

Shadow & Light Magazine

The Art of Photography



image: Aline Smithson

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Showcase Portfolio

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Brooklyn Orchid, 2012. ©Barbara Leven

March 30, 2005: It is cold, windy and grey. Weary and drained by a long winter and in need of solace, I pick up my camera and ride the subway to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Although I have lived almost my entire life in New York City, I have never visited this Garden before. The trees are still bare but when I look closely I see the promise of Spring in the beginning buds. The wind ripples across the sleeping lily pools, the pale sun glinting on small tangerine-colored koi darting here and there beneath the shadows.

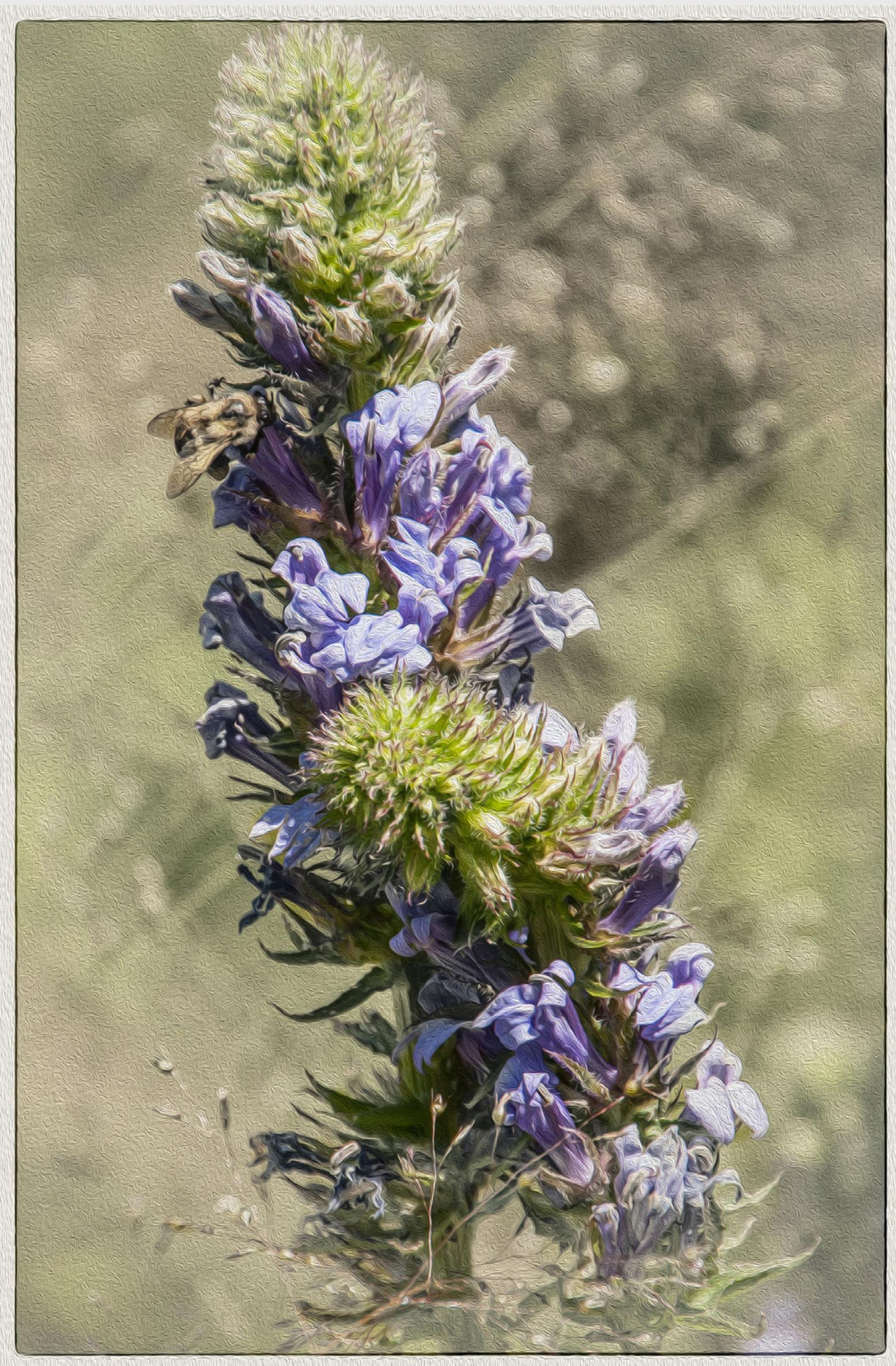
As I inhale the green scented air I am drawn into this garden world of "nature in captivity," which I had previously not thought of as subject matter for my photography. Through the camera I penetrate deep into the secrets of various garden environments and see the intimate details of the plants and flowers, their glorious colors and patterns, which I am then compelled to record. Thus began a project I call "Enchanted Earth" which continues to this day.

