

Black and White Images



First Place - Wild And Weird

Janet Azevedo

There are many strong elements in this image—the strong diagonal line going through the center, which is emphasized by the curvilinear lines in the lower half, the exposure and overall composition. The moodiness of the dark clouds adds mystery to an already mysterious scene. The way you saw and photographed this is very well done.



Second Place - The Meeting

Dale Thies

There are many times when I would be distracted by the bright background, but in this particular scene it works well, it makes the figures in the foreground almost silhouetted, but the highlights that show on them work extremely well. This is a complex image, with several “stories” that I keep moving to and studying. All of the figures in the image enhance it. Next time, if you can, you might want to lower the camera a little to keep the woman’s feet in the image, a small point that is only slightly distracting to me. I hope you will pursue this type of photography as you have a good eye for it.



Third Place - Fish Netting

Kent Van Vuren

This is a straightforward and effective image of the netting, and monochrome enhances it. I like the feeling of movement or motion, it appears as though the netting is hanging, thanks to judicious cropping across the top. It is also nice that the netting is off-center, pulling my eye into the scene from the upper left. The very neutral and plain gray background works well also.

Other Comments:

“C’est Magnifique” and “Noni” are both well done portraits, but in each case the lighting, while soft, appears to be frontal. Generally, portraits are more interesting with side lighting, which makes half of the face darker. I like to place subject beside a window for natural side lighting. The next time you have great subjects such as these, ask them to move around so the lighting shifts, or perhaps you can move around to alter the lighting.

“Light makes photography. Embrace light. Admire it. Love it. But above all, know light. Know it For all you are worth, and you will know the key to photography.”

--George Eastman

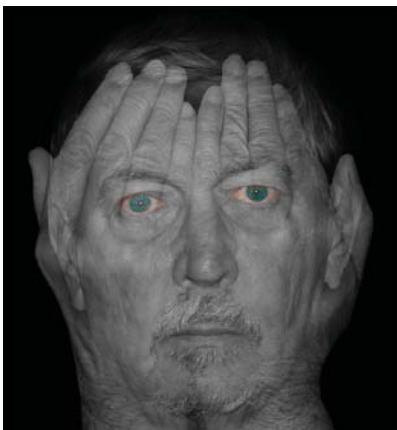


C'est magnifique
Dale Thies



Noni
Dick Light

Creative Images



First Place - Self Portrait

Dale Thies

This is a very compelling blending of images and the contrast of monochrome with the green/blue eyes is very well done. This is the type of image we should expect in the creative category—imaginative and nicely crafted.



Second Place - Eye of the Anemone

Charlie Gibson

This is similar in concept to the first-place entry with the eyeball showing through and is also very cleverly and successfully done. Both of these images show imagination and a mastery of the necessary skills in Photoshop to create a photograph that draws and holds the viewers' attention.



Third Place - Salinas Valley Charro

Amy Sibiga

Another very well thought out and creative image of the horseback-rider on a carpet with appropriate clouds in the background. I appreciate the details that were kept along the edges and with the bridle and horse's tail among others. This all takes extra effort and is very creative and well done.

Creative Honorable Mention:



Pelican--Portrait at Perkins Park

Amy Sibiga

This is a strong portrait of a pelican and the painterly effects are well done. It doesn't have the "punch" of the winning images, but is a strong entry in the creative category.

Nature Images



First Place—“Fox Squirrel Having Lunch”

Dale Thies

I selected this as the first-place winner due to the dramatic lighting and exposure on the squirrel. The shallow depth of field, which softens the dark background is also very helpful. If this were mine, I would selectively remove some of the bright spots along the top edge of the container he/she is standing on. Remember that bright light attracts the viewer’s eye and you want to be very careful where you direct the viewer. I would probably also add a little space above the squirrel’s head. You can easily do this in PS by selecting Canvas>Canvas Size and adding a little to the horizontal dimension. This will give you a white space above the frame. Then go to Select>Modify>Expand and select 1 pixel to move the selection slightly into the frame. This avoids creating an unwanted line. Then go to Edit>Fill>Content Aware and the white space will be filled with the dark background, enlarging the overall image and giving some breathing space to the frame. You can then crop away some if this if you add too much. I do this often when I want to add visual space to an image. If you try this and get lost, feel free to send an email to me and I will walk you through the process.



