

Through My Eyes! Australia



Jerry Grasso Visual Arts



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Welcome to my *Through My Eyes!* coverage of some amazing locations my wife Jayne and I have visited around the world. Some are iconic while the majority of the images presented here require a more intimate exploration of the location. This particular ebook is devoted to our travels through Australia. My goal is not to present a definitive study of this location, but rather to provide hopefully a tantalizing glimpse to peak your interest! You will find that these images are not just your typical iconic scenes, but also contain some rather different ones as well.

How does one portray the emotional response to, and non-representational spirit of, a new and exotic travel location? During February, 2010, my wife, Jayne, and I visited three diverse areas of Australia for the first time: Cairns, Melbourne, and Sydney.

This continent is just so - *different* - from any other place you will explore, from the exotic flowers and plants to the unusual animals and birds.

I hope my pictures will reflect this sense of awe that we felt as we enjoyed our Down Under adventure!

For an interactive country map with the visited sites referenced within this ebook, please click *here*. Feel free to do your own exploring!





Here is a view of Cairns, a major city on the east coast of Far North Queensland in Australia. It is the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Rainforest.



This is how some tourists get to points of interest in the Great Barrier Reef. A visitor to the Great Barrier Reef can enjoy many experiences including snorkelling, scuba diving, aircraft or helicopter tours, bare boats (self-sail), glass-bottomed boat viewing, semi-submersibles and educational trips, cruise ship tours, whale watching and swimming with dolphins.



This is one of the staging platforms for snorkelling in the Great Barrier Reef.





This is a view from a small submarine for tourists to get up close and personal with the reef without getting wet. The Great Barrier Reef stretches for more than 2000 kilometres (1200 miles) along the Queensland coastline. But a lot of the famous color is gone. A March 2016 report stated that coral bleaching was more widespread than previously thought, seriously affecting the northern parts of the reef as a result of warming ocean temperatures. In March 2017, the journal *Nature* published a paper showing that huge sections of a 800-kilometre (500 mi) stretch in the northern part of the reef had died in the course of 2016 due to high water temperatures, an event that the authors put down to the effects of global climate change.



Here is a list of some of the varieties of fish found in the waters.





Here are some scenes from around Cairns.





Notice the black spots in the sky above the marina in this photo and the next. Yes, those are bats and very famous in Cairns. These are fruit bats and flying foxes. This youtube video says it all!





From one of the many nice bars and restaurants in Cairns. Such a nice way to end the day!

Sorry. Soapbox time.

My wife, Jayne, and I experienced the privilege of touring Daintree National Park, north of Port Douglas, in the North Queensland World Heritage wet tropics.

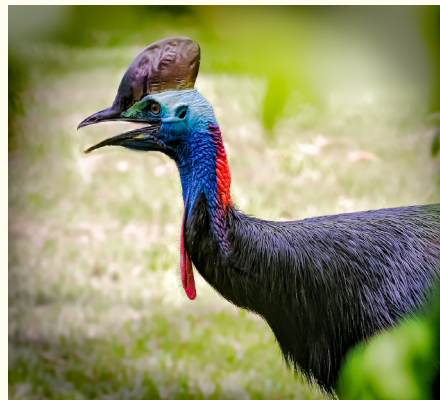
“The Daintree Rainforest is over one hundred and thirty-five million years old - the oldest in the world. Approximately 430 species of birds live among the trees, including 13 species that are found nowhere else in the world.”

My exposure in the past had been restricted to the global warming and the “save the planet” banners by the many activist groups. I became jaded by images of pollution and human interference in nature. But our visit changed all that for me. I guess there really is nothing like seeing and experiencing the rainforest on your own terms. The knowledgeable guide related many medical anecdotes regarding aboriginal practices for simple medical cures and symptom reliefs. What I read on this site underscored the unique importance of these rainforests:

“Researchers found a tree from the Malaysian rainforest in 1987 that was totally effective at killing the HIV-1 virus. Unfortunately, they were never able to find the tree again...but they’re still looking.”

I had no idea that medical marvels of this magnitude could be already possible within nature. Clearly, if we were to lose these rainforests, mankind existence would be in jeopardy. And so would the endangered Cassowary.

