

01 - Artwork by H2O.jpg

Janet Azevedo

Well seen and captured! I like the texture and the choice of monochrome. Personally, I may have lightened a few of the mid-tones just a bit but certainly that is a personal choice. I like that this image makes a viewer think and imagine.



02 - Asilomar Seaweed.jpg

Andrea Madsen

This is a nice collection of various intertidal vegetation. Good texture, detail, and exposure. It was presented for judging vertically and with this presentation the arrangement is difficult to look at as the viewer feels as if there is something off. The weighting if the image feels a bit like its going to tip to the right and slide off. This is an ideal example of how presentation can make or break an image as I did turn it horizontally and it feels much better that way and I would have scored it a bit higher had that been how it was originally presented.

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03 - Banksia Nearing Bloom, UCSC Arboretum.jpg

Joni Zabala

This looks like it would be an interesting subject but unfortunately the subject is out of focus. I can't tell if this is a heavy crop as well but I suspect maybe as there are areas and details that look like they should be sharp but aren't. Compositionally, I think this is a subject that can be centered but attention needs to be paid to the supporting elements. I would have liked to see a bit more space given on the left to not cut the leaf tips off or if doing that crop more on the right to make it more intentional.

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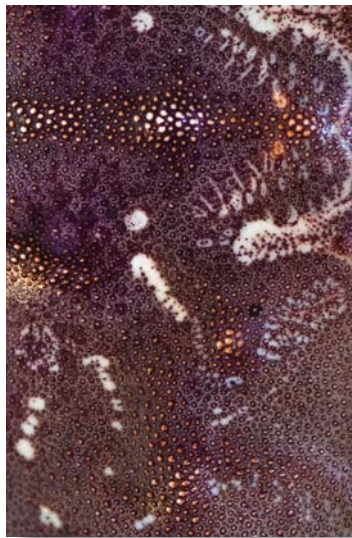


04 - Bee on Orange Dahlia Blossom.jpg

Don Eastman

I like the subject and the composition of this image however, it suffers greatly from heavy cropping to the point where the details on the bee are pixelated it seems. But the composition with the angle of the flower, position of the bee, and what crop there has been is really nice.

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05 - Beneath the Waves, an Ocean.jpg

Sean Crawford

Another wonderful tidal pool find. I love the texture, sharp details, and abstract quality of this image. While it certainly works as a vertical (how it was presented to me) I would maybe suggest the artist consider rotating it 90 deg to the left. If you do this the line and arrow like coloration that is currently at the top of the frame would be to the left of the frame pointing up and a bit more easily recognizable thus relatable to viewers while still having that wonderful abstract quality. Great capture!



06 - Bumblebee(Bombus latreille).jpg

John Drum

This poor bee looks like it just went through a rainstorm! I like the story here in this image but the quality of the image leaves me wanting. It looks heavily cropped and there is a lot of noise to the image along with a very blue cast, as seen in the highlights of the bee's eyes as an example.

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07 - California Poppy.jpg

Lillie Grossman

Great image with good detail. It seems a bit dark overall and I would have loved to have those three little stamen ends in focus. Being bunched up together creates an unfocused blur spot right where all the lines lead the viewer to look. But overall a wonderful image of a macro scene most of us don't get to see.



08 - Caterpillar on Catalina Ironwood.jpg

Bill Brown

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09 - Clematis.jpg

Bill Shewchuk

What carries this image is the composition. I like the radial burst and the detail captured but this image suffers from overcropping and the quality of the details has paid the price for the heavy cropping. Would really like to see this type of composition photographed with an actual macro lens and it would be great. If you decide to do that try to not crop the stamen there on the left.

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10 - Edible Bouquet.jpg

Charlie Gibson

This is a unique subject, a great example of showcasing regional specialties. I like the lighting and tones throughout the image along with many of the shapes and lines around the subject artichoke. However, my eye keeps being distracted by the smaller one that is just in front and to the right of the focal point. I think this is because there are just a few leaf edges that are in focus leading the viewer from the main subject to this one and then out of the frame. Maybe a square crop to take the majority of that distraction out of the frame would work better?



