



01 - Amanita muscaria aerial.jpg

Joni Zabala

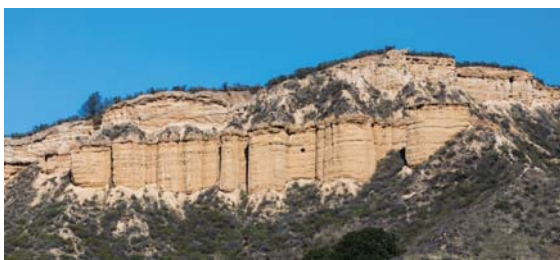
Nice light and great composition isolating the mushroom cap. Good choice of aperture to keep everything sharp on the cap. I like the crop you did on this too. It eliminated extraneous background so it wouldn't be distracting. There's no doubt what the main subject is!



02 - Babbaluci.jpg

Dick Light

Yum!! A feast for the eyes and the stomach! Sautè with a little wine, butter, and garlic – after you photograph it of course! So much for not jeopardizing the welfare of your subject! Anyway, back to judging... I think you could make a stronger composition by cropping in on the snail a bit tighter, at least to crop out the branch on the right and eliminate some more of the out of focus bottom stump. That would get rid of those distracting elements and really draw attention to the snail. The background is nice as is. ***



03 - Castle Rock.jpg

Dick Light

As I mentioned in my comments about a Castle Rock image in the Red Group, this is a fascinating geological formation and tells a great nature story about the geology of the area. However, for nature competitions, especially when emphasizing patterns in nature, I think it helps to get a closer, more detailed view of the rocks and patterns. I would suggest shooting at a longer focal length, isolating and area of interesting patterns in that formation, and including less sky in the image. Zooming in on the rocks could emphasize the texture of the sandstone a bit more too.

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**04 - Christmas Tree Worm (Spirobranchus giganteus)
Filter Feeding on the reef.jpg**

Karen Schofield

The beautiful colors and fascinating feather-like structures make me want to examine it more. However, the image is not super sharp. The lack of sharpness looks like it might be due to camera or subject movement and a shutter speed that was too slow to compensate for that movement. If this was shot underwater, I know many photographers use flash to provide plenty of light, allowing the use of small apertures. If no flash could be used, perhaps shooting at a higher ISO rating would allow a faster shutter speed (1/500 second or faster) which will result in a sharper image.



05 - Fungus Fan.jpg

Christina Parsons

I'm a big fungus fan too! I love fungi! In fact, I've been told I am a fun guy! This is a great ID shot incorporating the entire fungus in the shot and showing the substrate on which it's growing. However, since this is a "Patterns in Nature" competition, I would suggest making a composition that is tighter on the underside of the fungus itself. Perhaps you could fill the frame with the gill structures and just include a tiny bit of background behind it for context. It would be more abstract but that would well in a competition like this. It's important to shoot lots of images of your subject using different angles, perspectives, and focal lengths. Be creative and try lots of different things.



06 - Glacial forms.jpg

Ken Jones

This is a nice shot of the glacier and documents the scene but it lacks creativity. I know you were limited as to what you could do because it appears you were on a boat. However, maybe you could shoot with a longer focal length and isolate portions of the glacier that would emphasize patterns a little more.

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07 - Ivy on Oak Tree.jpg

Dale Thies

The lighting on this is dramatic in spots but, overall, I think it's too dark. Too much of the detail is hidden in the shadows. It looks like the lighting was rather harsh so maybe this is an instance where you need to go back when there's more diffused light on the subject, or wait until a cloud moves by. That would allow the viewer to see more detail in the image and be able to see the patterns that might exist. B&W works well with many images that emphasize patterns and textures; however, I think this image would benefit from color and nice, even, diffused light to show the layers of leaves.

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08 - Lichen Patterns.jpg

Jerry Heisel

Wonderful subject, overlooked by many photographers. So many species of lichen in one photographic frame! Nice diffused light. It's a little soft on the focus in the lower left corner of the image.



09 - Long, strong, sharp thorns lined up to protect tender leaves.jpg

Jerry Gifford

Stunning in its simplicity! Perfect composition, sharpness, and exposure. I love the balance in the composition.

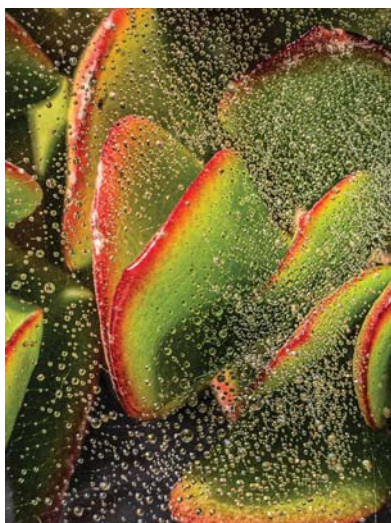


10 - Looking for Patterns.jpg

Betsy Collins

Your image does show some interesting patterns on the face of that mountain. You exposed it well in a difficult situation, with the intense whites, as well as dark areas of trees. Contrasty scenes like that are tough to expose correctly. The photo just doesn't have the visual impact to grab me as the viewer and make me want to examine it more closely. Perhaps you could use a longer focal length and isolate a portion of the scene, including just a sliver of sky at the top and the interesting ridges of snow running down the mountainside.