That is why Rainforest Rescue initiatives like the ***Buy Back And Protect Forever*** project currently underway in the Daintree are so important. Prior to the creation of the Daintree National Park, a developer purchased a large area of the rainforest from farmers and landholders. They also were able to convert some leasehold land to freehold. This occurred in the 1980’s. However, efforts have been underway since July, 2001 to buy back these parcels of land that had been designated for housing development. These buybacks have succeeded in protecting forever 12 of these significant parcels, so far.

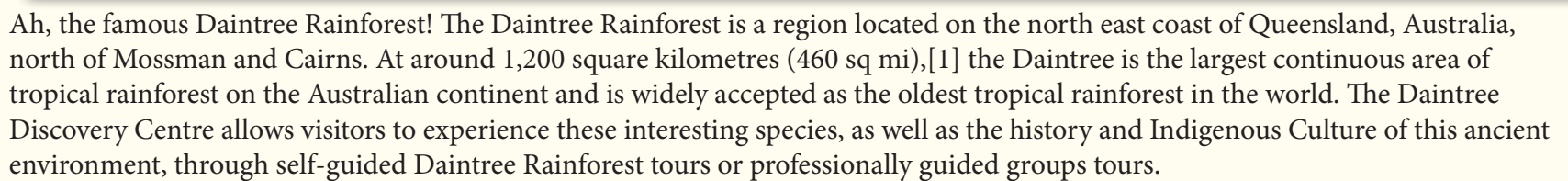




This is a photo of a boatride on the Daintree River near the Daintree Rainforest.



Here is a friend we saw along the way!





Kulki



Cape Tribulation, Daintree National Park

Welcome to Kulki "gool-gee" (Cape Tribulation), Eastern Kuku Yalanji Country

The Eastern Kuku Yalanji Aboriginal people are the Traditional Owners of this area. Their traditional country extends from near Cooktown, south to Mossman. They welcome you to their country and ask that you respect this special place.

Many natural features of the landscape, including this area, have spiritual significance for the Eastern Kuku Yalanji. This area, known as Kulki, was important as a meeting place and for gathering food, medicine and other things.

Early exploration

Cape Tribulation was named by Lieutenant James Cook in 1770 after he experienced a great deal of tribulation. "Here began all our troubles" after he damaged his ship, the Endeavour, and nearly died.

Since European settlement and logging, the area's timber culture and forest have made their mark on the National Park. Today the area is a popular tourist destination.



Hibiscus flower
Hibiscus tiliaceus

A special place

Daintree National Park forms part of the significant Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and is adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. Both areas are valued for their exceptional biological diversity.

The Daintree is considered one of the most significant living records of the evolution of Australia's plants and animals. In the past, as the climate changed, much of Australia's rainforest was able to refuges within deep valleys and on rocky mountain tops. Many of these ancient species survive as living relicts, throughout Daintree National Park today. In fact, the rainforests of the Daintree represent one of the world's oldest living rainforests.

Visiting the locals

Around the park area look for the monitors (lizards) – the largest lizards in the wet tropics. They are looking for food. Never feed these curious lizards as our food is harmful to their health. In the absence of people these reptiles feed on dead animals and anything they can catch.

Look for orange-footed scrubfowl (*Megapodius reinwardi*) scratching around in the leaf litter for food – fruits, seeds, insects and snails – or building their nests. Using their strong, orange legs these ground-dwelling birds rake decaying matter into a huge compost pile. Eggs are laid within the mound and as micro-organisms slowly rot the vegetation the heat generated incubates the eggs. Scrubfowl carefully check the temperature of the pile and maintain the heat of the mound between 30–35°C by adding or removing material.

Along the beach you may see hibiscus plants (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*) in flower. The flowers of this hibiscus initially bloom yellow with a deep red centre. Over the course of a day they deepen to orange and finally red before they fall.



Facilities

Toilets and picnic tables are provided. Camping is not permitted at Kulki.

Kulki boardwalk

This 600m (return) wheelchair-accessible walk leads from the picnic area up a ridge to the lookout named in honour of two senior Yalanji custodians Numbaji and Jinabaji. From this vantage point you can look out over the ocean and back at the beach with its striking rainforest backdrop.

