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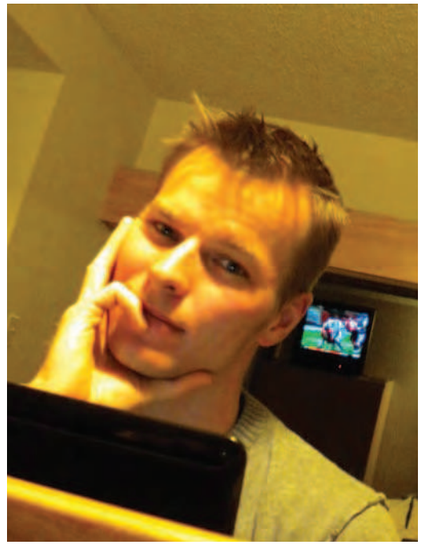

Joseph Armstrong, a recent graduate from Millersville University with multiple degrees in history, philosophy and film studies, is perpetually intrigued by the Constantine tapestries, which are housed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Award-winning writer and editor **Julie Jacobs** admits that one of her favorite paintings, for many sentimental reasons, is Renoir's "Two Girls in the Meadow." Jacobs's work has appeared in numerous national, regional and local publications, including American Way, Lifestyles, MovieMaker, Inside Jersey and Suburban Essex. She also maintains corporate clients and runs Wynne Communications publishing firm.

Christine Schrum is Director of Content and Social Media for Redwood Media Group—purveyors of fine art fairs including Artexpo New York, [SOLO], SPECTRUM New York/Miami and DECOR Expo. She's also a freelance writer, blogger and community director. Her favorite artist is Emily Carr, a British Columbia-born artist and writer heavily inspired by the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast.

Editorial assistant at Madavor Media, **Megan Kaplon** has been contributing content and editorial expertise to an array of magazines since graduating from Emerson College with a degree in writing, literature and publishing. Her favorite artist is Salvador Dali, and his painting "Woman with a Head of Roses" hangs in her bedroom.

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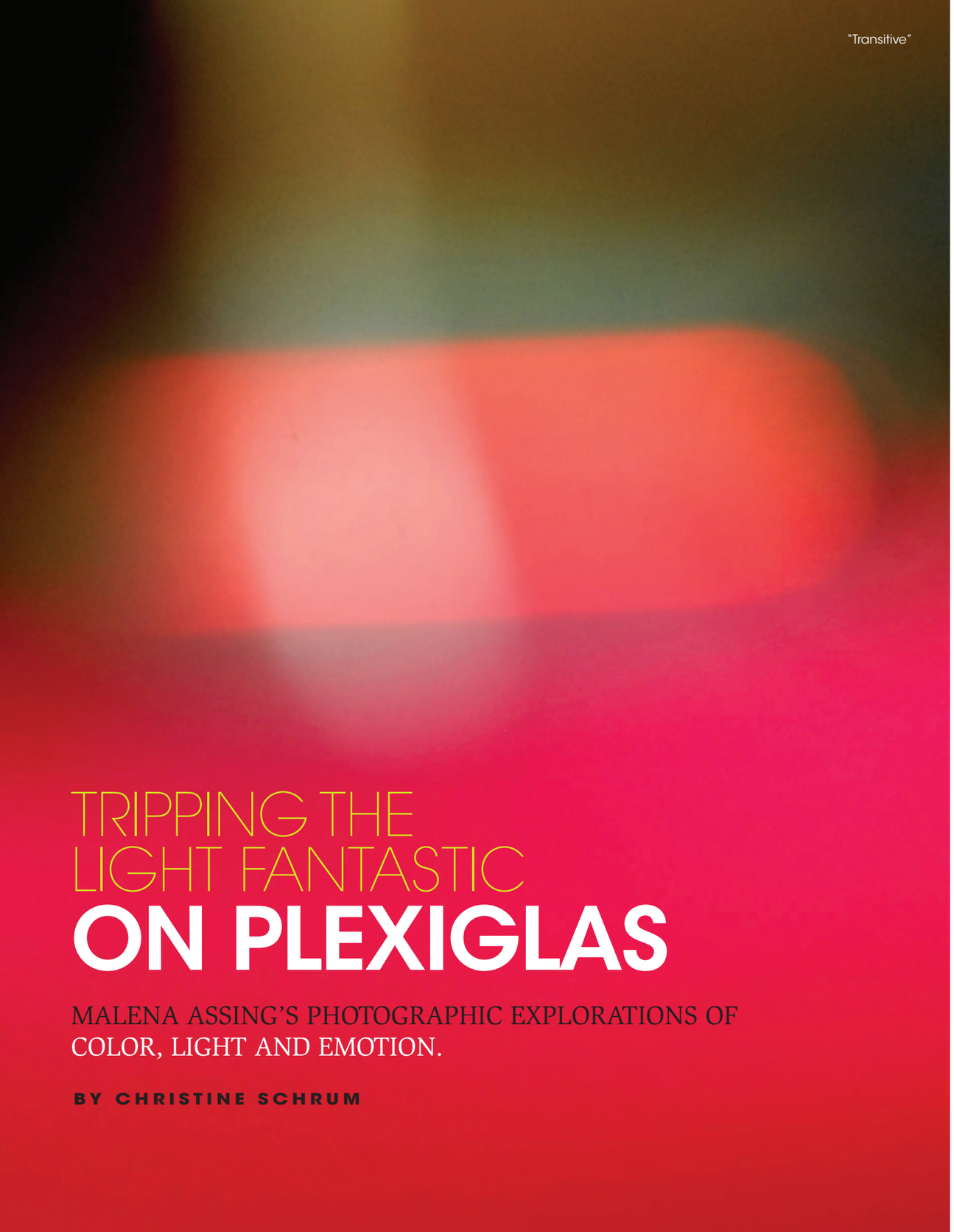

