

Harmon-Luber finds Rare, Fleeting Moments of Beauty

By Marshall Smith

Idyllwild visual artist and musician Kathy Harmon-Luber waits for the perfect moment, when the natural light dances with the slightest breeze, to illuminate and stir the subjects in her frame.

"I've spent many a golden hour watching the light, waiting for just the right moment of illumination and a puff of breeze," she explained.

Her portfolios of romantic and wonderingly mysterious photographs are the beginnings of a story about which the viewer yearns to learn more. And "yearn" is the most aptly descriptive word, since her images convey a sense of longing, of dreaming and of questioning what comes next. "In a Whisper," is one of Kathy Harmon-Luber's mysterious and alluring dual exposure photographs. Photo courtesy Kathy Harmon-Luber

Harmon-Luber cites a quotation by French impressionist painter Claude Monet as inspiration for her work: "The best use of mystery is to evoke an object little by little in order to reveal a state of mind." So a diaphanous dress shimmering on a clothesline in early morning light leaves a viewer wondering about the woman to whom the dress belongs – what was she thinking as she hung the dress on the line, where would she go next wearing the dress and with whom, and more importantly, who is she?

"I am passionate about capturing imaginative, and often fleeting, images of beauty and light," she explained. "I hope to share with the viewer a moment of joy or hope, a reminder of a lovely memory, a vicarious travel adventure, a dream come true, or simply a tranquil respite from the stress of everyday life."

Her extraordinary collection of photographs, often double-exposures with "a whisper" of golden light shimmering through them, can be found at www.kathyharmonluber.com and in an online gallery www.etsy.com/shop/KathyLuber.

Harmon-Luber is the Art Alliance of Idyllwild's 2012 Artist of the Year and has



exhibited widely in Idyllwild, Los Angeles, Hollywood, Santa Monica, Sacramento, Charlotte, North Carolina, and at Tarrt Gallery in Washington, D.C. She is a native of Rochester, Pennsylvania, and a graduate of the University of North Carolina in Wilmington with a bachelor's degree in Marine Sciences and of George Washington University with a graduate certificate in publishing.

Harmon-Luber is the quintessential Idyllwild supporter, giving back in many ways – as smARTS volunteer, as a key member of the Idyllwild Community Fund Advisory Committee, current member of the Art Alliance of Idyllwild, flute player for major Idyllwild Master Chorale concerts, local flute instructor, art workshop instructor for Idyllwild Middle School students and a former member of the Associates of Idyllwild Arts Foundation.

Harmon-Luber's professional career, apart from creating artwork, is as a fundraiser. She has worked in D.C. for the Smithsonian as director of marketing for its education arm, Norman Lear's People for the American Way and for the Democratic National Committee for which she raised \$28 million in 1992. As a fundraiser for the Bill Clinton campaign, Harmon-Luber was given the opportunity to look at the "Plum Book" of choice assignments in the upcoming administration. "There was nothing that really interested me," said Harmon-Luber. Instead she moved to Santa Monica, California, and joined a consulting firm. She later became executive director

for the Achievable Foundation, in charge of fundraising for the organization's mission of assisting people with developmental disabilities such as autism and cerebral palsy. She also worked for the Pediatric AIDS Foundation founded by Elizabeth Glaser.

During her career as a fundraiser, Harmon-Luber has raised more than \$100 million for organizations advocating the arts, education, children, health and social services, the homeless and for political change in both California and in Washington, D.C.

In view of her fundraising career and her volunteer activity, one could ask how she found time to create the stirring portfolio of photographs and collaged images. Harmon-Luber said, "I've always done my art, but two years ago I made the conscious decision to treat my art as a personal client, setting aside time to do the work and market my portfolio.

"It's all about the light," she said of her art. The same could be said about her life – the contributions she has made to charitable causes, her prioritizing of giving back to her community, teaching young artists both in music and in the visual arts, and her quest as an artist to find the magic and mystery in everything she creates.

Harmon-Luber and husband Ken Luber have been Idyllwild residents for more than 13 years. Ken Luber is a talented professional writer and director. He most recently directed "Durang, Durang" for the Idyllwild Actors Theatre.

Harmon-Luber's work is currently exhibited at Idyllwild's Artspresso Gallery.