Orange footed scrubfowl
Megapodius reinwardi



Discover the Daintree

- 1. Mount Alexandra lookout (Walu Wugiriga)**
This lookout provides the opportunity to enjoy breathtaking views of the coast including the Daintree River mouth, Snapper Island and Low Isles.
- 2. Jinabaji "Foot of the mountain"**
1.5km return (45 minutes) Grade: easy
This boardwalk offers the chance to explore an excellent example of tropical lowland rainforest. There is a large, quiet picnic area with toilets and tables.
- 3. Marraja "Rainforest" or "Jungle"**
1.2km return (45 minutes) Grade: easy
Visitors can walk in among a great variety of rainforest plants along this wheelchair-accessible boardwalk. Enjoy the mangrove communities – without getting muddy feet!
- 4. Noah Beach campground**
This campground is 50m from the beach, beneath the forest canopy, giving protection from both the sea breeze and the harsh sun. The campground does not cater for caravans or large campervans. Camping permits must be booked in advance and fees apply.
- 5. Dubaji "Place of spirits"**
1.2km return (45 minutes) Grade: easy
This easy, wheelchair accessible boardwalk winds through lowland rainforest, swamps and mangroves. Close to Myall Beach, the site has large, grassed areas with barbecues, picnic shelters and toilets.

For your safety

- Cassowaries live in this park. Never approach or feed these animals and remember to be Cass-O-Wary.
- Estuarine crocodiles inhabit the sea, river mouths and estuaries. They may also occur on beaches. Crocodiles are potentially dangerous. Never swim in waters where crocodiles may live.
- Dangerous stinging jellyfish ("stingers") may be present in the waters surrounding Cape Tribulation at any time of the year but occur more frequently in the warmer months. A full-body Lycra suit, or equivalent, provides a good measure of protection against stinging jellyfish and sunburn.
- Protect yourself from the sun. Wear sunscreen, a hat, sunglasses and a long-sleeved shirt, even on cloudy days.
- Wear protective clothing and insect repellent to protect yourself from scratches, stings and insect bites.

Caring for the park

- Never feed wildlife or leave food scraps around the picnic area.
- Leave pets at home – domestic animals are prohibited in national parks.
- Rubbish bins are not provided. Do not bury rubbish – take it with you when you leave.

Remember this is a national park – everything is protected.

Queensland Government

Cape Tribulation is a headland and locality in northern Queensland, Australia 110 km (68 mi) north of Cairns. It is located within the Daintree National Park and the Wet Tropics World Heritage area and is one of the key sights for the Daintree Reclamation project by Rainforest Rescue.



