

Padre Trails Camera Club

Nature #2 “Backyard” Competition - August 21, 2019
Group AA Comments



01 - Altocumulus and Cumulus Cloud Crossing.jpg

Amy Sibiga

This image is just fun to view... The clouds make a lovely textural background while the blue of the sky creates a visual tension with the yellow (blue and yellow are complementary colors and thus create visual eye candy when paired together) signage. You've also pulled some contrast into the image not only with the colors but with the message—XING. This could be seen to some as a winking metaphor for the afterlife because it's contrasted with the heavenward clouds. I love the cheekiness of the image and the bold usage of color. ***



02 - Among the tomatoes.jpg

Nicole Asselborn

This is an absolute joy to view... the yellow and green adjacent colors play off of each other beautifully and your use of depth of field to pull the mantis to the foreground is lovely. I love seeing the individual “hairs” on the tomato plant. It is well cropped with a beautiful bright leaf allowing the insect to show off and separate from the background. ****

03 - Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest.jpg

Dale Thies

This image has such lovely, interesting textures and I think the usage of the monochromatic color scheme is successful. I love the visual journey that's made with the winding and knotting of the wood which has an almost lacquered sheen to it. The one tweak I would do with this image is to consider cropping the smallest part off of the top. You would lose some of the beautiful curve of the tree, but you would also take off some of the background which can become a little distracting, especially if you are trying to emphasize the textural beauty of the tree. ***



04 - Arroyo Seco Gorge.jpg

Janet Azevedo

This image has so much lovely texture in it, and the usage of green as an emphasizing color is effective. While this image has excellent exposure, focus and white balance, it lacks a focal point. I think that the overarching texture is taking over the photograph and doesn't allow a true focal point to shine through. A strong aspect of this image is the carryover of the green from the treetops to the water flowing through the gorge and up to the pops of green on the right hand side of the picture. I think a change of vantage point would shift the composition, helping to establish a strong focal point and a direct visual trail through the image. **





05 - Blanket Flower with Honey bee.jpg

Dale Thies

This is an extremely engaging image and is cropped beautifully. I personally am a fan of cropping square, but I think outside of my own cropping bias, I think it works extremely well in this image. The flower and bee are emphasized and the usage of shallow depth of field for the background are great ways to cradle your subject and pull them forward in the image. The square crop also lends itself to instant crossover to social media platforms, too! The usage of harmonious colors (orange, yellow, green) also lends visual pleasure to the image. ***



06 - Double-crested Cormorant taking lessons_.jpg

Kent Van Vuren

I love the “wink” you’ve created in this photo from the title of the image. You’ve created a lovely dynamic between each bird and have created an image that allows the birds to be imbued with human characteristics. After reading the title of the image, I was more drawn into the composition and really was able to study the double-crested cormorant’s expression—you’ve caught a lovely moment when its head is turned in a very dynamic way. Your composition is effective as well as exposure, depth of field and focus. The only thing that would take this photo to the next level is if the larger bird’s head were turned to profile as well. I think that would create a more dynamic visual path that the viewer can take as they look at the photograph. ***



07 - Fly drinking.jpg

Nicole Asselborn

Wow, you’ve caught a moment very few people get to see so up close and personal. What a treat! Your focus and perspective are so pleasing to view. The first thought I had was that I would love to see your editing process—which images of this scene didn’t make the cut? How many vantage points did you try out? As I’m looking at it, I would love to see a shot where you’re shooting into the shadow and allow some dynamic quality of light to enter into the image with some lighting from behind (this would also allow for a bit more of a profile of the fly—so that more of what he’s using to drink the water can be seen). Your attention to detail is amazing and I’m pleased to get to see such an up close and investigative shot. ***



08 - Golden Retriever retrieving.jpg

Janet Azevedo

What a fun moment to capture! I can imagine that this shoot was a fun one. I love that the choice of shutter speed you used allowed water to be captured both stopped in motion and also a little blurred (the water in the foreground). The blue/green backdrop of the water provides a nice way to separate your subject from the background and creates a less busy background. The foamy water in the foreground of the image is also eye catching as well as the halo of water around the dog. I think what might make this image more effective is more thought to how light could accentuate this image. While the formal elements of the image are effective, where it falls short is in the lack of dynamic lighting. This could be brought into play in a myriad of ways...different times of days (early morning, late afternoon), backlighting, etc. **



