

Black and White Images



First Place - Clearing Storm

Patricia McKean

This is a very effective view of Yosemite Falls with swirling clouds or fog. The lighting and exposure are excellent, highlighting the falls, the clouds and the rock face to the right. The composition is also strong, with the falls a little off-center, but still prominently placed in the scene. I also appreciate the inclusion of blacks, particularly around the border. Very well seen and photographed.



Second Place—“Sanderling-To Share or Steal

Chris Parsons

A very strong image of the three sanderlings feeding. The story telling aspect of this image makes it even better. The center bird is sharp, which is very important and the slight softness of the bird in the foreground does not detract. There are no distracting details in the background and the slight reflections in the foreground work well.



Third Place—“Osprey

Dennis Giuffre

This is an excellent close-up photograph of an osprey in flight. There are many strong elements in this image, beginning with the strong cropping, which allows us to focus on the face of the bird, which is most important. There is just the right amount of space around the upper wing and having the head low in the frame adds to the drama of the scene. Also, the focus is tack sharp, which is not that easy with a bird in flight. Overall a very strong and impactful image.

Black and White Honorable Mentions



Succulents
Chyrl Light



Briana_Christmas_2002
Carolyn Comings

Creative Images



First Place (tie) - Monarch Butterflies Visit Waxing Crescent Moon

Clarissa Conn

I vacillated between these two photographs because I believe they both show very well-done creative work, probably in Photoshop. Finally, I decided to call it a draw and give both the First Place Award. Placing the reddish monarch butterflies on the blue moon is very effective visually. It is an intriguing image, one that I found I kept looking at. The placement of the linear ones accentuates the curvilinear line of the moon as it fades from dark to light, and the other butterflies are well placed in the image, creating a rectangular outline. Color, composition, and creativity make this a strong image.



First Place (tie) - Spring Welcome

David Thon

The second image, “Spring Welcome” is also very well done. I appreciate the details—the orange flowers and the yellow light on the porch. There are well-done leading lines from the lower left and the over-all water-color sort of effect is very well done. I think the neutral tonality works well with the softness and disappearing edges. I cannot think of anything that I would change.



Third Place - Culture-“Then and Now”

David Thon

I am not sure if the figure on the building was added later or was photographed. If it was added, it is very well done and makes a compelling and very strong image. It's challenging but possible to place the chunks of building in the figure's hands, if this was done in PS. It looks like an Incan or Mayan figure, which is from the past. If this was photographed, then it is not really creative, but an interesting photograph

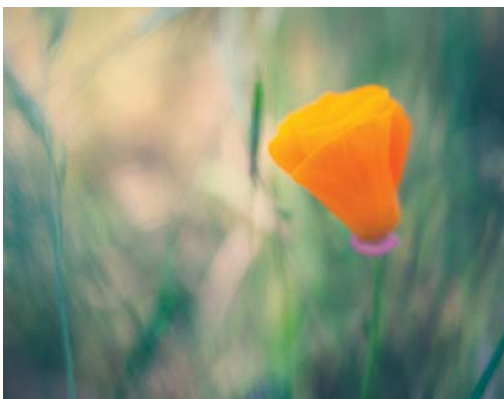
Creative Honorable Mentions



Bubble-Net Feeding

Patricia McKean

This is a wonderful photograph of whales feeding. I assume it was taken from a drone. But I think this is more of a Nature image than a Creative one. I think you should send this image to National Geographic or enter it in a photo contest. It is very well done.



Velvet Poppy

Patricia McKean

There are many strong elements in this image. I like the overall softness and vivid colors. One suggestion would be to crop it tighter as a vertical. This will accentuate the verticality of the flower stem and the grasses and eliminate much of the very distracting white areas that fill up the other half of the scene. I don't think the left side of the image adds to the overall impact and takes the viewer's eye away from the flower. One other observation, I think this might be stronger if the poppy were in sharp focus and only the background softened. You can do this either in the camera with a very shallow depth of field, or in PS. There are several tools in PS for softening the background—I often use the Creative Brush tool in Bridge or LR and then select focus or clarity and move the sliders all the way to the left.

Nature Images



First Place Sherwins of the Eastern Sierras With Hot Creek

Patricia McKean

I have to admit that I am very drawn to large, dramatic landscapes such as this one taken in the Eastern Sierras. The perspective or position shooting is powerful—was it shot from a drone or just from a great location? In addition to the perspective, the composition, exposure and lighting add considerable to the success of this image. The warm light on the mountains with some highlights is perfect. And the leading line of the creek with the warm reflected light also works very well. This is the type of photograph that I look for when I am out shooting, it's very well done.