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11 - Morning dew drops on jade plant leaves.jpg

Margret Cordts

It's hard for me to tell what's going on here. Those certainly aren't dewdrops on the plant itself, as the title implies. I thought it might be dewdrops on a spider web that was coating the jade plant. But it doesn't look right for that either. It might be dewdrops on a spider web but it appears to be in a separate photo. Those dewdrops are all on a single plane. That would mean that this entry is a composite of two images, which would make it ineligible in a nature competition. But, since I don't know that for sure, I will just judge it as is and say that I find the dewdrops way more of a distraction than an asset to the image.

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12 - New Zealand Silver Fern Koru Unfurling.jpg

John Drum

I really like the composition in this image. It's simple and clean. The diagonal of the fern coming in from the lower right corner works very well. The fiddleheads are beautiful and create an interesting pattern before they unfurl. The exposure is good on the fern; however, the focus is slightly off. It looks like it was shot at a relatively wide aperture so there is very shallow depth of field.. It would be better if all the little hairs on the fern were sharp. It also appears that the background was manipulated a bit using the clone tool, which left a few lines of lighter circles against the darker background. It looks like you were just trying to eliminate some distracting branches, which is a good thing; however, you want to do it more carefully so it doesn't leave those cloning artifacts. ***



13 - No See Me.jpg

Charlie Gibson

Because this competition focuses more on "Patterns in Nature," I haven't been placing as much emphasis on the storytelling value of the images as I normally do when judging. Great job finding such a fascinating nature story that fits so well with the "Patterns in Nature" theme. There's wonderful detail and perfect exposure in this shot. My only suggestion would be to compose it with the moth in the upper left or right thirds intersection of the image, rather than dead center. I think that would add a bit more visual impact.



14 - Noduled Sea Star (Fromia nodosa) Crawling over the Reef.jpg

Karen Schofield

Beautiful photo of a beautiful creature! It's sharp in and around the center of the sea star, which is what counts. Nice texture and incredible pattern! I would LOVE to see a shot of it from a more perpendicular perspective with the arms radiating out from the center of the frame. That way, it would have much more of the sea star in sharp focus and provide a more abstract pattern in the composition.



15 - Orchid Landing Strip.jpg

Christina Parsons

Nice job! It's hard to shoot such complex flower parts and get everything in focus. It's not quite sharp as you go down into the orchid but I think the only way you could achieve that is through focus stacking. You'd have to keep the flower perfectly still and shoot a series of images at different focal planes from the closest part of the flower to the most distant part of the flower. You would shoot the series at $f/5.6$ or $f/8$. Then you would combine the series in a dedicated focus stacking software (or Photoshop) and it will select the sharpest portions of each image and combine them into one shot with every part of the flower in focus. The lighting on this is a bit flat as it is. If you set up to shoot a series for focus stacking, you could use flash of reflectors, etc. to add some more dramatic lighting to your image.



16 - Oregon elm in autumn.jpg

Joni Zabala

Very nice use of the shadows! Good observation to notice a photo where most other people would just walk on by! Well composed, well exposed, and sharp!



17 - Patchwork In Stone.jpg

Charlie Gibson

Fascinating pattern! The little rock is positioned very nicely in the lower right thirds intersection, according to the Rule of Thirds. Nice exposure. Good texture. It looks like the cracks have been colonized by a golden lichen too. Very cool! The focus gets a little soft towards the top left corner. I think it would be a little stronger visually if it was critically sharp all the way through the image. ****



18 - Patterns made by layers of smoke on a rising full moon.jpg

Jerry Gifford

That's a very neat shot! It looks like a closeup shot of Jupiter with the red bands across the surface. Very creative photo! The tops of the trees and the hill anchor the image nicely and provide context and perspective. Very unique image! ****



19 - Petrified wood crystal.jpg

Ken Jones

The colors of the exposed minerals are beautiful and that part of the image appears relatively sharp. The darker areas, with the parallel striations, look a little fuzzy. My guess is this was handheld a relatively slow shutter speed. For a subject like this, you have the time to set up a tripod and precisely compose your frame and shoot with a remote trigger device so you get the sharpest possible image. ***



20 - Pine Cone, Not the Carmel Kind.jpg

Dale Thies

This is a great composition and concept. I like the B&W. I think it would good to play around with the contrast a bit and I'm thinking it might be a little more dramatic with more contrast to really make the tips of the pine cone scales pop out at the viewer. ***



21 - Pocketful of Snails - Pt Lobos.jpg

Brooks Leffler

What an amazing discovery! The colors are stunning and the exposure and focus are spot on. Wonderful texture throughout this image! Very cool nature story too!



