



01-Ageratina Adenophora.jpg

David Eisen

A wonderful example of the creativity of nature. Unique subject. Well exposed, especially when working with a bounty of white. The background in the upper right corner draws the eye away from the main subject. A shallower depth of field would have helped, but probably not enough. So, the alternative would be changing the perspective of the shot. With that said, the upper left quadrant has great potential. I love the repetition of the spikes and the way the light catches the ones on the left. Perhaps explore a crop, leaving that quadrant. Much simpler ... and a path for the eye. ***



02-Colorful Raindrops on Succulent.jpg

Gerry Gifford

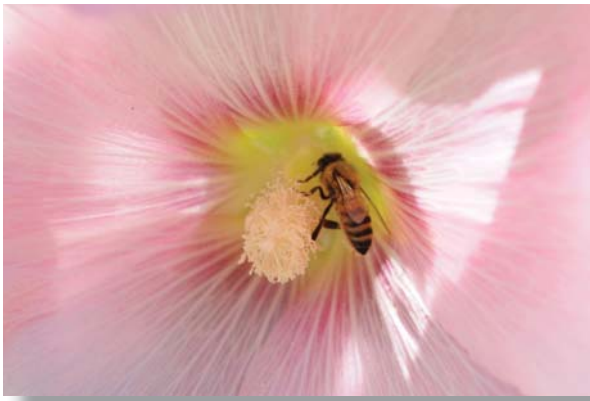
A walk into science fiction, with strange shapes and colors that seem alien to the nature we know. Bravo for finding this bizarre scene. There are probably 20 different photos in this image. The challenge is to find the one that best communicates what you saw and felt when you discovered this scene. If your goal was a bombardment of the bizarre, you have succeeded. As is, for me, it is too much, without a clear path for the eye or strong compositional guidance. Suggestion: Find a smaller segment that you find most interesting. ***



03-Dandelion .JPG

David Eisen

An elegant choice to show the delicacy of nature. Well exposed and composed (with the nice touch of a diagonal stem (love those diagonals!) and a (mostly) nondistracting background outside of the depth of field. I particularly like the “crosshatch” effect in the right-side background. The main distraction is the strong vertical green stem right behind the main subject, as well as the minor highlight distractions on the left side. The green stem breaks the mood of delicacy and prevents us from seeing much of the detail of the dandelion. ***



04-Honey bee on Wildflower.JPG

Don Eastman

As viewers, we are swept inside this flower in a very visceral way. Bravo. We almost feel as if we, too, are bees ... being drawn in to search for that sweet reward. I don't mind that the flower is out of focus. That adds to the feeling of movement. I do mind that the bee is not in focus. Wish it were sharper. The highlight on the right side of the flower also perhaps draws the eye too much ... away from the action. ***



05-Inside a tree seed pod.jpg

Carole Gan

One of the more unique and interesting choices of subject. What strange things nature comes up with. Well exposed, with rich color. I like the tight cropping leaving nothing to distract from the movement of the "sculpture" within itself (although I might suggest a little more breathing room).. Our eye moves around and within. My main comment would be to ask for crisper focus and a slightly larger depth of field. I would like to see at least the front "half" in focus, although I know I might be dreaming in macro land. ****



06-Julia Longwing Butterfly (Dryas julia).jpg

Gerry Gifford

Breathtakingly elegant. I love the regal nature of the butterfly and the repetition of the graceful curve of the wings in the leaf behind and below. I also relish the delicacy of the legs (and arms?), as well as the butterfly design patterns that we are able to see in detail. The lighting makes the wings seem luminescent and the left-weighted composition gives this subject the freedom to fly. I am momentarily distracted by the white behind the top of the wing, but not enough to keep me from saying "This is a spectacular image."



