

# Padre Trails Camera Club

Pictorial #3 competition - Creative Use of Light- 04/17/2024

Judged by: Meredith Mullins



Presented here are all the images submitted to this competition along with our judge's comments and star rating for each. For this competition, the Green and Red groups were combined for judging purposes. Place awards are presented at the end beginning on page 14.



Photo © Jim Buongiorno

## Meet our judge Meredith Mullins

Meredith Mullins is an internationally exhibited American photographer and journalist currently living bi-continently—in Paris and in Pacific Grove. Her work is in museum and private collections throughout North America and Europe, including the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Willem Photography and the Weston Gallery on the Monterey Peninsula. Her photographs also appear in several publications and printed photography collections.

She is the recipient of international photography awards, including the Grand Concours Photo sur Paris, the Paris Prix de Photographie (Px3), the Worldwide Gala Awards, the Julia Margaret Cameron Awards, and Photographers Forum. Meredith has been a writer/photographer for National Geographic School Publishing, Paris Magazine, and Carmel Magazine and currently writes and photographs for Bonjour Paris, France Today, Eye Prefer Paris, OIC Moments, and Browntrout Publishing. She is the author of the award-winning photography book “In A Paris Moment.”

As a supporter for emerging and mid-career photographers, Meredith has taught photography for Monterey Peninsula and Hartnell Colleges, currently teaches photography in Paris, and is the Director and Co-Founder for the International Fine Art Photography Program and a juror for TerraQuantum, a program celebrating the beauty of the earth through photography.

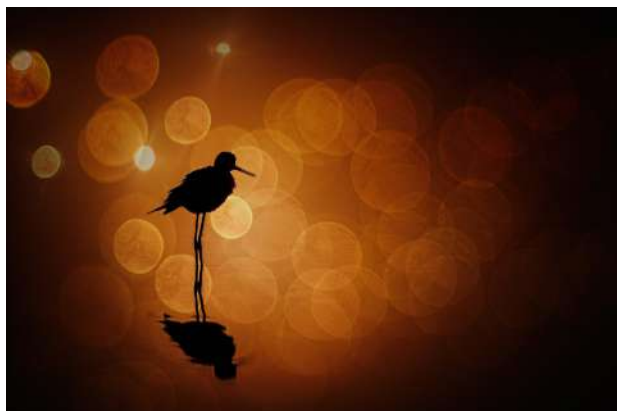
Visit <https://meredithmullins.artspan.com/home> to see and learn about her work.

# Padre Trails Camera Club

Pictorial #3 competition - Creative Use of Light- 04/17/2024

Group Blue Comments

Judged by: Meredith Mullins



## 01 - Black-necked stilt silhouette.jpeg

*Julie Chen*

STAR RATING: 4

COMMENT: A great choice of subject, with a well-captured silhouette and reflection. Elegant and delicate. I particularly like the slightly open beak ... ready to speak or sing ... or gobble something up. While bokeh works in many cases, here it seems a bit overdone ... and distracts from the simplicity and elegance of the subject. Some of the "hotter" spots draw the eye to areas away from the subject and into the upper left corner, which is not really where you want the viewer to go.



## 02 - Daffodils in the Morning Light.jpg

*John Drum*

STAR RATING: 3

COMMENT: Ah ... spring. A bouquet of daffodils is really the essence of an intro to the season. Here, however, the underexposure dampens their brightness and their would-be exuberance. The bouquet is relatively well arranged (although it would be nice to see more of the architecture of the flowers, since daffodils are like little musical instruments). The vase is a good selection to reflect some of the directional light (adding nice texture to the glass). The composition is strong, with good use of the diagonal table line. And the dark background works well to highlight the flowers ... if only the yellow "popped."



## 03 - Dandelion about to go to seed.jpg

*Carole Gan*

STAR RATING: 2

COMMENT: Depth of field in macro shots is difficult ... and here we find not much in clear focus except a few of the center leaves. The exposure is good and the background simplicity highlights all the interesting details of the flower. I'm curious what drew the photographer to this subject ... and did we, the audience, feel the photographer's passion and find it just as interesting? Did the connection work?



