

Black and White Images



First Place - Lonnie The Clown

Judi H. Clayton

There are several excellent images in this B&W category, but I had to select one. This portrait is very well done, the side-lighting, dark background and expression of the face are all very effective. I think it is the facial expression which makes this image so compelling—it's not a smile, not a frown, but very expressive. It is also interesting that the clown is looking out of the frame, to one side. I find that it is easy to recall this portrait after it is off of my screen.



2nd Place - Bench Plane

John Avera

Bench Plane is an excellent photograph—the straightforward composition and superb lighting create strong linear elements that describe the shape, depth and outline of the plane. Underexposing the image, making it darker with lots of black, makes it very compelling. I find that I keep looking at it, hoping that I can absorb some of the forethought and skill that went into making it.



3rd Place - Zero Greets the Rising Sun

John Avera

The soft lighting on the plane is very effective, creating dark and light areas. The light areas tend to outline key parts of the body, while the darker areas recede and show the overall form or shape. This image would not have been nearly as effective in brighter light, as the early morning allows for much more drama and visual interest. The symmetry and the rear view are also well done. Did you have to turn the propellor to line it up so well, or is that how it comes to rest? The way the rear of the front wings meet the front of the rear wings is also a strong detail. The only distracting elements are the planes in the background, but they would have been difficult to move around. I wonder if a slightly lower perspective would have reduced their impact, maybe...

Black and White Honorable Mentions



Ash Throated Flycatcher

Jeff Hobbs

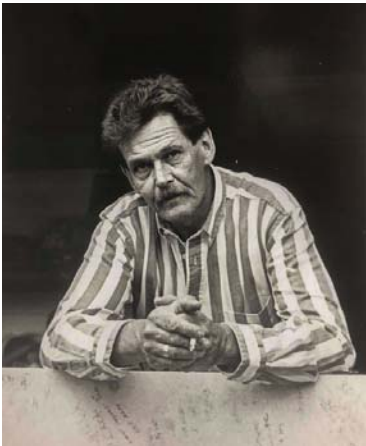
This is a very strong portrait or “head shot” of the flycatcher and the alterations in post-processing work very well. It’s nice that the bird’s beak is open and that there is a small catch-light in the eye.



Darwin Dave and His Dog Toots

John Avera

This is a very well-done and compelling portrait. I appreciate that both the subject and the dog are looking away at something off to the side. Dave’s hand is very interesting and could easily be another photograph. I find the background is a little distracting, particularly since it has the same bright tonality as the main area of the image. Perhaps it could be darkened and softened to make it less competitive.



Glen

Jeff Hobbs

This is a strong portrait, I like the facial expression, the cigarette and striped shirt. I think it would be stronger if some of the white area at the bottom were cropped and straightened. Leveling is subjective, but I would probably do it. I think that underexposing it a little more would make it more dramatic and cleaning up the spots and brighter areas of the background would also be helpful. When you look at an image, it might be helpful to pretend you are sketching or painting, and then determine what you would change to add interest and emotion. So often photographers see themselves as documentarians or journalists instead of artists.



Stormy Tide

A Bender

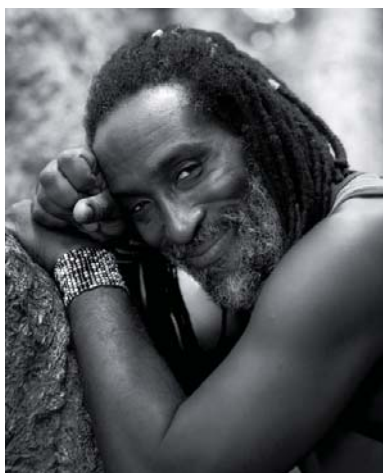
This is a nice image of the slow movement of the water and rock formations. The diagonal lines are particularly effective. Placing the tall vertical rock in the upper right enhances the strong composition. I have to admit that when I see a landscape with a crooked horizon line it bothers me. This is an easy fix and would make the image much stronger. I take many images with crooked horizons and it is one of the first changes I make in post-processing.



