

Shutter Release

A newsletter for the members of the International Photographic Society

October 2012

First Place Pix!



October 17, 2012 Meeting

Social and Refreshments: 5:45p.m

Presentation: 6:30pm

IMF Auditorium RD-710

700 19th Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

Electronic and Print Competition Theme: “Open”

([All themes](#) for the year are posted on IPS' site)

Robb Hill:

“Street Photography: Public Moments, Private Thoughts”

Robb Hill created his own degree of documentary photography at Indiana University. Since graduating he's concentrated on long-term projects while making a living as an editorial and commercial photographer. He's been based in Budapest, Chicago, and now Washington D.C. His work has been featured in NPR's Picture Show and The New York Times Lens blog.

He says: “I'm far more interested in coming to understand and photograph themes rather than issues.”

IPS Online



www.ips-imfwb.org



(must join first to access)



(discussion group; must join)

See all winning images p. 10-14

Message from the President



It was great to see such a well attended meeting last month: lots of familiar faces and a crop of brand new ones! We hope the trend keeps up :)

The feedback we received on Craig Rudlin's presentation was positive: I think we were all able to add a trick or two to our photographic toolkit. However, we had mixed reviews on the competition part of the meeting, with several members feeling there wasn't enough feedback on each image from the judge.

And therein lies a little bit of a dilemma: with a growing membership and more people submitting images for the competition, we are running against time constraints. At this point, over 80% of the members who submit images, submit three of them into the EIC competition; the remainder submits two images. This means we're averaging between 80-90 images at each meeting (not counting the images submitted in the print competition). Even if we have a judge who is used to giving feedback, that's quite intense.

So what's the solution? The IPS Executive Council met this week to discuss this and has come up with two, inter-related actions, effective immediately:

1. we are reducing the number of images members can submit to a maximum of four: two images in the electronic competition and two images in the print competition. The idea is to trade off quantity of images for quality of comments.
2. we are re-opening the IPS Flickr forum, where members can post pictures and seek feedback on those pictures from other members of the IPS. The forum will be monitored and our resident photographer of the (many) year, Alex Hoffmaister, has volunteered to keep on his eyes on this, but this will work best if everyone participates.

Our understanding in making these decisions is that our members want to participate in formal competitions for sure, but are also interested in simply getting feedback from fellow photographers to improve their own images. We are still considering other options (e.g. splitting the monthly meeting in two sessions, one devoted to a more thorough presentation, and the other to the competition) but need to think through the impact and details. So in the meantime, let's try that approach for a few months and see how it goes.

Bill Katzenstein has kindly contributed an article which covers some of the things judges look at when they consider your images and I've written a short piece on to use our various online tools.

As always, if you have comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact me or any member of the Executive Council directly.

I look forward to seeing you at our monthly meetings or online in Facebook or Flickr.

Michele

email as of 10/1/2012: alsacienne@aol.com

HOW JUDGES DECIDE PHOTO COMPETITIONS

Deeply appreciated is the photo competition judge with the knowledge, empathy and wit to provide constructive praise and criticism of each entry. This may not always occur because of personal style or time constraints, but all judges add to our learning, and we can only be grateful for their efforts on our behalf. As an assist to the perplexed photographer whose masterpiece may have been turned aside in competition by an unexplained "Out," "Next," or "We'll keep this in for now," this article discusses the artistic objective and considerations weighing in photo competitions, and summarizes technical reasons why submitted images don't make the grade.

Objective: Photography as Art

To win or place in IPS and club competitions generally, a photograph has to be seen as art. When is photography art? The most uniformly accepted criterion over the past century defines art in photography as an image that evokes emotion, be it beauty, contrast, pathos, intrigue, pity, humor—any one of innumerable human feelings.

To be considered art, a photograph has to be virtually free of technical faults that would detract from the image. Since the absence of such problems is normally a prerequisite for qualification of a photograph as art, most judges begin a critique of an entry by noting any distracting flaws.

Technical Concerns

In normal eyesight, our minds unconsciously process and finesse what we see. We envision naturally composed scenes in focus, with appropriate contrast. Unimportant effects and distractions are diminished in the mind's eye. For example, glare on a polished floor is nearly as bright as the lights above it, but when we look at the scene, the effect appears quashed as if the glare has been muted. Only if we concentrate on the glare will we perceive that it is almost as bright as the light source above it. A problem with photography is that the mind does not tune out such distractions from an image in print or on a monitor.