#### **04 - Delicate Ranunculus.jpg**

*Christene Johnson*

STAR RATING: 5

COMMENT: This image uses light in a truly unique way. The hi-key approach, with backlighting, reinforces the delicacy of the flower and floats it in simple white space so that we feel its ethereal nature. Heavenly. Reminiscent of Irving Penn's beautiful flower series.



#### **05 - Feather Duster.jpg**

*Julie Chen*

STAR RATING: 4

COMMENT: Several excellent uses of lighting effects, from the front lit grasses in the foreground to the backlit "feather duster" so that we see his/her feathery outline in graphic detail. I would like to see more detail in the face of our friend. Open up those facial shadows because the face is a huge part of his/her personality. The interesting profile (head and beak) gets lost in the shadow. It's also difficult to "read" what's happening around the legs, so the viewer spends time there when it's not the most interesting part of the image.



#### **06 - I'm on Fire.jpg**

*Bill Brown*

STAR RATING: 4

COMMENT: An interesting portrait, with fun detail to savor ... from the jeweled bodice and pants to the net stockings to the garters to the tattoos. The subject is captured in a great pose that moves the viewer's eye from lower left to upper right. This was a difficult exposure situation. The subject is perfectly exposed, but the fire is overexposed so the detail is lost and we don't exactly know what it is (unless we read the image title). The dynamic range was too great for the camera, so best to expose for the highlight and bring the shadow up in the woman. The background is beautiful with its "brushstrokes" of blue and green, but whatever the club/fleur de lys-like bright light on the right is, it needs to go. It's too unreadable and it breaks the mysterious/dramatic mood.



### 07 - Into the Light.jpg

*Carol Silveira*

STAR RATING: 5

COMMENT: A pretty perfect image. Interesting subject, with lovely, tactile detail. Strong and innovative composition and musical movement in the silvery threads descending from the spider. This use of light is exactly what this assignment/competition was looking for. If I had to find something to comment on, I would say remove some of the circular spots in the background. The linear threads don't need any competition/distraction.



### 08 - Jam at the Bulldog Pub.jpg

*Bill Brown*

STAR RATING: 4

COMMENT: The dramatic use of directional light and high contrast B&W are working well in this photo, as is the nontraditional slanted composition. The diagonal of the guitar body and neck creates strong movement and an energetic path for the viewer. The image holds our attention. There is definitely a story unfolding here. While some might critique the rounded object in the left foreground blocking the guitar or the shiny door-like object in the upper right, I love them both. They add interesting forms and light/shadow combos that frame the subject without competing. I do, however, find the vertical slits of light on the right and the round floral-like light and light beams on the left distracting. Easy to remove if you so choose. I can't quite figure out what's going on with his face. Is it painted? It leaves me with a question, which is not bad, but it may keep me up at night.

### 09 - Jasmine with a spot of light.jpg

*Christene Johnson*

STAR RATING: 5

COMMENT: A mood-heightened photo that begins to tell the story of this young woman. Her expression and pose will be interpreted by each viewer based on their own histories, but viewers will linger with this personality ... is she dreaming of the past ... or future, is she innocent or on the border of innocence and sensuality. The directional lighting is well done, giving a sculptural quality to the subject and highlighting the beauty of the human form. I particularly like the lighting on the legs which become just a study in light and shadow. It might be nice to see a bit more detail in the shadowed part of the face and the lower part of the clothing on the chair. What's interesting to me is, if you crop to just the face and neck (which I am not suggesting, just playing with), the whole feeling of the photo changes. Her expression can be read in so many ways.





### 10 - Light and Dust.jpg

*Carol Silveira*

STAR RATING: 3

COMMENT: The contrast and light and shadow of form has impact, but, for me, the subject does not hold my interest. The technical quality is excellent and the sharp focus gives a tactile feel to the the various textures. Since the subject is dead center, the photo becomes more static than it could be. Perhaps cropping from the top or bottom would make the photo more dynamic (either would work nicely ... a creative choice.)



