



01 - Apprehensive Cowboy.jpg

Amy Sibiga

An excellent “environmental” portrait. I can feel the grittiness of the sand and of the subject (the grain adds to the rough mood of the photo). His expression is a bit hard to read, which, in some ways invites the viewer to fill in the story. I was a little distracted by the complexity of the background, but I understand that it adds to the “environment.”



02 - Ash Throated Flycatcher.jpg

Jeff Hobbs

Bravo for stepping outside the normal “people” box. Yes, birds have personality too and this photo captures the fragility and tenderness of the bird world, as well as perfect detail that is unique to the flycatcher. Artistically, this excels, but at the same time, I felt the post-production manipulation too strongly (I see the “edges” of the shading). That said, the artistic background and the toning did take the image back in time to some of the early pictures/etchings of birds. (And I sure hope this was a real bird, not a stuffed one.)



03 - Barbara at Ease.jpg

Brooks Leffler

A poignant and elegant portrait of this subject. It is clear that the photographer had a good connection to the subject. Much of her kind inner spirit comes through. I love the natural pose and the highlights in the hair and eyes. What kept it from being 5-star? The extraneous hot spots that distracted.



04 - Boy'sBestFriend.jpg

Shelley Nemeth

A boy and his dog has to pull at the heartstrings, especially such a captured moment of love. I particularly like how the dog’s nose becomes a focus point, as well as his sleepy, docile eyes. The lighting is distracting. Too many important things in shadow, especially the boy’s face.



05 - Colleen.jpg

John Drum

A well-done portrait from a composition and tonal standpoint, but I don't get a real sense of the subject or the "voice" of the photographer. Nice to have the subject looking off camera. It adds interest. What does she see that makes her smile?



06 - Cow along Warnell Trail.jpg

Amy Sibiga

I applaud the photographer for capturing the personality of this subject and realizing that animals are "people" too. Strong. Defiant. With room (leading space) in the composition to charge if it wants. I particularly like the texture and detail of the fur. Makes this a very tactile photo. Only drawback is the high contrast—detail is lost in the shadows and some of the highlights. A Giacomelli version of a cow.



07 - Darwin Dave and His Dog Toots.jpg

John Avera

Perfect in so many ways. Composition, rich black and white tones, texture and detail everywhere, from the hat to the beard to the sweater to the dog fur. Outstanding composition, with an added touch of movement implied by the blown hair, the gazes of man and dog off camera, and the right-angled dog legs and man's fingers moving to the corner of the frame. Also a great background that adds depth, but does not compete with the subject. And ... a personality that comes through with force. Excellent!!



08 - Ellie.jpg

Brooks Leffler

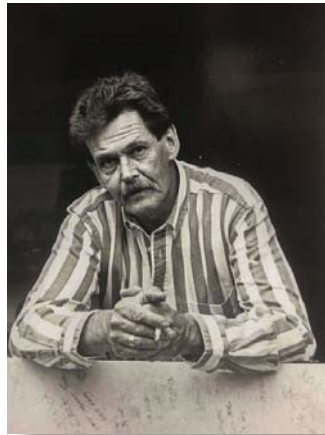
A studio-quality portrait. Flattering lighting (except for the shadow on her left eye, which makes it look a little like a black eye). Good focus. A thoughtful pose. Something seems a little un-natural, though. Is it her make-up or something in post-production? The texture of the skin and the dark line at her chin are strange.



