



01 - Alaska sailor's life through a porthole_.jpg

Kent Van Vuren

What a unique and creative way of looking at a “portrait” of a slice of someone’s life (like the content of one’s purse or one’s garage or one’s refrigerator). I see great potential for a series here. I’m sure there would be many more interesting things discovered in sailor’s bunks. Well-exposed (under difficult conditions) and a unique composition, with the added strength of the circular design. However, without the title, it is difficult to understand what’s going on ... to understand the artistic intent. Also, with the title, the randomness of the composition is explained. Without the title, the composition seems, well, too random. ***



02 - Bay Bridge San Francisco.jpg

Carol Silveira

An excellent example of being in the right place at the right time. (Or perhaps the photographer waited patiently for a full moon in clear weather, to be rising at just the right position to make a Bay Bridge exclamation point. Some will see the lovely humor in this composition. Some might say the composition is too “staged.” What I will say is that, even without the moon, this is a solid photograph. We really get the feeling of the beauty of the architecture (especially at night). We find beauty in the reflections and in the distant lights. My only suggestion would be a bit more contrast and perhaps a slight color correction. Perhaps even an exploration into a B&W conversion since the color of the sky and the water is, for me, not particularly appealing. ***



03 - Chili ristra.jpg

Joni Zabala

I love the idea of this ... showing the variety of chilis and the unique design of each. However, in this composition, I find the chilis are fighting with one another for attention. There is no single focal point. I also find myself wanting to see them in close up ... for their texture, color, and shape characteristics (with a bit of brightening). Perhaps try simplifying this to just

three chilis, choosing a background color that would enhance the contrast, and, moving in close. As Robert Capa said, “if your photo isn’t good enough, you’re not close enough.”

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04 - Classic On Tour.jpg

Rick Verbanec

I like this image (especially the brush strokes), but (and I apologize), I’m not quite getting its photographic qualities. Is it a photograph of a painting? Is it a photo manipulated in post production into a painterly style?

In any case, compositionally, I would like to see more of the front of the car. Chopping off its front wheel is like chopping off a human’s hands or feet.

Adding some space in front of the car would also give the image more compositional motion. As is, it is stopped dead in its tracks because it hits the wall/ edge of the frame on the left with no room to move (although the lines around the subjects’ heads are a nice touch that adds “speed” (as is the hair blowing in the wind)).



05 - Dutch Chocolate Box Landscape.jpg

Julie Chen

This is a lovely landscape, with an irresistible invitation to bring us into the scene and inspire us to walk up the winding path in this soft northern light. The title makes me wonder about the structures in the background. All of a sudden they don’t look real. So what’s going on here? A mystery. You’ve got my attention. I am also curious about the strange quality of the sky. Is it a painting? Is it pixel noise? The foreground looks very real to me ... and quite beautiful in its color, lighting, and texture. Then, I want to know more about what’s happening in the background. I guess it will remain a mystery.



06 - Entering a sanctuary.JPG

Margret Maria Cordts

The idea of allowing us a special peek into a private sanctuary is interesting and inviting. The composition of the arch and open gray door entice us to enter and explore. We are then confronted with the white column (dead center), which is unfortunate, as it blocks our path. Too bad, as the garden beyond is beautiful. If it's a metaphor for the difficulty of entering paradise, then it works. As a compositional element, not so much.

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07 - Flowers and bokeh.jpg

Brian Spiegel

Psychedelic! The impact of this image is decidedly color and shape. I can see this covering the wall of a dance club with pulsing lights. I find it artistically interesting ... an unusual approach that bombards us with color. Generally, we might give a flower a simpler background and let its natural form and color dominate. Here, the photographer put the flower against a very complicated background of bokeh lights. There is competition for focus. It's a complicated composition. But somehow for me it works because it is so unusual. My only suggestion would be to crop off the right side where the stems and second flower add complexity without strong design purpose. ****



08 - Harvest, Finished.jpg

Sean Crawford

This is a good documentary photo of a part of the agriculture process. Well composed, with some strong lines leading the viewer around the scene. Well exposed, given the difficulty of highlights and shadows. My only criticism is that it is not a unique view (we don't get any insight into the heart of the artist) nor is it a view that will necessarily evoke any emotion in a viewer. Perhaps the addition of a lone human would add to the mood.



09 - Leaf wreath 3.jpg

Joni Zabala

A nice homage to autumn, particularly the way the leaves are in varying degrees of color change. Maple leaves are quite elegant in shape and design, so a good choice of subject, and an artistic way of displaying shape, color, and form. Good diffused lighting choice also, which allows the color to stand on its own.



10 - Old Steel Bridge, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin.jpg

Bill Shewchuk

An interesting subject, made more interesting with its reflection and the steel grayness of the day. A very steely photo.

For me, the image gets too complicated in the background under the bridge. Perhaps if shot from a slightly higher angle, that distracting background could be eliminated (blocked by the bridge). The strongest part of the image is the reflection (quite beautiful for many reasons). I would suggest further exploring that aspect.



