

BRENDA JAMRUS



It is the English scientist William Henry Fox Talbot who was credited with creating the first paper print, an image of a leaf, feather, and piece of lace pressed under glass.

Working in the tradition of Talbot and his so-called "photogenic drawing," contemporary artist Brenda Jamrus creates elegantly luminous botanical photograms that reveal the underlying structural beauty of some of nature's most fragile creations.

"I'm specifically working with plants and flowers because I'm interested in science and physics, and I like the combination of opacity and translucence of the plant material," says Jamrus.

"I also like the element of surprise and that I can't make two images that are exactly alike since the material deteriorates and becomes fragile as it's handled."

An accomplished multi-media artist based in San Jose, California, Jamrus has since the early 1980s

worked in sculpture, mixed-media collage, metalwork, and found images. She first took up photography documenting the punk rock music scene in the San Francisco Bay area, often photographing for the *Fanzine Ripper*.

As her interest in the medium blossomed, Jamrus studied photography under Barbara de Genevieve, who currently heads the photography program at the Art Institute, Chicago. From the beginning, Jamrus found herself drawn towards a more experimental approach to the medium.

"I didn't do much in the way of traditional media when I was taking classes," notes Jamrus, who currently teaches art and design at San Jose State University.

"There was a freedom to be more experimental, and I tended to work mostly with found photographs that I would incorporate into mixed-media pieces."

It was during her tenure as a high school photography teacher,

introducing students to basic dark-room technique, that she found a renewed interest in photograms.

"I came to enjoy the immediacy of the process and the anticipation of how the image would come out," she notes. "I like the purity of the process."

In addition to her botanical photograms, Jamrus has been producing a photographic series on European gardens designed by 17th Century French landscape architect André LeNotre. She hopes to publish her work in the near future, featuring images from both series in separate volumes.

In working with the photograms, Jamrus has sought to emphasize the structural, and often hidden beauty of the plants.

"I try to do variations on a single plant type, and I've found that it's not necessarily the most beautiful specimen that prints best," she comments. "Some of the most mundane and ordinary weeds are very elegant, and part of what I like about the photogram is how it stresses the form and composition of the specimen."

Jamrus's talents as an artist and photographer have been recognized with several artist-in-residency grants, including one at the Villa Montalvo art center on the San Francisco Peninsula, and one at the Center for Contemporary Art in Prague. It was in Prague she began her photogram series; and it was the city's beautiful architectural legacy that engendered an unexpected influence on her approach to the photograms.

"The sculptural relief in the architecture had a lot of the same aesthetic and sensibility, kind of an art

nouveau style, that I was looking at in the flowers," says Jamrus, who also cites Karl Blossfeldt, the Bauhaus instructor who did a lot of traditional photographs of plants, as an important influence.

Jamrus's work has been exhibited at the Center for Contemporary Art, Prague; Stanford University, CIS; SF Camerawork; Gallery Tercera and Linda Durnell Gallery, Los Gatos; Stanford University; UCSF *Art for Aids* at Bonhams's and Butterfield's, San Francisco; and the D. P. Fong Gallery, San Jose. Her photographs are held by numerous private collectors internationally as well as in a number of corporate collections.
—Richard Pitnick

■ PRINT INFORMATION

These photogram images are one-of-a-kind, printed and hand processed by the artist to archival standards. Image sizes start at 9x9 inches and are matted. Overall dimensions start at 16x16 or 16x20. Larger sizes are available, as well as a variety of botanical specimens not pictured here. Consult the artist's website to see additional work. Prices start at \$550.

