



THE NEXT EXHIBIT to open at Light Art Space is an international juried show of pinhole photography called "Layered Light: Contemporary Pinhole and Zoneplate Photography." It is dedicated to Eric Renner, a celebrated pinhole photographer who lived in the Mimbres and died last year. The show is juried by Renner's partner, Nancy Spencer, director of Pinhole Resource Inc., and Scott McMahon, associate professor of art at Columbia College. It opens April 23 and runs through June 26. A show of the jurors' pinhole work will be on display at the same time.

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A VIRTUAL TOUR OF EARTH AND SKY AT LIGHT ART SPACE

by Christine Steele,
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We are all feeling a little cooped up after a year of social distancing and hunkering down to wait out this pandemic, so most of us have not been doing a lot of traveling. Well, if you are feeling as restless and hungry for wide-open spaces as I am, do yourself a favor and head down to Light Art Space gallery on Broadway and take a stroll through the exhibit "Earth and Sky: Photography from Grant County, NM."

The show's title is a bit of a misnomer as it actually showcases photographs taken by Grant County photographers, but the photos are from all over, although most were taken in New Mexico and Arizona. Not all, however. There are familiar Southwestern landscapes, both vibrant and muted, and distant galaxies seen through a telescope in Chile, magnified to bring out details the human eye cannot see. And at least one volcano.

Stroll past towering saguaros, perfectly shaped agaves, blood-red skies and swirling rust-colored canyons. There are a variety of shapes and textures, with prints on metal and canvas, and iconic views captured in both traditional and nontraditional ways, like the orange-hued view of the Kneeling Nun printed on metal by Tim Aldrich, and the shadows of the Grand Canyon, by Bruce Bloy.

As your eye scans the wall, you'll travel through peaceful forests and serene scenes of waving grasslands and postcard-worthy shots of canyons along the Gila River. There are spooky and haunting images of the Big Ditch, of snow-covered trees, and a stark red moon peering between black claw-like branches, ready to grasp it, and abstract, almost otherworldly images of moss and lichen, earth, and trees.

In curating the show, gallery owner Karen Hymer said she wanted to give Grant County photographers a place to exhibit their work and put

the focus on the natural world. "With the COVID shutdown, there was a lot of attention being paid to what was happening to the planet," she said. "Also, we live in such a beautiful place, and I knew local photographers would have work. There are a lot of really accomplished photographers here in Grant County." So, with that in mind, she chose the theme "Earth and Sky" and put out a call to local photographers to submit their work. The result is a beautiful collection of images from 26 different photographers, from those who have frequently shown in galleries to first-time exhibitors.

"Blue reflection," of piñon pines captured in a blue pool at Cherry Creek, is Cindy Provencio's first photo to be accepted into an exhibit.

"I was an art major but didn't focus on photography," she said. "Other than my final show for my bachelor's in English and expressive arts at WNMU, this was my first show since I graduated several years ago. I haven't even done art since about 2013. I took a different path with my life. So, getting accepted affirmed my artistic skills, so that feels really good."

It was the pattern of the falling leaves in the pool below that she was trying to capture with her Nikon DX, so the blue reflection came as a surprise.

"Since the theme was earth and sky, it captured both in an unexpected way," she said. It was another hobby that led her to photography — hiking. Combining the two has now become a favorite activity. Her favorite spots?

"Honestly, anywhere on the Gila River has breathtaking views. The camera never seems to capture it as beautiful as I see it with my own eyes."

Alex Woronow's photos help you see things the human eye can't capture. The retired Harvard-trained scientist-turned-astrophotographer combines two of his passions: science and photography. He creates deep space images that send you swirling into the celestial atmosphere bursting with nebulae and exploding meteors. To get the images, he leases time on telescopes around the world remotely from his Silver City home, then processes

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the images digitally, bringing out detail that no human eye could see. One image can take over 20 hours to obtain, he explained, then after processing, he has them printed on metal, which further amplifies the hues of these deep space landscapes.

Jim Pendergast combined his love of teaching and love of photography in one and has been teaching the craft at Western New Mexico University since 2013. His photos of Owens Lake, in California, tell an environmental tale of woe. Once a thriving bird migration stop 12 miles long and 8 miles wide on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevadas, in 1913 the lake was drained and the water diverted to the growing city of Los Angeles. Within just 13 years, the lake was gone and only a desiccated lake bed remained. The dry alkali lake bed contributed so much dust and particulate matter to the atmosphere that in less than 50 years, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power was instructed to begin spraying it with water to cut down on the dust. Since then, small pools of water have begun to form, and migrating birds have begun to return. Jim's photo "Owens Lake 1" shows the vast expanse of dry lake bed and the weathered wooden remains of a fence and stone pylons.

"Owens Lake has an amazing story to tell," Jim

said. "From the loss of water to 50 years later the Department of Water and Power being instructed to knock that dust down and bring water back to the desert. When you do that, it brings life back. Water is life and it brings life back to the desert. That's the profound takeaway."

Despite this, as recently as 2013, Owens Lake is the largest single source of dust pollution in the United States.

Jim has been showing his photos in galleries in California since 1995, and locally since he moved to New Mexico.

"New Mexico is a big art state and one of the best places to go to get your work reviewed," he said. "I encourage students to enter, especially local shows, and I do have one or two students whose work is in the show."

Bruce Bloy has been taking pictures since he got his first camera at 9 years old. After a career in the graphic design industry, he got back into photography more seriously and began using his mastery of Photoshop to bring out his images. His photo of the shadows at the Grand Canyon took two to three hours of editing, while his perfect mirror image reflection of a lone tree and the sky in Cass Lake, Minn., took probably 20 hours of editing

over the 13 years since he took the photo to get the right balance of lake and sky.

"COVID has been a mixed blessing," he said.

For the past year, Bruce has spent between two and four hours a day going through his archives of thousands of photos — taken on 17 major trips around the country — and posting a new image each day on his Facebook page.

"The vast majority of my images are not Southwestern art and it was a great pleasure for me to go back through and revisit them," he said.

Bruce said he is frequently told that his photos look like paintings.

"That is an element I actively strive for," he said. "I look for composition first, color second, and I look for — hopefully — emotion. If I can elicit an emotional response in someone looking at my picture, I consider it successful."

"Earth and Sky" is on display through April 17. Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and by appointment.

Photos courtesy Light Art Space
Left: "Milky Way" by Jim Matthew
Right: "Blue Reflection" by Cindy Provencio

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