

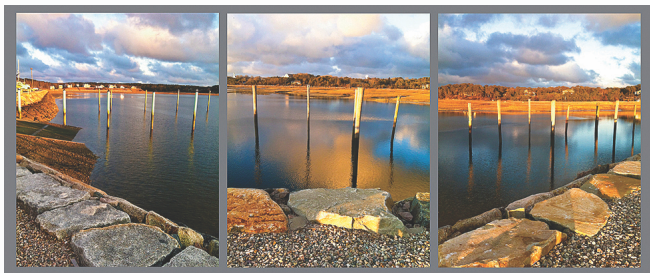
# Carol Ginandes - a photographer's expedition in photography



*The Agate Collector*, South American  
Portfolio © 1970 Carol Ginandes  
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*Gypsy Girl*, South American Portfolio ©  
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*Infinity Pier*, color photograph © 2017 Carol  
Ginandes [www.carolginandes.com](http://www.carolginandes.com)



*Island Bridge*, color photograph © 2018  
Carol Ginandes [www.carolginandes.com](http://www.carolginandes.com)

Carol Ginandes is an accomplished photographer who has a long history mastering her craft. Ginandes' photography and experiences are detailed in a first-person account below.

## About My Artwork

As an art form, photography is deceptively simple. Most people think it entails the easy act of "taking a picture" of the scene in front of them. This concept is reinforced by the thousands of images uploaded to social media every day by people who consider photography to be "a snap" - literally and figuratively.

I am not interested in "taking pictures". For me, creating photographs involves a deliberate, intentional, artistic practice, a process I experience as being a cross between poetry and prayer. My intention is to "make" strong, visual images that are aesthetically and emotionally revealing over time.

In general, I feel more moved to comment on beauty than on blight - whether in nature or in the human spirit. My photographs honor moments of transcendent appreciation of an ordinary reality that is so blessed by the clarity of light and color that it seems heightened to a dream. I continue to be amazed at how photographs of "objective reality", filtered through the lens of inner artistic reality, can become so unique and profound.

I have spent many years mastering my craft - first in the black and white darkroom, then in the color darkroom, and now in the digital darkroom. I use deeply saturated colors to evoke the richness of the image. Considerations of hue, contrast, scale, placement, vantage point plus a little grace go into making the chosen artistic statement. I am aware of every part of the composition contained by the borders of the image; this enables my images to have a strong element of abstraction as well as, paradoxically, a heightened realism.

My final images purposely hover at the intriguing intersection of painting and photography. I am accustomed to hearing viewers make the verbal slip referring to the images as "paintings" - until they pull back or go in closer to question what they are really looking at. More recently, I have been printing the images on canvas as the substrate; this serves to heighten the textural richness, and a purposeful confusion, as well as the sustained contemplation it invites.

All of the work on my website gallery is gathered into project topics, each of which has its own thematic coherence. They include the "South American Portfolio", "Western Series", "Outer Cape Portfolio", "New England Portfolio", and the "Infinity Series". I also do natural light portraiture that can be seen in

my “Portraits “ and “Wedding Album” series.

In my recently developing “Infinity Series”, the work takes the form of multiple images in juxtaposition; the visual elements that join them evoke narrative, non-continuous yet coherent imagery that resonates beneath the surface of consciousness. As the brain scrambles to complete the gestalt of the connection, it is guided into a different state of intuitive awareness. Examples from this series are the “Infinity Pier Triptych” and the “Island Bridge” photographs that are included here.

In my other “hat”, I work as a health psychologist. In that work, I integrate states of meditation/hypnosis into the treatment work to access inner resources that may facilitate the healing of mind and body. A longstanding interest in shifting states of awareness that elicit deeper levels of concentration and perception unifies the guiding principles of my work as an artist and as a psychotherapist.

### **Personal Art Story - The First 20 Years**

As an artist, I am a bit of a “lifer”. My childhood experiences with art seeded the vision that has flowered over time so I have included the following account of my formative years as an artist for the reader who may be interested.

There were virtually no artists in my family; yet, from an early age, I felt impelled to make art. I remember when I was eight, using the boldly colored paints in school, I wanted to render a realistic version of a person on the page, but it totally eluded me. Nonetheless I remember the teacher telling my mother that I had talent, and that inspired me to continue trying.

When I was ten, I entered a “Draw Your Father” contest sponsored by the local shoe store. I sat on the floor in the living room and carefully strove to draw my father as he sat reading the newspaper in his chair. For that drawing, I was proud to win a tennis racquet.

From that time on, I always carried a drawing notebook with me as I rode the New York City buses; secretly, or so I thought, I would draw portraits of the endless supply of new faces. I was glad not to have any real instruction, other than the generic free form art classes at school, for the duration of my childhood. That way I could discover the way for myself without being

constrained by rules or formulae.