Hazel and Frankie

Shelley Nemeth

This is a good portrait of the young girl and the bunny. I particularly like the facial expression on the rabbit, he is very wary of being photographed. Stronger side lighting would have helped this image, but it is very well done.



Keather

Lillie Grossman

This is a very nice portrait. The strong diagonal lines help a lot as does the closed fist. The smile works well, but now that you have him posing, I would try some other facial expressions. If it were mine, I would change the background to black to emphasize the darkness of the skin and hair.



La Calavera Catrina

Carol Silveira

This is a well-done portrait of the painted face. Some of the brighter details in the background are distracting and I would darken them to add more contrast and mystery to the image. I think there is a lot of potential to make this even stronger.

Creative Images

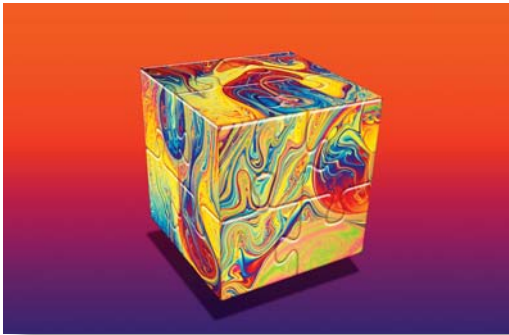


First Place— Brooklyn Bridge Revisited

Bill Brown

This is a very strong and creative image, perfect for this category. The viewer's eye is drawn to the towering guitar by multiple leading lines and perfect placement. Having it disappear into the clouds is a nice and effective touch. Very clever and very well done.

One small suggestion would be to straighten out the buildings along the sides of the frame, so they are vertical and not leaning inward.



Second Place— Puzzling Soap Film

John Avera

This is a very well-executed and conceived image. The shadow under the cube adds a strong element to the composition and the range of background colors is very well done. A lot of thought and creativity went into making this image.



Third Place— Sunset

Bill Shewchuk

This is also a very creative image, colorful and well done.

Having the hand holding the sphere is a nice touch and it adds an interesting perspective.

I notice a lot of noise in the background sky and if this were mine, I would reduce the noise to make the image stronger. If I had to guess, I would say this was taken with a phone as the resolution and focus seem a little soft.

Creative Honorable Mentions



Superbike Zoom Blur

Jared Ikeda

A very well done and creative photograph. I appreciate that the lighter area is in front of the biker and that the shadow was maintained. It is also an unusual perspective, taken from above, perhaps with a drone or from an unusual vantage point. The shading and gradation of the background are also well done. It would be nice if there were a way to emphasize the forward motion of the motorcycle, perhaps having the foreground more plain or open, and keeping the streaks behind the cyclist.



Waterford Crystal

John Drum

The pattern and vibrant colors make this a very strong image. The reflections on the facets of the crystal are mesmerizing and well-conceived. I find that I want something more—some motion or some sort of grand finale. I am not sure what I am looking for, but some additional element of surprise.

Nature Images



First Place— Great Egret

Bill Shewchuk

There are several excellent images in this Nature category. I selected this one for first place due to the composition, exposure (holding detail in the white feathers) and the posture of the egret, which I believe is taking flight. Also, it is tack sharp in the areas that are important, particularly the face. There are no distracting details and the square format works very well. It's amazing the quality of images we can now get with iphones!



Second Place— Osprey Parent Delivers Live Prey

Karen Schofield

This is a very well-done photograph of the osprey bringing a fish back to the nest. The fast shutter speed stopped the motion and the high wings of the landing bird are perfect. Scenes like this tell a compelling nature story and it certainly was well worth the wait for the male to arrive back at the nest. The placement of the flying bird in the upper left makes the composition very strong and there is a strong diagonal as my eye travels between the two adult birds. Well done!