### 11 - Light Painting with Milky Way.jpg

*John Drum*

STAR RATING: 4

COMMENT: Wow. Are there really that many stars in the sky? It's a whole new universe. In any event, this image makes a viewer pause and contemplate the great unknown. I appreciate the photographer's time and expertise in capturing this difficult shot. The vertical approach to the Milky Way is understandable, but the "universe" seems to beg for a horizontal/landscape format. The composition as is seems imbalanced and "tight." The exposure/light painting on the tree is good. The subtlety works. But best to remove the "stars" (white spots) from the tree.



### 12 - Mini Forest.jpg

*Joni Zabala*

STAR RATING: 4

COMMENT: As a snow lover, I appreciate scenes like this. A viewer can sense the silence of the snow and appreciate its purity before disturbed by any outside presence. The exposure and color balance are good (so often we get the blue cast to snow) and the directional light is creating some interesting shadows. The composition seems a bit "undesigned." There is some inherent movement, but there is no specific point of focus. The largest "tree" should probably be the point of focus, but the tree to the right competes and so the viewer's eye bounces back and forth. Perhaps cropping out the righthand tree would help the balance of the image.



### 13 - Rocky Beaut.jpg

*Joni Zabala*

STAR RATING: 4

COMMENT: A competent approach to a difficult exposure challenge, with good detail in both the bright sun and shaded areas. The composition is strong, with a powerful feeling of depth provided by the layers of the landscape and by the natural swirls of the rock adding nicely to the foreground movement. Congratulations to the photographer for finding a stunning setting. The human figure adds interest and contrast (and scale) to the natural landscape, although the pose seems too “stilted” for such a natural setting. I don’t understand the intent of the pose, so whatever message the photographer was intending was lost in translation (for me).



### 14 - Slice of Pi.jpg

*Denice Loria Woyski*

STAR RATING: 3

COMMENT: A unique approach to lighting as the photographer was able to capture the geometric light patterns of an urban street shaded by tall buildings. The “slice of pie” gives us a fresh perspective and leaves the viewer no choice but to look to the lighted area. With that said, I don’t find anything particularly interesting when I get there, and the tangle of details at the top is too complex to try to sort out. Perhaps “patience” is the key word here ... waiting for something more interesting to pass through the pie slice.



### 15 - Urban Solitude.jpg

*Denice Loria Woyski*

STAR RATING: 5

COMMENT: Bravo. By far, the best photo in the competition and perhaps in any competition. Everything about this image is brilliant. A story is being told about the quiet of inner space vs the chaotic outside world. The beauty of architecture is powerful-in simple forms and lines, light and shadows. And the elegance of the human form, where, in this case, every detail of movement seems to be in the perfect place, from the position of the feet to the angle of the body to the slightly proud tilt of the head. Not to mention that the figure has just stepped into the light at the perfect moment. Even the organization of the outside “urban” elements warrants a lingering look. So many interesting things happening out there. The image is perfectly composed and perfectly exposed (in a difficult exposure situation where it is challenging to get detail in both the shadow and highlight areas). (Am I using the word “perfect” too much?) I could go on and on. Really stunning work.

# Padre Trails Camera Club

Pictorial #3 competition - Creative Use of Light- 04/17/2024

Combined Groups Green and Red Comments

Judged by: Meredith Mullins



## 01-Art Glass in Winter Light.jpg

*Brooks Leffler*

STAR RATING: 3

COMMENT: A creative exploration of light, color, and shadow. I appreciate the use of the strong diagonal and the attention to some details (e.g., the positioning of the red cup so that the handle gives an interesting shadow). The colors of the glass in the largest vessel are beautiful, both in reality and shadow. I suggest some further experimentation with composition because there is great potential here with the subject matter. For me, this composition gets a bit jumbled in the lower left, and it might get more interesting if the red vessel interacts more with the purple/blue.



