

## **Know Your Artist, Know Your Art**

Carbondale Arts believes in the power of art and we know you do, too. There is a deep connection that happens when you purchase a piece of art, and getting to know the artist makes that connection even deeper. Carbondale Arts hosts over 10 art exhibitions every year. Find some art you love and dive in.

We have launched a [“Know Your Artist, Know Your Art”](#) campaign, as Carbondale Arts works to build relationships between artists and patrons. Inspired by the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model of Investing in local food, this Community Supported Art movement promotes the investment of local artists making a living in and around the newly established Carbondale Creative District, where Carbondale Arts makes its home.

## **Acknowledgements**

“The Plants We Live With” is generously sponsored by Power Surge Productions, creating films since 2009.

Special thanks to Matt Vickers for gallery preparation assistance, and to Savanna LaBauve and Kirk Robinson for gallery installation assistance.



**August 6 - September 10, 2021**

# **The Plants We Live With**

by Forrest Zerbe

**Sponsored by Power Surge Productions.**

At the Carbondale Arts R2 Gallery  
in The Launchpad (76 S 4th Street)  
[carbondalearts.com](http://carbondalearts.com) | 970-963-1680  
Open weekdays 10am - 5pm & Saturdays 10am - 2pm

## **FORREST ZERBE**

### **Biography**

As a child, adventure was Forrest's first priority. Days were spent in the woods near his family home in western Pennsylvania where he used his imagination and creativity to construct a world of adventure. Forrest's college years were spent traveling the country looking to quench that thirst for adventure. He spent time at many different Universities studying many different things.

Creating with his hands had always made Forrest feel grounded and gave him a sense of calm. For this reason, he happened upon Art School, Herron School of Art and Design. Herron opened up the idea that maybe he could make art into not only his passion but also his profession.

Herron led to Forrest getting into graduate school at Savannah College of Art and Design. SCAD was the type of place where creativity thrived and was supported by the faculty and administration.

Forrest completed his MFA degree in Photography in 2003 and is currently an award winning artist, educator and adventurer living in Grand Junction, Colorado.

### **Artist Statement**

Photography was once a very hands-on discipline. As digital technology has progressed, the evolution of photography has turned away from that hands on element to embrace machine produced prints. Originally the photographer was much like a print maker except they used light to draw with. These works

are an attempt to revisit the basics of photography while speaking about our environment on an emotional level.

Photo-Graphy translates to "Light Writing or Drawing". The Photogram is one of the most basic photographic methods. Photograms are made by placing everyday items onto a substrate that has been made to be photosensitive. The substrate is exposed to light and developed leaving an impression of the item that had been used. This photographic process pre-dates cameras.

I have taken these Silver Gelatin Photograms one step further by soaking the print in a very acidic solution to bleach the image out and lift the blacks. This process was first developed by Jean-Pierre Sudre in the 1960's. It is referred to as Mordancage.

The Photogram itself is very controllable. As the artist, I can control the composition and value shift amongst the subjects. The bleaching process on the other hand is extremely difficult to control. The results are often chaotic and surprising.

My subject of choice, for this body of work, are local botanicals. Most of these plants were found on my small farm right outside of my darkroom. I use the plants as characters in an attempt to construct a narrative landscape. This narrative often reads as ominous, possibly about the state of the subject's environment.

This relationship between the controllable and the uncontrollable creates a dichotomy between the subjects (the plants) and their environment. On a personal level, this is how I feel about the current state of our environment. The chaos of all that is happening, that is out of our control, is much like the chaos surrounding my subjects.

## More about mordançage

Pronounced “MORE-dahn-sahj”, it is based on a late nineteenth century process known as “etch-bleach”, which was then further developed in the 1960s by Jean-Pierre Sudre (French, b. 1921-1997). In 1991, Sudre invited seven Americans to France to learn his mordançage technique. One of these students was Craig Stevens (American, b. 1947) who then taught Forrest Zerbe whose works are featured in this exhibition. All of these works (framed and unframed) are one of a kind!

### The mordançage solution consists of the following materials:

10 g copper chloride  
50 mL glacial acetic acid  
25 mL 30%-35% hydrogen peroxide  
distilled water to make 1 liter

After making a silver gelatin print, a photograph (typically on fiber paper) is placed in the mordançage solution, and left in until the image has bleached. The hydrogen peroxide in the solution softens the gelatin in the emulsion. Next, the chemicals are rinsed off of the print. Some people choose to remove the parts of the emulsion that have started to disintegrate while washing; these areas will be the darkest portions of the print.

After cleaning, the print is redeveloped. Different developers and dilutions will result in different tonalities in the paper. Areas where the emulsion has been degraded may redevelop unevenly. Emulsion removal can cause a reversal effect when redeveloped. Once the image has been redeveloped, it is rinsed off again. The print can be fixed in fixer at this point. Neglecting to fix the image can lead to the oxidation of the print, however these color shifts can be a desirable effect.

A final washing of the print is performed after fixing. Any veils that have developed are fragile, which makes the print difficult to wash without causing them to pull away from the paper.

*Learn more at these sources:*

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mordançage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mordançage)

[www.kmrarts.com/jeanpierresudre](http://www.kmrarts.com/jeanpierresudre)

[www.alternativephotography.com/the-mordanage-background-and-process](http://www.alternativephotography.com/the-mordanage-background-and-process)

Learn more about this exhibition and visit the space virtually at [carbondalearts.com/exhibitions](http://carbondalearts.com/exhibitions)



## R2 Gallery Committee Members

**Staff:** Brian Colley, Staci Dickerson, Amy Kimberly

**Board Liaison:** Leah Swan

**Non-staff:** Lindsay Jones (Chair), Savanna LaBauve, Vanessa Porras, Kirk Robinson, Laura Stover, David Thickman, and Matt Vickers