

# Zen and the Art of Digital Imaging by Ursula Freer

Digital Art: a Ping-Pong game between me and my Mac

I started experimenting with the digital medium fourteen years ago after having painted with traditional media throughout my life. When working with brushes and paint I often found myself dissatisfied as not being able to fully express my ideas. When I realized the potential of the digital medium it did not take long before I was totally won over.

Once I mastered the basics of Photoshop I was captivated by each new tool inspiring more exploration. I still find surprising effects that continue to keep the medium fresh and challenging. It's remarkable that technology, which supposedly tends to mechanize our endeavors, is capable of facilitating the expression of subtlety and intuitiveness.

I am happiest when improvising, letting the software randomly suggest a direction. If the results resonate, I follow and refine them. It is like an unplanned, intuitive journey that evolves naturally to a place where the subconscious has free reign and surprises delight.

Using different approaches, I mix some or all of the following components: digital painting, scanned objects, photos, fractals and filters. Layers, opacities and blending modes then connect the various parts to evolve into the image that speaks to me; the interplay of randomness and intention evolve into the final image.

I find it surprising that in spite of so many options the image eventually settles into the one combination that seems just right. Four Seasons

In Four Seasons I combined two digital paintings with a photo of tree branches in order to express the flow of the seasons and the transcendence of time. I prefer to convey an altered sense of reality rather than the objective way of seeing objects and events. Alia of Arakis (text from the novel Dune by Frank Herbert)

A character from the novel "Dune" and the captivating photo of the little girl were the inspiration for this image. The concept of an all-knowing child seemed intriguing and challenging. Fractals woven throughout seemed suited to symbolize the mystical and somewhat disturbing aura surrounding Alia. The components included photo, fractal, digital brush painting and text. This image was included in the Digital Art Guild exhibit Urban Legends and Country Tales (2008).

Three images merged into the picture below. Petals and Branches

The first of the three components is a digital painting using gradient colors for the flower petals. The second is a digital painting (with filters applied) added for the needed cool colors. The third, a tiled fractal, provides additional textures in back of the vines. Merging all three gives the work a richer surface and dimensionality.

I enjoy experiencing and expressing alternate dimensions and consequently am drawn to fantasy and the surreal, while still working with realistic images.

Summer Rain

February

Fly By

Ocean Sonnet

Ursula Freer website