## 02-Candles and Glass.jpg

*Carol Fuessenich*

STAR RATING: 4

COMMENT: Mysterious and regal at the same time. An excellent choice of subject and use of light, catching the golden lines and forms, making it one of those images that one wants to spend time with. The composition is well designed, although the reflection seems truncated, with an odd cut off point in the middle of the image, making the overall balance feel askew. I would suggest more (or less) of the reflection and perhaps less black at the bottom of the image (or crop to square).



## 03-Carmel Mission Saint.jpg

*Sandie McCafferty*

STAR RATING: 2

COMMENT: We might not stop to savor the details of this statue and art work above had the photographer not brought it to our attention. Interesting pieces with subtle details and color. I'm not sure why there's "fog" at the bottom of the image. The lighting and clarity of the upper part of the sculpture are good, but things fall off at the bottom, creating an unnecessary distraction. It might also be good to include the whole circle of the top art piece so that the top of the photo doesn't feel constricted.



#### **04-Chinese Actor Applying Stage Makeup.jpg**

*Dick Light*

STAR RATING: 3

COMMENT: What a great portrait and moment in backstage theatre. A well-chosen subject. I sense difficult lighting conditions, so a flash might have been necessary, but it is causing some distracting highlights. Might be interesting to try this in very low light, with darkness in the background. The element on the left is competing for attention, so the question is ... is it really adding to the photo or distracting the viewer's eye, with no reward.



#### **05-Circles of Light.jpg**

*Ken Jones*

STAR RATING: 5

COMMENT: Everything works in this photo. The photographer's innovative idea to "see" the potential of light and what happens to light when it is filtered in a creative way. The combination of real and shadow, and complimentary colors-red (a warm color advancing to add depth), and gray/blue receding. The textural juxtaposition of lines, circles, and rectangles join forces to form a truly interesting exploration of light and graphic interest.



#### **06-Embers.jpg**

*Andrea Madsen*

STAR RATING: 3

COMMENT: The idea of embers as a subject is an interesting one and certainly provides the potential for creative use of light, particularly because the light is emanating/pulsing from the subject itself rather than being reflected. However, it's easy to get lost in this photo. It is unclear where to look and even what the subject is if you aren't privy to the title. I suggest looking at smaller sections of this image (e.g., the left side) and choosing a composition that is simpler and that guides the viewer on a well-composed journey.





### **07-Life Guard Tower - Paint with Gels.jpg**

*Lillie Grossman*

STAR RATING: 5

COMMENT: This photo stood out from the crowd from the beginning. The perfect composition, saturated colors, interesting architecture, and subtle contrast of background sunset light against the vibrancy of the lifeguard tower all work to make this an image that stays in mind long after viewing. Bravo. I know it has been manipulated, but I don't think about how or what was done. I just revel in the results. There is also that one brief moment where you're not sure if it really WAS manipulated or if this is just some wildly painted lifeguard stand. And that's cool.



### **08-Light of the Silvery Moon.jpg**

*Ken Jones*

STAR RATING: 3

COMMENT: This image should be sent to the Cloud Appreciation Society. The clouds are the stars (not the "moon" (if that is indeed the moon as the title proclaims). Actually, it's hard to know what it is because of its strange shape and overexposure. For me, it's a case of looking at the brightest object in the image and being disappointed in being taken there. I'd rather spend my time in the clouds (e.g., the right-hand side of the image is a much stronger photo).



### **09-Low Tide.jpg**

*Janet Azevedo*

STAR RATING: 3

COMMENT: The play of light on the incoming waves and on the textured foreground is a textbook definition of creative use of light. Nice choice of subject at the perfect time of day, with excellent exposure. The movement in the upper portion of the image is striking. The "horizon line" cuts the image in half and allows the bottom half to take on too much weight. I'd suggest cropping about half of the foreground. It is much less interesting than the water, and the compositional balance would be more dynamic.