09 - Friendly fellow.JPG

Margret Cordts

Well, this IS a friendly fellow. A well-done portrait of the subject that his friends and family should love. His personality comes through via his eyes, his smile, and even his energetic shirt and slightly tousled hair. This image is well composed and well done technically. To be honest, I originally gave this 4-stars because it seemed like a competent portrait of an ordinary person. Nothing earth shattering. However, as I spent time with the subject, I began to really appreciate the subtlety of his personality coming through and the masterful presentation. Thus ...5 stars



10 - Glen.jpg

Jeff Hobbs

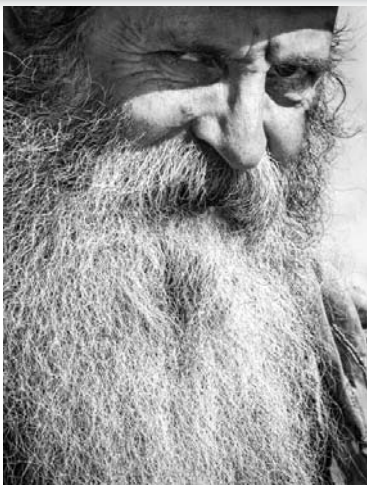
The direct gaze of the subject and the natural pose work well to bring us, as viewers, right in to the image and holds us there. It seems hard to break away from this gaze, and the more you stare, the more you start to see. I might be going crazy, but this actually becomes video-like for me. I start out seeing a tough guy, but as I stare, he softens and kindness begins to creep in. His face changes before my eyes. His pyramid-like pose (with his elbowed arms as a base and his head at the top) is a great composition device, and creates inherent movement in the photo leading to his face (the stripes of his shirt support this movement). His rough hands, the cigarette, and the graffitied base add to the story. Really well done.



11 - Grandson.jpg

Joni Zabala

What a picture of innocence mixed with a wisdom beyond the age. This baby exudes confidence. The flat lighting makes the image a little less dramatic than it could be (but allows for good detail and that slightly ethereal high-key look) However, the catchlight in the eyes is too prominent.



12 - Grizzly.jpg

Chris Johnson

This image wins the prize for beard detail and the Walt Whitman doppelganger award. The texture and detail of the beard is a highlight of this image, and the composition element of cropping in to the face works very well. The harsh lighting and high contrast, for me, is a negative, as is the strange angle of the eyes (and the fact that they are in lighting that makes them hard to see).



13 - Hannah.jpg

Frank Penner

A well-done studio quality portrait. Interesting lighting, that gives good depth to the subject and nicely separates her from the background. All the textures (and tonal details) can really be “felt,” from the softness of the shirt to the smooth skin, to the silkiness of the hair. The pose is quite natural, and the catchlight in the eyes works well to add inherent energy.

14 - Hazel & Frankie.jpg

Shelley Nemeth

This image is different from some of the other “standard” portraits in that the subject is engaged in an action. For me, that makes the image much more interesting. It also provides more clues to the personality of the subject. The composition here is excellent with the arms adding fun movement to the image and the crook of her elbow leading us to her face and the face of the rabbit. The white stripe on the rabbit’s nose mirrors the curve of the girl’s sleeve in an interesting way. I also love her raised eyes that show a connection to the photographer, as well as a protectiveness of her rabbit. A sweetness but also a message: Don’t mess with me ... or my rabbit. Great technical quality also, a range of well-exposed tones. *****



15 - Hi, I’m Sal Monella - May I join you for lunch.jpg

John Avera

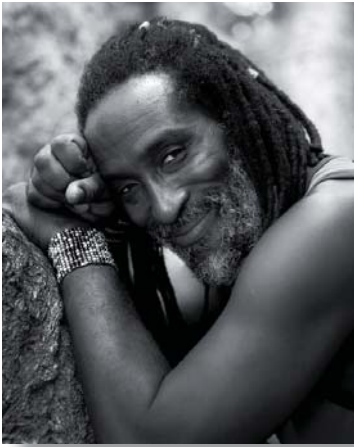
I love the humor here ... and the fact that we can see the microscopic detail of good ole Sal (whatever he is). Really interesting design and texture, especially the eyes (?) and hairs. It may be my lack of scientific knowledge, but I do get confused looking at this image. I’m not exactly sure what’s going on here at first glance and am unnecessarily drawn to the highlight spot in the background just below the creature.

