



Les Allert

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Biography

Born in Southern California, Les Allert moved to Simi Valley at the beginning of high school. He developed a strong interest in the biological sciences while collecting reptiles with his neighborhood friends. He earned his college degree from California State University, Northridge in Biology in 1974.

His Federal career, spanning 30 years, began in Yosemite National Park as a naturalist. Nature talks often relied on slide photography, which began his interest in 35mm photography. After working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, he retired from the Bureau of Land Management in Lake Havasu City, AZ in 2006.

In 1994 Les began taking photography courses at Mohave Community College. After taking a class in large format photography, he was hooked. Buying his instructor's camera, he now has been creating large format, fine art photography for more than 20 years, concentrating on landscapes, modern and historic architecture, and most recently, abstract features found in these subjects.

Moving to Alpine County in 2007, Les and his wife, Jill, built their dream home, including a dedicated darkroom. Les began taking photography classes at Lake Tahoe Community College and participated in the annual Student Art Exhibit each spring. In 2017, Les took the Exhibit class that organizes the Student Art Exhibit and was involved in all aspects of putting on a professional large scale art exhibit. He also explored the platinum printing process, first patented in 1873. His most recent work has involved combination printing called Gum over Platinum. The platinum print is coated with Gum Arabic with watercolor pigment and contact printed a second time to add color, in some cases selectively. Gum printing was first patented in 1855. Recently he began exploring Platinum over Pigment printing, combining digital and analog photo printing techniques.

Through his photography, Les has been driven to expose the viewers of his art to new ways of looking at the environment around them, to see those things often overlooked. Focusing on the ground glass of the large format camera shows an image that is upside down and backwards, thus forcing him to give careful consideration to the composition, as well as the design features of line, shape, texture and form.

In the last few years, Les has been exploring alternate printing methods, such as Platinum printing. Going the extra step, he is also beginning to do Gum over Platinum printing, now he has been learning Platinum over Pigment printing. Since he has already taken all the photo classes at LTCC that he is interested in, he and Jill have been taking printmaking classes.