

HILO PALMS



Brooks Jensen

A Brooks Jensen Arts Publication



We humans are creatures that yearn for order wherever we see chaos. How else could we explain those constellations in the night sky — our projection of pattern onto the chaos of the stars? We crave order so strongly that we will *create* it, even if it means we plot mythical Greek figures in the night sky that don't really exist there.

But when order *does* exist, we find it perfectly seductive. Perhaps this is why trees and the world of nature attract us so strongly. There is a pattern in a tree or in a leaf that satisfies our soul on a spiritual level — an amazing feat for something supposedly unintelligent. (How can we see such wondrous life and doubt the intelligence of existence?) A walk in the woods has soothed many a worn worrier.



Order in the chaos is welcome, but pattern in *overwhelming detail* is the ultimate aphrodisiac. Listen to any bit of music you are inclined to enjoy and you'll find there is such complexity! Mozart was right — there were not “too many notes” as the Sovereign claimed. It is the very complexity in abundance that we enjoy.

And in precisely this combination is the dance of life — abundance of detail in patterns of grace, uncountable strands of DNA in concert, performing a pig, a whale, a tree, and me. In my youth I cursed the cowlick in my hair; now I see an Archimedes spiral that rivals the forms in so many delightful shells. The Nautilus and I have something in common!



I have never been a great fan of palm trees. In my limited experience, palms were stick-like weeds with crudely-formed, tufted tops found along the freeways of southern California. Clearly, I had never been to Hawaii. Recently, during my first visit to those balmy islands, I learned how limited my experiences had been.

There they were — the palms! — overflowing with life in a ravine near Hilo. What complex beauty! They were jazz brought to life in an explosion of jiggity details and repeating, graceful arcs that make a chord of wonder for a photographer's eye. No, not a chord — a *forest* of chords. I was entranced. I did not need to project an imaginary constellation onto the fronds; they were true constellations in biology. Limitless details held in wondrous, repeating, and detailed patterns that can only come from living logic.













As I photographed, I discovered I was not just breathing, but breathing *deeply*. Unconsciously, the sea breeze and the forest breath were refreshing my soul. I tried to stay focused on the photography at hand, but I could not let go of the impression that the palms were gesturing to me — waving a greeting and welcoming me to the islands. Of course, I knew I was simply projecting a different form of constellation. Nonetheless, for an hour or so, the palms of Hawaii and I had the most pleasant conversation — one complexity of ordered pattern to another.



Brooks Jensen is a fine-art photographer, publisher, workshop teacher, and writer. In his personal work he specializes in small prints, hand-made artist's books, and digital media publications.

He and his wife (Maureen Gallagher) are the owners, co-founders, editors, and publishers of the award winning *LensWork*, one of today's most respected and important periodicals in fine art photography. With subscribers in 73 countries, Brooks' impact on fine art photography is truly world-wide. His long-running podcasts on art and photography are heard over the Internet by thousands every day. All 900+ podcasts are available at [LensWork Online](#), the LensWork membership website. LensWork Publishing is also at the leading edge in multimedia and digital media publishing with *LensWork Extended* — a PDF based, media-rich expanded version of the magazine.

Brooks is the author of seven best-selling books about photography and creativity: *Letting Go of the Camera* (2004); *The Creative Life in Photography* (2013); *Single Exposures* (4 books in a series, random observations on art, photography and creativity); and *Looking at Images* (2014); as well as a photography monograph, *Made of Steel* (2012). His next book will be *Those Who Inspire Me (And Why)*. A free monthly compilation of of this image journal, [Kokoro](#), is available for download.

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Anacortes, WA, U.S.A.

Email brooks@brooksjensenarts.com

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