that synthesizes the best of what a generation has learned. Perhaps they recognize that knowledge is an infinite activity, and the essence of their knowledge is then passed on to other artists and creative's through a variety of means; by exhibiting unique works of art; through teaching; by collaborating in various communal projects; and by mentoring an emerging generation of artists in the ideas and values of our humanist culture under challenge and in transition. For *Artists on the Bridge*, social activism and spiritual consciousness are opposites poles in the same field of play and has been an essential part of their practice. They create a "bridge" of understanding and a platform for dialogue and authenticity. Without making this essential connector, the metrics of market capitalism will continue to dominate the narratives of culture and distort the metanarrative of our times.

*Artists on the Bridge* as a sensibility or brand that many individuals can plug into as a collective consciousness that is very much alive and active, especially after the frenetic mercantilism of the art market came into question during the major recession of 2008. That became a tipping point for many who, if they hadn't already been on a different path, now embarked on a reprioritization of personal goals in the sharing of ideas, energy, knowledge and sustainability. The selling of art was not seen in itself as a negative, but its place in the activity of the artist and the social energy that was needed to sustain the kinds of careers that graced the covers of major magazines now seemed inappropriate to the seriousness of the wake up call the world was getting.

There are thousands of artists worldwide with viable careers that would subscribe intellectually to the above statement, and can provide individual thoughts and contributions to the kind of movement *Artists on the Bridge* offers. For Photo LA, we are presenting four artists who do just that. Their photographic and video art is a range, or literally a bridge, between the poles of representation as seen in social activism and color field abstraction evoking spiritual consciousness. These poles operate in the same field of play, bringing together investigations of social concerns with evocative manifestations of the ineffable.

For Photo LA, the artists all have a long history of mentoring and collaborating with other artists, and this process has informed their practices. They include Clayton Campbell, former Co-Executive Director of the 18th Street Arts Center, and currently Consultant for Special Project to the President, Otis College of Art and Design; artist KuBO, currently organizer of the European traveling exhibition *Trans Angeles*; artist Fatemeh Burnes, long time Director of the Mt. San Antonio Art Gallery in Walnut, CA; and artist and video artist Kate Johnson, Co-Director of EZTV. Each of these artists has embraced an ethos that the Psychologist Erik Erikson calls "generativity." The definition used here would describe someone who gives back more to their community than they take out of it. While each of the artists is a superior image and object maker, they also are known for their efforts cultural producers, arts writers, exhibition organizers, gallery directors, arts administrators, and founders of cultural organizations. They would acknowledge that this cultural work is part of their practice, and has to some degree impacted their art making, informing their thinking and placing them so to speak, on "the bridge." *Clayton Campbell, Los Angeles, 2017*



*After Me/Rabbit Holes 1, Transluminants Series, Light Jet Print, 50" x 70"*

## Fatemeh Burnes

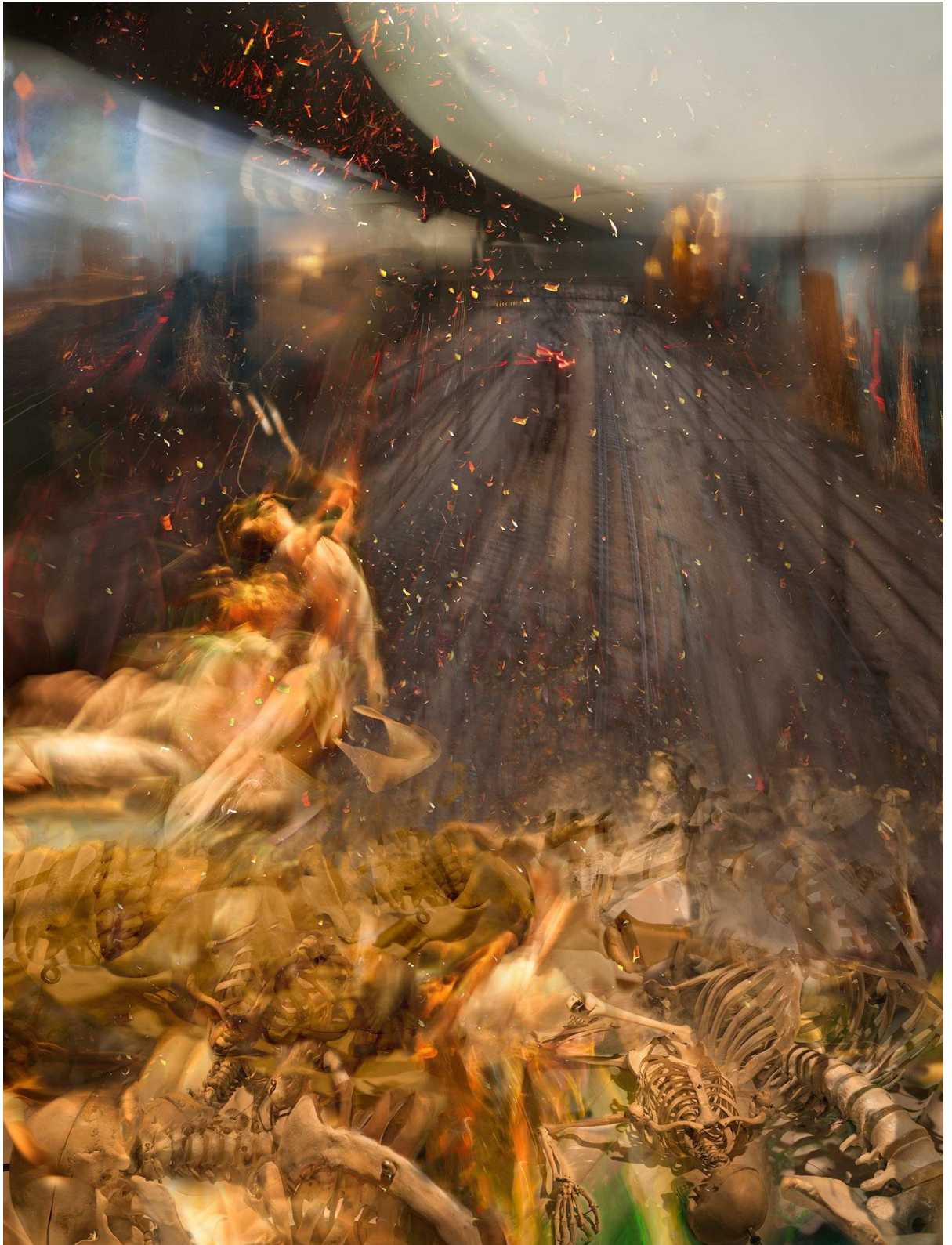
CC: Fatemeh, what was the initial inspiration for your work, *After Me... Transluminants*? Explain how you came to title this series of expressionistic figurative works with that title, and what was your thinking behind this? For example, "transluminations" literally means 'the examination of a body part, or a tissue sample, by shining a light through it.' What was your intention since the quality of light your work is so extraordinary?

FB: The root of my curiosity comes from an experience I had as a child. I always wanted to see through anything I couldn't open. Partly because of my parents' mystical outlook, my hungry mind and almost desperate imagination was set free to possibilities, which did not have to match everyday perception. At a very early age I would examine my hand and thumb with a flashlight under the bed, and would be constantly fascinated to see the effect of light shining through my solid flesh. Subsequent personal experiences directed this wild interest towards more of a spiritual examination and reexamination of the world.

My work in drawing and painting does not result from any direct illustration of my thought process. My work divides into two phases. In the first I actively study, review, question, and interpret the world around me and the life within me, also giving consideration to historical events. I am concerned with whatever involves nature and human nature, from simply studying genetics to examining the reasoning behind strategic decisions in war, which resulted in human cruelty and destruction. The second phase is a kind of dream that subconsciously manifests itself through the poetic act of art making. I respond to what feels beautiful and regenerative and also what feels artistically right, given my formal training as an artist in the application of visual language in whatever context or medium.

The "Transluminants" series began as a result of the medical treatment I received, involving the application of radiation to my neck and head. During the process of radiation, I started creating work with the concept of light literally passing through my mind. As I was being invaded by invisible Nano-particles – as in an x-ray, only far more lethal in their intensity and concentration -- I wanted to look at the transparency of form, especially human form. The series of Transluminants followed, connecting the process of radiant revelation to dance. Dancing is a moment of pure joy, of self-acceptance, transparency, courage, and joining inner and outer sensation. In order to inspire this moment of pure connection, I challenged myself within my first project by focusing on adolescent's behavior.

For example, I invited my daughters' very shy and quiet friends to dance within a space transformed into an elaborate installation. Everything was put into movement.



*After Me/Rabbit Holes 2, Transluminants Series, Light Jet Print, 50" x 70"*

Later, the Transluminants evolved into a multivalent series composed by layering and re-photographing images through projections. Consequently, the works grew into something more elaborate and formal, even aspiring to the complexity of painting. But the basis of the Transluminants can still be regarded as the human body in motion.

CC: The images of multiple distorted figures in motion are incredibly evocative, and the viewer can bring many associations into a reading of them, but in particular they bring to mind other worldly states of transition, reminiscent of souls, angels or spirits caught between astral planes. Just one literary association could be Dante's Divine Comedy, for example, among many.

The viewer's responses and associations are welcome, even invited, and a poetic reading fits the works' spirit. The work is about change, transformation, and conditional interpretation.