11 - Eye of the Daisy.jpg

Lillie Grossman

Wow! This is beautifully photographed. I like all the detail throughout the image, down to the grains of pollen. The square crop and centering really works well with this subject. It looks like a highly frosted cake almost. If I was to change anything I would lighten up the upper right quadrant to match the brighter lighting in the lower left and I would remove the little black hairs in the lower right corner. But those are very small adjustments. Bravo!



12 - Fittonia verschaffeltii.jpg

Sean Crawford

Another really beautiful image! Love the black and white treatment and the definition you have throughout the layers of leaves. My one suggestion would be a very light vignette to help keep the viewer's eye in the image rather than wondering out at some of the spots where highlights are close to the edge like the upper right corner. Overall, a very strong image for sure!



13 - Fungus on a Log.jpg

Brian Spiegel

I really like this a lot. It has a good composition with layers that help the subject stand apart from the rest of the frame. For me the lighting versus the subject in focus are competing with each other though. The darker fungus is in focus and closest to the camera but it is the orange patch behind it which is out of focus that draws the eye as that is where the light is landing. You were already at a disadvantage with the color as the orange draws the eye anyway, but then to have the light landing there as well a viewer's eye goes past the subject and to that area. Without the focus being there as well the image doesn't quite work. But again, I really like the subject and the composition, just need to balance the light vs subject focus.



14 - Honey Bee on Pink Dahlia.jpg

Don Eastman

While the composition with the bee in the lower left third is a good start, this is another image that suffers from the subject being out of focus and the image being heavily cropped leading to a deterioration of image quality.

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15 - Looking up to Mushrooms.jpg

Brian Spiegel

This is a great close up with an ultra-wide lens. There is a good choice of DOF and composition. Unfortunately, the brightness of the sky attracts the eye up and out of the image. I would have liked to see maybe the perspective be just a bit higher on the subject which would have decreased the amount of sky shown without losing the unique upward look at these mushrooms.



16 - *Macrocystis integrifolia*.jpg

Janet Azevedo

Interesting abstract macro. I like the textures captured and how the sand filled in the dips of the kelp leaf. The image does look a bit dark to me and the straight horizontal line of the kelp makes it a bit static. If I were to change something about this image, I would try to bring up the shadows and/or black just a small amount or possibly play with turning it into a black and white image as I don't feel the story of the image is based on the color but the textures and patterns.



17 - Mushroom Surrounded by Moss in the Del Monte Forest.jpg

Patricia McKean

This is a cute little mushroom and a good find. I like the focus on the water droplets but feel the DOF chosen was a bit too shallow for this image to work. This has led to some oddly defined but not sharp details throughout the image. And the highlight on the cap has been overexposed.

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18 - Old Rock.jpg

Steve Perkins

While this is a nice clean image of a fossil, this image looks to have been manipulated beyond contest rules and so it has been disqualified. The image was either composited or there has been background replacement through AI or other means of manipulation as the light on the subject does not match the background and there is too clean of edges around the subject, some with haloing, for it to be a true depiction or unaltered pictorial content of the original scene.



19 - Orb Weave Spider.jpg

Patricia McKean

Wow! My blood got pumping when I opened this image! This is a creative and engaging perspective of this subject that many of us would not be willing to capture (myself included). I really love pretty much everything about this image, but I did have to deduct a star as the highlight on the eye is blown out and the DOF was just a bit too shallow and thus the eyes are out of focus slightly. So close though and with the bravery shown here, I'm sure you will get it perfect next time.



20 - Paper Birch (Betula papyrifera).jpg

Bill Shewchuk

First off, I want to say I actually really like this image and could see it doing really well in another category, however, for the nature category techniques are supposed to enhance the image without changing the depiction of nature or alter the content of the original scene. This image looks to have had some editing process applied that makes the image look like an ink or watercolor painting thus it had to be disqualified. Beautiful but not fitting with this particular contest. I would touch up the sharpness on the curls just a bit and consider entering this in the next open or altered image contest for sure.



21 - Roadside Beauty.jpg

Steve Perkins

Beautiful subject that is well captured but this is another image where the background has been manipulated excessively and thus the image is disqualified. Once again, the lighting does not match between the subject and the background and there are remnants of editing located around the petals in the middle of the flower clump.