11 - On the Edge.jpg

Chris Johnson

This photo definitely evokes a response. Fear. Admiration. Worry. The smallness of humans in the grandness of nature. It is a great storytelling photo. The question that comes to mind is “Were you directing the figure?” Or was it just serendipity that a figure, in a perfect stance showed up on the cliff edge? The bottom line is ... we really don’t need to know. It is a “decisive moment.”

The cliff is interesting in form and texture. And the figure, of course, is the highlight of the story. You don’t see him/her right away. It is a viewer discovery that is an impactful surprise.

It is important that the distant valley is appropriately desaturated, as happens naturally when there are air particles involved, but, still, I would like to see it a bit more saturated, perhaps having used a polarizing filter or pollution filter while shooting ... or managing in post production. The tonal values do need to be different of course, for the cliff to stand out from the valley. ****



12 - Piano torched by the homeless in Salinas.jpg

Kent Van Vuren

A good find for a subject, with interesting detail of the inner workings of a piano, as well as the rich tones and textures of a burned out, weathered instrument. As shot, the story can possibly be imagined that this is in a homeless camp or a makeshift dump out in the brush. Without the title, though, the story that it was torched by an unhoused person is not clear. If that is an important aspect of the story, perhaps more clues are needed.

This subject has great further potential, especially in terms of close ups and abstracts. I particularly like the abstract charcoal designs on side of the piano.



13 - Quebec City Country Restaurant.jpg

Rick Verbanec

This quaint scene makes for a perfect pictorial, with added interest in the warm colors, and the unusual autumn decorations. We don't know where we are except for the hint in the restaurant sign ... and the big hint in the image title), but wherever we are, it's a French speaking country, which gives the image instant charm. My question is ... why the post production treatment? The image seems just fine without any additional artistic treatment. For me, the impressionism is overdone ... to the point where we lose detail of the textures and lines. A watercolor with too much water. I would like to know more about the artist's intent and why the need to augment reality. ***



14 - Renaissance Faire Masks.jpg

Carol Silveira

What great subject matter. Interesting shapes, colors, textures, and details. Some scary, some macabre, and some regal. I would suggest attention to exposure and composition. The whites need a bit of brightening and the shadow areas are a bit dark. (An overall adjustment to the exposure would suffice.) As for composition, the image might be stronger with some "rearranging" of the top shelf. The bottom shelf works well. The cropping of the two end masks on the top shelf is distracting and the sheer number of masks makes the viewer's eyes wander a bit too much. All kinds of composition possibilities exist if the photographer is able to touch and rearrange

the masks (and, yes, that's allowed, with permission of course.) As always, my tendency is to simplify (e.g., pick the three most interesting masks.) All in all, a treasure trove. ***



15 - Secret Beach.jpg

Bill Brown

I was swept into this image from the first viewing. A well composed mystical land/sea scape, made more mysterious by the fog and the unique branches on the precipice reaching into space. A great subject discovery. (Good idea to keep it a photographic secret, as its title implies). The long exposure brings the viewer into the surging foreground water (makes me feel as if I'm in the scene) and also works to soften the mid-ground water (love that tiny spot of turquoise). The composition keeps the viewer moving in a nice semi-circle. The only thing that kept this image from first place was the soft focus throughout the image. The softness works well for the movement of the water and even for the background in the fog, but I wanted some part of the image to be sharp. A tripod or better focus on the main land mass would have made this image perfect. *****



16 - Stairway to a new life.jpg

Sean Crawford

I like the richness of tones and the strong graphic of the bottom half of the photo (the stairs). But ... I do not have a clue what's going on here. That could be a good thing, if the photographer is going for an abstraction. What confuses me is the machinery between the large forms (with much of the detail lost in shadow). Without that, this is quite a strong set of forms, lines, and light. With it, I get caught up in the complex shapes and spots of light that, to me, are more distracting than strengthening.

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17 - Sunflowers.jpg

Bill Shewchuk

The impact of this image is immediate. Technical perfection and a vibrant burst of “sunshine.” You almost feel warm looking at it. The brilliant color is enhanced by great lighting and by the blue/yellow complementary contrast that brings the flowers forward in all their splendid detail (with textures ranging from tiny seeds to exploding petals to spiky buds ... all in crisp focus). I was a bit surprised this was my choice for 1st, as it’s not as “moody” as my usual favorites. Then I realized the mood was the pure joy of nature. And the outstanding technical quality of the image pays honest tribute to the beauty and nuanced detail of nature. The composition takes the viewer on a circular journey, from the large flower to the smaller flower, across the textures of green and back up to the bud on the right. Energy in full force. Well done.



18 - Windswept.jpg

Chris Johnson

This image is a beautiful capture of the force of nature. I particularly like the composition, the leading space on the left giving us room to imagine the path of the wind. The warm light also adds strength/balance to the left side of the image.