CC: When you were making this series, what was the formal process you employed with the camera? What kind of camera did you use, and how did you arrive at these extraordinary images? Did you use models, and how did you stage the process? How are the images printed?

FB: I transform my studio space by wrapping it in imitation mirrors used on film shoots. I arrange floating artifacts or badly made origami, sheer fabric, flashing lights, models (professional or family members and friends) and many other manipulations of space, as well as the movement of camera and lenses. Occasionally I have photographed dance rehearsals and re-projected and photographed those images, layering them. Although my training was in the chemical processes of the darkroom, I am interested in pushing the boundaries of digital photography. As a visual artist, my interest in transforming all media and making the work solely about the experience and the language of form has become more persistent. I work in large format photography and, in most cases, I print my own images on my large format printer. I find it magical to watch the paper go through the printer and to see the image appear.

CC: What prior series of work leading up to *After Me...Transluminants* established a precedent for the work you are doing now? And how so?

FB: Actually, my previous photographic work had less bearing on the "Transluminants" than did the painting I was doing and was thinking of doing at the time and just previously. I was becoming a more abstract painter, creating dense compositions that straddle the natural world and the imagination. I wanted to see if I could achieve the same level of complexity and the same degree of lyricism in my photography – if it were technically feasible and formally possible.





*After Me/Rabbit Holes 3, Transluminants Series, Light Jet Print, 50" x 70"*

CC: In *Artists on the Bridge*, social activism and spiritual consciousness come together in the work of artists for whom mentoring emerging generations has been an essential part of their practice. They create a “bridge” of understanding and a platform for dialogue and authenticity. Without making this essential connector, the metrics of market capitalism will continue to dominate the narratives of culture. The artist’s work is a range, or literally a bridge, between the poles of representation as seen in social activism and color field abstraction evoking spiritual consciousness.

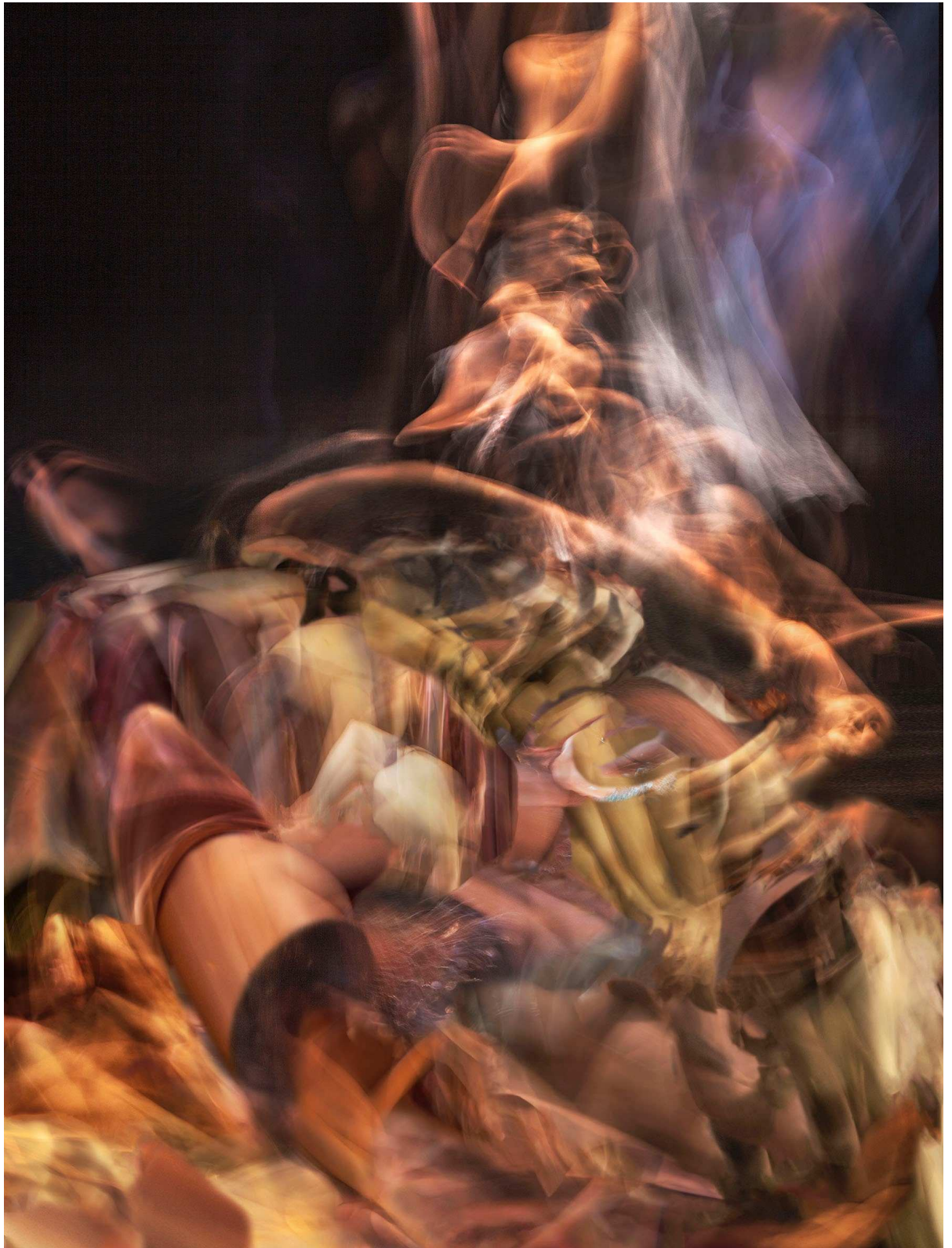
I view your work as a bridge between representation and abstraction, as an expressionism rooted in humanism, where the figure is not absent yet has been obscured to the point of being almost unrecognizable. Yet we are very much aware that something monumental, mysterious and perhaps profoundly magical is taking place in the tableaux we are witnessing. When you think of this series, do you connect it to a lineage of any other humanist artist’s? For example, I think of William Blake and his ascendant figures, hallucinatory work by Odilon Redon, and then contemporary artists like Bill Viola. Do you see this work as part of a lineage, and what artists do you respond to who might be part of the *Artists on the Bridge* sensibility?

FB: I have an eclectic visual aesthetic, I respond to what stimulates my formal, conceptual, and spiritual interest. Inevitably, being an educator and trained in art history and being exposed to artists throughout history, I have acquired a diverse appreciation as an artist and an individual human being. I do not actively follow or emulate any particular artists’ means of expression. That said, there are certain artists and different works by them who come to mind with regard to different works and series of mine. The artists you mentioned are at the top of my list, and I would also include Goya, Velazquez, Kokoschka, Kollwitz, Kandinsky, Ludwig Georg Baselitz, and, at the very top of my list, Anselm Kiefer.

CC: In your own work as an organizer of exhibitions at the Mt. San Antonio College Gallery, you have helped dozens of artists by bringing their work to the attention of diverse audiences. And by being a mentor for younger artists.

In Erik Erikson's *Stages of Psychosocial Development*, “Generativity” is a struggle against stagnation that ascends during adulthood. Generativity in the psychosocial sense refers to the concern for establishing and guiding the next generation and is said to stem from a sense of optimism about humanity. In short, it means giving back more to your community than you take out of it, and all of the artists in *Artist on the Bridge* not only do that, but have made it part of their practice. How has this mentoring and giving back informed the art you make?

FB: Staying connected with younger generations is stimulating, provocative, and engaging. I find conversations and dialogues in everyday life crucial to the core establishment of my visual art practice. Over my 30+ years of teaching in higher education and working as a volunteer mentor, I have been reminded on a daily basis of my own capacity to grow. This deep involvement brings resiliency to the spirit of my creative work.



*After Me/Rabbit Holes 4, Transluminants Series, Light Jet Print, 50" x 70"*

Being involved with young minds is invariably constructive and opens doors to possibilities that we take for granted as we age.

CC: How do you view *Artists on the Bridge* and what do you hope for it to become?

FB: In current times, it is exciting to see how many dedicated visual artists are working, especially considering economic constraints or difficulties. It is a reflection of a need in our society for more meaning and connection. The presence and active participation of an individual, specifically an artist, is essential. It is my belief that a difference is made, for both the individual and the course of subsequent art, when a community of artists establishes itself to support those artists' activity. Artists are the synapses of society, transmitting what is happening socially even without spelling it out; so it is necessary for artists to come together and support one another. Older and mid-career artists need to take on the role of catalyst. Especially now, when it seems the world is becoming more and more nationalistic and tribal, art is a universal language that brings people together beyond any boundaries or affiliations.

