

Landscape Photography On Acid

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The California landscape in front of you starts to blur. The light from the sun turns blue, then green, then pink, and the mountains begin to meld into a magnificent dreamscape of color. That's what the images in the Oakland-based photographer [Terri Loewenthal's](#) new series *Psychscapes* look like. But in case you were wondering, Loewenthal swears she wasn't on acid while shooting them. "My acid taking days are over," she says.

The photos, which will be [on display at the Cult | Aimee Friberg Exhibitions](#) gallery in San Francisco through April 21, are gorgeous psychedelic images created entirely on-site, in nature—no editing involved. They're a meditation on the beauty of nature and how it can help ground us, particularly during trying political times.

To shoot the series, Loewenthal spent about a month camped out in different places in the California mountains. She creates each colorful shot directly within the camera, using a mixture of real-life filters that she holds over the lens. Though she's very secretive about how exactly she achieves the vibrant images since she's been working on the technique for many years, there are likely some long exposure times involved since she manages to capture the natural landscape all around her in a single shot. "I think of the landscape as the paintbrush and I'm condensing the surrounding landscape into this superimposed dreamscape," she says.



Psychscape 41 (Lundy Canyon, CA), 2017. [Photo: courtesy the artist and Cult/Aimee Friberg Exhibitions]

Loewenthal does get a kind of high from creating these images. "With any creative moment there's this rush that happens," she says. "It's the gift that artists are addicted to. That's my arty term for the tripping moment."

The images' profusion of color, not often found in the desert landscapes and forests in California, echo the psychedelic impulse of the 1960s, when artists responded to a country in political and social crisis. Loewenthal's photographs similar bent. "Our wild spaces are in danger," Loewenthal says. "Our president is threatening to take them away from us and the reality is difficult right now for all of us to stomach in my immediate community. This is my response to that feeling. I want to touch these places, I want to inspire people to visit them and treat them like the portals to our imagination that they are."

She hopes the images remind people of how precious the wilderness is, both for its own sake and because of the escape it provides. *Psychscapes* illustrates that magical, dream-like place that nature represents for Loewenthal—a refuge worth fighting for. “Especially in this tumultuous political time, I think that the reason I love to make these and the message that I would love to send has to do with keeping one foot in reality and letting your other foot step over into this fantastic unknown,” she says. “I think that in-between place is how we’re going to survive.”