16 - John and His Image.jpg

Mary Ann Avera

What a kind and heartwarming image. We can feel the heart of John and a bit of pride (in his image, perhaps?) Well composed, with just the right amount of space next to the edge of the frame and leading space for the implied movement of the subject. I also like the form of his glasses just above the picture frame. Well done technically as well. ****





17 - Keather - Maui.jpg

Lillie Grossman

Another warm image (this club knows how to get the best emotions from their subjects). The composition and technical quality of this image are both superb. The crooked elbow V-shape leads us to the subject's face—a natural framing device. The depth of field is also perfect to separate him from the background. I can feel all the textures from the rough rock to the beaded bracelet to the smooth skin to the scratchy/crunchy beard and hair. Most of all, the subject's expression and the direct gaze pull us, as viewers, into this image and make us feel good about getting to know this person. Well done.



18 - Killian.jpg

Mary Ann Avera

A cute subject captured in a natural moment. I'm not quite sure what is going on with the hair style, but it makes me take a second look. Technically well done with soft side lighting and a good b&w tonal range.



19 - La Calavera Catrina.jpg

Carol Silveira

This photo is certainly one of the most dramatic images in this portrait group, which makes it stand out to a reviewer. The theatrical make-up is well done, particularly the design of the mouth and eyes, which makes this subject an excellent choice for a portrait. The composition is unusual, with the off-center face and the cropping in on the hat, with the veil adding an interesting framing device. I also like the detail around the neck—the silky ribbon and the feathers, giving us a variety of textures to “feel.” Well-exposed and well-rendered technically. Great job. *****



20 - Lonnie the Clown .jpg

Judi H. Clayton

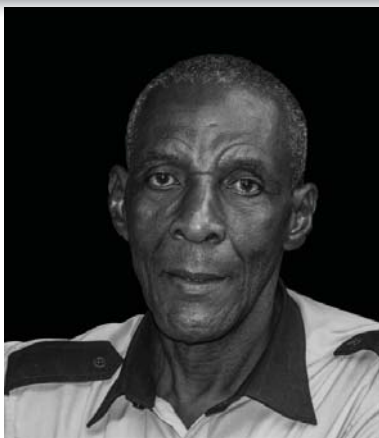
This image caught my attention right away. It is one of those stories that allows the viewer to imagine. The expression is poignant, sweet, tender, sad, and gentle all at the same time. The position of the subject is absolutely perfect to accent the shape of the face and chin line, to see the eyes as windows to the soul, and to see the detail/texture of the hair. The close up choice brings us into the subject's world and makes us feel a part of the emotion. I feel a lot when I look at this image. Beautiful portrait. *****



21 - Michael Rugg Owner of Big Foot Museum.jpg

Ken Jones

A proud mountainman to be sure (or BigFoot fan). Without the photo title, it's hard to know why this guy is presenting this particular bottle of wine. It makes it seem more like an ad than a window into Michael's personality. He's an interesting subject, though, worthy of perhaps picturing him in better lighting conditions.



22 - My Cuban Friend.jpg

Bill Shewchuk

This image pulls one in to try to understand the expression. There is pain, trepidation, a plea for help? It's hard to know, but that mystery makes us spend time with the image (and the subject). Well done technically, with the skin tones and the separation from the background via soft flash.



23 - Pato Banton - Performer at West End Celebration.jpg

Bill Brown

Another image where we are swept in by an expression that is hard to read but seems to demand our attention. Given the moment we are living in history right now, this image is mesmerizing. In this subject, there is pain and struggle and, I think, a bit of rage. I'm sure I'm reading in much from the times, which leads me to ask what the subject was "saying" to the photographer at this moment. It does not look like a comfortable conversation. But the emotion coming through, for whatever reason, gives this image great power. Well done.



