

REFLECTIONS

Ever since I was a small child, autumn has been my favorite time of year. It reminds me of walking in the woods with my father while he tells me stories of his boyhood in the Ozarks. The memory is so vivid that I can smell wood smoke and apples and hear crackling leaves underfoot. I see sunlight filtered through the trees, giving everything a soft, muted glow like candlelight.

As I looked over the art selections for our features, I see how like autumn this issue feels...serene, poignant, and reflective. The images are as expressive as a scrapbook, and they remind me of places I have loved.

When I look at the photography of Wendi Schneider, I sense a love of history - a reminder of more graceful days, a longing for what has gone before. Each piece brings a flash of memory - roses and old lace, grand Victorian houses. Her work has a romantic, dream-like quality.

Anthony Arciero's photography is characterized by light and shadow. It has a gentle harmony, a softening of sharp edges. Both he and Lauren Kramer have a gift for turning the ordinary and even throwaway objects into art. Kramer, who finds inspiration in everything from "stone carvings to clouds when you squint," designs a symphony of textures that add a delicate foundation to her photographic backgrounds.

"Immediate" is the feel of David Guilburt's photos. He "freezes an instant in time" through his new technique, cinegraphics. It is easy to imagine oneself in the moment.

The essence of the individual is captured in the compelling portraiture of Marc Hauser. The photos are intimate, stirring, evocative. Whether shooting celebrities or "real" people, Hauser captures the character within each individual. I am reminded that the artist Gari Melcher said, "Only that which has character is beautiful."

And so with the season of reflection upon us, I hope that you will be able to pause, get a cup of hot cider, and share with us a few quiet moments.



PEG CARMACK SHORT
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A Fine Eye For Detail

Wendi Schneider uses photography and paint to capture the beauty of simple things and simpler times.

By Nancy Bartels

"The details says photographer Wendi play of the various ele-balance, light and shadow, When you get up close and focus on the details, the picture becomes abstract. It becomes simple and essential, reduced to the elemental beauty of the object."



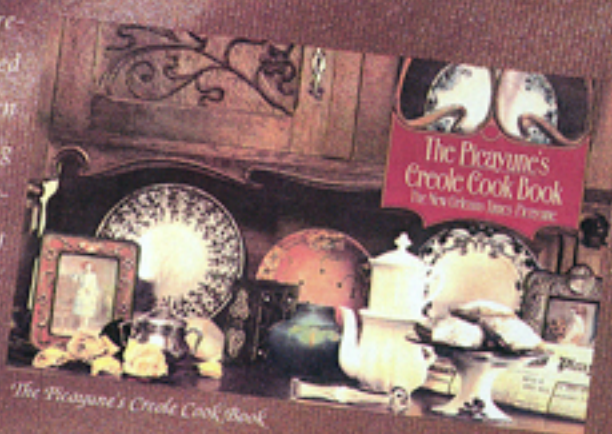
Tea

in objects fascinate me," Schneider. "The inter-ments - composition and the beauty of the line,

This fascination with the details is reflected in every aspect of Schneider's varied professional life. The Memphis-born photographer began her training as a painter at Tulane University and came to photography only when she began making reference shots of her models for figurative paintings. "I just fell

in love with photography," she says.

But the training of that eye for detail and Schneider's artistic drive both came much earlier. Born to a family of artists, early on she accompanied her mother, a needlepoint artist, on antiquing expeditions around Memphis, beginning a lifetime love affair with beautiful old things. Spending her college years and the remainder of her 20s in the lush, historic city of New Orleans further developed her romantic, rich, and evocative style. Her first creative job after college as a designer



The Picayune's Creole Cook Book



Gargoyles, Notre Dame, Paris





A Fine Eye For Detail

and copywriter with the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* newspaper sharpened her eye for detail even more.

This happy confluence of history, talent, and environment has sent Schneider's work in a variety of directions. She has done some advertising work, but more of her commercial photos have an editorial focus. She has shot cover photos for numerous books for Random House, Berkley Publishing, Little Brown, Warner Books, and others. Her project for Simon & Schuster, Mary Higgins Clark's novel, *Loves Music, Loves to Dance*, was Number One on the *New York Times* best seller list.

Her work has also appeared in *Victoria*, *New Orleans*, and *Literary Guild Magazine*. In addition, her fine art photography has been shown in galleries in New Orleans, New York,

Munich, and Basel, Switzerland.

