

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Portraits of the Poets

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Who are the poets?

You will discover them in their personal glory, as seen through the eye and lens of Alexis Rhone Fancher, when her photography show *30 Southern California Poets* opens at Beyond Baroque in Venice, California, on April 4. The show runs through April 30, and all proceeds benefit Beyond Baroque.

In addition to being a photographer, Alexis is also a poet and *Cultural Weekly*'s poetry editor. In describing the show, she explained how these three activities have braided together:

"My goal as an artist is to document the human condition, in both my poetry and my photography," Alexis said. "I'm keen on showing what's going on inside of a person, what truth is hiding inside a poem. I want to get beyond the façade, and photographed each poet as an individual, choosing a multitude of styles over a single through line, some presented in B&W, some in color, as the sitter's persona dictated.

"The Poets' Portrait Project (PPP) began by happy accident in October of 2012. I'd just signed on as Poetry Editor of Cultural Weekly, and part of my job is to solicit outstanding poets for publication. I receive gorgeous poems, terrific author bios, and almost without exception, the most pitiful author photos imaginable. "You're a photographer," my publisher, Adam Leipzig told me. "You should shoot them!" If the poet was living in or visiting So. Cal, I did.



Linda J. Albertano, photograph by Alexis Rhone Fancher

"In addition to publishing them in Cultural Weekly, I regularly posted many of the portraits on Facebook, and the response was extraordinary. These photos took on a life of their own. When Beyond Baroque Executive Director, Richard Modiano offered me a one-woman show to coincide with National Poetry Month, I didn't hesitate.

"What I learned:

- Poetry is thriving in Southern California.
- Poets were thrilled and willing participants.
- Every poet I photographed led me to someone else. 30 poets was/is just the tip of the iceberg.
- I now have a list of over 100 (and growing) additional poets I will photograph during the second phase of PPP. My goal is to publish the entire collection as a book.

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“I think it is important that there be a visual record of Southern California’s poetry community.

“I look forward to Phase 2 of this project. I hope you enjoy the show.”

***Information about [Beyond Baroque and 30 Southern California Poets here.](#)***

*Top: Portrait of poet Michelle Bitting by Alexis Rhone Fancher.*

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