

Artist's Statement OneTree Improv— A Portfolio by Witta Priester

I love taking photos — new photographs are all promise and possibilities! They are the raw materials that allow me to celebrate life and joy, as I play coy with realism.

My images reflect my up-beat life-view, as I create a vision that enhances the subject and its surroundings. I'm drawn toward photomontage, combining images I've taken — of rust, walls, bubbles, birds, etc. — into my photographs, to make them fresh, striking and sometimes other-worldly.

In this series, I explore images of the isolated tree. Like many photographers, I find trees —especially a lone tree —intriguing, beautiful and evocative. Trees typically symbolize nature, life and growth. For me, trees also embody the concepts of uniqueness, knowledge, and strength. When I look at an isolated tree, I see possibilities, often "all alone and (mostly) happy".

Initially, I experience the single tree as part of quiet, peaceful world. I see glorious sunlight playing on the leaves and bark, and I see a sky full of possibilities. Trees reflects the passage of time — decades may have passed to produce this complex, unique and formidable ally. But then, I picture MORE ; my mind reimagines the scene — with its one tree — as a different story.

The photo captured by my camera often feels too quiet, too bland, too simple. It doesn't suggest nor express the joy I feel as I soak in the nearby grace. Like solos in jazz, which celebrate and encourage improvisation and experimentation, I shape my images by exploring a multitude of possibilities. The original capture is merely the first step. Viewing these photos catalyzes a second, more creative process. As I seek to share my sense of beauty, awe and wonder, an amplified scene grows in my mind's eye. I might add color, tonal variations, or textures. By embracing my imagination and my develop skills, I transform my photographs into painterly fine art.

These images are some of the results. I hope looking at them evokes an emotion or reaction in the viewer. Perhaps they bring forth a dream, or rekindle a memory, or provide a few minutes of viewing pleasure.

"Trees are poems that the earth writes upon the sky." Kahlil Gibran