07-Monterey Cypress Cone - (Cupressus Macrocarpa).jpg

Brooks Leffler

A good case of beauty in the eye of the beholder. For me, this is not a particularly interesting or beautiful subject—either in color or form. Probably mostly because I don't know what it is. But, I'm sure the artist had good reason. I would love to hear (or see) more explanation as to why this drew the artist's attention. Perhaps those more scientific than I would find this interesting. The little tendrils extruding from the cone are worthy of study. But they are lost in a jungle of detail. The photo has technical quality (exposure and focus are good). Just too many questions about the subject. ***



08-Opuntia Cactus Aeroles with Spines.jpg

Christina Parsons

I admire that the artist turned these fascinating details into an abstract design. Interesting spiny shapes that are in perfect alignment, using the strength of diagonals. A bold contrast of red and green. All of these elements are working well. If only it were in sharper focus.



09-Pollen in Droplets.jpg

Karen Schofield

Many close-up nature shots are so common that they are almost clichés. This image is anything but that. Very original view, with dynamic composition—the sharp-edged leaves slicing their way through the frame, creating movement and negative space as interesting as the subject itself. And, although it's unclear what the droplets are, they are like little snowglobes of mystery. Very strong and unique image.



10-Prickly Lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*) in Bloom.jpg

Brooks Leffler

A good scientific documentation of this plant, shot with technical competence. In some ways, I like that the flower is centered amidst a jungle of leaves and prickles. It is perhaps a metaphor for survival, and is true to reality. In other ways, I want to see a simpler version ... a tighter shot that might have more force compositionally. In any event, I am drawn to the flower and the lower left bud, with its glistening prickles. Lovely detail.



11-Snow Globe Jelly.jpg

Dick Light

A good choice of subject. Graceful. Mysterious. And presented at its best with a black background. If only the subject was in focus ... so important with the fine detail of tentacles.



12-Succulent in the Rain.jpg

Christina Parsons

A living mandala, full of circles and curves. While this type of image has been done before, the water droplets are so tangible that one can almost smell the rain. The droplets and the richness of green make this image stand out from others that might be similar. Well exposed and nicely focused.



13-Syrphid Fly Visits Golden Queen.jpg

Charlie Gibson

Wow. Unbelievable detail that makes me feel like I can see every tiny part of this creature, down to his/her delicate prancing legs. I want to look at this image for quite a while to learn more about the living things that we rarely get to see up close. I find this image fascinating. Well done technically, with the proper depth of field, excellent exposure, and good even lighting. And, yes, the creature is even tilted at an angle to give us that moving diagonal. Well done. And quite original.



14-Venturing inward.jpg

Carole Gan

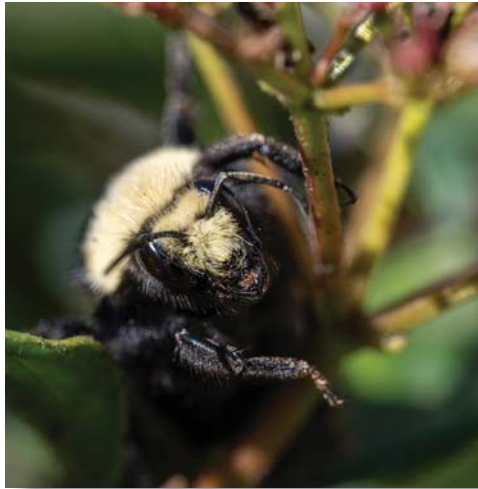
Excellent composition ... moving in just close enough to give us a hint of subject, but a strong abstract design. We benefit from the inherent movement of the shell's spiral. I'm just wishing for a little more depth of field so more would be in focus.



15-Wild Thistle Plant.jpg

Don Eastman

Lovely subject, with great textures, color, and interesting spikes of all kinds. Technically well done, with perfect depth of field and focus. The exposure is good, perhaps slightly overexposed, but that yields a softer palette, which might be the artist's intention. Personally, I would like to see just a bit more color saturation. The white line in the background is distracting, even though blurred. It detracts/competes with the diagonal of the thistle itself.



16-Yellow-Faced Bumble Bee (Bombus vosnesenskii).jpg

Karen Schofield

I love these images where we really see the personality of the insect. Here, he/she crawls out of the bush, looking like a Star Wars bar patron. Furry and slimy at the same time. Friend or foe? Who knows. This is a unique perspective that gets high marks for originality. Technically well done, with a creative depth of field that works well for this image. Good exposure and nice even lighting.



