



Artist Statement  
**DAVID LEASER**

**I am on a journey to present a world of botanical wonder in a way you've never seen before.**

The journey began a few years back in the depths of the Amazon. I had just published a photographic monograph and was inspired by a trip to the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens in Los Angeles. The Huntington was featuring the works of American artist Frederic Church, including his images of the Amazon and the Andes. The exhibit inspired me to hop on a plane and head to South America to retrace his footsteps.

In the Amazon, I was struck by the tiniest flowers on the floor of the rainforest. Each held an amazing secret, a complete ecosystem with insects and other living things, yet went largely ignored by our group because of its diminutive scale. In our world, big and bold draws attention. Right then, I had an epiphany: Why not show viewers the most intricate, intimate workings of these tiny flowers – and show them in enormous scale?

Upon returning to my studio in Los Angeles, I spent months collecting exotic flowers from around the world to pose as subjects for this new work. Orchids from Asia, bromeliads from the Amazon, gingers from Polynesia . . . but unfortunately, technology hadn't caught up with my vision. I wasn't able to capture the extremely fine detail I wanted to show. After more than a year of frustration, I realized I needed to develop a new process. Using groundbreaking technology, including equipment used by NASA, I developed a unique technique to capture detail like you've never seen before, so unique that Nikon has documented the process in their flagship *Nikon World* publication. You can literally see grains of pollen on the stamens of a hibiscus in my *Nightflowers* collection. And every flaw in these flowers demonstrates that every beauty has its imperfections.

A critic called my technique *dettagli* for the intense detail in the images. The images are provocative, but they were created to calm, rather than confront, the viewer.

I am a conservationist at heart, and I donate a percentage of my proceeds to support IUCN's Red List project. I hope to bring awareness to botanical subjects in a way others have for animals because, in my mind, I always return to the floor of the Amazonian rainforest and think of the lesser-known species that deserve our attention. Using the miracle of photography and my process, I am elevating these botanical subjects – some of them rare and endangered – to pop star status. When you see these flowers, enormously enlarged, I hope they reveal to you the miracle of nature. I believe you will never look at flowers the same way again.