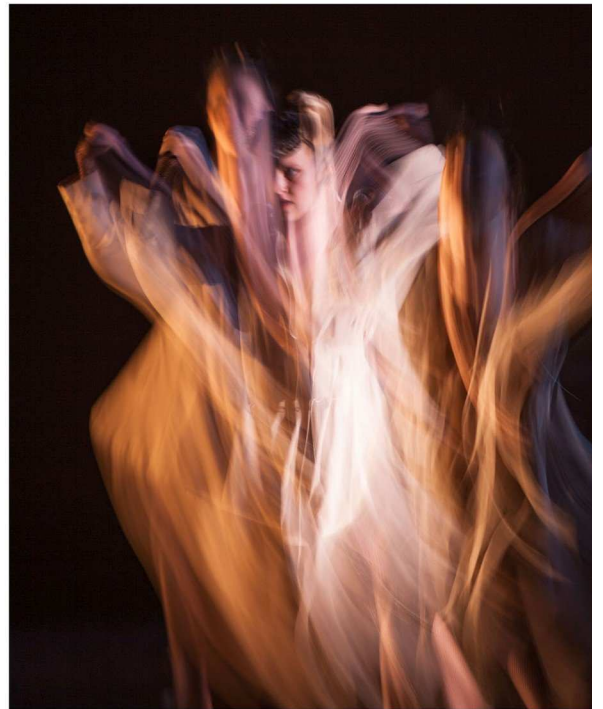
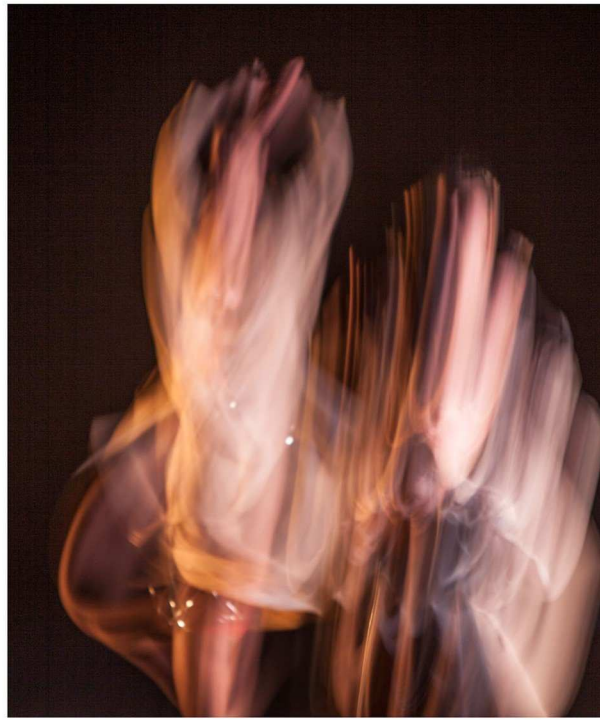
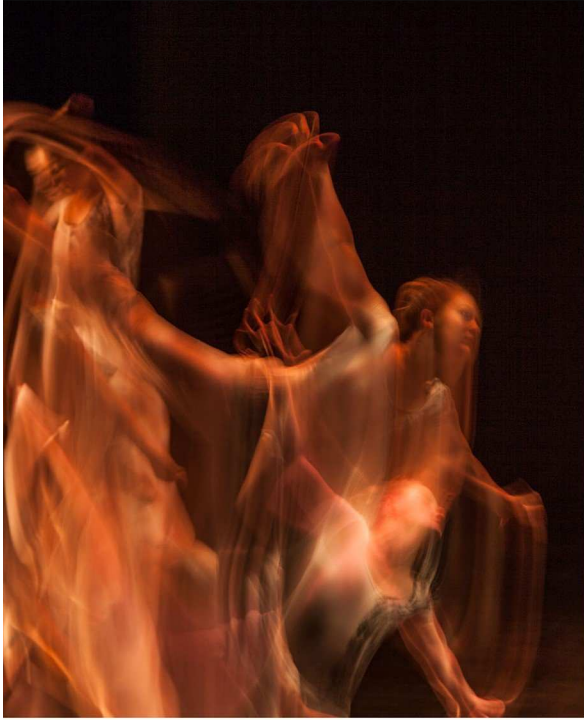
### Biography

Tehran born **Fatemeh Burnes** first came to the United States in 1973, where she later received her BFA and MFA in Art History in Southern California. Burnes has taught fine arts, design and art history at California State University Fullerton, the Art Institute of Southern California (now the Laguna College of Art and Design), Saddleback College, and the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandise (FIDM). She also led special programs in public art that resulted in the creation of murals with environmental themes.

Since 1992 Burnes has served as Gallery Director and Curator, as well as full-time Professor of Drawing and Design at Mt. San Antonio College, focusing in particular on Art Education and Curriculum Development in exhibition organization and design. At the gallery she has curated over 100 exhibitions, authored numerous publications, conducted art-education documentaries, and worked with an international array of artists and art professionals.

Burnes has exhibited her own artwork extensively since the 1980s, but the last several years have been the most eventful of her career. In January 2012 Zero+ Publishing released *Drift*, a book of Burnes photographs, edited by critic and writer Peter Frank; and in March 2013 she published a 220-page full-color catalogue, *Imprints of Nature and Human Nature*, to accompany a solo exhibition at Mt. San Antonio College celebrating her two decades with the school. She has also exhibited at the Municipal Arts Gallery in Los Angeles, the Sturt Haaga Gallery of the Descanso Gardens in La Cañada-Flintridge, at Laguna Beach's George Gallery, which focuses on museum-caliber contemporary women artists, and at Gallery C24 in New York. Her exhibitions have been reviewed in publications such as Art ltd, ArtScene, Whitehot and the Huffington Post.

Burnes is currently featured in "Trans-Angeles," a traveling exhibition curated by Peter Frank for the Wilhelm-Morgner-Haus in Soest, Germany. The show is designed to highlight the distinctive paradigm within which Los Angeles artists think and work, drawing on both personal experience and Southern California's variety of cultural and natural phenomena and fostering a willingness to experiment with diverse modes and media.



Transluminants Dance Series 1



Clayton Campbell, *Why?*, 70" x 50" , Light Jet Print, 2010-16

# Clayton Campbell

JD:: What was the inspiration for your work *Words We Have Learned Since 9/11*? You have been working on this participatory photographic project of portraits since 2005 and it has now been in numerous countries and has over 1400 portraits, which is kind of extraordinary.

CC: The original inspiration was working with my son, who was 11 at the time. He was experiencing anxieties and not sleeping because of all the fear-based news that was filtering through our household on CNN and I didn't realize how much he was absorbing unfiltered. It turned out many of his friends were experiencing the same thing, and they didn't have many coping skills, for that matter neither did the parents. I suggested he write down new words he was learning as a result of all the chatter he was hearing and he did, just to get it out of his system and his head. One day we wrote them down on sheets of paper and I photographed him holding the words and the project was born. I put them on a wall in a grid and it was an extraordinary conversation. Two months later I was in Paris and showed the photos to the Director of the City of Paris Photo Museum in the Marais, and they immediately scheduled an exhibit. It was stunning, and from there it just took off. It came back to LA, went up at LACMA where I began doing workshops and the project just grew. Since then it has been in museums, art centers and galleries internationally in Paris, London, Gdansk, Warsaw, Northern Ireland, a tour of Croatia, Bucharest, Seoul, Beijing, Tehran, Camac (France) and Capetown. In the U.S. it's been in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Mobile, Santa Fe, and Las Vegas.

JD:: In each portrait you have a person holding on a piece of paper a word or short phrase. Are these their words, or what is actually going on? In some of the portraits they are just standing there, in others the subjects are quite animated and reacting to the word and doing some pretty funny mugging. And who are these people?

CC: When I do an exhibit I set up a workshop in the gallery of the exhibit and invite any viewer who wants to participate to sit with me and talk with me. I ask them two questions; what new words have they learned since 9/11, or what words did they know whose meaning has changed since 9/11. After some discussion, and they can become quite intense and personal, I write their words on a paper, and then take their portrait. The actual camera work is very simple, much like having your portrait taken for a passport. I work on the photos with my computer and change them from color to black and white for the large grid installations I do for exhibits. I found that color distracts from the overall power of the conversation that happens when the viewer looks at all of the image/text photographs.



*What Is Democracy?, Variable Sizes, Ink Jet Print, 2010-17*



I normally print the shots in the following day and put them straight into the installation while the exhibit is still going on, and many of the participants come back to see themselves in the show. All of the conversations are private, and so I have about 1400 stories in my mind from these workshops, of what people have experienced in arriving at new words, or old words with new meanings. It is an amazing project for me.

JD:: In Artists on the Bridge, social activism and spiritual consciousness come together in the work of artists for whom mentoring emerging generations has been an essential part of their practice. They create a “bridge” of understanding and a platform for dialogue and authenticity. Without making this essential connector, the metrics of market capitalism will continue to dominate the narratives of culture. The artist’s work is a range, or literally a bridge, between the poles of representation as seen in social activism and color field abstraction evoking spiritual consciousness.

Your work seems to be more on the side of social activism than spiritual consciousness. How would you characterize this project in terms of socially conscious art making and what are your intentions with the project overall since it is now 12 years and still going?

CC: Because I am asking people to focus on a word and not an opinion this is not a partisan project. I don’t want political opinions, yet clearly the way a participant looks or holds a word, their body language, makes a political statement at times. And depending on where they are from, which country, or their age or ethnicity, you can tell what they have in mind. This adds to the non-linear conversation going on when you begin to look at all of the portraits and start to connect the dots. This project is really about what has happened “since” 9/11. 9/11 has become, the further we get from the actual event, an iconic symbol for the first big and traumatic event of the 21st century that almost everyone has heard about and in some way, direct or even vaguely been affected by. It set off currents that are still rippling through economies, war zones, pop cultures, religions, language, everything. It is incalculable the changes it set in motion, and so the project seems to have hit the zeitgeist and while it still has energy I am pursuing it when there is interest. It is not political art, but it is socially conscious in that it is uncovering people’s deepest emotional concerns about their future, and they are unclear about where it is all heading. It is building bridges between diverse groups because it is seen in different countries and the viewers have the opportunity, for example to see in Tehran the perspective of someone from Los Angeles or Poland.

