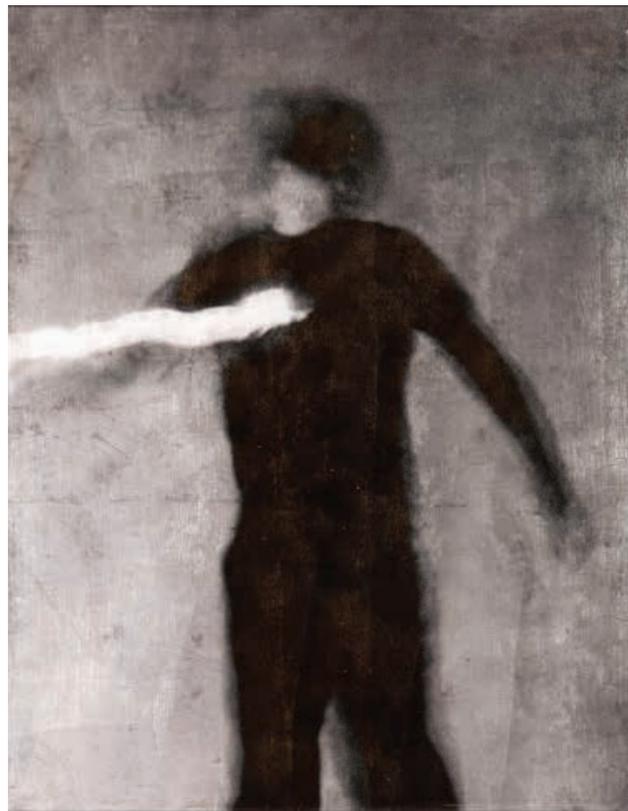


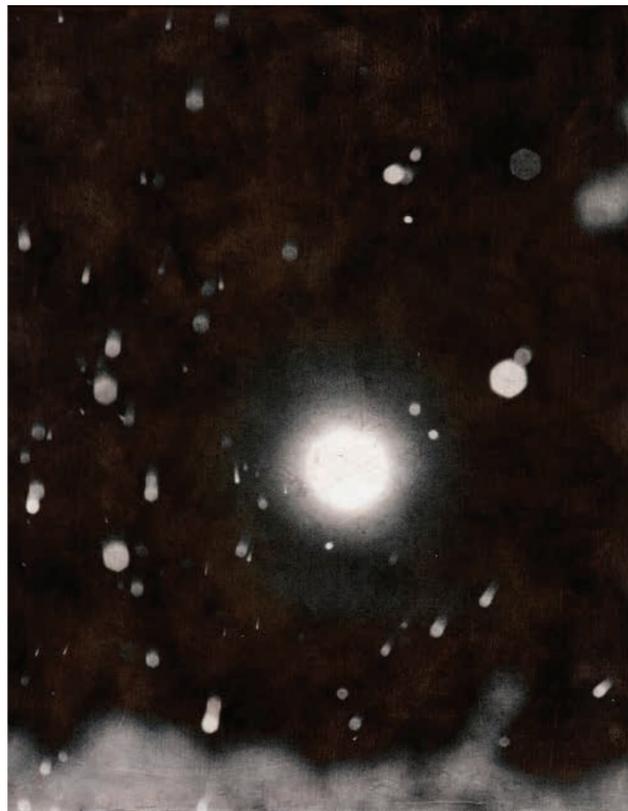
AMERICAN CONNECTION

It takes determination and vision to learn about traditional photographic practices then use the skills to create pictures that seek to connect with nature. But **Blue Mitchell** has these qualities in abundance. He talks to Susan Burnstine.

susanburnstine.com



Fusion, 2014



Comet Shower, 2014

Region photographer Blue Mitchell has a boundless passion for 19th century alternative processes with a modern twist. Throughout the years, he's successfully merged hands-on craftsmanship with thought-provoking, conceptual based narratives that focus on reconnection with the power of nature and mysticism, perhaps most effectively achieved in his series *Chasing the Afterglow*.

Early on in his photo career Mitchell became bored with straight photography and yearned for a more hands-on artistic approach to the medium. He became reinvigorated once he began

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studying antiquated photo processes, printing and working with mixed media all of which intrigued him the most.

The themes of mystery in nature, magic, mythology and metaphysics weave throughout Mitchell's work. 'Most of my work is based on my longing for spiritual connection with nature and my belief in universal oneness,' he says. 'My desire is to create photography that conveys emotions of delight, wonder, connectivity, otherworldliness, spirituality and magic. Sometimes I use personal and written mythology as symbolism to express these

ideas in a more narrative sense, other times I implement abstraction for a more meditative experience.'