24 - Portrait of Scarlett .jpg

Judi H. Clayton

A lovely portrait of youth and a certain confidence in being. I love the expression, which is somewhat angelic with a hint of devil. These eyes could stare down the best of us. The soft lighting on the face belies the strength/force of the subject, but works well as a contrasting element. The forms below the hand are distracting since I don't quite know what they are. Perhaps best to remove them.



25 - Pretending.jpg

Frank Penner

A great moment, making the case that good photographs of children are often when they are engaged in their own play. I would suggest a bit more contrast in the image to make it pop.



26 - Proud Grandmother , Dublin, Ireland.jpg

John Drum

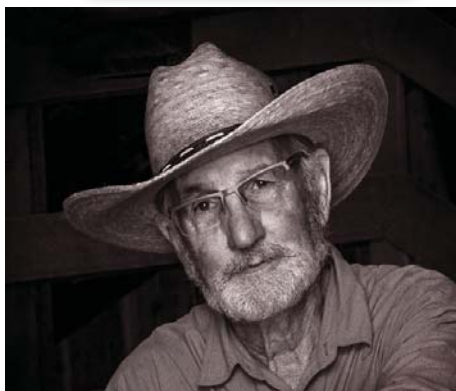
A nice portrait with many clues to personality, from the twinkling eyes to the sly smile to the jaunty and elegant clothes. I particularly like the composition with the shoulder providing strong diagonal movement in the photo.



27 - Scottish Royalty.jpg

Carol Fuessench

The costume provides interest to this image, as well as the warm smile to bring us in to the photo. I particularly like the position of her hands and the beaded cuffs. I am confused by the background treatment. What is going on? And I'd like to see a bit more contrast. The lighting/tones seem flat.



28 - Selfie.jpg

Jerry Heisel

A well done selfie, with excellent composition and lighting. I love the tilt of the hat (and head) giving us the strength of a diagonal and inherent movement in the image. Good contrast of tones, but maybe a little too much grain/noise.



29 - Silver Haired Gentleman.jpg

Chris Johnson

Well exposed and well printed. The contrast and range of tones is great, especially giving the white hair some luminosity and the black hat and coat a nice richness and depth. I like that the subject is presenting himself proudly, but his eyes have a bit of question in them, thus making a read of the personality and emotion more complex. I do wish the background were simpler or in some way less distracting. I find that it competes with the subject. ****



30 - Sophie in Fields of Gold B&W.jpg

Jared Ikeda

A subject and setting that has great potential. I love the hair bow and the design/texture of the clothes, especially the sturdy shoes. The dappled light is a bit distracting as is the petal/flower that covers the face. I would also suggest that the whole scene could be brightened.



31 - Standing tall.jpg

Joni Zabala

A subject and setting that has great potential. I love the hair bow and the design/texture of the clothes, especially the sturdy shoes. The dappled light is a bit distracting as is the petal/flower that covers the face. I would also suggest that the whole scene could be brightened.



32 - The Muse.jpg

Carol Fuessench

I'm a sucker for pensive children. Images such as this one leave much to the viewer's imagination as to what the child is thinking and feeling. The child becomes metaphorically older (a projection to adulthood) just by nature of being lost in thought. Well done technically in terms of tonal scale, exposure, and textured background. Great image.



33 - The Washer Woman.jpg

Carol Silveira

A fun shot, but the lighting and the lack of contrast in the image detract from the subject. I find more strength of subject and artistic potential in a close up look at the details (for example, the clothespin hair and the hand and teeth).



34 - Thompson.jpg

Bill Shewchuk

An image with such interesting textures. I love the beard and the background. I am less enthralled with the overexposed white shirt and the reflections in the glasses. Reflections in glasses can be a real addition to a photo. We tend to look carefully to see what's reflected. However, I don't find anything particularly interesting in these glasses and they are a center of focus in this image. A great character, though. I'd like to see more images with him as subject.



35 - Tom Ryan - Cubensis Keyboards at Michael's on Main.jpg

Bill Brown

The subject seems a worthy choice and the tilted perspective adds interest, but the shadows don't allow the viewer to fully appreciate the personality or what exactly is going on. The dark shadow on the face is particularly distracting.