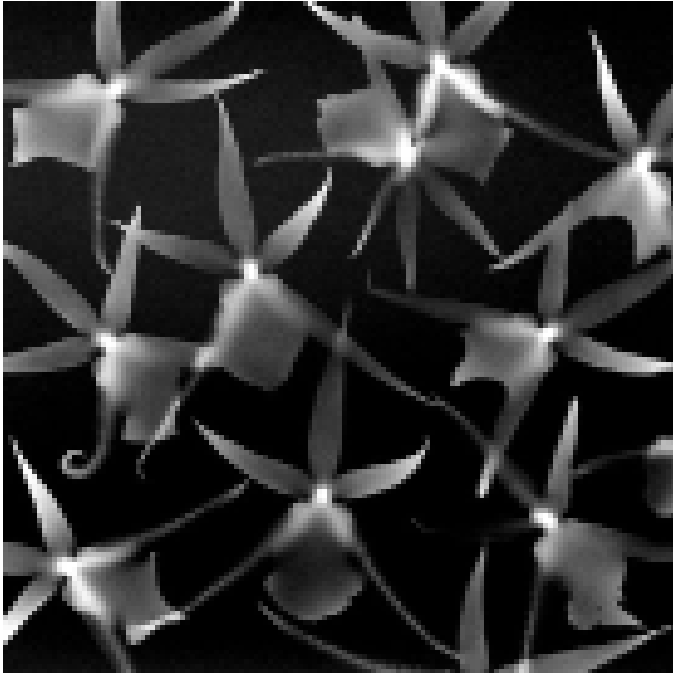
■ CONTACT INFORMATION

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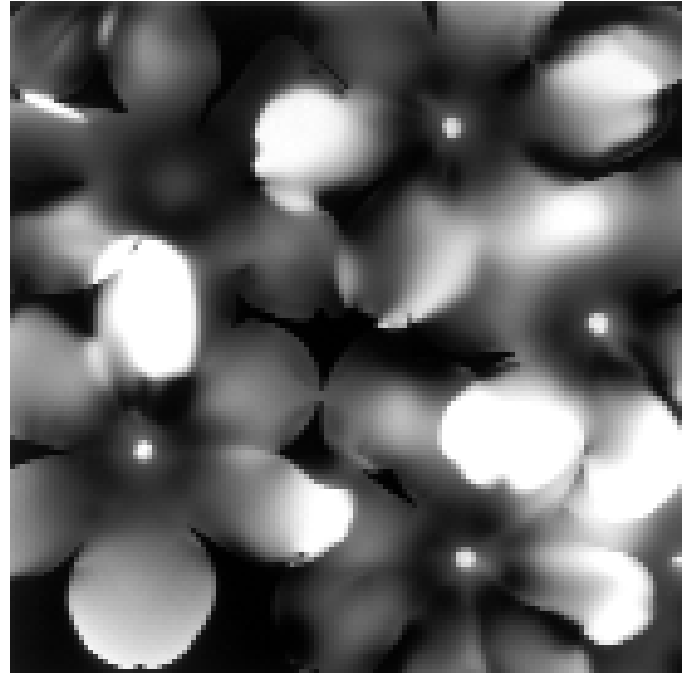
Jamrus is currently seeking additional gallery representation.