Chasing the Afterglow began after Mitchell determined his creative time was limited to the evening, during twilight, and late into the night. 'I've always enjoyed the night, especially when there's a moon present,' he says. 'As a goal, I decided to photograph every full moon night for two years. The subject matter varied depending on the moon's location and visibility.'

On moonless evenings, Mitchell works in the studio to create what he refers to as his 'twilight lores'. 'The studio

work allowed for an abstract narrative and gave me the freedom to add hand drawn elements, figures and still lives,' he says. 'Additionally, some of my favourite images from the series have no moon at all, but rather the sun in more of a setting and glowing state.'

Mitchell's previous series was displayed by using light boxes. As he began creating *Chasing the Afterglow*, he realised he wanted to replicate a similar glowing cast from light boxes but in a different manner in his new work. That's when he came up with the idea of transferring the images on to silver leaf. 'The use of silver leaf and mixed media alters the nature of the two-dimensional photograph and creates a more all-encompassing experience,'



Faeries, 2014

he says. 'The technique accentuates the luminance of the subjects and gives the work a tactile, sumptuous quality.'

In recent years, Mitchell achieved a respectable list of accomplishments in the world of photography. Perhaps one of the most notable was the creation of his company, One Twelve Publishing, which includes *Diffusion* magazine, a photography book publishing division and an online photo magazine venture, *Plate to Pixels*. The aim of One Twelve Publishing has been to further educate audiences about handmade processes, as a means to celebrate practices that are widely considered as teetering on the brink of obsolescence. Mitchell's publishing ventures are a pure labour of love to help ensure others will continue to appreciate these methods for generations to come.

If all of that was not enough, Mitchell balances his photography and publishing company with a full-time job running a visual media service department for a healthcare organisation while

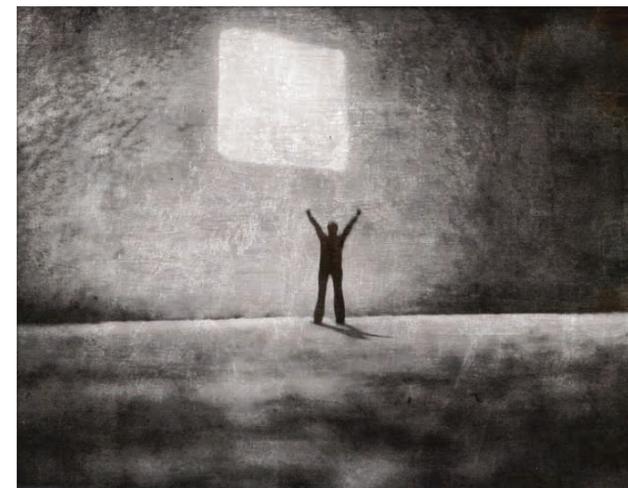
he and his wife are also raising two young children. That is indeed a full plate.

Currently, Mitchell is continuing to work on some new pieces for *Chasing the Afterglow*, which will be produced considerably larger than his previous prints. Additionally, he is working on an extension of the series with re-photographed images and additional added physical elements such as salt, cinnamon and dirt.

After these items are added to the composition, the piece is presented as a straight pigment print rather than lifts on silver leaf.

Additionally, he is reinvigorating a former colour series entitled *Evanescent Energy*, which involves creating a colour image on positive film then burning the image with an open flame until the film selectively melts, bubbles and changes colours.

bluemitchell.com



Illumination, 2014

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EXHIBITIONS
USA

BAKERSFIELD

Bakersfield Museum of Art

Until 6 August

Bob Kolbrener: Vision of Place

bmoa.org

BROOKLYN

Brooklyn Historical Society

Until 1 July

Truman Capote's Brooklyn:

The Lost Photographs of David Attie

brooklynhistory.org

CHICAGO

Museum of Contemporary

Arts Chicago

Until 23 July

Eternal Youth: Featuring Larry Clark,

Dawoud Bey, Wolfgang Tillmans,

Francesca Woodman

mcchicago.org

LOS ANGELES

The Getty

Until 2 July

In Focus:

Jane and Louise Wilson's Sealander

getty.edu

NEW YORK CITY

International Center

of Photography

Until 9 June

Han Youngsoo: Photographs

of Seoul 1956-63

icp.org

NORFOLK

Chrysler Museum of Art

Until 16 July

Glen McClure: The Shipyard

Workers of Hampton Roads

chrysler.org

PORTLAND

Blue Sky Gallery

Until 30 June

Wendy Ewald: This is Where I Live

Ima Mfon: Nigerian Identity

blueskygallery.org

ROCHESTER

George Eastman Museum

Until 11 June

Richard Renaldi: Manhattan Sunday

eastman.org