I will say though that many of the participants have gone through a spiritual upheaval in their lives as a result of the aftermath of 9/11 and all that has transpired and will take place in the years to come. Many of the words they hold in their portraits are emotive, while some come from the media, or the military. Some are deeply felt and you have to glean it from the person and not the word. So a search for meaning, meaning of one’s life in this deeply uncertain time suffuses this project. It is not negative and dark, it is a collective yearning, at times funny, at times tragic, for clarity, for love, for understanding, and a call for decency. I have been moved too many times to say, drained at the end of a session where I felt I have been through a process of transference that was profound. I have been honored to hear the words, and back stories, and the honesty of from these people who are just ordinary people off the streets, looking at an art exhibit, and who all were nervous about having their picture taken.



*Shame*, Variable Sizes, Ink Jet Print, 2016

JD: Are you doing anything different for Photo LA since this is an art fair and not the normal large venue you exhibit in?

CC: Yes, I am. I am exhibiting on a monumental scale, 80" x 60", one of the truly iconic portraits from the collection. It is a shot of a man who looks like Uncle Sam, wearing an American flag T-shirt, and hold an upside down sign with the word "why?" It seems to sum up an underlying motif of the project, indeed of the nations state of mind. I took this portrait in Mobile, Alabama on the 10th anniversary of 9/11 at the State Museum in Mobile. It resonates as much now as then. Normally I exhibit these photos in large grids and the photos are printed letter size, so this monumental scale is unusual. I am also printing some individual portraits that I also find iconic in their original color rather than their black and white conversion, as they are beautiful objects also enlarged and isolated as color photographs. These I feel are best collected as small editions from the overall Words We Have Learned Since 9/11 project, and I will be releasing some images this way. The entire collection already has one letter sized set committed to the Smithsonian Institute 9/11 Print and Drawing Collection.

## Biography

Since 1975 **Clayton Campbell** has worked in the field of arts and culture as a visual artist, curator, arts administrator, and arts writer. He is a widely published arts writer and is founder of Campbell Consultants Group, which works with major philanthropic foundations and arts organizations to develop cultural exchange programming for artists. He is an artist in residence at the 18th Street Arts Center I Santa Monica, CA.

*Words We Have Learned Since 9/11* has been exhibited nationally and internationally at Unit 24 Gallery, London; The Higher Bridges Arts Center, Enniskellen, Northern Ireland; the Nam Jun Paik Art Center, South Korea; the Aaran Gallery in Tehran; The Maison Europeenne de la Photographie, Paris; the WYSPA Institute for Art, Gdansk Poland; Outdoor Projection Installation, Warsaw, Poland; Scope Basel, Switzerland; the International Center of Contemporary Art, Bucharest; Photo Galerij Lang, Samobor; City Museum of Dubrovnik, Batana, Rovinj; City Museum of Vodice; the Three Shadows Photography Art Center, Beijing; the University of Capetown, South Africa; The Museum of Mobile, Alabama; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Barrick Art Museum, University of Nevada Las Vegas; Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery; The Wonder Institute, Santa Fe; Pitzer College Gallery, CA. Many of the images are in private collections, as well as the collections of several major museums.

In 2015 he exhibited a series of unique digital photos, Wild Kingdom, at Coagula Gallery, that received positive reviews from Christopher Knight of the LA Times, Peter Frank of Artillery, and Lisa Derrick of the Huffington Post. His most recent project is a unique 20,000-word novella with 21 new photomontage tableaux photographic images presented as an e-book on-line. Launched on October 1, 2016 by Coagula Gallery and entitled *The 1% War*.



*Freedom, Variable Sizes, Ink Jet Print, 2011*



*Waterboarding*, Variable Sizes, Ink Jet Print, 2009-14



*I am A Terrorist*; Photo Shoot in Beijing; *Religion, Hate, Sand Nigger*-ink jet prints, 2005-2014



Kate Johnson, Still from *Everywhere In Between*, Running Time 8 Minutes

# Kate Johnson

CC: Kate, What was the initial inspiration for your work, *Everywhere In Between*? It seems to be involved establishing images that might be transformational states of consciousness, literally coming in and out of consciousness? Was this part of your intention, to make a work that has an emotional and psychological basis with imagery that I found to be almost archetypal in its intensity and beauty?

Kate: I was commissioned to create an evening at Bergamot Station with a site-specific projection piece mapped onto a 120' long dark blue wall serving as the centerpiece of the event. The darkness of the surface and the extreme image ratio gave rise to painting it with striking contrasts and defining the scale with long geometric shapes. The more I worked on the piece, the more images appeared and were shaped in my mind. I began with very ordered structures, linearity, defined shapes, but the figure served to disrupt the order and minimalism and began warping, curving, blending, and transforming the imagery from an almost clinical coldness to an evolving connection to humanity and a sensual ecstasy reminiscent of Sufi rituals.

I can't say that the piece was completely planned from start to finish. I knew I was going to begin with the particulated stripes and finish with the figure spinning at the end. I saw the figure, the beautiful performer Ariana Gallestegui, as a figure in red spinning, and floating in water, of serving as a transition between virtual and photographic spaces. Red to me is a very graphic color that speaks to passion, but more as a bold reclamation of one's being. I use it in a lot of my work as a vibrant declaration of life.

How the piece was going to build was found in an almost meditative and at times feverish manner. Images appeared to me and I filmed them and created them. The video took shape in the editing room, which was in and of itself an almost monastic and cathartic experience. I locked myself into the studio, speaking and seeing no one, not leaving for 7 days straight. I slept maybe 2 hours a night, some nights not at all and just kept exploring ideas. I was in a state of in-the-moment experimentation weaving the virtual and graphic imagery with the figure, looking for the balance, the flow. So in a way, while making it I was myself going in and out of different states of consciousness. I wasn't sure of what exactly I was creating until I saw it play back on my last pass through the edit.

That was the surprise of it. I thought I was making one piece, but realized that much of my inner life, my subconscious had found itself to the screen. In the end, I discovered that creating in a state of not knowing could bring me closer to expressing something authentic and almost mystical than if I had planned it out entirely. In that sense creating it became a transformational experience for me and changed my perception of how the mind presents itself to the outside world.



CC: The images of a figure or the red figure from above in motion are compelling, and the viewer can bring different associations into a reading of them, but in particular they bring to mind other worldly states of transition, reminiscent of a soul caught between astral planes, or state of consciousness. In fact, you have passages that look like star fields or abstractions where everything is in motion and the figures dissolve into them, disincorporate and then reform. What is the poetry you are visualizing in this work?

Kate: I come from a tradition of dance and performance training. Movement and dance have always been an important part of my visual vocabulary as they speak to me of transition, of moving through different states of being, of sensuality, and most importantly of the inexpressible or indefinable. Gestures are momentary paintings that speak volumes and reach us at a level beyond our normal rational responses. I use the elements of particles, of water, light and shadow, form and figure to dance through different states of being. Nothing is stable or solid but transitory, ever in motion. I have always been interested in the moments in-between, in the impulse before the action, the ever-changing perception of reality and I seek to express it in much of my work. Coming to terms with the relationship of our synthetic or simulated worlds with that of our natural world is also a theme that I explore looking for the connections.



The figure moving through thousands of digital points forming lines, the undulating waves of black and white forms dissolving into a figure underwater at night reminiscent of the earlier shots “waves”, the simulated rain forming into a dancing figure are all created as a kind of bridge. What in our lives is real? Are both states real or is it about the perception of reality much like the relationship we have with our dreaming life relative to our waking? At times, both can seem like dreams or like reality. The figure in red is an interpretation of the whirling dervish in Sufism. Instead of white I’ve placed a woman in red and filmed her above so we can see her as she gradually looks to the heavens. The red color is an obvious choice away from the traditional white and I chose it as it speaks to me of being a woman, to being of blood, and strangely of both the peace found in its beauty, and the rebellion of the color saying “here I am daring to be free, seeking to truly see”.

When I asked Ariana to do this shoot I gave her some time to practice spinning. I sent her videos of whirling dervishes and said practice this and see how you do. On the day of the shoot I thought we might at best get a few seconds of spinning. Instead, to my utter amazement Ariana began to spin and she kept going and going, herself transcendent and at one with the movement. It was an incredible moment to capture. At the end of the piece I distort her image, reducing her spinning body to a spinning circle of color sending the figure back to pure form. As in the beginning is pure form, so in the end is pure form as must we all pass through in our own existences.

CC: The sound is very evocative, how does it function in setting a mood in *Everywhere In Between*?

Kate: Sound to me is as important as the image in relating the mood and concepts of a piece. It reaches us at a very primal and evocative level and can express what is not possible with image alone. It is the partner dancing with the imagery, expanding the vocabulary, and immersing the viewer into a deeper landscape.

I wrote and performed most of the music. I wanted cello layered throughout the piece and I asked experimental cellist Michael Intriere to come to the studio and respond to the visuals with improvisatory statements. I then took the statements, deconstructed them, added processed layers to the instrument, and placed them as a kind of haunting melodic counterpoint around the large gongs and rhythms that I timed through the piece. I composed more melodic structures and sounds using keyboards and samples and then layered in aural pads, sounds from nature and cities, pitches and drones, and orchestral passages as I responded to the imagery. Much of the piece is set in a lower register, very bass, booming as if across a large landscape. There are moments of relative quiet offset by a questioning, descending bass structure until we come to the underwater sequences where the piece begins to resolve to a meditative, heightened awareness. Here the music rises and becomes more treble, lighter, strings ending on a lustrous high note bridging a darker mystical state to a higher consciousness and release.



