



End frame: Wonder Valley, CA 2019 by Joan Myers

GREG PIAZZA CHOOSES ONE OF HIS FAVOURITE IMAGES

By [Greg Piazza](#) | [October 7, 2022](#)

When On Landscape asked me to pick a photograph to write an End Frame article about, I was not only humbled but also very indecisive. There are so many landscape photographers I admire and am inspired by. As I thought about which photographer and which specific photograph to write about, I was overwhelmed. I decided the photograph had to be a non-traditional one, and it had to fit into my approach to photography and life. [Joan Myers](#) work immediately came to mind.

In the early 1970s, Myers turned to photography. She began as a large-format platinum-palladium printer, examining and photographing the relationships between people and the land. Her highly acclaimed work has been the focus of three Smithsonian exhibitions, more than fifty solo and eighty group shows, and eleven books. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Amon Carter Museum, Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, Center for Creative Photography, Denver Art Museum, George Eastman House, High Museum of Art, Minneapolis Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Museum of Modern Art, Nevada Museum of Art, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others. Today she lives and maintains a studio in Santa Fe, NM focusing on the myth of the American West.

I recently attended [Joan Myers' exhibition at Obscura Gallery in Santa Fe](#), NM and was drawn to her Devil's Highway landscape works. One particular photograph which gave me pause was "Wonder Valley, CA 2019." As a photographer who travels to remote destinations in search of unique landscapes and curiosities, Joan's "Wonder Valley" photograph has everything. The composition of the photograph leads the viewer through its depth, from the modern structure to the mountains in the background. Additionally, the details of the objects in the phone booth and costume are evident, but also in the more nuanced areas of the photograph, such as the shrubbery.

As I gazed at the photograph, I took in the masterful exposure of the scene, but then also the beauty in her printing process. The print is flawlessly executed. Afterwards, I thought this has to be a set up shot, but when I spoke with Joan about her process, I learned this was not the case. She does not set up photographs but instead searches until she finds the right subject. This was comforting to me and sparked a conversation between us regarding how it is more and more difficult to find these types of scenes in our fast developing world. I find this type of photography fascinating because it really forces the photographer to examine their environment and focus on the details that all play a part in the photograph. It's more than just a pretty picture and shows us that it is about the journey and not the destination.



[Greg Piazza](#)

Greg Piazza of Dallas, Texas "[@the_dallas_artist](#)" is an award winning photographer and painter frequently featured in online contemporary and fine art publications. Since 2004 he has won several national awards including The National: Best of Contemporary Photography 2018 and 2017 Fort Works Art, 40 Under 40. Greg's exhibition history includes exhibitions in Dallas, Fort Worth, New York, Scottsdale, Naples, Denver, Ann Arbor, Fort Wayne, and Waterbury. His artworks has been collected by the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Mattatuck Museum, and numerous private and corporate collectors.

In 2007, Greg became interested in how our environments shape our thoughts and emotions and set out to photograph these scenes to later reflect upon in his paintings. In addition to his self-taught creative style, Greg has worked with Alan Ross on fine-tuning his approach to processing and printing. Alan is an internationally respected master photographer and educator who worked side-by-side with Ansel Adams as his photographic assistant.

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(c) Joan Myers 2019

I also particularly like "Wonder Valley, CA 2019 because of the story it tells. It reminds me of the song Superman (It's Not Easy) by Five for Fighting. The singer has said the song is about "frustration about the inability to be heard." In this photograph, I see one of the harshest landscapes begging to be heard by a hero, but the hero is not there, only his superhero outfit.

The photograph also reminds me of the song's repeating lyrics, "it's not easy to be me." Despite all of their superpowers, we cannot rely on one person to save us all. The hero has become overwhelmed and is nowhere to be found. Perhaps the hero has left his superhero outfit for someone else to try to take on his burden. Only time will tell if someone will don the outfit again.

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