36 - Young woman at kew gardens.jpg

Ken Jones

A pleasant presentation of an engaging subject. The soft natural light (and the structure of the window) is lovely, as is her outfit (clearly not American). I also like the position of her hands. Showing hands in a portrait always adds to the personality clues. I feel happy just looking at this photo.



37 - Young woman with python.JPG

Margret Cordts

She looks so calm having a python around her neck. A lovely serene countenance, made a bit more wild with her piercings and, of course, the snake (but her innocence comes through with those great freckles). I like the texture of her shirt as well, which, near the snake head, looks like snake skin of a different sort. Unfortunately, the design and line of the snake gets lost in her other necklaces. Might have been better to let the snake be her only necklace.



38 - Catarina_Dia de los Muertos.jpg

Karen Schofield

An interesting subject presented well so we can revel in the detail. That's one mother of a hat. Lighting and focus are well done. The centered composition makes the image less dramatic (more static). I would suggest trying some different croppings to have more movement in the image.



39 - Leo Watching the Birds.jpg

Karen Schofield

Yes, Leo looks quite focused here, with the softest of fur. The lighting and exposure really bring out the tactile nature of the subject. The clipping path, or however, the photographer removed the background (and one paw?) feels quite unnatural here. A floating dog???

Winning Images:

Honorable Mentions:

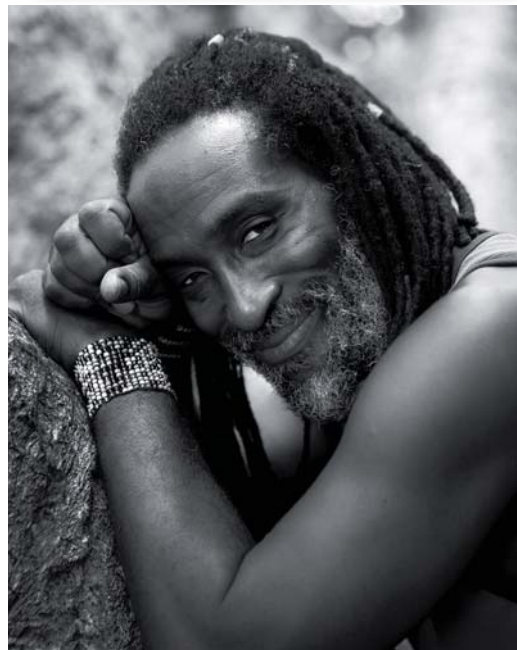
Ash Throated Flycatcher
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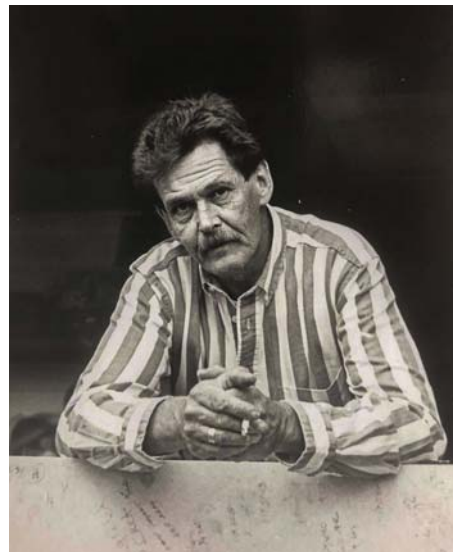
Third Place:

Darwin Dave and dog Toots
John Avera



2nd Place - Tie:

Glen
Jeff Hobbs



2nd Place - Tie:

La Calavera Catrina
Carol Silveira



First Place:

Lonnie the Clown
Judi H. Clayton



General Comment: This interesting collection of personalities, presented with technical mastery, made a selection of winners quite difficult, especially in the top prizes. All were outstanding, as were the honorable mentions and the other 5-star images.