Second Place - Eagle Feeding Show at 9 a.m. for Tourists at Lake Furen

Christina Parsons

This photograph was taken at exactly the right second, with the eagle's talons extended and the large wings acting as brakes. The exposure time of 1/500 second was fast enough to stop the motion and still allow for a little blur in the wings. You did everything correctly and captured this very strong image.



Third Place - White Tailed Kite With Mouse

Dennis Giuffre

This is an excellent image of the White Tailed Kite in flight. The fast shutter speed of 1/2000 second freezes the movement and the diagonal composition of the wing span creates a strong compositional element. Also, it's very difficult to photograph white without having some areas blow out. Looking at the small jpeg, I cannot be certain of all the feathers along the body, but it is always possible to selectively darken or underexpose some areas either in LR or ACR. I use the Adjustment Brush Tool to do this. A very good image that is difficult to capture.

Nature Honorable Mentions



Redwoods

Jeff Hobbs

This is a very well-done image of the back-lit redwood trees with sunlight creating diagonal lines through the mist. I am always on the lookout for scenes such as this one, and you did an excellent job. I wonder if it would be slightly better if you changed the aspect ratio a little and cropped some of the left side. This would move the two prominent vertical trees more to the left and place more emphasis on the diagonal lines. You might try it and see if you like it better. The overall composition and exposure are very well done.



Hands On The Whales

Jerry Loomis

This brings back many memories for me of the two trips my wife and I have taken to Mexico to see and pet the young and older mother gray whales. It is still a mystery to me as to why they come so close to the boats, asking to be petted and photographed. It brought tears to our eyes talking about the experience later. It is an amazing experience, one that I highly recommend!

The extreme crooked horizon line is a little distracting, but, believe me, I have plenty of these. It's really difficult to take these shots in a small, crowded boat when there is so much energy bouncing around. Still, watch the horizon. And I think I see a dust spot, probably on the sensor, in the upper right. These are annoying, but easy to remove.

If this were mine, I would try to fill in the sky with water to eliminate the horizon. I'm not sure it would work, but you can try it out. You can clone from this image, or open two in PS and clone ocean from another image.

Photojournalism



1st Place - Number 8 seed Aptos High Senior star Natalia Ackerman drives in last second win over the most under rated 16 seed Lick-Wilmerding of SF on March 5th

Dennis Giuffre

This is a very nice sequence of photographs showing Natalia Ackerman making the winning basket. I am OK with the way they are arranged, it tells the story very well. I wonder if they would look better arranged in a horizontal sequence? BTW, there is a personal foul in the second shot as the defender touches her arm, but it's good that they did not call it. You were in a perfect position to capture this sequence and had your camera set up appropriately, it's very well done.

No additional awards in this category

Pictorial Images



First Place - Carmel Sunset

David Eisen

This is a nice image of the Carmel Lagoon with a dramatic sunset. The detail of the grasses in the foreground adds a nice point of visual entry and interest. I always try to avoid having the horizon line in the middle of the image, but end up with many images like this one where it seems OK and difficult to change. When you have a great scene like this, be sure to try a series of different compositions, which you may have done, some with more sky than foreground and vice versa. The clouds, warm lighting and tranquility make this a very successful photograph



Second Place - Clearing Storm Yosemite

Patricia McKean

The ethereal quality of this photograph makes it very compelling. The trees appear so small because the overall landscape is so large. The swirling clouds are very dramatic and the composition and exposure are very well done. Was this done with a phone?

When you have swirling clouds it is a good time to add a neutral density filter or a circular polarizer to slow the exposure speed a little. This would add more movement to the clouds and can make the scene even more dramatic.



Third Place - Mexican Cowboy

Jerry Loomis

This is a very strong portrait and the tight cropping enhances it. If it were mine, I would remove the bright horizontal line on the center left, it's pretty distracting and easy to fix. And while you are there, I would darken the upper corners slightly. The brightness pulls the viewer's eye away from the center of the image, where you want it to stay.

See how the light is on the front of his face? It works OK with this photograph, but while you have such an interesting subject, you might ask him to turn so his face is lit from one side. Side lighting almost always enhances a portrait. Watch the high ISO setting of 3200. Maybe the light was very dark and you needed it, but you probably could have slowed the shutter speed down a couple of stops from 1/500 second and lowered the ISO a couple of stops.