Third Place— Morning Hunt of Ezo Red Fox

A Bender

Another excellent image in the nature category. The fox is perfectly placed in the lower right of the scene and the grasses along the top edge provide a strong context. I suspect that this was taken in Yellowstone in the winter, where I have seen several of these red foxes and know how shy and reluctant they are to have their picture taken! It's nice that you got him to stop and pose and lift his leg. I also like the slight over-exposure, which adds a wintry feeling to the scene. Well done in all ways.

Nature Honorable Mentions



Ash-throated Fly Catcher

Jeff Hobbs

This is a very well-done photograph of this flycatcher. It is sharp from front to back and the two diagonal lines add to the strong composition. The exposure is perfect as is the soft, out of focus, green background.



Mermaid's Cairn

Bill Brown

An interesting composition and the soft water allows the main subject to be more prominent. You might try flipping the image horizontally to place the tall rock on the left side instead of the right—it leads into the image in a very different way.



Beach Street Sea Wall

Bill Brown

The two diagonal linear elements in the background provide a strong contrast to the vertical columns in the lower right. These work well together to make a dynamic composition, which is enhanced by the overcast light and soft water.

Photojournalism



First Place— Driver Survives Crash

Karen Schofield

This is a strong photojournalistic image because of the dramatic story that it tells, and it is enhanced by the night-time fog with the moody glow. A bad car accident and the unwieldy position of the car, make this compelling for the viewer. You might think about removing the tree branches on the left, but I don't think that Photojournalism images need to be as refined or improved as those in other categories. Hopefully you did not have to assist in the care of the driver.



Second Place— Shoppers At Target Looking For Toilet Paper

Jim Lambert

This image shows an experience that we all can relate to, the early stages of the Covid epidemic. I never fully grasped the importance of toilet paper, but evidently many others did. This captures a moment in time that we will probably never see again. Photographing the shoppers from the rear is effective, as are the strong leading lines created by the shelves. This is well seen and taken.



Third Place— Hiroshima and Nagasaki Remembrance Day...

Chris Johnson

This is a captivating image of the lanterns being towed out in the bay. The reflections in the foreground add a strong visual element and the combination of warm and cool colors in one scene is always compelling. This is a strong photograph for this category.

Photojournalism Honorable Mentions



Coast Guard Tests Fire Equipment...

Carol Fuessench

You did a good job of capturing the entire scene—showing the bay with sailboats and buildings on the wharf. The diagonal line and rainbow draw my eye right where you want me to look. Good exposure, good composition and good seeing.



French Children Cheer Their Basketball Heros:

Ken Jones

You made a good choice to turn your camera toward the cheering children instead of whatever was taking place in front of them. I always try to remind myself to look both directions when an event such as this is taking place as the audience is often more interesting and often makes a better image. This is a very strong Photojournalism entry.

Pictorial Images



First Place - Milky Way Over Bodie

Jeff Hobbs

This is an excellent photograph of the side-lit old truck and building during a summer night with the bright Milky Way. The angle of the truck makes a strong foreground and leading line and my eye easily moves from it to the old structure to the diagonal line of the Milky Way. Good exposure, good composition and well seen. The only question I have is why it is cropped to a 4:5 format instead of a 2:3. Perhaps this tightened the scene and made it stronger, but I usually include as much sky as possible.



Second Place - Wind Turbine Panorama - Palm Springs, CA

Chris Axe

This would be a very strong image of the wind towers without the amazing cloud formation, but the two of them together make it spectacular. What a fortunate moment! Clouds such as this are rare, and this is a great example of seeing a scene and maximizing it—opportunity is where luck meets preparation. The placement of the clouds on the upper left is perfect, complementing the wind turbines in the lower right.



