

CELEBRATING LIFE THROUGH A LENS

Best recognised for her work as a master fine art photographer, East London-born Marlene Neumann is also known for her incredible work as a teacher, author, designer, inspirational speaker and visionary. She celebrates life in a variety of creative ways and her passion for sharing this with others is evident in her emotive photographs. Her work has won awards all over the world and continues to push the boundaries of photography and what it represents.

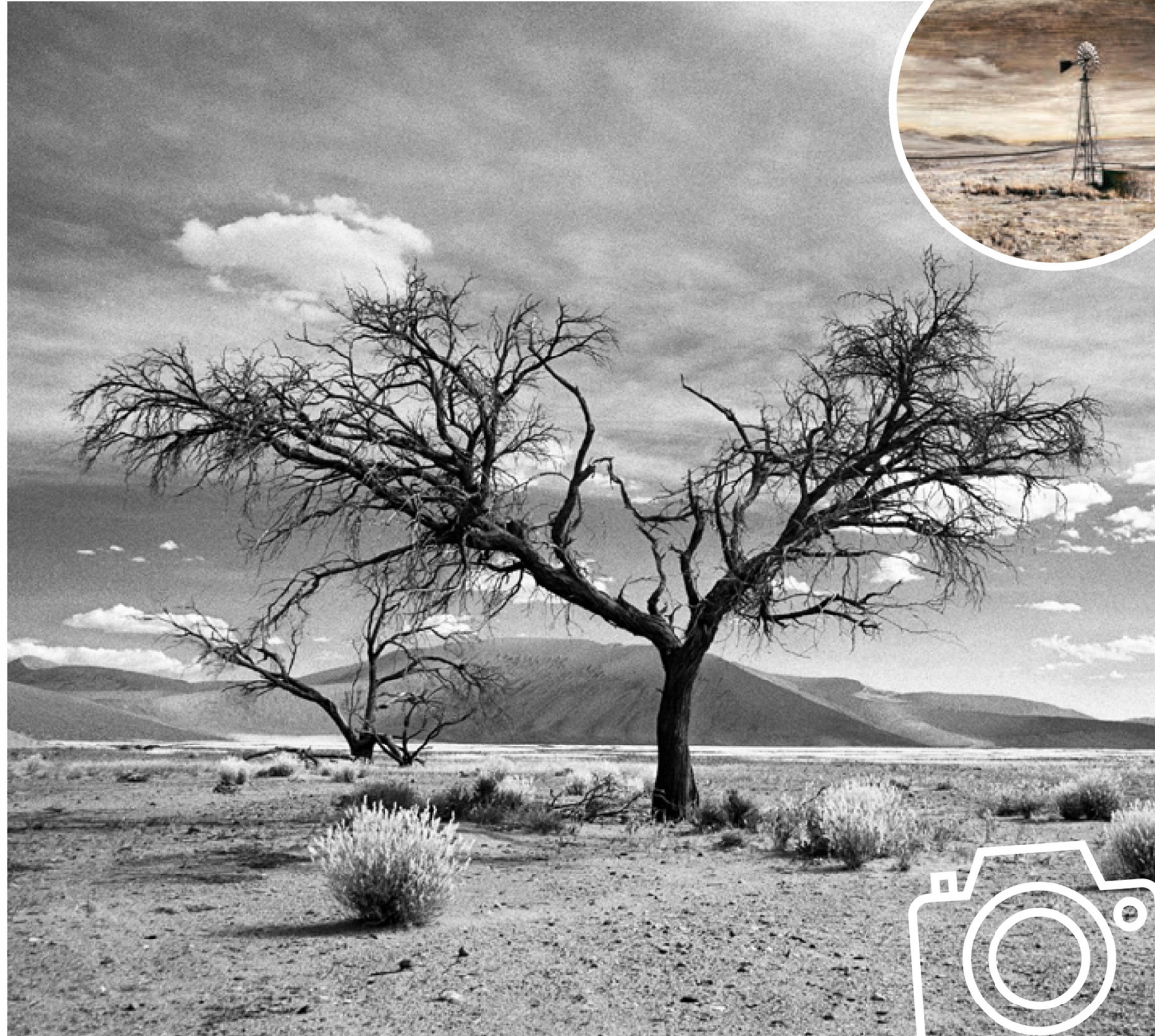
✕ Coming from a German background with English as a second language, Neumann used photography as a way to communicate the beauty of life from a very young age.

"The only way I could really express myself was through the camera," she recalls. "That is what I have done for the past 35 years. The lens of the camera is merely an extension of the lenses of my eyes, which are connected to my inner core. I feel as though my purpose as a child was to channel how beautiful this life is."

Having a strong connection with nature, which is evident in her masterful work, Neumann's photographic journey is a deeply personal one which she shares with her audiences.

SKY MEETS LAND

Her magnificent coffee-table book of over 100 moving images called *Sky Meets Land* was released in 2014. Neumann, who refers to her book as a metaphor for "mind meets heart", hopes readers will experience a mindful shift when paging through the visual journey which she has so artfully captured and curated. More than just photographs, the images carry with them insight into a profound life purpose, one that she deliberately seeks to capture and share with the world.



