



Distinctive Image

featuring...

Barbara E. Miller, FPSA, PPSA

Boynton Beach, Florida



Blue Poppy

Once again the *Journal* continues its *Distinctive Image* series, featuring this time a Photographic Society of America (PSA) artist who particularly enjoys table-top and macro photography; most especially using local flora grown in her own garden in Florida. **Barbara E. Miller, FPSA, PPSA**, is renowned for her exquisite and creative images of flowers.

Managing a travel agency in Ann Arbor, Michigan gave Barbara opportunities to travel worldwide. On her first trip to Africa in 1979, her neighbor, a keen photographer, was dismayed to learn that Barbara, knowing nothing about photography, intended to take a little Kodak camera and buy postcards! With his coaching and a new Olympus SLR she left for Kenya. Upon her return home the first slide she viewed was to her untrained eye, the most marvellous picture of a giraffe ever seen and she was hooked. Shortly after retiring, Barbara, and her husband Dale, moved to Florida and in 1983 she joined PSA.

A prolific exhibitor, this *Distinctive Image*

artist has four stars in the Nature Division; three stars in the Electronic Imaging Division; four stars in the Photo Travel Division; three stars in the Photojournalism Division; three stars in small prints and five stars in the Color Projected Imaging Division. She was awarded her first PSA Gold medal in 1991 and now has a total of thirty-one medals and plaques: seven Gold medals—with her image, *Blue Poppy* accounting for four Gold medals and three Awards. Barbara has acceptances in over 962 exhibitions. In addition to her photographic achievements in PSA-recognized exhibitions, this PSAer has been published in *Pop Photography* and took first place in a Kodak competition. Barbara has had the PPSA distinction from 2001.

Internationally, the *Federation Internationale de L'art Photographique* (FIAP) has recognized Barbara's work: in 1995 she received an associate in FIAP and in 2000, she qualified for the honour of EFIAP, for excellence in photography. She had acceptances in 436 salons with FIAP patronage.



Amaryllis with border

Barbara began by entering slide competitions in 1988 in the Photo Travel Division (PTD). Eager to host a Photo Travel Salon (as they were called in those days) she had the Delray Camera Club, of which she was president, host the *Sunshine State Photo Travel Salon*, which continued for five years. In PTD Barbara served as PSA Chairman of Travelette and Travel Set Competitions and then Vice Chair of Services.

When the Electronic Imaging Division (EID) was formed in 1997 this PSAer quickly joined study group number five and shortly thereafter, Barbara became the Director of the EID study groups, a position she has held from 1999 to the present. This has become Barbara's main service role in PSA and in 2007 she received an EID Service Award plaque that reads "in appreciation for exceptional contributions and unselfish service performance in the valued interest of EID photo art." This was a very proud moment in her life.

After joining EID, Barbara was encouraged to start the *Tropical Image Exhibition* by **Nick Muskovic APSA EPSA**. This exhibition has become one of the largest PSA-EID-recognized exhibits in existence. She has been director of the Exhibit, now in its fifth year, since its inception. In 2008, Barbara acted as Director of the PSA EID Exhibition.

In addition to her work in PTD and EID, Barbara has served as a PSA Region Director for Region 8 and Past Chairman of the Everglades Chapter of PSA. Mrs. Miller was elected an Associate of PSA (APSA) in 1995 and in 2002 she was elected a Fellow (FPSA).

TECHNIQUE

Barbara utilizes backdrops of black or red velvet, sheer nylon or blue felt draped over a home made bracket of 1/2" PVC pipe, 5' high by 4' wide. In her east facing sunroom, she sets up her flower arrangement and using an atomizer bottle of water and a little glycerin, she sprays the flowers for interest. Her camera of choice is the Canon Rebel XTi with a 100mm Macro lens. Sometimes, the 28-135mm or 70-300mm lenses are used, and although the lenses have image-stabilization, Barbara sets her camera on a tripod and utilizes the self-timer, which gives her an opportunity to run around and hold a reflector on the flower. She usually uses the silver side for added light.

Starting with Adobe Photoshop® 3, this PSAer has upgraded each time to the current CS3. Barbara enjoys using various filters but many of her ideas come from the techniques used by members of the EID study groups. One of her favorites is using a vignette to surround a flower set-up, to soften and add an esoteric touch to the image

Barbara states, "It would be ideal to have a shooting partner, because of the going back and forth that I go through to arrange the set-up. Move a petal, go back and look at it through the lens, go back and move something else, so that it takes me forever to get just one shot. I shoot in RAW format which I thoroughly enjoy using."

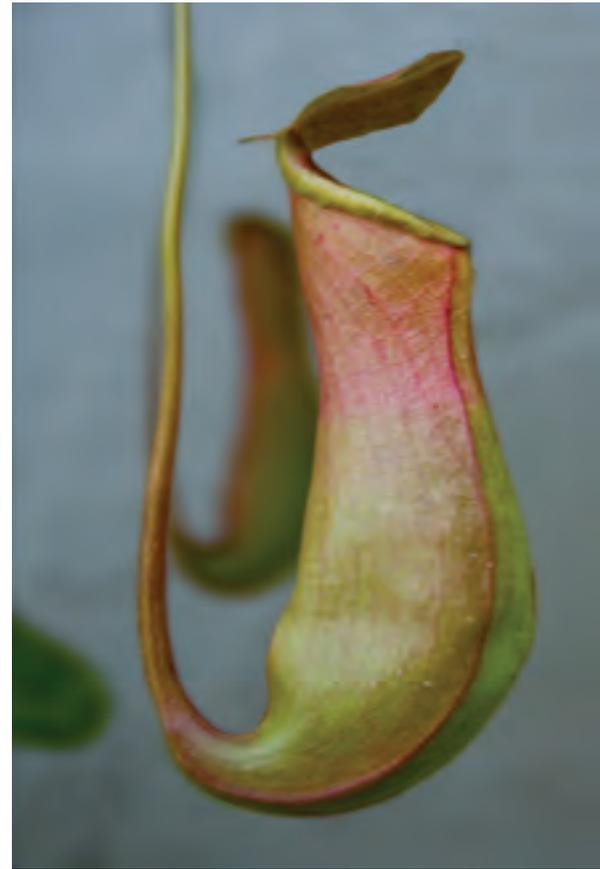
*Magnified
Magnolia*



Shaving brush tree



Sunflowers filtered



Pitcher plant

Photos © Barbara E. Miller, FPSA, PPSA



ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Before joining a camera club, I merely took snapshots. But while on a field trip after joining a club, an old-timer acting as my mentor began pointing to things that I never would have noticed; a dripping tap, an oddly shaped vine, a frayed rope, the striated tree bark that makes one want to reach out and touch it, or a still water's reflection. As a result, things I formerly would not even have considered pointing the camera at began to take on new meaning. My mentor taught me a valuable lesson: he taught me to "see."

The delight of looking at the world with a discerning eye and helping others to do the same, has enriched my life, and although the object is not always photographic it has brought me a pleasure that I would perhaps never have known but for looking through the lens of a camera.