

Huntington's fotofoto gallery's latest exhibit blossoms with floral beauty

By Rita J. Egan

Spring is here and flowers are blooming all over the island. Yet, whether found in a garden or a vase, the beauty of a flower is fleeting, unless a photographer captures the image of a bloom. Then, not only can its beauty live eternally, but also every nuance can be seen, and the image may even inspire one to see the flower in a new way.

To celebrate the fine art of floral photography, fotofoto gallery in Huntington will present photographer Holly Gordon's exhibit, FLORAbundance, through May 28. To complement her solo show, Floral Bouquet, with works from individual gallery artists, will be on display as well.

Gordon said that fotofoto gallery, which was founded almost 15 years ago by a group of Long Island-based photographers, is the oldest fine art photography collective gallery in the area that provides a space for professional contemporary photographers to display their work. Each month a group member has a chance to feature his or her art, and Gordon chose the month of May.

The photographer, who explained her work starts out as photographs but grows into something different in the digital "darkroom," said May is the perfect time of year for her to display her floral images. Gordon said while a young mother she would plant vegetables and flowers and then take photos of her garden. "A lot of my evolution as an artist has evolved from the garden, and I thought May would be a perfect time to let my gallery space explode with the color and profusion of these wonderful blooms after a cold, gray season," she said.

Gordon said she uses a 35mm Canon EOS 5D camera with a Tamron 28-300 zoom lens or a Sony RX1 with a fixed lens, and she varies her techniques when photographing subjects. She sometimes shoots with a shallow depth of field so the background blends in, and other times sets her camera out of focus so she can capture a more impressionistic view of what is in front of her. She said everything is manual because she feels, "it's not the camera, it's the person who is using the camera. I do not want a little box making decisions for me."

At times, Gordon will take one shot in focus, and then, without moving or changing the focus or depth of field, she'll keep taking photos. Once she has the photos on her computer, she uses Photoshop to layer them over each other and changes the opacity to make it look almost like cellophane to create an image that is recognizable yet at the same time represents her vision. Many times her photographs have been compared to a painting, which is no surprise since Gordon has a background in that art form, too.

"I'm always looking for creating my own vision, because you can set up a zillion cameras, and let the camera make all the decisions, and all you do is snap the picture, but I want to have a more personal response and reaction to what it is that I am looking at," she said.



Photos from Holly Gordon

Above, 'Iris,' a photographic print by Holly Gordon and left, Lawrence Chatterton's photograph, 'Astilbe Chinensis' will be on display at fotofoto's latest exhibit.



The photographer said she calls the paired exhibits at fotofoto The Focus Is Flowers, and the name of hers, FLORAbundance, is a play on the words floral and abundance. Gordon has 10 of her prints on display, and in Floral Bouquet 10 gallery artists are participating: Patricia Beary, Sandra Carrion, Lawrence Chatterton, Patricia Colombraro, Susan

Dooley, Rosalie Frost, Andrea M. Gordon, Kristin Holcomb, Seth Kalmowitz and Lois Youmans.

Gordon said photographers will each have one piece on display in the group exhibit, and their signature styles inspired the title Floral Bouquet. "Because each artist in the gallery has his and her own unique vision, that's why it has become a

floral bouquet. That's what's so fascinating, and it's absolutely wonderful, because it just shows so many different approaches to photographing flowers," she said.

The photographer hopes that visitors to the gallery will look at flowers differently after viewing the exhibit and that serious photographers may even be inspired to share their work with art lovers at fotofoto gallery. "I hope that it expands the way they see. That they look at the world much more sensitively and as a natural work of art, and that it might inspire them to see differently when they use their camera . . . not just to rely on the technology of the camera to snap something, but to be a more active player in choosing what to take and to realize that being an artist is a rare and special gift," she said.

Gordon said she once read something that Monet said to the effect of "look beyond the bloom." "What I took that to mean, and maybe that's something that I would like people to take away from seeing my work, what he was saying, 'look beyond the bloom,' see it for more than the fact that it's a tulip, or a rhododendron, or a rose or a daisy," she said. "See it as colors and shapes and patterns, and how those colors and shapes and patterns and textures play with all the other colors and patterns and textures around it. And, that's how I view the world; I see it as art elements."

The exhibit is the first of a number of events for Gordon in the next few months. The photographer is scheduled to display her FLORAbundance pieces at the Bay Shore-Brightwaters Library from June 1 through 30 and will also present a slide show based on the artwork at the library on June 13. Another slide show with Gordon, presented by the Long Island Horticulture Society, is scheduled for Sunday, June 28, at Planting Fields Arboretum in Oyster Bay.

In addition to her solo work, the photographer is currently working with watercolor painter Ward Hooper on the artistic endeavor, The Brush/Lens Project, which compares Long Island landscapes in both a photograph and painting to show how the brush and lens relate. The Long Island MacArthur Airport Gallery will host an exhibit by The Brush/Lens Project with Gordon's photographs as well as Hooper's paintings from July 1 through August 12.

Gordon said an artist reception at fotofoto will be held on Saturday, May 7, from 5 to 7 p.m., and the gallery will also be part of Huntington Village's first Art Walk taking place on Saturday, May 14. "I certainly hope that people will tiptoe through the streets of Huntington and come back to fotofoto gallery because I'm going to be there, too," she said.

FLORAbundance by Holly Gordon and Floral Bouquet by fotofoto gallery artists will run through May 28. The gallery is located at 14 W. Carver St. in Huntington and admission is free. For more information on the exhibit, visit www.fotofotogallery.org or call 631-549-0448. To discover more about Gordon's photography, visit www.hollygordonphotographer.com.

The shows

FLORAbundance
Floral Bouquet

The artists

Holly Gordon
Patricia Beary
Sandra Carrion
Lawrence Chatterton
Patricia Colombraro
Susan Dooley
Rosalie Frost
Andrea M. Gordon
Kristin Holcomb
Seth Kalmowitz
Lois Youmans

The dates

Now through May 28

The reception

May 7 from 5 to 7 p.m.