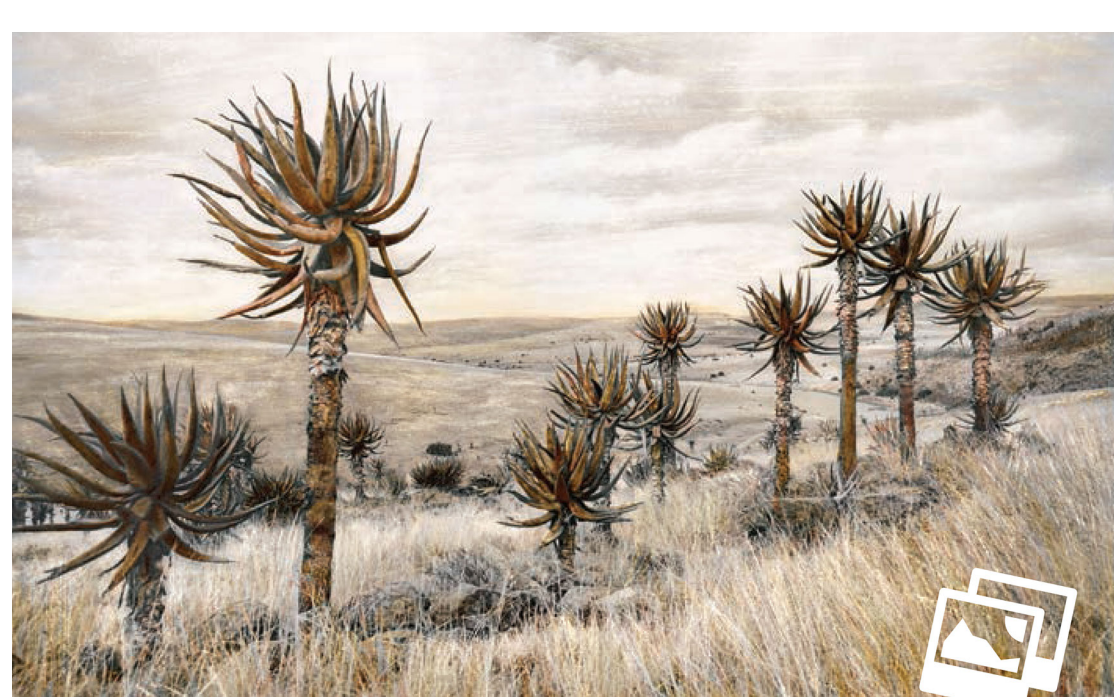
When asked about this purpose, Neumann says: "I love life more than I love photography. I believe that comes through strongly in my work. I seldom feel separated from nature. I am always tuning in to plants and animals. Sometimes I will lie on my back and float in the ocean just breathing in Life. My purpose is to 'shine' and so allow others to shine. I have the ability to inspire people, to make them want to get out of their old skin and into something new. Life is a privilege and to waste it being negative is crazy."

Sharing such a deep part of herself with the world, Neumann's book not only comprises striking imagery which brings the beauty of nature into the viewer's world, it also shares her innermost thoughts and feelings. "I have found that people relate to my work on a very deep level," she says. "However, they never really understand why I photograph what I do from my point of view. I wanted people to finally hear me and see me. What I have to say, my thoughts, feelings – I want people to see life through the lens of my camera."

A 30-YEAR JOURNEY

Filled with images captured over 30 years of exploration, Neumann's journey through *Sky Meets Land* has been rich in personal and spiritual discoveries. On the defining moments during this journey, she says: "There were many things that stood out for me. One is how things show themselves to me. I specifically remember a row of aloes in the Eastern Cape," she recalls. "I felt they were showing me their spirits. I turned and asked if anyone else saw what I saw, and naturally they thought I was crazy. So to prove it to them I photographed the aloes. Everyone took a step back when they saw the image. There were no words that could explain what I meant; it could only be understood by the image."

"Most of the time I am amazed at the beauty things allow me to see. There is nothing 'woo woo' about it. It's a different way of seeing and I teach people to do this in my workshops. I remember meeting someone on the beach in Cape Town while I was photographing and, out of the blue, she took me to meet her invalid mother who was 91. They lived in a house that literally felt as though you were on a boat. My work has allowed me to have incredible experiences. I am grateful for each one of them."



Neumann's collection of images is vast and covers a range of subjects such as landscapes, her travels, wildlife and more. One specific range that is close to her heart is her black-and-white range – a collection of provocative, striking and powerful imagery. "Fine art photography is about emotion, intuition and connection," she says. "I am interested in the spirit, the essence of the subject, not the colours. I want the message it has for me to be seen by the world. Back in the day I would never speak so freely about the subject, I had to guard what I said or I would not be taken seriously. Things have changed. I believe the world is seeing that things have to be integrated, the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. Black-and-white allows for all of this. Colour can be a distraction."

A BUSY YEAR

2017 was a busy year for Neumann and between running workshops, empowering the youth and giving inspirational talks at schools around the country, Neumann added what she refers to as the "mother ship" of all printers to her collection – a P9000

Epson which will allow her to print images at an even larger scale.

"I can now enlarge my images up to 1,118 mm x 1,725 mm. Images this size will be stunning in boardrooms and homes with double-volume walls," she says. She also launched her DVD series entitled, *Capturing What People Don't Talk About*, a series based on her own realisation of what it means to be a true, authentic human. "From a broader perspective, the objective was to help raise the vibration on Earth, so that people can more easily become aware of how to live an enriching life," she explains.

Neumann's work is truly in a league of its own and it is no wonder that she was awarded South Africa's top woman photographer in the Creative Photography category at the Mbokodo Awards in 2014. Her advice for budding photographers is simple: "Study light, naturally available light. Study it before you study photography or your camera. Know light for all you are worth and you will know yourself."

To view her work and to purchase it, visit Marlene Neumann Fine Art Photography's website at www.marleneneumann.com or email neumann@worldonline.co.za. ✕

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01/18



KATMELEON JEWELLERY

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