The sounds serves to illustrate the journey, marking the path and returning to the source with the final reverberating processed gong.

CC: When you were making this video, what was the formal process you employed? What kind of camera did you use, how many, was it a long shoot, how much was made on the computer, how did you arrive at these extraordinary images through the editing, etc? Did you use models, and how did you stage the process?

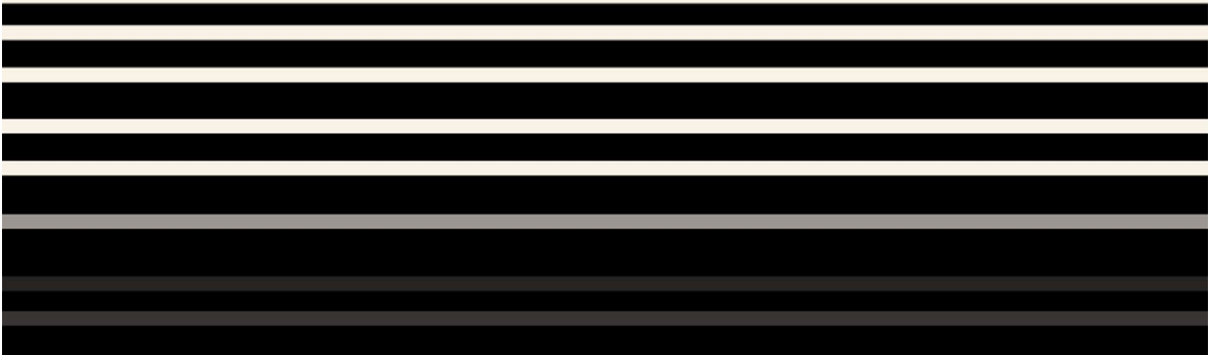
KB: I had to plan the live shoots first and that required that I visualize those elements clearly in terms of the visuals and postproduction treatment before beginning the work. I filmed with Ariana in a green screen studio over the course of a couple of days. I personally film all my shots and used 4k cameras with Zeiss prime lenses. Most of the shots were done with one camera as each sequence was intricately planned for composition and timing. However, I also leave room always for a performer's own improvisation and personality to come through and use the camera to respond to what I'm seeing in real time while keeping to the structure of the image that I have in mind.

The underwater sequences offered an unexpected challenge. A fellow Otis professor, Gary Geraths, was kind to offer his salt-water pool to me to film in. It was an incredible experience to spend a day in this warm, buoyant luxurious space. However, the buoyancy was an immediate concern as we could not stay submerged for longer than a few seconds. The nature of the salt water would kick Ariana inelegantly straight up the surface no matter how hard she tried to swim to the bottom of the pool. I finally realized that I was going to have to figure out the physics of the situation and see how they could work in our favor. I dove into the pool and experimented. I discovered that if I swam to the bottom and upon reaching it kicked my legs out, arched my body and lifted my head and arm and relaxed I could let the water dynamics work and float me to the surface. I taught it to Ariana and we filmed several takes capturing an arresting surrender to the elements that I then slowed down in post.

Other than the live action shots with Ariana the rest of the piece was created virtually with 3D modeling and animation, programming particles, and transforming basic forms with key frames and modulations.

CC: What prior work leading up to *Everywhere In Between* established a precedent for this work and what are you doing now?

*Everywhere In Between* is a continuation of an exploration I've journeyed through in several of my pieces about states of perception, a kind of magic realism, and the haunting nature of memory. However, I think it is the first one that went beyond exploration to realizing and expressing a deep desire to find the connections between worlds, between realities, and to break free of structural limitations while also coming to peace with that which is formless and indefinable. Along with public works creating large-scale projection art, I'm now creating work that combines sculpture and large installation pieces with video. Recently I exhibited "Arboreal Witness" at Tongva Park. The piece physically was cold and technical with 75 LED screens on 7 "trees" or metal scaffolds ranging from 12' high to 8' at their lowest. Responding to the park, in itself an installation of nature in the heart of an urban environment, I created an installation that subverted the technical look of the infrastructure and used the screens to display fragmented imagery of nature I filmed throughout Southern California from the mountains, to the desert, to the ocean, and the park itself.



The fragmentation spoke to the fact that we cannot truly understand or know the complexity of nature through a simulated experience, yet at the same time the screen serves as a bridge between where we are physically and where we can be through an augmented reality.

CC: In *Artists on the Bridge*, social activism and spiritual consciousness come together in the work of artists for whom mentoring emerging generations has been an essential part of their practice. They create a “bridge” of understanding and a platform for dialogue and authenticity. Without making this essential connector, the metrics of market capitalism will continue to dominate the narratives of culture. The artist’s work is a range, or literally a bridge, between the poles of representation as seen in social activism and color field abstraction evoking spiritual consciousness.

I view your work as a bridge to spiritual consciousness yet a social narrative is still in evidence. We are very much aware that something elemental, transformational and perhaps profoundly important is taking place in the moving tableaux we are witnessing. I see *Everywhere In Between* and your work overall as part of a lineage of transformational imagery, going back as far as even thirteenth century Alchemical woodcuts that represented the music of the spheres. These were artists who were on some sort of “bridge.” What artists do you respond to who might be part of the *Artists on the Bridge* sensibility?

Kate: It is interesting that you mention Alchemical woodcuts as I have often gravitated towards the symbolism of those works and have sometimes quoted them in previous pieces. There are so many artists that speak to me of bridging social and spiritual narratives across mediums and eras. Examples that come to mind are Bill Viola, Doug Aitken, Laurie Anderson, Mark Hansen and Ben Rubin; performance artists Barbara T. Smith, Guillermo Gómez Pena, Rachel Rosenthal, Joseph Beuys, Suzanne Lacy; surrealist painters Remedios Varo, Leonora Carrington, Frida Kahlo, Dora Maar; filmmakers Andrei Tarkovsky, Federico Fellini, Jean-Luc Godard; artists Chuck Close, Mark Rothko, Wassily Kandinsky, John Outterbridge, Bettye Saar, Marc Chagall, Mike Kelley, Nicholas Roerich; poets Rumi, Dylan Thomas, Pablo Neruda, Yeats, S. Pearl Sharp; writers of magic realism Isabelle Allende, Gabriel Garcia Marquez; choreographers Loretta Livingston, David Parsons, Pina Bausch, Mythili Prakash, Alvin Ailey, Anna Halprin...More than any other philosophy or approach which is at the core of EZTV where I began, was this idea of bringing together art and artists with technology, experimentation, and community, across all mediums to create works with emerging tools through a singular vision which challenged the norms of video and film production. This approach to art making created the DNA that I grew from. The list is endless as so many have inspired us and they have been or still are bridges to today.

**Kate Johnson** is a video artist and Emmy® Award winning filmmaker. Throughout her career she has created work that explores the intersections between memory and presence, perception and reality, and the momentary nature of existence. Informed by a combination of influences ranging from her work in college on archeological digs, to collaborations with choreographers and performers, and her immersion into video and computer art when she joined EZTV, she pulls from motion motifs, poetry and magic realism, as well as themes around emerging technology and its confluence with our humanity.

Her work has been shown in galleries, festivals, and exhibitions nationally and internationally. Her large-scale projection and video sculptures have transformed spaces including The Getty Center, Ford Amphitheater, Tongva Park in the City of Santa Monica, Japanese American Cultural Center, the Los Angeles Metro, Bergamot Station Art Center, Dance Camera Istanbul, and The Sheraton Grand in Doha for the Royal Family of Qatar among others.