From the beginning of her love affair with the camera, Schneider missed the smell and feel of oil paint, so she began painting her photographs. Rather than use the traditional method of applying color and then wiping it off again to leave a "tint," Schneider builds up layers of paint to achieve a rich and subtle color. Her media include a variety of oils. She intimates that "my brushes and my fingers" are her most useful tools. She also uses various kinds of filters and grainy films to achieve the distinctive misty appearance of many of her photos.

When asked about any messages in her photos, Schneider says, "If there is any specific message in my work, it's not intentional. I'm looking for a balance of composition, but it's more an intuitive than a cognitive thing. I see something, and my heart starts thing about a particular gets to me, and I think,

"Of course, everyone's biographical. I don't think doesn't reflect something

In Schneider's case, her early immersion in antiques



Calla Lily

to flutter. There's some image or moment that just 'That's it.' I just feel it. work is somewhat auto-you can do anything that inside of you." life in the Old South and her is evident in her work.



A Fine Eye For Detail

In an evocation of things past shot for *Victoria* magazine last summer, she photographically recreated elements of paintings by Dutch-American painter, Gari Melchers (1860-1932). These close-ups are loving studies of Schneider's favorite components, light, line, and texture, as they are reflected in scenes of late-Victorian life.

Schneider's work on book covers gives her another opportunity to focus on the details and communicate on an intuitive level. A book cover is a kind of visual shorthand. A high-heeled shoe, a string of pearls, or a gardenia carry the freight of the whole book. The idea is to intrigue and tempt the potential reader to pull this particular book instead of one of a hundred others off the shelf.

The photographer does not necessarily have to tell the story of the book, but should be "spiritually in tune" with it.

While she has done a dozen or more book covers, Schneider's dream project was a complete redesign and reissue of the 1901 edition of *The Picayune's Creole Cook Book*, produced in honor of the newspaper's sesquicentennial. Schneider designed, art directed, copy edited, produced, and shot the photography for the book.

Over the course of years, the original book had been "updated" and "improved," and Schneider's goal was to restore the sense of the original. "We went back to the original text. We had this wonderful chef who tested the original 2,000 recipes and cut the number to 800. Then we researched turn-of-the-century books to get an authentic type face, and we kept the French language expressions from the original."

The new version uses Schneider's photos as chapter headings and as cover art.

When left to her own devices, taking pictures without input from art directors or editors, Schneider continues her close-up exploration of light, line, and texture. Her meticulously painted and arranged photos begin to take on the quality of paintings. Her flower paintings are reminiscent of Georgia O'Keeffe. As with O'Keeffe, her eye for detail does not equate with



Bridal Finery



Two Roses



Dappled Roses II



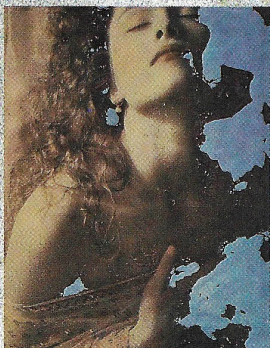


Alexandra with Anthurium

A Fine Eye For Detail

"miniature". Some of are 16 x 20s and 20 x 24s. She recently began working in the 30"

The other challenge herself is working with transfer process. In this pictures are converted into printed on watercolor Schneider begins to



Schneider with Shawl

her most popular works 24s. She recently began working in the 40" size.

Schneider has set for the new Polaroid technique 35mm pictures and then Polaroids and then paper. At that point, paint on them.

Still very much in the experimental stage with this process, Schneider says, "You have to do these over and over until you get something you really like. Every piece is different. Sometimes the result is pleasing. Sometimes it's not. I like the effects when I can draw and paint on the photos. They're a much more personal artform for me than, say, Cibachromes."



Hibiscus

And where to now for Schneider, beyond exploring bigger size photos and a new photographic process? For one thing, she is getting ready for a show in New Orleans in October at A Gallery for Fine Photography. She is also hoping to get her portfolio around to more ad and design agencies. "I see a lot of ads that I think my work would be perfect for; but I get so busy sometimes that I don't get my portfolio out."

Over the long term, Schneider wants to go back to doing books. "I like to do whole design projects. I'd like to do a book of my own work. And what I'd really love to do is illustrate a book of Colette's writing...her work is so beautiful and sensual.

"Of course, I love what I'm doing now too. I get a kick out of seeing my work published. But I'm still dying to go to Italy. I want to shoot the landscape and the architecture and the people, and, of course, be able to capture the sense of the past that pervades everything. And there's Paris and London too..."

Whatever direction Schneider's work goes in next, that fascination remains. As long as the world remains full of details articulated by light, line, and shadow she will not lack for sources of inspiration. ■

NANCY BARTELS is Senior Editor at CONFETTI.



Schneider with Hat