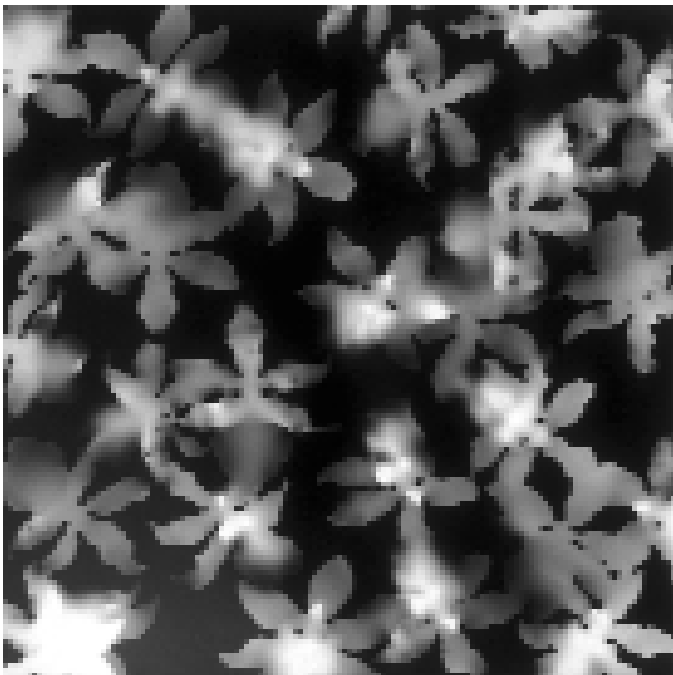
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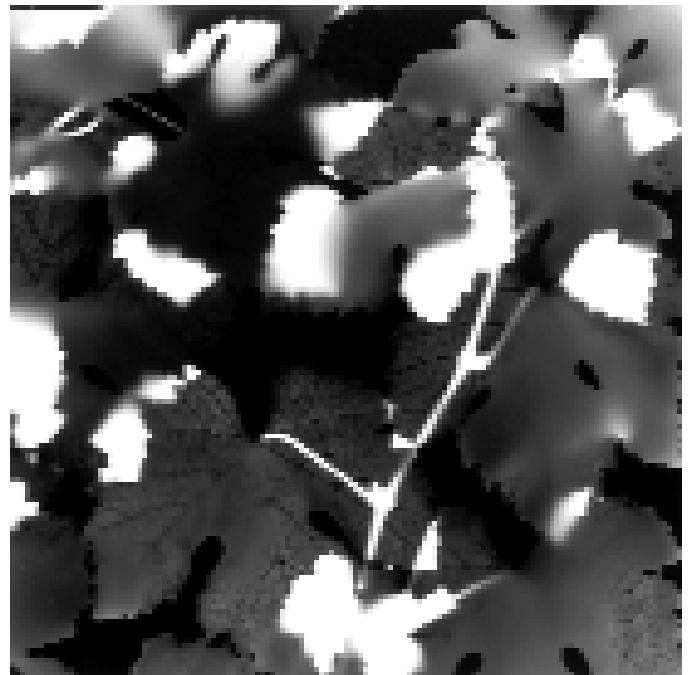
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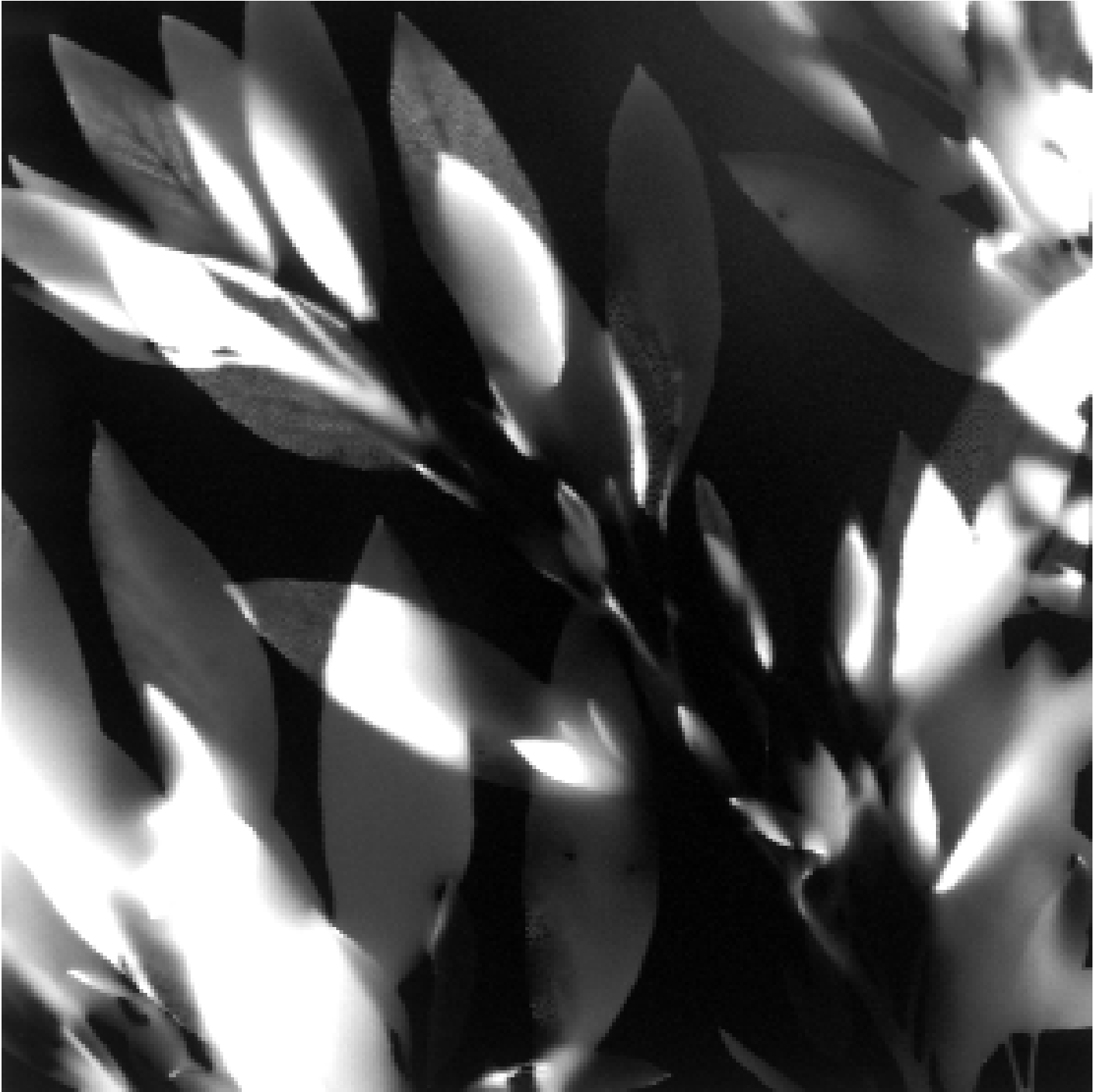
FIRMAMENT III—2003



VIGNE III—2003



GALAXY II—2004



SAGE IV—2004