**10-Lue.jpg**

*Bill Shewchuk*

STAR RATING: 5

COMMENT: OK. Whether you're a dog lover or not, this portrait is going to win your heart. An excellent portrayal of a personality and mood. The exposure and clarity of focus allow the viewer to feel the texture of the fur and whiskers in a very tactile way. I admire the muted neutral tones, almost like a B&W photo, but with hints of color where it counts (the eyes). The directional natural light works well to add to the mood. Although we see a lot of photos of pets and children, when they make you smile ... it's worth it.

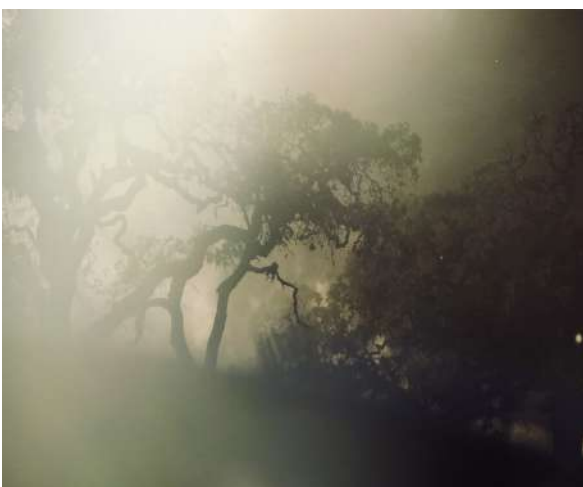


**11-Mirror Ball Magic.jpg**

*Brooks Leffler*

STAR RATING: 4

COMMENT: A creative choice of subject to explore light and abstraction of light and reflected light. Well-executed, but too complex at the top of the image. The lower 2/3 works well, so perhaps a crop to make the image stronger (and simpler).



**12-Oak Woods.jpg**

*Sandie McCafferty*

STAR RATING: 5

COMMENT: We know that light is one of the primary ways to set a mood in an image, and this photo is definitive proof. The diffused light (and mist) lend an air of mystery and calm. And the sculptural elements of the tree, in contrast, add an interesting focal point. The lateral movement of light to dark adds to the dynamism of the photo. (I am distracted by the points of light (sensor dust spots?) especially the large one near the right edge.)



**13-Oil and Water are not Mixing.jpg**

*Brian Spiegel*

STAR RATING: 5

COMMENT: A lovely abstract that has strong spontaneous movement and composition. Like climbing a rogue wave, the viewer travels from left to right along the organic edge between blue and white. It's not a new subject, but the image is well done.



**14-Ready for the Band.jpg**

*Andrea Madsen*

STAR RATING: 3

COMMENT: The idea of “waiting” for the action is a good choice for this image, as the viewer can spend time with the graphic strength of the light beams. Unfortunately, the mass of details on stage distracts from the strength of the lights and gets the viewer tangled up in things that aren't as interesting graphically. Without the title, a viewer might wonder why this photo was taken or might try to search for a “hidden” human subject as a real point of interest.



**15-Roses Blinds Light.jpg**

*Brian Spiegel*

STAR RATING: 3

COMMENT: So nicely reminiscent of Mapplethorpe's flower series. The photographer here (like Mapplethorpe) pays attention not just to the subject but also to the background (which I love!), which becomes equally important in the graphic design. The soft focus (and depth of field) on the subject is distracting. Should be more in focus (especially the leaves).



**16-Starry Night in Newport State Park.jpg**

*Bill Shewchuk*

STAR RATING: 5

COMMENT: Well done in exposure and composition. The shadowy tree line is a nice base for the starry sky. The light painting of the tree, mystical and mysterious, adds a dimension that requires the viewer to spend time, contemplating the “why” of the universe. I would suggest a color adjustment to the bark of the tree. It’s taking on an unnatural blue/cyan cast from the artificial light, although that might be part of your “mystical” approach.) I’m also wishing for clearer focus on the tree.



