

ANGELA

BACON-KIDWELL

When Angela Bacon-Kidwell decided to move from her native Dallas to Wichita Falls in the Texas Panhandle ...a town 1/20th the size...she found not just a slower pace but also the landscape she was looking for.

"For twelve years, I worked in Dallas in a high-stress job. I did the fancy cars and big money and was so unsatisfied," Bacon-Kidwell explains. In Wichita Falls, she worked in marketing for a while and got married, then began painting again—something she hadn't done since she was a teenager. She went back to school and earned a BFA in art and photography from Midwestern State University, and she enjoyed some success as a painter. Photography remained peripheral to her work. "I used photography as a catalyst to the painting," she says. "I was never happy doing straight photography. I would use it as a reference—distorting or manipulating in the darkroom, or creating mixed media work. I was not interested in getting something straight out of the camera."

After the birth of her son, however, Bacon-Kidwell knew that painting in the studio for her customary eight or nine hours a day would be impossible.

"I have this intrinsic need to create. I wasn't going to give that up because I was a mom," she notes. With its portability, its immediacy, photography seemed the answer. "It was a deciding factor that the photograph would be the end result rather than a painting. Whatever I could do with baby in tow."

The world around her became her studio. In the ensuing years, the two became traveling companions, with her son as muse, subject, and delighted participant in her photographic explorations. Having become intrigued by the possibilities of the surreal through the work of Jerry Uelsmann, Bacon-Kidwell began creating dreamscapes full of family and friends that mingle imagination and reality. "I get my ideas from my dreams," she says. "I feel like most of my life I am never asleep. There is this constant drama in my head."

Appropriately, her color series is entitled, "Reveries." She no



longer works from a dream journal, however, having found that images arrive without much deliberation, interwoven with totems such as birds, trees or water. "Birds are very symbolic to me, spiritual," she reveals. "In essence, I attempt to create a waking dream."

She often uses props, sets and players, but works quickly to avoid overintellectualizing the photograph. "I usually set things up in a matter of an hour. It's instinctual," she says.

Most of her work is done out of doors and in natural light that takes advantage of her Texas Panhandle location.

"Landscape is important to my work," she says. "I have a great pallet up here. We have beautiful country and great weather. If I had to live in a big city it would drain all my energy. I draw all my energy from being quiet, being focused."

She particularly loves moody weather—rain, fog—and her colors are often muted and saturated. Kidwell's photography is similar to illustration or painting. Using classical techniques, Angela combines her ideas through photo illustration, painting and digitally hand crafting the stories she tells. Color plays a large part in her vision. "Color is more dreamlike, and you can focus the viewer more," she muses. "Being a painter, I love color."

Bacon-Kidwell's work has garnered notice from PhotoLucida's Critical Mass competition, a First Place award at The International Photography Awards, as well as participation in Center's Review Santa Fe. Her images have been published in *SHOTs* magazine in the United States and in the European publication *Fine Art Printer*. She is looking forward to exhibitions in 2010 in Seattle, Portland and San Francisco.

Although her work rises from her own subconscious, Bacon-Kidwell is acutely aware of its place in the world, and the possibilities of each image for storytelling and allegory. "I'm not illustrating a specific story, but creating unresolved moments from which the viewer must imagine a beginning and end."

It reminds one of Prospero, that great conjurer of dream dramas, from Shakespeare's *Tempest*: "We are such stuff as dreams are made of; And our little life is rounded with a sleep."

—Shawn O'Sullivan

■ PRINT INFORMATION

Archival Pigment Prints, 10x15 inches, in editions of 25. Prices tiered from \$550.

■ CONTACT INFORMATION

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