09 - Hawkmoth.jpg

Nicole Asselborn

I appreciate your attention to detail in this image—I've never seen a hawkmoth so close up and so intimately! What a treat! This image is composed quite well, exposed correctly and the white balance is pleasing. The composition is helped by the diagonal of the moth's position in the image. I can see there was a lot of thought put into that aspect of the image and it is quite effective. I do like that you are using some shallow depth of field which helps to pull the moth from the background, but more shallow depth of field would really take this photograph to the next level. I think if you are able to use a lens that would allow for extremely shallow depth of field you could play with isolating the moth and really pulling it to the foreground—right now it's fighting a bit with the background and getting lost a bit. **



**10 - Is the Van Vuren restaurant still open for business.
jpg**

Kent Van Vuren

I love your title—it gives the image an appreciated aspect of whimsy. I personally love raccoons (our family had a raccoon as a pet when I was a kid) and was happy to get to see a photo of one! While the image has a lot of whimsy, there are some things that might help bring the animal more to the focus of the image. I know that when you're shooting nature and wildlife, it's a bit of a grab bag with what you can really get because you have to react to quickly to the individual circumstances. I do, however, think that a little more shallow depth of field (allowing more of the foreground to blur) would really help emphasize the raccoon. If the raccoon can be separated from the background more, this would also help emphasize the raccoon, bringing it more into play as the central character of the image. ***



11 - Ivy climbing up bark.jpg

Janet Azevedo

I love the formal aspects of this image—the lovely texture of the tree (I think it's a tree) contrasted with the pop of green from the ivy, the composition with the ivy coming in diagonally and the textural focus. While the pop of green does add a lot of visual interest, I'm also wondering if you might have thought about converting this to a black and white image and possibly giving a slight bit of a tone to it. I think that the lovely formal qualities of the image would be even more catered to as a black and white image, especially if you are able to adjust the tones so that the ivy pops just as much monochromatically as they do in color. ***



12 - Lavender Wildflower.jpg

Dale Thies

Your usage of shallow depth of field in this image is quite successful! The pop of lavender color also draws the eye into the image in an effective way. I also think the square crop works, too. I would love to see a bit more separation from the background (although the shallow depth of field really does a great job separating the subject from the background). I'm not sure of the circumstances of when the shot was taken and where, but either bouncing light into the shot or diffusing some of the light coming onto the flower would help soften the shadows on the flower. I think the reason I'm pointing it out is that the image has such a softness in the flower and the usage of depth of field, that there is a bit of contrast that is created with the sharper shadows. ***



13 - Reflection, Refraction and Dispersion.jpg

Amy Sibiga

I love the unexpected take you have on the idea of “backyard nature” and I also enjoy the risk you took with shallow depth of field. The shallow depth of field allows the viewer to “settle into” the image and meander around, gathering experiences on the visual journey. I love how the raindrops in the foreground mingle with the texture of the buildings—this adds a lot of visual interest to the image. The quality of light is lovely how it causes the gold building to actually seem like it’s glowing. Well done!



14 - Warning, Warning, Aplomado Falcon.jpg

Amy Sibiga

I love the quizzical expression the falcon has in this image. It’s almost as if you have given the bird some human attributes. Your usage of shallow depth of field is also quite successful—it helps to pull the falcon forward and emphasize the personality of the bird. The pop of red in the background plays nicely with the yellow on the bird’s face (yellow and red being harmonious colors allow them to create some visual harmony within the color scheme). Red is also the color of passion which helps to imbue the falcon with even more human attributes—we tend to see falcons as intense prey animals and the red in the picture helps to solidify that idea. It’s “sharp” where it needs to be which is so important for an image like this which can be ruined by improper focus. ****



15 - White-lined Sphinx Moth on my backyard wall.jpg

Kent Van Vuren

This image has some lovely aspects—the beauty of the moth is intriguing and it’s the almost symmetrical quality of the image which is pulling me in. I think you may just want to tweak the composition to exploit this a bit. Consider just turning the image a bit so that the moth is straight up and down. This would settle some of the tension that this image has. I’m not sure if you intended this contrast or not, but there is a definite contrast in man vs. nature in this image that comes from the strong light source (this causes the shadow on both the moth and the texture of the wall). Artificial or hard lighting may have definitely been needed when this was shot and I’m going back and forth on whether I love the effect the wall texture has when emphasized like this or if it detracts from the overall impact of the image.

Winning Images:



2nd Place:

Among the tomatoes

Nicole Asselborn



1st Place:

Reflection, Refraction and Dispersion.

Amy Sibiga