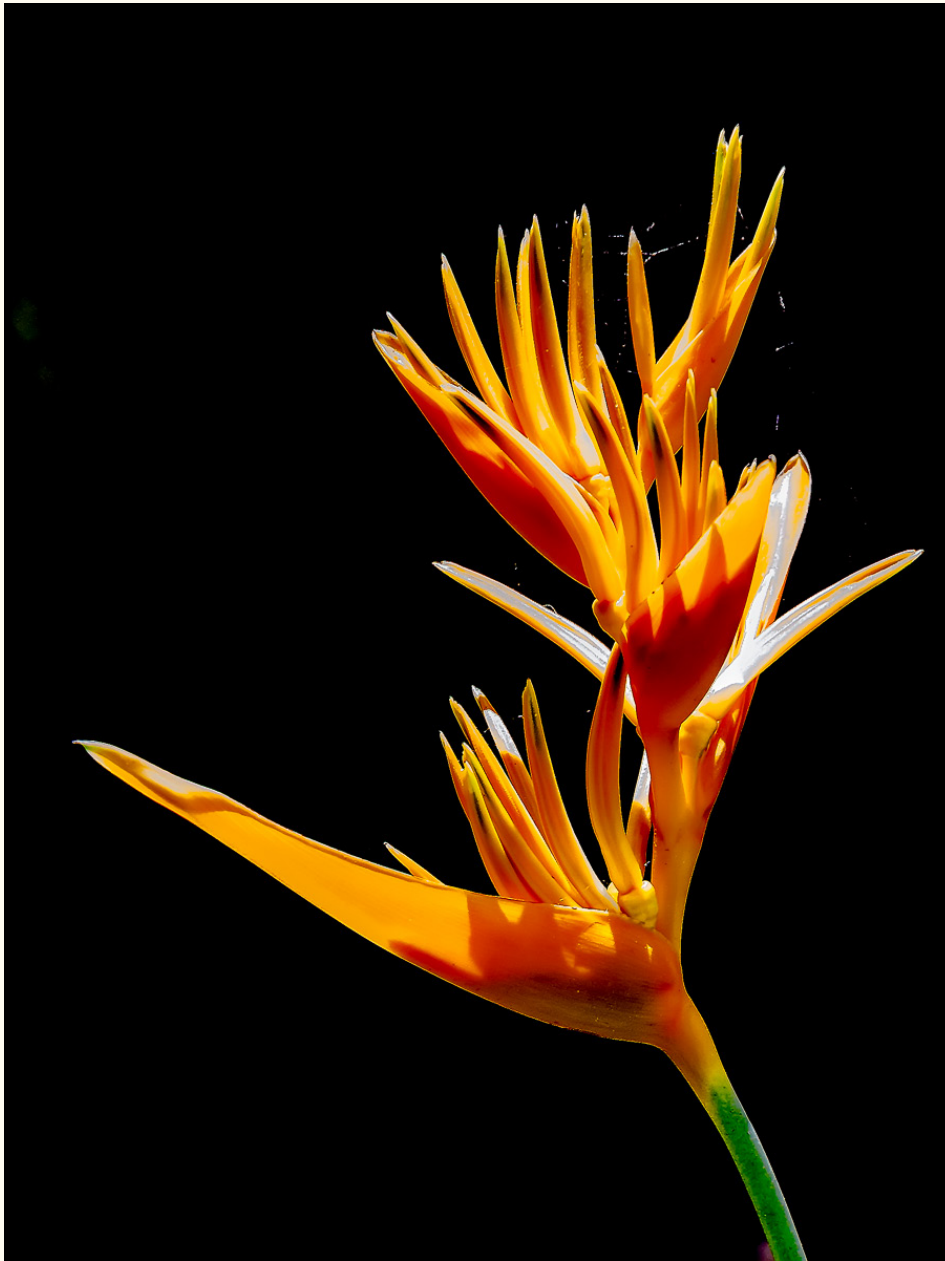
This is a panoramic of Cape Tribulation.



This creature is a Cassowary, similar to but smaller than an Ostrich. We were very lucky and privileged to see this in the wild. It is indigenous to the Daintree and is an endangered species. They are ratites, flightless birds without a keel on their sternum bone, like ostriches and emus.









This was somewhere on the way to Phillip Island.

HERE'S ONE!

Look closely and quietly in the trees-
there is a koala nearby.

You've heard of the expression
'here one day and gone the next'.
It applies well to koalas.

Koalas travel along the ground at
night between trees in search of
food and shelter.

Koalas have fairly well defined areas in
which they move and feed (home range).
On Phillip Island an average home range
includes a minimum of twenty regularly
used feed trees.

KEEP SEARCHING!!!

'Here one day
and gone the next'







This is part of Phillip Island.





Two of the Little Penguins (Fairy Penguins) on Phillip Island.



This is where the famous *Penguins On Parade* takes place on Phillip Island. You really must see this event which happens daily, just after sunset. Here is a youtube video sample.





These next few pictures are from the Grampians National Park, commonly referred to as The Grampians. It is a national park located in the Grampians region of Victoria, Australia.







Also within the Grampians, is the picturesque MacKenzie Falls.





This was a “rest stop” in Apollo Bay, along the Great Ocean Road.







This rain abstract was taken on the tour bus. I was bored and not looking forward to the prospect of having a rainout at Port Campbell National Park. Afterall, being able to shoot the famous “12 Apostles” was the reason I wanted to visit Melbourne. So, I decided to try to make lemonade...

LOCH ARD GORGE

There is a thin line between life and death for the plants and animals that this park shelters – caught between land and sea.