17-Anna Hummingbird-Calypte anna.jpg

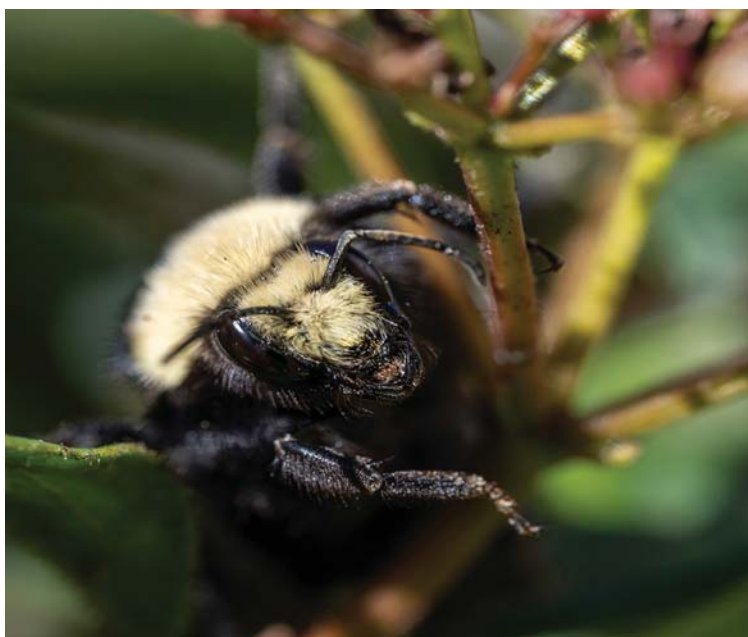
Fernando Ibanez

It's difficult to photograph a hummingbird. And even harder to get one to pose in perfect compositional form. A regal profile, with delicate wing extended, adding perfect balance to the nicely curving branch. The colors and textures come through loud and clear. The bokeh-like background is the right glowing setting for this royal bird. And even the one large white spot in back seems to add focus to the wing rather than distracting. Yes, the head and body could be just a tiny bit sharper, but because the wing and claw are sharp, I don't seem to mind. I would also like to see a bit more detail in the head (some is lost in the shadow). Lighten the head just a bit.

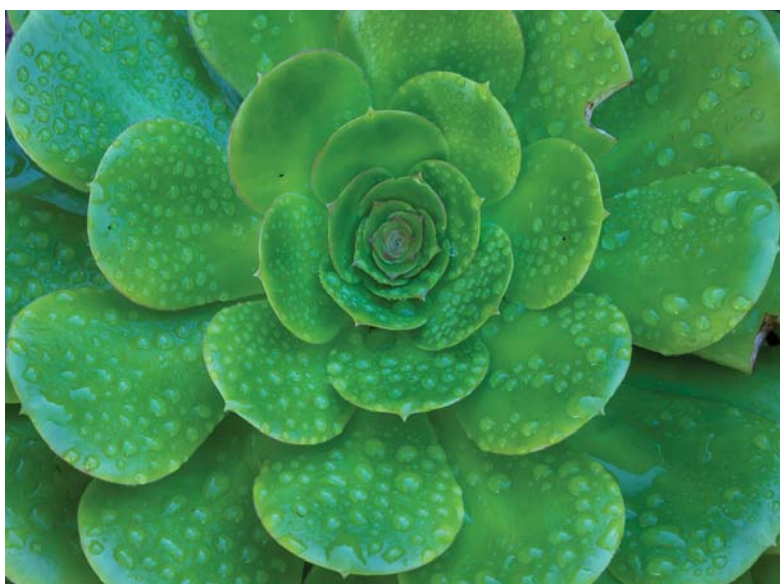
Winning Images:

Honorable Mentions:

Yellow-faced Bumblebee
(*Bombus vosnesenskii*)
Karen Schofield



Succulent in the Rain
Christian Parsons



Third Place - tie

Anna Hummingbird
(*Calypte anna*)
Fernado Ibanez



Syrphid Fly visits Golden Queen
Queen
Charlie Gibson



2nd Place:

Pollen in Droplets on Leaf
Karen Schofield



First Place:

Julia Longwing Butterfly
(*Dryas julia*)
Gerry Gifford