TRIPPING THE LIGHT FANTASTIC ON PLEXIGLAS

MALENA ASSING'S PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPLORATIONS OF COLOR, LIGHT AND EMOTION.

BY CHRISTINE SCHRUM

In Venezuela, the sun shines year-round, brightening everything it touches—from lush, green foliage to the deep blue sea. No surprise, then, that Venezuela-born photographer Malena Assing has had a lifelong love affair with light and color.

"I like the impact of bright colors," says the artist. "Vibrant colors represent life and being alive. With my work, I want to bring light and happiness to everybody… something that awakens their senses."

One look at Assing's abstract photography on paper or on Plexiglas, and you'll definitely feel the impact. Her works pulsate with dynamism. In "Running Lights III," for instance, Assing captures a series of unexpected, multihued reflections over indistinct objects. The result is electric.

Assing's "Incessant Movements" series of photographs in quick succession explores the movement of light and how it creates color fields with background shadows.

"I want to show viewers that there is nothing static—that everything changes continuously," says Assing. "Life itself is sequences of photographs of our experiences that we collect in our minds."

Growing up in Venezuela, Assing always dabbled in photography but did not pursue it in school because "studying art was not well seen." Instead, she obtained a bachelor's degree in business and a master's degree in advertising and marketing. In 1999, she moved to Miami, and everything changed.

"I had the chance to start anew," she says. She enrolled in art and photography classes, and her career took a 180-degree turn when she began taking portraits of children.

"I found that I had an innate ability to photograph children and come up with images that were somehow natural and appealing," she says. "I seem to have a special connection with kids and can reflect their personalities in my work."

She became a professional photographer in 2002 and has gone on to photograph hundreds of children and families in the Miami area and around the world. She has also done freelance work for Key Biscayne Magazine, Complot Magazine, Selecta magazine and others.

But when it comes to her more unleashed creative passions, Assing prefers to explore subtle nuances of light, color, shadows, abstraction and emotion. Critics sometimes compare her work to the emotive, intuitive paintings of the Lyrical Abstraction and Tachisme movements—a comparison she embraces.

"I work with emotions, and these emotions come from somewhere deep down. My work is intuitive, and color is the language that I use to express emotions."

In that vein, Assing says, Mark Rothko, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Julio le Parc and Wassily Kandinsky are her strongest influences, although she gains great inspiration from her three children, as well.

Currently, Assing is working on a new series of photographs with the working title of "Mystic." They feature vibrant colors, though less intense colors than those in her previous works. During Art Week Miami this December, she'll be showcasing new pieces at Curator's Art Voice Projects, a gallery in the Wynwood Art District. She has made a name for herself in Midtown Miami; last year, her work was well-received at SPECTRUM Miami.

Assing plans to head to Spain next year to participate in Foto Alicante. She's still deciding which pieces she'll bring, but one thing is certain: Her little corner of the show will be luminous with color. ABN

• *For more, check out malenaassing.com.*