Welcome to Loch Ard Gorge – one of the special places in Port Campbell National Park.

Signs along the way reveal fascinating stories about the area's history, geology and natural features.

Three easy walks: take the time to discover some of these areas' natural treasures.

Loch Ard Gorge was named after the clipper *Loch Ard*, wrecked here in 1878. The area has since become famous for its coastal scenery.

Allow 2-3 hours to walk them all, or one hour for each.



PORT CAMPBELL NATIONAL PARK

Gaz & Shaz Oz

Parks
VICTORIA

Port Campbell National Park is a national park in the south-western district of Victoria, Australia. The Port Campbell National Park features an array of sheer cliffs overlooking offshore islets, rock stacks, gorges, arches, and blow-holes. As part of the Shipwreck Coast, it hosts several tourist attractions; including The Twelve Apostles, the London Arch (formerly London Bridge), Loch Ard Gorge, the Gibson Steps, and The Grotto.









This is a vineyard on the way to Healesville.

Here is my wife, Jayne, in
front of the entrance to the
Healesville Wildlife Sanctuary.



This is an emu!



BEWARE!
HUMANS!

Echidna

This spiny egg-laying mammal is found in a wide variety of habitats all over Australia and New Guinea. It feeds on ants and termites, which it collects with its long, sticky tongue. Although not often seen, it is still quite common even in fairly populated areas.



Tachyglossus aculeatus







The Tasmanian devil. Some of you may remember the old Looney Tunes cartoon!





Typical countryside with many sheep farms.



Galah lovebirds!



Sunset in Melbourne!



This the entrance to Sydney Harbor. It is know for its huge seahorse population!







They are prepping for the evening's fireworks display over Sydney Harbor. This happens almost every evening. Very fun.



The famous Sydney Harbor bridge. You may recognize it as the first fireworks scene from around the world on New Year's Eve.



The intrepid Sydney Harbor Bridge climbers! These hearty souls took the walking tour that allowed them to literally walk upon and across the great arch girders to the very top of the bridge itself! If you have the nerve, I am sure the views are spectacular!









Surfing in Dee Why, a suburb of northern Sydney.

Enjoy incredible views from West Head lookout,
regarded as one of Sydney's best in Ku-ring-gai Chase
National Park.









Now you won't see signs like this in the States! It is just so - *different* - in Australia.





Instead of pigeons, they have these guys! Sulphur-crested cockatoo.



A rainbow lorikeet which is also pretty common in that area.

Biodiversity

The Web of Life



blue mountains
australia

Any bare surface is first colonised by single celled plants called **algae**.

These are visible on the rock surface as red or yellow staining. Once these establish, specialised plants called **lichens** (made of fungus and algae) start to grow. These are greenish and grey.

Lichens produce acids in their rootlets which break up the sandstone. As the lichen grows it catches dust and soil, which when wet allows the **mosses** to grow.

Mosses accumulate more soil, and keep it wet, which further breaks up the rock. Other plants grow in the soil accumulated by the mosses.

Grasses and small shrubs send their roots into the cracks and expand them. Other plants grow on the rocks, including orchids and ferns.

How many different plants can you count in this small garden of delights?



The ancient sandstones of the Blue Mountains are being attacked! - even by the plants that rely on them to grow.



Promoting Local Tourism

This and the next few are from the Blue Mountains National Park.



The Three Sisters...





This and the next few pictures are from the Jenolan Caves. The Jenolan Caves are limestone caves located within the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve in the Central Tablelands region, west of the Blue Mountains. My intent was to capture a sense of moltenness as seen within the world's oldest known and dated open cave system. These caves are composed of limestone and calcite formations. It is located in the World Heritage Blue Mountains, northwest of Sydney. Many of the strange shapes and forms seen throughout the extensive cave system reminded me a lot of melted candle wax. An episode from the original Star Trek series from the 1960's was also filmed here!













Nighttime in Sydney's Darling Harbor, located on the other side of the city from the Opera House. What impressed me most here were the many exotic and colorful cityscape reflections cast upon the harbor waters at night. The summer swarm of diners, tourists and party goers gave a rapid pulse to the city's heartbeat as these reflections seemed to dance with their vibrant energy.