22 - Rock and sand patterns.jpg

Margret Cordts

What an incredible opportunity you found to capture nature's beautiful artwork! The impression of the seaweed in the sand is like an optical illusion. It looks raised at first but when you examine the shadows, it's evident that it's an impression in the sand. Great exposure, sharpness, and composition. The rock works really well to anchor the image and provide even more relief and depth.



23 - Sun Bleached Driftwood.jpg

Carol Silveira

The layers, lines, and curves make this photo special! I think it could be dialed down a 1/2 – stop overall to eliminate some of the harshness of the highlight areas. But the composition makes up for brightness of the highlights. It has a sensuous quality to it with those curves.



24 - Sycamore Tree Bark.jpg

Jerry Heisel

Amazing photo of one of my all-time favorite trees! Very nice and even diffused lighting. It appears sharply focused all the way through the image. Although there's no one spot for the eye to come to rest on a main subject, the composition is interesting and engages the viewer. It would make one heck of a puzzle!



25 - Western Fence Post Lizard(Sceloporus occidentalis).jpg

John Drum

That's really beautiful light on the lizard. The catchlight in the eye really gives the lizard personality in the photo. And, of course, the texture and pattern of the scales is amazing. Great pose too! The photo is super sharp where it needs to be. Nice composition with the eye of the lizard in the upper left thirds intersection of the frame.



26 - Wind Patterns.jpg

Carol Silveira

Exquisite image! You were out at the right time for the early light and it sure paid off! The composition is perfect. The sharpness is impeccable. Making it monochrome is excellent. That really emphasizes the texture and contrast which are both perfect. I love everything about this shot!



27 - Woodpecker's Larder in an Ancient Oak.jpg

Brooks Leffler

It's a good general nature photo, showing the cache of a family of Acorn Woodpeckers. It tells an interesting nature story. However, it lacks the visual impact and emphasis on patterns when compared with the other photos in this group.



28 - Autumn Leaves Bois de Bologne.jpg

Denice Woyski

This has such beautiful diffused light which enhances the colors so nicely. It's such a calming and soothing photo. Your composition is beautiful with the larger sycamore (poplar) leaf just to the left of center surrounded by the smaller leaves of more muted colors. The viewer's eye has a place to rest on the larger leaf, with the others providing supporting info. The water ripples and the droplets are the icing on the cake! *****



29 - Caprobrotus edulis pattern.jpg

Denice Woyski

The colors really capture the viewer and the light is great! I think if, when shooting, you cropped out the very left edge of the frame so the out of focus red leaf wouldn't be a distraction, it would help balance the composition a little better. My eye keeps being drawn to the left edge with the out of focus red leaf and the spider web. ***

Winning Images:

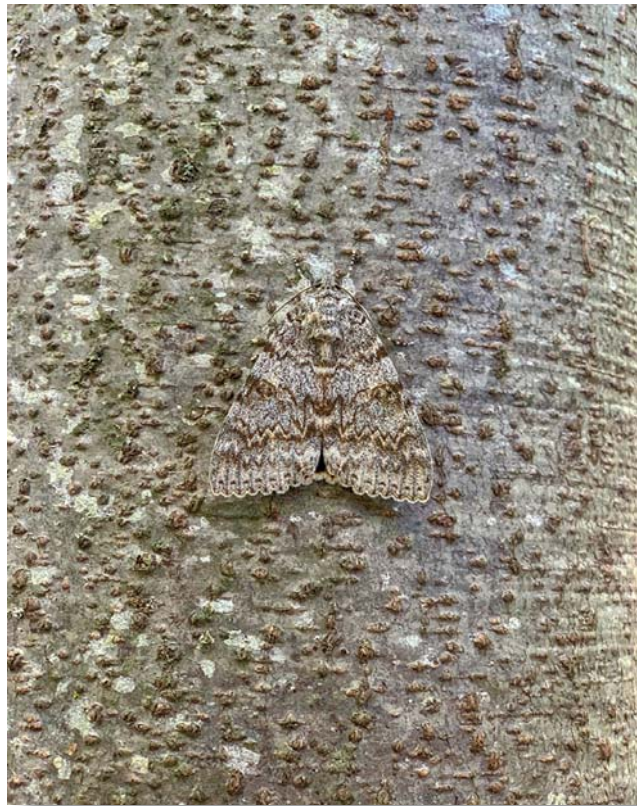
Honorable Mentions:

Rock and Sand Patterns

Margret Cordts



No See Me
Charlie Gibson



Sun Bleached Driftwood
Carol Silveira



Third Place:

Pocketful of Snails - Pt. Lobos
Brooks Leffler



2nd Place:

Autumn Leaves Bois de Bologne
Denice Woyski



First Place:

Wind Patterns
Carol Silveira