22 - Rust.jpg

Elke Ikeda

Wonderful image that I wish I could give a 5 star to but this is from a manmade object and thus disqualified in a nature macro competition where the subject must be a live organism/ecosystem. If entering this in an open contest, consider darkening down that top edge just slightly and maybe lifting a few of the shadows to the lower right of center to really hook your viewers.



23 - Scarlet Pimpernel (Anagallis arvensis).jpg

Bill Brown

Well composed, the lines of the composition lead the viewer directly to the subject. The highlights there in the center appear to be overexposed however as do some of the red-orange hues on the petals.

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24 - Silver Squill (Ledebouria violacea) with ball point comparison.jpg

Gerald Gifford

This image was disqualified prior to judging due to the man-made object seen for size reference.



25 - Silver Squill (Ledebouria violacea).jpg

Gerald Gifford

An interesting and slightly chaotic subject here. This type of plant can be hard to photograph pleasingly due to the alternating stems that come out every which way. Compositionally it is heavier at the bottom due to the number of buds there and all the stems pointing that way. The image also has a lot of noise and there is a random dark mark towards the top that looks like dust or dirt.

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26 - Telopea speciosissima suellen, UCSC Arboretum.jpg

Joni Zabala

Very nice image of a very unique plant. Good DOF choice and lighting, but compositionally I would have liked to see either the full center mass or had the image a bit tighter in on that center. The current crop is a bit off center and has the stamens clipped at odd places such as on the lower left where the one has half a bump still in the image. But the red and green contrast and the detail achieved is great!



27 - Tidestroms Lupine.jpg

Andrea Madsen

Good subject and compositional consideration to have the stem leading in from the right that way with the graceful flower tilt to the upper left. Yet this is another image that seems to suffer from overcropping as there is a lack of image quality throughout.

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28 - Veins on Fern Leaf.jpg

Elke Ikeda

I like the subject and understand some of where you were going with this image. But my eye doesn't have a central subject to go to as the brightest area is in the brownish spot due to the glare on the leaf. A polarizing filter would have helped cut that. The other issue is that then my eye is drawn to the out of focus leaf edge of the new growth there in the bottom right. I would have loved to see this composed slightly tighter on the mature leaf with those great vein patterns. Especially with how some of the ones at the top of the frame seem almost backlit. Good detail in the image though and I think it's a great shot to grow your idea from.

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

John Drum

What great detail you were able to capture on this lizard! I can practically see your reflection in its eye. Yet there is obvious signs of editing around the lizards head where it looks like there may have been some bright highlights and you tried to make them less noticeable through post production. I don't think it is to the point of needing to disqualify the image but it ruins the image from a technical and artistic standpoint.

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Winning Images:

Honorable Mentions:

California Poppy
Lillie Grossman



Orb Weave Spider
Patricia McKean

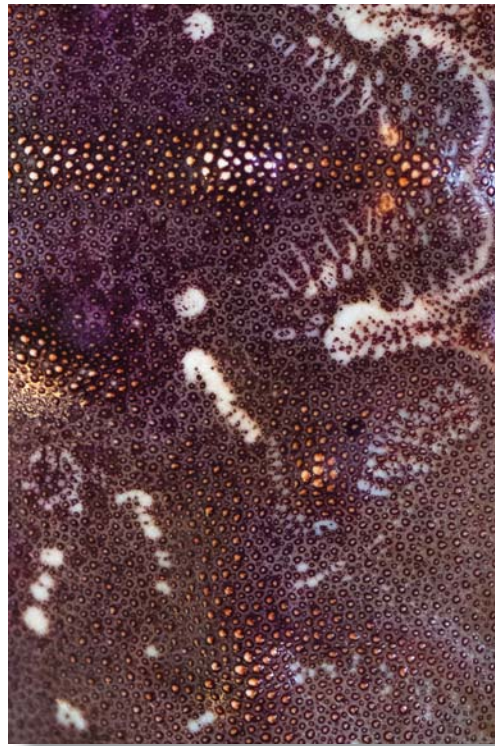


Artwork by H2O
Janet Azevedo



Third Place:

Beneath the Waves, an Ocean
Sean Crawford



2nd Place:

Eye of the Daisy
Lillie Grossman



First Place:

Fittonia verschaffeltii
Sean Crawford