The natural light was beautiful, I imagine, so I am a bit sad that the image looks too manipulated in post production. Perhaps it’s not. Sometimes nature astounds us. But, for me, it seems unreal (overproduced). The fine line that needs to be walked between a nuanced artistic manipulation and overproduction. This particular color manipulation takes me away from the natural beauty of the scene and plants a seed of mistrust. Otherwise, a stunning 1st place image. *****



19 - Wizard Hat - Bandon, Oregon.jpg

Bill Brown

An excellent subject choice, given the shape and textures of these interesting rock formations. The composition is strong, as viewers are clearly led to focus on the first rock and then follow the imaginary diagonal into the distance. I appreciate the long exposure (difficult in bright light), lending mystery to the water and making the scene even more magical. I would love to see this subject in more dramatic lighting

(storm lighting, emerging darkness, sunrise or sunset). The bright day/strong light detracts from the fantastical nature of the formations. For me, it's like coming out of a dark movie theatre into the bright sunlight. The magic disappears in the harsh light of day. *****



20 - Yellow on white.JPG

Margret Maria Cordts

Still life lends itself well to color and interesting forms. I particularly like the feather, with the crisp focus and the excellent choice of a simple black background showing every tiny detail. The diagonal line of the feather is a strong compositional element.

The addition of the yellow flower does add interest, but seems a bit too staged for me. I myself asking, what is the relationship between these two items. What is the artist's intent in putting these two things together?

I am also distracted by the yellow spots on the feather (pollen from the flower? Not sure quite what is causing that).

Technically a good image ... well lit, well exposed, and in nicely sharp focus. *****



21 - Zebra Portrait.JPG

Julie Chen

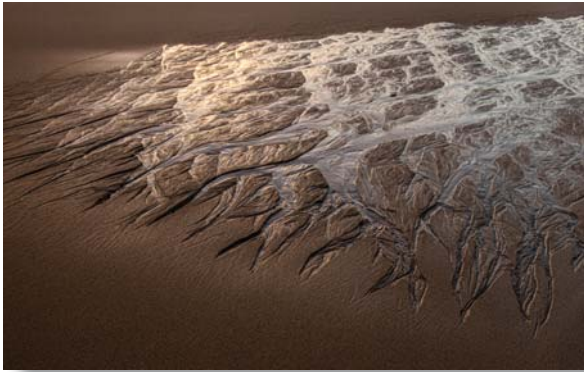
As a minimalist at heart, I am a huge fan of this image. Zebras abound in the photographic world, so one needs to find a unique way of portraying them. Here, we really focus on the design of this bizarre species because there are no competing details. The design almost overshadows his personality. And yet, I feel we know him somehow. A bit shy. A hint of sadness in his eyes. Perhaps a bit of tiredness that comes with age and the burden of surviving in a predator/prey world. Am I reading too much into this portrait? If so, it's a good sign. I am intrigued. *****



22 - Birds and Reeds Reflecting.jpg

Janet Azevedo

This is a great subject that is filled with possibilities, especially when form and lines are simple and elegant. There are several images within this photo that could be isolated and made into really lovely studies of line and contrast (especially the forms on the right side). As is, it is too complicated, with no discernible focal point or guided movement. **



23 - Tidings.jpg

Janet Azevedo

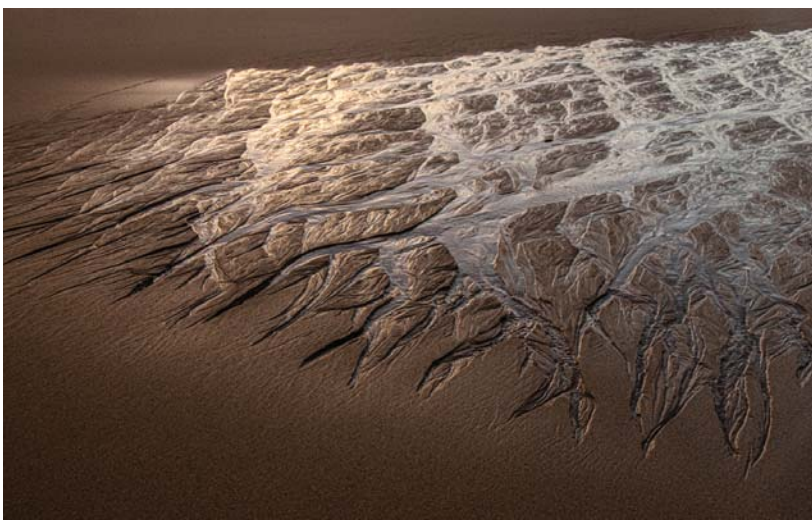
The photographer here takes a creative approach that succeeds on many levels. A change in perspective is always interesting, and, in this case, we really don't know scale or orientation. We could be miles or inches above the earth, which makes us really study the image to try to figure that out. While doing this, we are rewarded with the movement of the lines and the graceful etched detail where light and dark intermingle. Well done. *****

Winning Images:

Honorable Mentions:

Zebra Portrait

Julie Chen



Tidings

Janet Azevedo

Wizard Hat
Bill Brown



Third Place:

Windswept
Chris Johnson



2nd Place:

Secret Beach
Bill Brown



First Place:

Sunflowers
Bill Shewchuk