**17-Tea Time - Paint with Gels.jpg**

*Lillie Grossman*

STAR RATING: 5

COMMENT: I always hate it when someone says a photo reminds them of something else. But ... this photo reminds me of the beautiful simplicity and graphic strength of Robert Wilson theatre sets. The clean blue background and the black base (with a horizon line that is interestingly jagged) are a perfect setting for the simple shapes and saturated color of the vessels. Unique ... and well executed.



**18-Temple in China Town, Los Angeles.jpg**

*Carol Fuessenich*

STAR RATING: 3

COMMENT: This image has many strengths. The beautiful altar is like an 18th century still life, rich with shapes and color, and the beams of light from the window are a perfect reminder of the essence of spirituality. The detail of the background is also a strong graphic of rectangular shapes. I can’t help but be distracted by whatever is on the floor where the beams touch. Whatever it is, is difficult to read and takes on too much importance in the overall image flow because it is the brightest spot in the photo.



### 19-Tibetan Monastery.jpg

*Dick Light*

STAR RATING: 2

COMMENT: Such beautiful, rich colors take a starring role in this image, but the lack of focus and relatively shallow depth of field detract from what might have been interesting detail in the columns. I'm missing the "creative use of light" that was the assignment. It seems the window light is overexposed and the light hitting the right side of the temple is so strong that many of the highlights are blown.



### 20-Waterscape.jpg

*Janet Azevedo*

STAR RATING: 5

COMMENT: This waterscape moves in lovely rhythms, making good use of light to highlight textures and lines and add a warm (gold) touch to the otherwise neutral tones. Excellent composition with a curving line that moves the viewer organically through the image. Nicely done.

Place awards follow.

---

**P**adre Trails Camera Club  
Pictorial #3 competition - Creative Use of Light- 04/17/2024  
Winning Images Blue Group



Honorable Mentions

**Feather Duster**  
*Julie Chen*



**Jasmine with a Spot of Light**  
*Chris Johnson*



**Light Painting with Milky Way**  
*John Drum*

Third Place Blue Group

**Delicate Ranunculus**  
*Chris Johnson*



Second Place



**Into the Light**  
*Carol Silveira*

First Place



**Urban Solitude**  
*Denice Loria Woyski*

---

**P**adre Trails Camera Club  
Pictorial #3 competition - Creative Use of Light- 04/17/2024  
Winning Images Combined Green & Red Groups



Honorable Mentions:



**Starry Night in Newport State Park**  
*Bill Shewchuk*



**Waterscape**  
*Janet Azevedo*



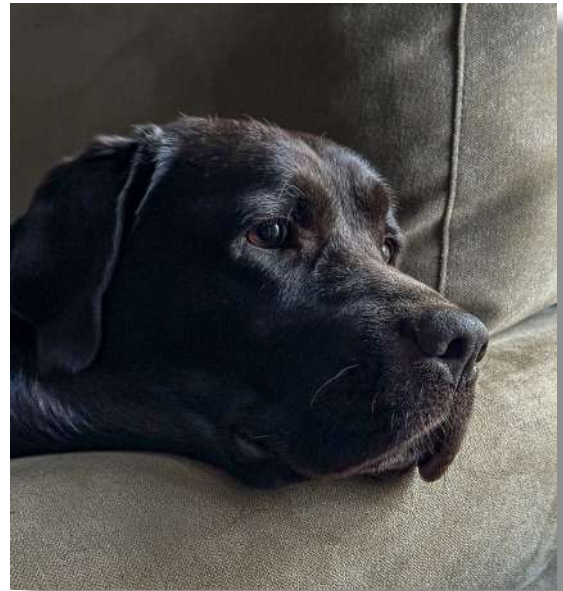
**Tea Time - Paint with Gels**  
*Lillie Grossman*



Third Place Combined Green & Red Groups - Tie



**Oak Woods**  
*Sandie McCafferty*



**Lue**  
*Bill Shewchuk*

Second Place



**Circles of Light**  
*Ken Jones*

First Place



**Life Guard Tower - Paint With Gels**  
*Lillie Grossman*