The ingenious design of this World Heritage landmark, the Sydney Opera House, by architect Jørn Utzon has been the creative source of inspiration for many artists since it was opened to the public in 1973.

Many architectural elements came together to form the final look of the facility's famous "sails". When completed, 6,223 square meters of glass were used, 350 kilometers of tension cable, and 1,056,005 roof tiles completed the shape. The foundation of the exterior is supported by concrete ceiling beams which were designed to replace the need for columns. Just like the movements within an opera, these change shape as they rise to support the roof.



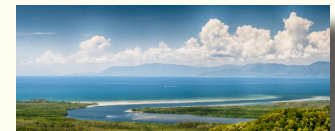
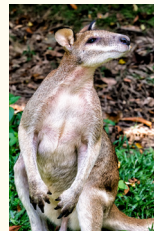
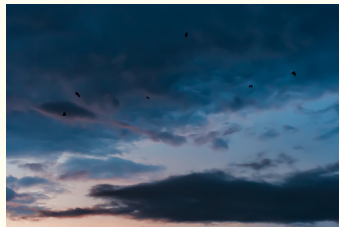
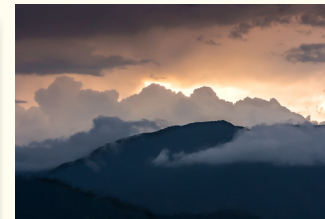
My most memorable first impressions of the Sydney Opera House were discovered within the amazing lines, shapes and reflections of its World Heritage-listed architecture. The great windows facing its famous harbor reflected images of the intrepid Sydney Harbor Bridge climbers. The Opera House roof shells and ribbing are abstraction marvels themselves. The lines and shadows created by these shells seem to lead the viewer into a geometric mystery tour.



The fairy-tale adventure Jayne and I experienced, of course, had to come to an end. But we will always carry with us fond memories of these sites and the easy-going and helpful nature of so many of the people we met Down Under. G'day, mates, and no worries ever!

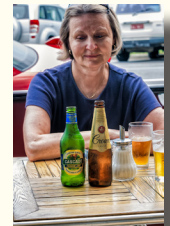
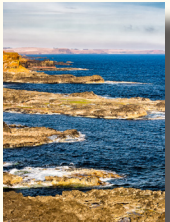
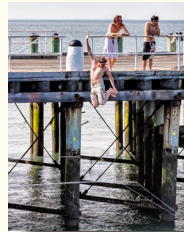
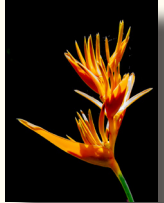
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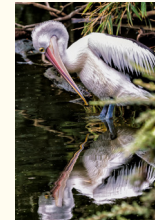
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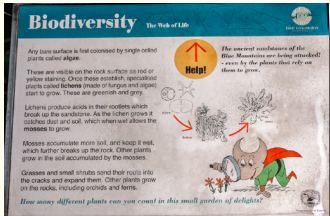
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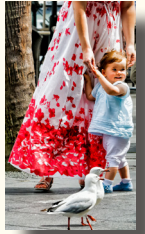
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Jerry bought his first SLR camera in 1975 and taught himself how to use it during trips through the Orient and hiking the Appalachian trail in Maine and New Hampshire. But it wasn't until 2002 that photography became his passion.

By 2004, Jerry became serious about developing his art. After upgrading his equipment, he began taking formal instruction in compositional techniques. That was the year he started his photography blog to document his artistic progress. By 2008, Jerry took the first of his courses with photographer Mallorie Ostrowitz who opened his photographic eyes to the artistic world of abstraction.

Also in 2008, Jerry spent a day of digital darkroom and printing training, one-on-one, with Michael Reichmann, the founder of the *Luminous Landscape* website.

In 2010, Jerry attended a John Paul Caponigro creativity workshop. John Paul gave him the courage to continuously push beyond the boundaries of his comfort zone in order to sustain growth as an artist. He was also personally selected to become a member of his *Next Steppers* artistic community.

Currently, Jerry's photography is only the starting point for his visual art. He prefers to work in a story or series, rather than only with separate images.

Website: www.jerrygrasso.com