When I was fourteen, my mother enrolled me in a “life drawing” class at the famed Art Students League. Somehow managing to tote a large newsprint pad under my arm, I would navigate the subway downtown on Saturday mornings. There was no instructor for the class - just a circle of aspiring artists, all them adults except for me, trying to capture the changing poses of the nude male model in the center of the room. On the first day, I must have appeared pretty slack - jawed at that sight, because I remember the middle - aged man sitting next to me poking my arm and saying “just start drawing!” I loved the flow of the charcoal pencil lines on the page as I struggled to depict a three dimensional form on a two dimensional page.

The summer I was sixteen, I attended a well - known summer art program at Skowhegan, Maine. Again I was the youngest participant, but I relished the serious concentration involved in painting for hours on end - both outdoors in the landscape and indoors in the studio. When my parents came up to visit, the director sat them down and told them I had substantial talent and that I should go to an art school for college. Yet despite that exchange or maybe because of it, my father, a physician who had always wanted me to follow in his footsteps, frankly forbade me from going to a specialized art college.

At the time, I was devastated. But I ended up going to a college that allowed me to pursue a wide range of studies in languages and the humanities that ultimately broadened my future career opportunities. There were no applied painting courses offered at the college, but, on Monday nights, I would ride my bicycle, treacherously hauling that large newsprint pad under one arm, to attend an extracurricular life drawing class. The instructor of the class would bellow at us as we drew, commanding us to observe the model carefully. He was intimidating and sparing in praise, but, like a Zen master using the paddle to remind aspirants to “wake up”, he imprinted on me the mandate to see and depict with full mindfulness.

During one summer of college, I had the good fortune to be accepted into a grant funded art program at Yale Summer School of Art in verdant Norfolk, Connecticut. In addition to painting, all of the students were required to study photography. It was there that I was introduced to and promptly fell in love

with the medium of photography. We were taught a full array of skills: using a vintage medium format camera for shooting, developing the negatives, and spending hours printing them in the black and white darkroom.

The instructor was a renowned documentary photographer, Walter Rosenblum; he was a remarkably kind and caring person as well as a superb teacher who became a true mentor to me. In his work, he photographed his subjects with deep empathy and respect. The resulting portraits were soulful paeans to people from disadvantaged circumstances that nonetheless appeared heroic and archetypal. As important as the content depicting his portrait subjects was, so were the aesthetic elements of the image composition and photographic rendering. This classical education in photography, albeit only a few weeks long, launched my life - long pursuit.

When I returned to college that fall, despite the fact that I was majoring in languages and literature, I was able to cross - register at MIT and study with the great American photographer Minor White. Minor was well known for bringing a spiritual, transcendent dimension to the creation and perception of photographic imagery. In class, we would begin by sitting silently in a circle and, using meditation and contemplation techniques, we would focus deeply on the images presented. Sometimes the photographs would be turned upside down to force the eye to see the composition and the range of tones abstractly. This kind of deeper perceptual awareness permeated my work going forward.

In my senior year of college, I applied for a Fulbright Grant in photography and, to my delight, was awarded a yearlong fellowship to South America. This extraordinary opportunity covered all my travel expenses and even gave me full access to the darkroom in the American Embassy in Chile. Leaving two weeks after my college graduation, I flew to Santiago and spent the next year traveling all over the country ranging from the Atacama Desert in the north to Patagonia in the south. As a young woman traveling alone with a camera, I was the object of much curiosity in the small rural towns when I would get off the bus, secure a room at the local bed and breakfast for a few days, and begin to chat with the local people. I wanted to get to know them in order to do justice their portraits in familiar settings.

One day, I took a local bus and asked to be let off at a gypsy encampment

outside of a town by the side of the road. The driver and the bus travelers tried vigorously to dissuade me, but I insisted. I spent a remarkable day in the tent with the gypsies and was very moved by their plight: their fierce spirit and pride along with the shunning and poverty they endured. The image included here of a gypsy girl from that time. Another time in my travels, I met a wonderful older woman in the doorway of a small town. She collected agates with a passion and regaled me with her tales; a portrait of her accompanies this narrative.

At the end of that Fulbright year, I was invited to install my photographs at an institute gallery in Santiago. For that show, I created a black and white exhibition entitled "Ventana al Alma" ("Window to the Soul"). The images clearly showed my admiration for some of the poorer people. The exhibit was perhaps challenging for the urban sophisticates who attended since they were expecting a "gringa" to offer a lighter view of pretty scenes of the countryside. This opportunity to create my first solo exhibition in my early twenties gave me a formative taste of the excitement of doing photography in a project - oriented, exhibition approach - that is, deeply exploring a unifying theme rather than grabbing images as they came along.

I will end this account of my early artistic development here. By the time I was twenty, I was already deeply involved with painting, drawing, and photography. Undoubtedly that multifaceted exposure set the stage for the visual work I have been doing and exhibiting in the decades ever since. I have continued to cherish having the freedom to pursue my own artistic vision and to be my own guide - just as I did in my childhood.

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