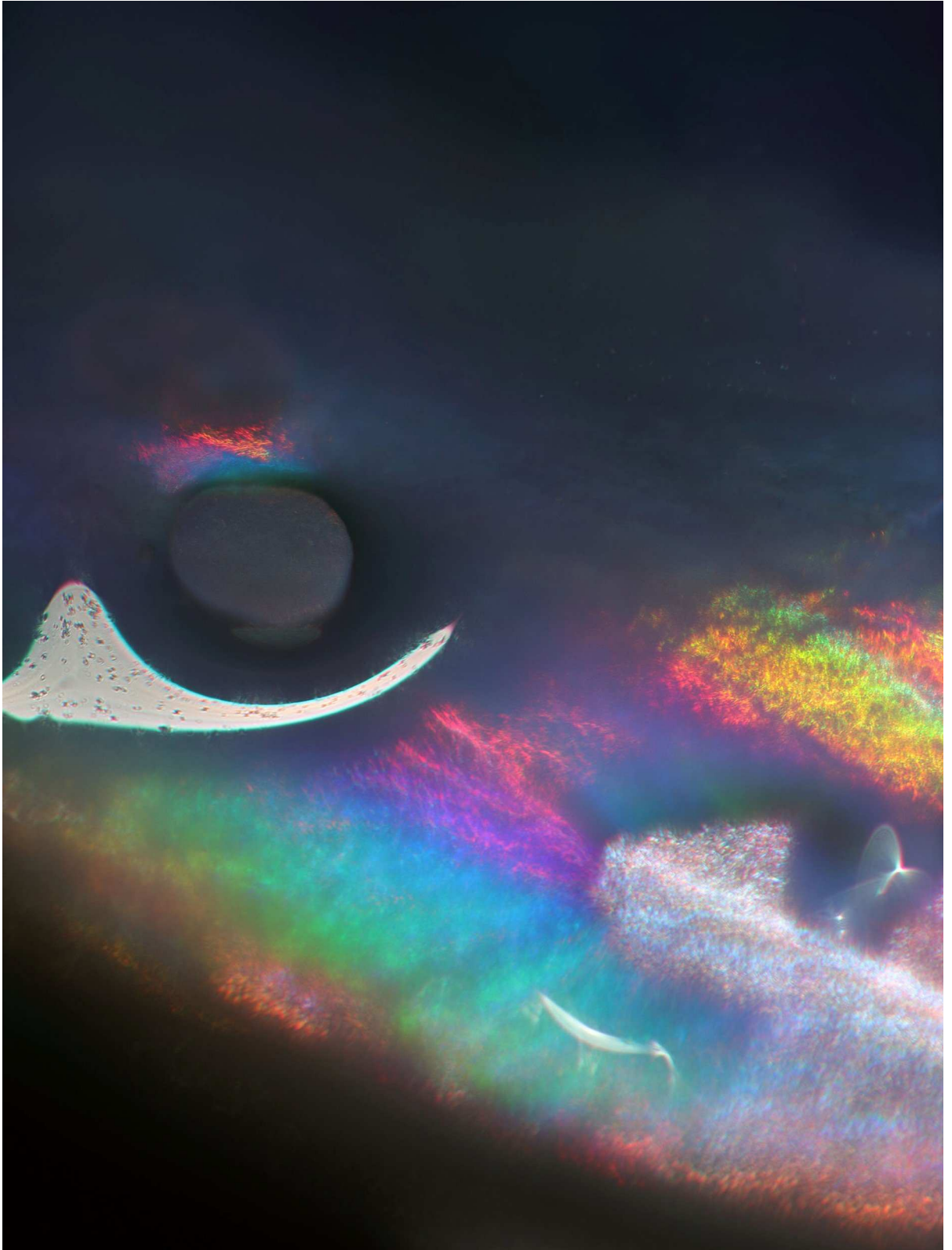
Defying the convention to specialize, she works in multiple mediums as an installation artist, performance artist, sculptor, video artist, and filmmaker. In her projection and video work Johnson through-designs and executes the entire piece including concept, writing, photography, choreography, creation of digital imagery and animations, and composing the music and soundscapes. When asked what her medium is she often answers: time.

Her film, “Mia, A Dancer’s Journey” premiered at the Film Society at Lincoln Center and was broadcast on PBS stations across the nation. Her collaborative works have been exhibited at The ICA in London, MOMA NY, Cannes Film Festival, The American Cinematheque, The Los Angeles Film Festival, American Film Institute, The Pan African Film Festival, Pomona College Museum of Art, and broadcast on The Documentary Channel, Channel 5 France, and in film festivals internationally.

She is a principal force behind the seminal Los Angeles media art group EZTV ([www.eztvmuseum.com](http://www.eztvmuseum.com) (<http://www.eztvmuseum.com/>) ) and instrumental in the group’s early works being inducted into the permanent collection at the University of Southern California’s One Archives. She is currently Assistant Professor at Otis College of Art & Design and is an artist in residence at the 18th Street Arts Center.



Still from *Everywhere In Between*, Running Time 8 Minutes



KuBO, *In the Shell # 1*, From the Series *Light and Death*, 180 cm x 120 cm

# KuBO

CC: KuBO, What was the initial inspiration for *Light and Death*? Explain how you came to title this series of color field abstractions with the title Light and Death and what was your thinking behind this?

K: The starting point was that I am working with interference in my paintings for many years now. The one thing all my works from the beginning in the early 80's have in common that you always can combine the shapes, patterns etc. in different ways so everybody will see different stories and creates different meaning and interpretation, which for me reflects reality. We all live in different inner worlds and somehow we manage to interact with each other in often astonishing ways which for me is the real wonder of human existence. Adding the effects of interference after 2000 when these pigments became more advanced gave me additional options to work on this, now colors are changing as well depending our your point of view which you can even transfer to political standpoints, red, black, green etc.

The idea beginning of this year was to transfer the aspect of interference to photography which technically is not possible as there are no interference pigments used in photo production (that's an idea I'm working on but will take more time).

So the aspect had to be in the object I would photograph itself and luckily we have enough options in nature mostly shells, some beetles and butterflies. I choose only living organisms because here we have a much deeper connection to ourselves, minerals and oil films can create optical effects but I find them way less exiting.

That's when the title *Light and Death* came up in an early stage because all the objects were dead but at the same time its about amazing light effects with an almost spiritual/cosmic aspect which touches some deep routed emotions similar to looking to the stars at night.

One important aspect: these photos are nowhere similar to photos done in Biology or Astronomy, they are 100% art. These "situations", light, angle, camera settings. My mood cannot be reproduced even if I or someone else would try hard. The shells are all there and they did not change, they are pretty stable, clear defined objects but the reflections the inner layer's of the shell can create are never the same - for me this is very close to an artistic "evidence" / interpretation of Heisenberg's "Uncertainty principle", the deeper you dig the more uncertain things become within a statistical defined frame - by reproducing it you would end up with same/similar colors and structures but never the same.

Just one additional thought: one of the big misunderstandings/misleading of the last 200 years for me is the idea that science has taken away/destroyed our deep astonishment about the wonders of the world and our existence; I think the opposite



is the case. Science is a thread to all of those who think they possess final truth and knowledge, which gives them, power to rule and guide us...

CC: You have mentioned E.O Wilson, the Pulitzer Prize winning biologist as a source of interest to you. Nietzsche searched for meaning in what he called "the rainbow colors" around the outer edges of knowledge and imagination, which was one kind of "Bridge" and shows up in the work of social aware artists.

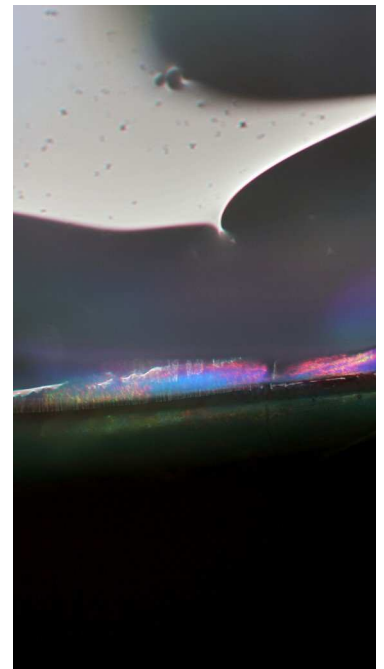
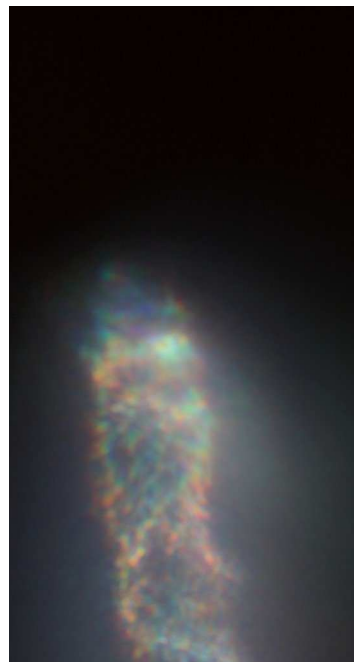
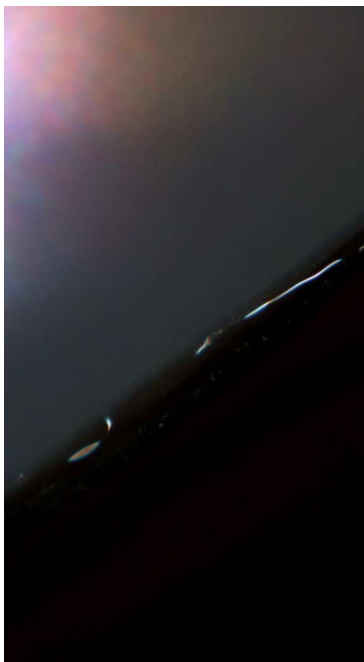
Wilson in his recent book *The meaning of Human Existence* that you referred to, seeks to bridge science and philosophy to create a twenty-first-century treatise on human existence. Does this similar process somehow impact you in *Light and Death* and if so, how does it manifest in your work?

I think some of this is already answered above. My deep believe is that we need science as described by Karl Popper which would avoid the arrogance we can find there (then often in combination with commercial interest) and the arts/humanities where Philosophy is one of them (unfortunate often infected by Ideology which is exactly the opposite of what I'm looking for).