In the last 10 years, I have visited botanic gardens all over New York City and beyond. Armed with both a macro and telephoto lens I capture my subjects up close and personal as if I am a "participant observer" occupying their space and becoming a part of their world. The gardens, continuously in flux, bring new visual challenges with each new season, each new year, yet grow more familiar at the same time like long term relationships between companions.

Once the photograph is captured, it is processed in Adobe Photoshop and Nik Silver Efex Pro 2 software, to elicit from the viewer as much wonder as I felt while taking it.

Barbara Leven

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Meadow Flower and Bee, 2014. ©Barbara Leven



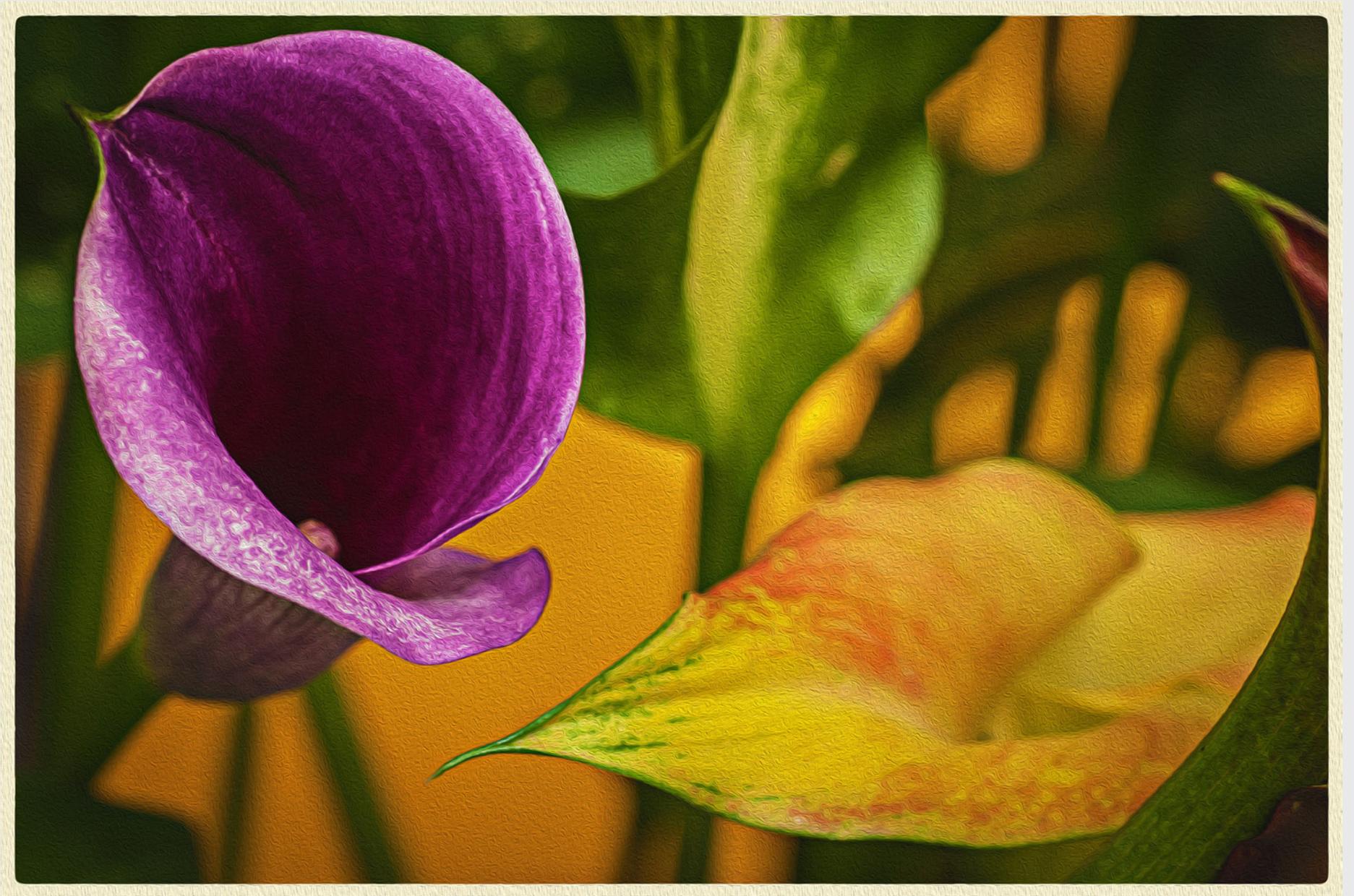
Heliconia, 2014. ©Barbara Leven



Lily, 2015. ©Barbara Leven



Frolic, 2014. ©Barbara Leven



Purple Calla Lily, 2015. ©Barbara Leven



Dancing Orchid, 2014. ©Barbara Leven



Carnivores2, 2015. ©Barbara Leven



Rainbow Orchids, 2013. ©Barbara Leven



September Sunflower3, 2015. ©Barbara Leven