Third Place - Oyster Mushroom Gill and Cap Patterns

Margret Cordts

There are many strong images in the Pictorial category, but this one of the mushrooms is particularly compelling. The brightest area is in the center and pulls the viewer's eye there, and even though it is white, it is still holding detail. The repeating curvilinear lines are particularly effective as they pull the eye into the scene and then take us on a visual tour. This image is very well composed and exposed and is a strong example of what can be done with a simple subject.

Pictorial Honorable Mentions:

Where to start? There are many excellent images and another judge would probably give many of them a higher standing. Judging is subjective, so please don't feel that one person's opinion, in this case, mine, is the only or best way of making these difficult selections!



ANTics

A Bender

This is an excellent photograph of the ant climbing down a plant. The curls in the plant are very unusual and add an interesting visual element to the scene. The shallow depth of field, which softens the background, is perfectly well-done. Placing the ant in the upper right was thoughtful and effective.



Coal Conveyor Bins

Jared Ikeda

The symmetry and heavy industrial feeling of this image make it very strong, and showing it in monochrome adds impact. Placing the containers along the bottom of the frame with the heavy metal crossbars above enhances the composition. Very well composed and exposed, I cannot think of a thing I would change.



House Finch At Sunset

Bill Brown

This is a great portrait of this finch, the angle of the head turned to the side, the sharp focus, perfect exposure and soft background all work in harmony. And it doesn't hurt that red and green are complimentary colors. The soft, warm sidelight also works very well. The only reason it is not rated higher is that it is so much of a portrait, however well executed.



Luna Moth... at 10X

John Avera

This is intriguing because I know nothing about microscopic photography. But the details of the wing with the interesting shapes and ranges of colors make this a very successful abstract image. It makes me curious and want to find out more about how to do it.



Merced River In Autumn

Mary Ann Avera

This is a very strong photograph of the Merced River, probably during or after a rain. The dark tonality of the large granite boulder suggests that it is wet, and the other colors are also very saturated. The composition is very strong, with the boulder in the lower right and the leaning (black oak) tree in the upper left. I also like the slow movement of the water,



Northern Flicker

Bill Brown

This is a very strong and intriguing close-up image of this flicker. I like the placement and diagonal line created by the beak and head, and the other two diagonal lines that are soft out of focus. A very well-done image.



Oak Tree Refraction in Raindrops on Fuchsia

Chris Johnson

This is a very intriguing photograph that I kept coming back to. The red bud with the water drops is very compelling. I think if the bud were a little more to the left it would be out of the center of the frame and perhaps a little stronger. I would also darken the upper left and remove the distracting details along the lower left of the frame. It does not matter to me how the fuchsia appeared in nature, it only matters how it is presented to me, or any viewer, in the frame.



Dettifoss Cauldron, Iceland

Bill Shewchuk

This is a very well-done photograph of the waterfall on the left and the roiling water it creates below. The lighter area in the center of the frame is helpful in directing my eye there. A concern I have is that there are competing areas that could be the main subject and I find that my eye tends to bounce around instead of focusing or instead of being led to a subject. It's almost as though this is two images placed together. I also wonder about cropping a little of the right side of the frame to draw more attention to the roiling water.. You might try it and see if the image works better that way. BTW, I know exactly where you were standing, right on the edge!



Salinas Valley Sunrise

Gerald R Gifford

This is probably the best image that I have seen of the fields in Salinas with the dramatic clouds, including all of mine! The panoramic cropping enhances the vastness of the sky in a very positive way. I also like the red/orange color reflection on the rows in the foreground, I have never seen that in any other image. What an amazing morning, you must have been very pleased! There probably are many businesses in Salinas that would love to have this image on their wall, it is VERY well done.



Whoa Nelly!

John Avera

A very strong shot of the rider on the bucking horse! His cowboy boots probably cost more than your camera. I wish the background were a little softer, or maybe darker. Perhaps you could select the white shirt on the guy in the background and turn it blue, or black, so it would recede more. The horse's tail above the rider's head is a nice touch.