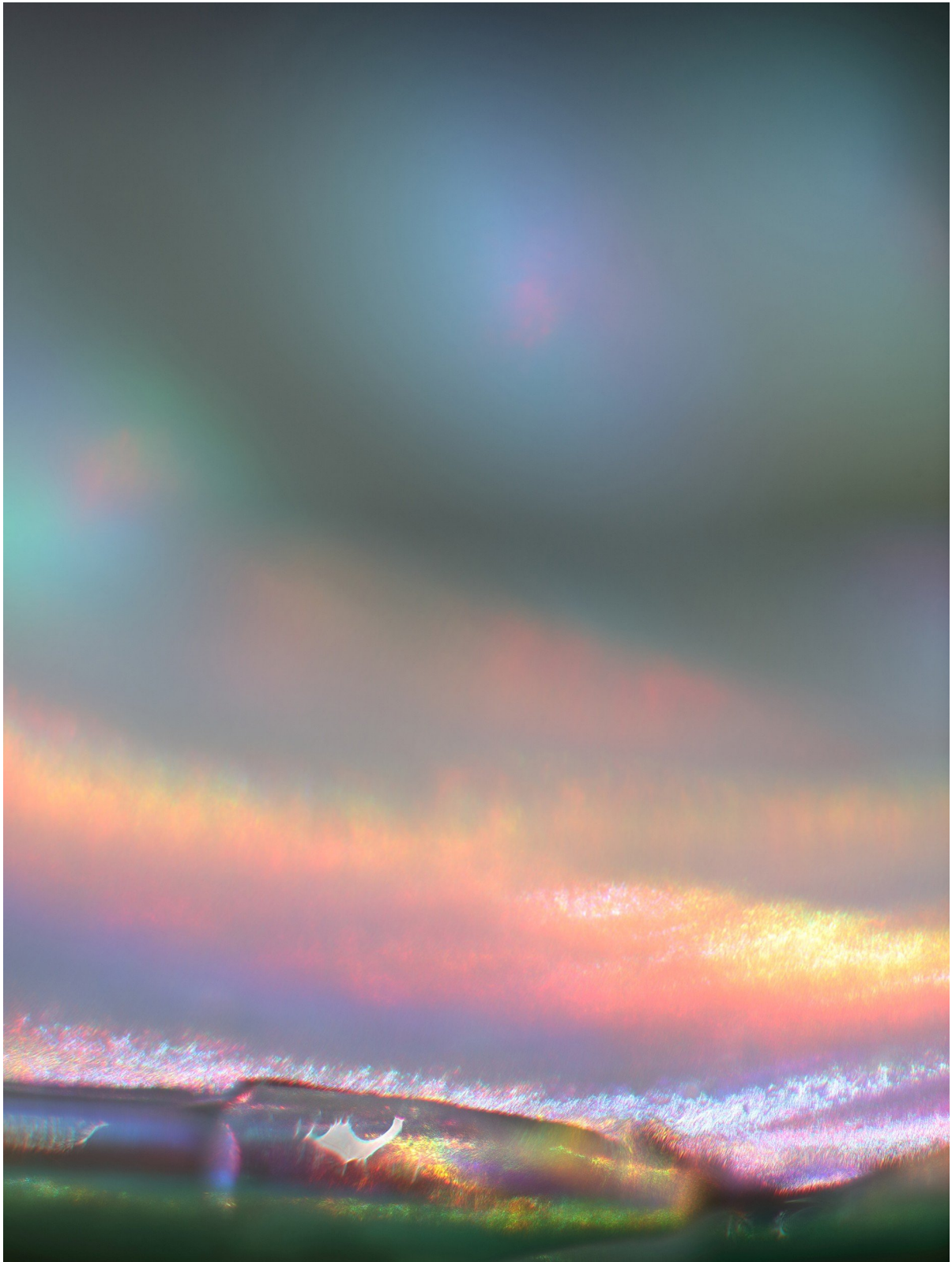
As humans we have and need both aspects deep rooted in us but it's a narrow path to keep the right balance.

CC: When you were making this series, what kind of camera did you use?

Canon EOS 5 d rs, Canon 24-70 mm in reverse position, Novoflex bellow,Novoflex reverse adapter and led panel 5500-kelvin.



*In the Shell 2,3,,4*, From the series *Light and Death*, 180 cm x 120 cm



*In the Shell 5, From the Light and Death Series, 180 x 120 cm*

CC: What prior series of work leading up to *Light and Death* established a precedent for the work you are doing now? And how so?

K: *Light and Death* is more related to my painting then to previous photo projects, e.g. there are no color modifications as used in my other projects. The color modifications within the camera I use to make photos, which reflect what I feel, want to feel or want to see, the Photos in *Light and Death* are traditional photos without any modification.

CC: *In Artists on the Bridge*, social activism and spiritual consciousness come together in the work of artists for whom mentoring emerging generations has been an essential part of their practice. They create a “bridge” of understanding and a platform for dialogue and authenticity. Without making this essential connector, the metrics of market capitalism will continue to dominate the narratives of culture. The artist’s work is a range, or literally a bridge, between the poles of representation as seen in social activism and color field abstraction evoking spiritual consciousness.

K: The metrics of market capitalism will continue to dominate the narratives of culture. I fully agree but I think we need to dig deeper. For me those metrics are not the root cause they are already a result of unsolved human issues related to ideology, uncontrolled reflexes and instincts, ignoring science, ignoring logical thinking, following stupid leaders etc.

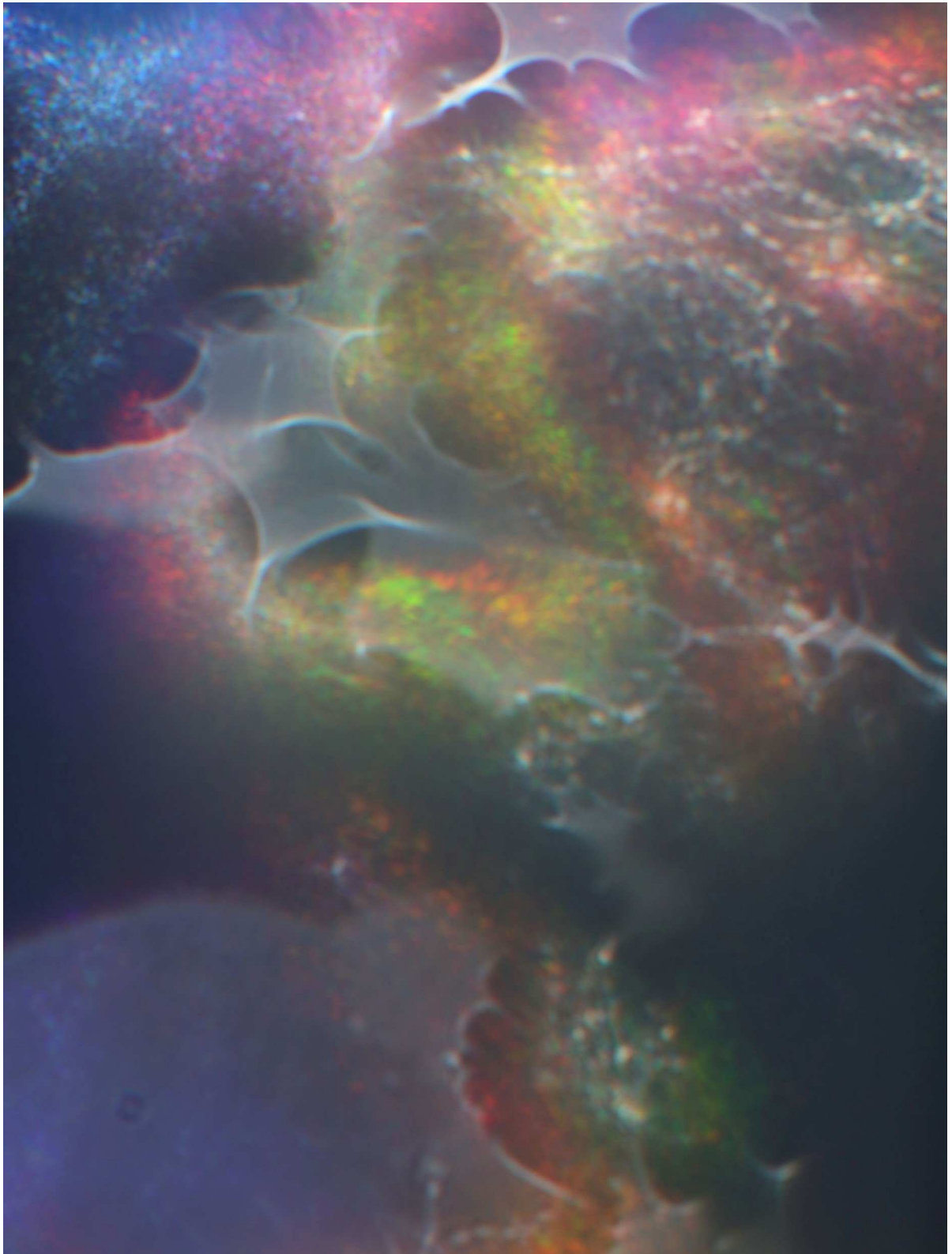
CC: I view your work, as shimmering fields of abstraction, at least in one way as portals into a meditative zone that can evoke an approach to spiritual consciousness.

K: Fully agree, thanks for that. All these are important aspects of human existence, looking to the sky at night and being overwhelmed, standing in front of the Annapurna Mountains etc..are most important aspects of our human existence.

If we manage to use this to explore the world around us more, to dig deeper we will never lose that, that’s one of the ugly strategies of the anti-Enlightenment movement, very deep rooted in our culture starting with Eva and the apple, which still justifies for a lot of people to treat women badly and to ignore science.

Digging deeper, finding answers just makes life way more exiting and there will be no end to this because there is no final knowledge, no final truth, again its up to us...but we have to move our ass, use our brain instead of going for ideology with simple answers, following others who do the job for us (and make us great again).

CC: This notion is not new to abstraction, and was voiced famously, for example, by Wassily Kandinsky in his *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. Similarly, Carl Jung in his study of archetypes and the Psychology of the Transference has alluded to the aspirations of artists to seek a higher consciousness through their art. In your work, would you talk about this tendency, and how it can be related to the lineage of thinkers like Kandinsky, Jung, and others. What are your thoughts about your own work in this regard?



