

visual

The Tao of Michelle Stump

Soulful landscapes thoughtfully rendered by Taos photographer

BY MANDY MARKSTEINER

Has the beauty of the natural world ever made you feel closer to God? The sun shining through leaves like stained glass. A deer looking you right in the eye. A soul-expanding landscape. You imagine what Heaven is like. You feel exhilarated. At peace. You try to savor the moment by snapping a picture...

...But when the picture is developed it doesn't look a thing like you remembered.

It's flat and boring. The feeling you had when you were actually standing there is lost.

Michelle Stump's images are what most people wish they could have captured. Her digital art spreads a sense of peace by showing the sacredness of the earth.

"God shows us the other side, but not many people slow down enough to see it," she said.



"RIO GRANDE RIFT VALLEY" BY MICHELLE STUMP.



"PERFECT PASTURE" BY MICHELLE STUMP.

To show me what she's talking about, Michelle had me drive five miles per hour down a dirt road in El Rancho past quaint old estate walls, quirky artistic neighborhoods, the perfect view of Black Mesa, and the trickle of the Rio Grande that keeps the rose bushes lush.

"I believe the place calls to you. You can hear or feel a place beckoning," she said.

I recognized the fence from her

photograph, "Perfect Pasture," where the horses came right up to her while the setting sun warmed the barrancas in the distance. But the place where she had taken the photo called "Cottonwood Arcade" was unrecognizable this day. Someone had put in a fence and cut the boughs.

"The images are here for an instant, and then they're gone," Stump pointed out.

Few people can capture the magnitude

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Black tree and Orphan Mesa, 2005. Photograph ©Craig Varjabedian.

GHOST RANCH

and the Faraway Nearby

Photographs by CRAIG VARJABEDIAN

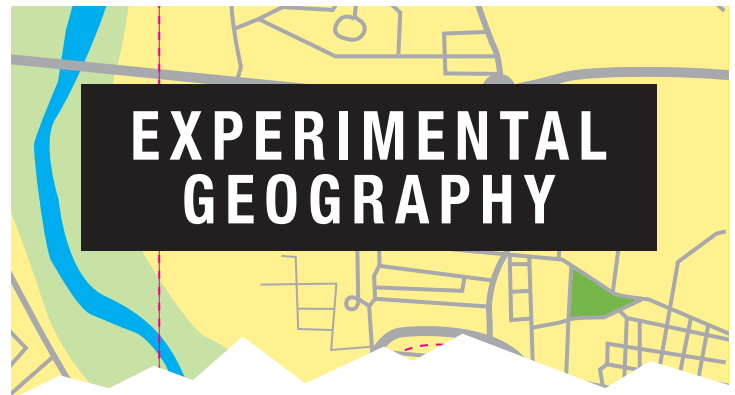
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