Second Place - Dragonfly

Nicole Asselborn

This is a very strong image and was a contender for first place. I thought the exposure was a little bright, try underexposing it a little and see if you like it better. The focus is very sharp and I am quite impressed that you captured a dragon-fly in flight! The movement in the back wings works well as does the soft background. I appreciate that the subject is off center. A very strong photograph.



Third Place - White Lined Sphinx Moth

Amy Sibiga

This is an excellent capture of the moth in flight, feeding from a flower. The moth is sharp and the motion of the wings stopped so we see all of it. I am a little distracted by the bright background, which keeps pulling my eye away from the main subject. Please don’t be hesitant about experimenting with darkening the leaves a little. I often do this with the Adjustment Brush Tool in either LR or Bridge. Just use the brush to make a selection and then move the exposure slider to the left to darken the selection. This is a very powerful tool and one that will assist with post-processing of many images.

Photojournalism



First Place—“Monterey Shelter in Place

Dick Light

This is a very interesting group of images, which clearly capture the non-existent crowds that we are all accustomed to seeing at these popular tourist destinations. I like the idea of showing multiple images with the common theme of no people—very thoughtful and well-conceived.



Second Place - Stay In Line

Charlie Gibson

This image of the line in front of Whole Foods tells a timely and pertinent story well. Everyone is appropriately spaced, and this was taken before masks were mandatory. It's interesting how the world has had to make substantial and consistent changes to deal with this terrible virus, and this scene captures a moment in time very well.



Third Place - Fleet Week Patriots

Dick Light

This is a well captured image of the jets streaming over the Golden Gate Bridge. But it is in serious need of color correction. Try this: open the image in PS and go to Image>Auto Tone. See the Difference? Then go to Edit and under Fade Auto Tone there will be an opacity slider, which allows you to select how much of a change you want to keep. Then do the same with Auto Color. I use these two adjustments on almost every image.

The bottom of the scene clips off the sail boats, so you might want to crop some of the bottom or remove the boats. I would recommend keeping the water and cloning out the sails where the entire boat is not visible.

Pictorial Images



First Place - Stairway To Heaven

Betsy Collins

I am probably prejudiced about this image because I have been to Burma so many times and set up many similar scenes. But this one is particularly strong because of the composition—the receding arches and stairway disappearing are very well done. Also, the stairs are perfectly centered, and level, and the lifted left foot is well done. The brightest area of the image is at the top of the stairs, and that is a location you want the viewer's eye to go to. It's easy to take shots such as this one and overlook important details, but here, all the details work very well.



Second Place - Art of Welding

Amy Sibiga

This is a very compelling image due to the strong composition and lighting. The bright area is in the center and the edges are darker, which pulls the viewer's eye exactly where you want it to be. The flying/streaking sparks and another very strong element and we can feel the concentration of the person welding. This is an excellent image, and I cannot think of any suggestions to make it better.



Third Place - California Poppies

Dale Thies

It seems to me that every time I try to photograph poppies, the wind blows. They don't open in the morning, when it is calm. So, I appreciate that these are static as well as being well-composed and exposed. The shallow depth of field is helpful as it removes what could be a distracting background. A very nice capture of these flowers.

Pictorial Honorable Mentions:



Old Hands

Nicole Asselborn

This is a strong image of the hands against a dark background. I think it would be stronger, more dramatic, if the exposure was a little darker. I would also suggest moving a little lower, so you are on about the same level as the hands, not slightly above them. I'm not certain this would improve the image, but I think it would. When you have a strong subject such as this, be sure to move around and take a series of shots from different perspectives. I would also darken the white part of the chair in the lower right—it's a little distracting



Stick The Landing

Charlie Gibson

A very sharp capture of the bee landing on the flower. The moving wings are a nice touch as is the shallow depth of field, allowing the background to be soft. You might consider removing the small part of a flower in the upper left—it's in focus and I keep looking at it. Just circle it and use the Content Aware Tool to fill it in. You could also darken or vignette the edges a little to make the central area of the scene stand out a little more. There are many ways to do this, I usually use the Adjustment Brush Tool, which lives in LR and Bridge, or now, you can use the new vignette tool.



Pelecanus Occidentalis in all its' glory

Janet Azevedo

This is such an unusual image of a pelican, I had to include it. We see so many head-shots of pelicans just sitting there that it is nice to see this movement. The exposure, composition and sharp focus are all well done.