*In the Shell 6, From the Light and Death Series, 180 x 120 cm*

K: I agree and the great thing is that in the last twenty years we got a lot of exciting new understandings about our human nature - neuro science and cognitive psychology, biology and physics are the most important to me. Having this new developments on a solid level allows us to solve some old conflicts in humanities (e.g. the influence of Genetics vs. Environment, question of determinism) which means we can bring ethics, higher consciousness, spiritual aspects to new levels by just getting rid of ideology in that world, too.

CC: In your own work as an organizer of exhibitions like Trans Angeles, how have you sought to help others artists and bring their work to the attention of diverse audiences? How have you acted as a mentor for other artists?

K: I don't see myself as a mentor, especially not within the TA group, none of them needs this. Its about collaboration and working together on similar ideas, together we can achieve more and the dialog/discussions between artists or humans in general when working on a real project has a deeper quality and meaning then just exchanging ideas. Teaching might be an option for me in a later phase but not now .

CC: In Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development, Generativity is a struggle against stagnation that ascends during adulthood. Generativity in the psychosocial sense refers to the concern for establishing and guiding the next generation and is said to stem from a sense of optimism about humanity. In short, it means giving back more to your community than you take out of it, and all of the artists in Artist on the Bridge not only do that, but have made it part of their practice. How has this mentoring and giving back informed the art you make?

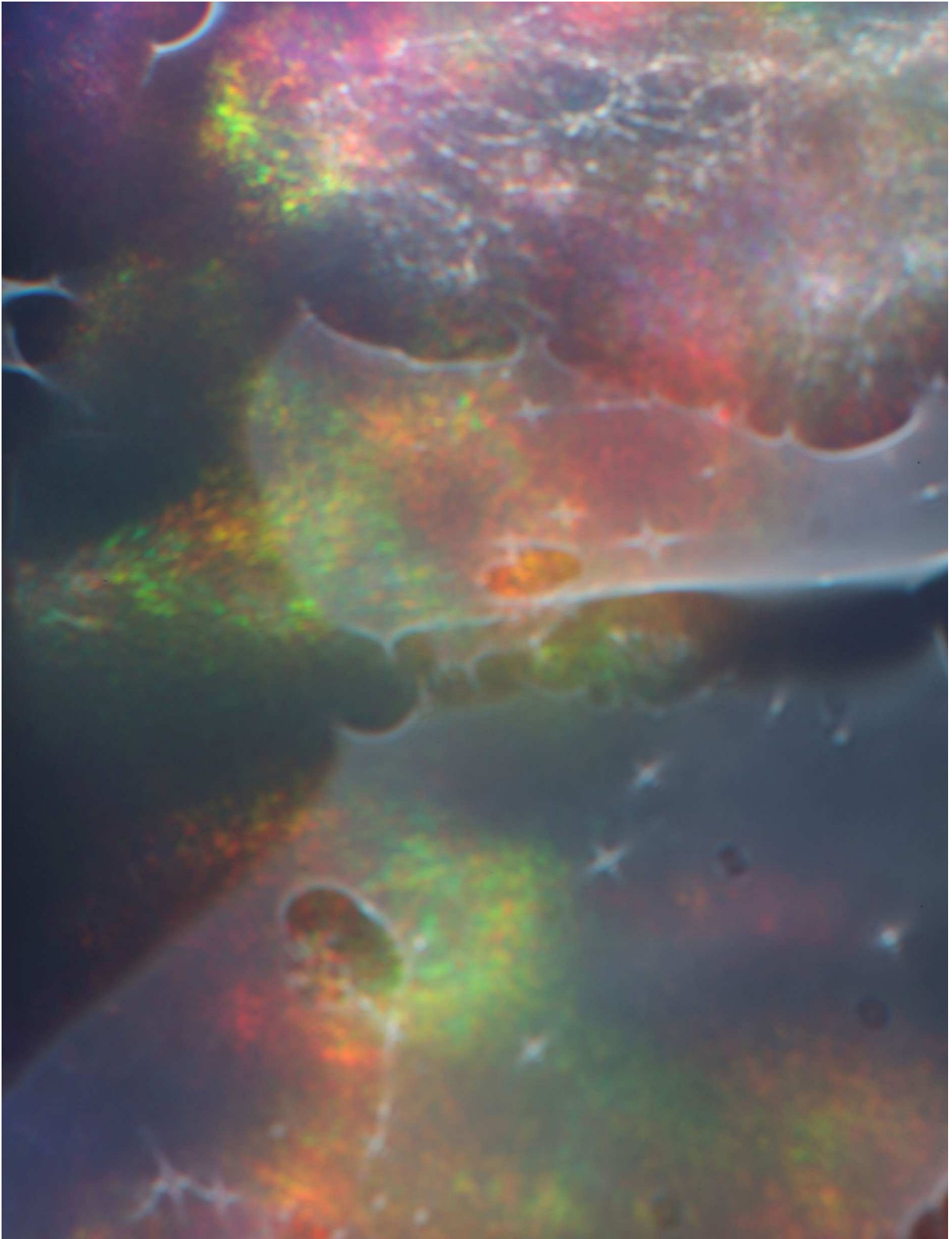
Giving back to the community is a strong aspect, I just would not use the term mentoring here. We are living in pretty exiting times where the powers and knowledge we have developed give us immense options to create a better future for *all of us* (this would be complex area to discuss separate) or run into deep disaster.

The key aspects are our instincts, emotions and our mental capabilities and to satisfy both of them in a constructive way will be a constant challenge for us as individuals as well as mankind at all.

As artist we are able to interact with all of this, we can look on aspects of ourselves and the world around us in new unexpected ankles.

CC: How do you view Artists on the Bridge and what do you hope for it to become?

K: Lets make this the bridge between us and future generations of artists, the bridge between art and science etc. we need it more than ever now



*In the Shell 7*, From the *Light and Death Series*, 180 x 120 cm

**KuBO**, born in 1962, has lived in Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Sweden and his home country in Germany, both for his work in several continents and for enriching his art. This includes paintings, sculptures, photographs and their combinations, resulting from his extensive research into pigments, ink / ink and coatings. This research, in turn, is driven by its global environmental commitment. His experiences with such materials give the surface of his pictures and objects a peculiar glimmer. Before living in Hong Kong, KuBO lived and worked in various other cities in Asia, including Istanbul. The pseudonym "KuBO" comes partly from the Cantonian term for a broken but repaired vessel - a metaphor for reconciliation after a time of conflict and conflict.

Between 1992 and 2000 he experimented and developed waterbased pigment concentrates, hydrophil and dydrophob binding agents. In 2002-2008 he was working extensively with digital photographic work. And since 2008 he has developed numerous series of sculptural, painting photographic projects including *Artefacts From the Good Old Times*. From 2014 to the present he was one of the main organizer's of "Trans Angeles", an extensive traveling group exhibition in German Museums of Los Angeles, Asian and European artists. This project has been a major effort involving numerous artists in a transatlantic cultural exchange exhibition project. The past two years he has devoted to the making of the *Light and Death* series.

His group exhibitions include in 2010, the *One Year Anniversary Exhibit*, Water Street Studios, Batavia, IL; *International Painting NYC*, Jeffrey Leder Gallery, New York, NY in 2011; in 2012 exhibitions at the Gallery 7, Tokyo; Texas A & M University; and Flow Art Space in Minneapolis.

In 2013 he was in the 4th Annual Photography Exhibition at the Aperture Foundation in New York, and in 2014 saw the first of the *Trans Angeles project: Crossover Experimentation from Southern California*, Kunstmuseum Wilhelm Morgnerhaus, Soest, Germany. In 2015 notable exhibits included *Water Works I* at the Lancaster Museum of Art and History, and in 2016 *Trans Angeles Good bye*, Kunstmuseum Wilhelm Morgner, Soest, Germany, *60 Americans*, Makeshift Museum, Los Angeles, CA, *Trans Angeles*, Chabot Museum, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

One-person exhibitions include in 2012 *Artefacts from Good Old Times*, Karpeles Museum, Santa Barbara, CA; in 2015 *KuBO*, VICA, Gypsy Trailer Show at Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, CA, and in 2016 *Art is a four-letter word*, Gallerie Droste, Soest, Germany.



In the shooting of this series KuBO outlined the steps in his process as follows:

1. Placing the shell or other object and an LED panel to create reflections
2. Adjusting the camera, focus and decide about aperture which changes the visual motive dramatically
3. All camera settings were done manually; automatic camera functions don't work with these settings, so its technically a very old fashioned way which requires highest level concentration because the motive is so small and because of its iridescent nature very hard to focus; after 30 minutes the shot was finished.
4. For some photos: dripping a little bit water over the shell to add more effect



*Artists On The Bridge* at Photo LA 2017 is a special project produced by Campbell Consultants Group and would like to thank the following:

Artist KuBO

Artist Fatemeh Burnes

Artist Kate Johnson

Artist Richard Shelton

Temporary Space LA

Claudia James Bartlett

Madeleine McManus

Photo LA

John Coloa

Weldon Photo Labs

Dave MacIntosh

Mt. San Antonio College of Art

Fine Art Solutions







Artists On The Bridge  
The photographic and video art of:

Fatemeh Burnes  
Clayton Campbell  
Kate Johnson  
Kubo

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