Most technical flaws cited by competition judges can be summarized as follows:

1. Out of focus or inconsistent focus: The main subject or a part of it may be out of focus in such a way as to defy viewer expectations, or there may appear two focal points, which confuses the image.
2. Image not full: A sizable part of the photograph is empty or has no meaningful content, to the extent the view appears wanting.
3. Objects cut off: Significant elements of the image appear cropped off by the borders of the photograph.
4. Excessive contrast: One or more areas or colors appear too bright or dark. Back-lit scenes are especially vulnerable.
5. Weak coloration or "washed-out" look: Faded color, or a gaping absence of tone where strong color saturation would normally be expected.
6. Hot spots, glare and the like: Offputting ultra-bright areas, reflections, blurs of motion and other unintended consequences of capturing an image under challenging conditions may also dilute artistic effect.
7. Image not level or misaligned: Photographs taken with wide-angle lenses are particularly susceptible.
8. Presentational faults: Prints are sometimes rejected because the size is considered too small to effectively illustrate the content, or because of excessive graininess or flaws in development such as streaking.
9. Excessive application of HDR or other digital effects: Judges will sometimes fault an image with special effects that appear "unreal" yet not creative enough to qualify as a fantastic digital creation in its own right.

Experienced photographers are not unaware of these issues. Many shooting situations are so impromptu or otherwise difficult to perfect that technical issues remain a challenge for the most expert practitioners.

Evaluating Photography as Art

Clear of the technical obstacle course, a photograph may illustrate beauty or other impression, powerful or subtle, but still not win an award. Photographer Lucian Perkins, in a talk to IPS in January 2001, advised that a winning photograph, “. . . must have something that drives me further. . . than the norm. Subtlety with complexity, and that you are compelled to study more, which grabs you.”

Some Individual Characteristics of Compelling Photographs

While there is no step-by-step recipe for producing award-winning, artistic imagery, certain characteristics are evident. Over and above an absence of technical flaws, finalist photographs are frequently:

1. Of character: The subject, whether human, flora, fauna, geographic or architectural, has a distinct and appealing presence.
2. Creative: Judges tend to prefer subjects and compositions they have not seen before, rather than common themes. While most judges would not rule out selecting a sunset or “family photograph” as a winning image, such an effort would have to be absolutely spectacular to make up for its commonality.
3. Direct and to the point: The subject and theme of a great photo are immediately obvious. A not infrequent critique is that an image is “too busy” or multifaceted, which is an aesthetic rather than technical judgment.
4. Either rich in color saturation or delicately shaded: Both approaches accentuate mood. In black-and-white images, high contrast without sacrificing detail creates a compelling tension.
5. Composed to “Rule of Thirds”: An image structured as if set on a grid of thirds tends to appeal to the aesthetic senses of balance and order.
6. Light transcendence: Highlighting the essence of the subject through a delicate interval of sunlight or other bright illumination tends to create inspiring photography.

A truly great photograph and sure winner evokes awe, a compelling sense of wonder and admiration that returns with anticipation when the picture is viewed again.

The subjective nature of art cannot be overemphasized. In assessing photographs in competition, judges often reach a point in narrowing the field through the reluctant, albeit straightforward admission that one photograph impresses them personally more than another.

Contributed by Bill Katzenstein

Welcome new members!

Alex Culiuc
Baaquia Holloway
Yanna Zang

Member Profile: Alex Hoffmaister



- Nationality: Costa Rica
- IPS member since: 2007

Where do you work?

I joined the Fund as an EP in 1990 and roughly spent the first 10 years in RES, including a two-year leave of absence (in the interest of the Fund) at the Central Bank of Costa Rica. Upon returning to the Fund in 2001, I joined the EUR department (where I currently am a deputy division chief) working first on Spain, then Poland, Malta, Cyprus, Poland again, and more recently on Luxembourg and Estonia.

What got you started on photography?

It started as a young teenager. My father first lent me his Mamiya SLR and, seeing my enthusiasm, he subsequently bought me two Nikon SLR F bodies as well as my first lens 55 macro f3.5 and some primes: 50 f1.4, 28 f3.5, 135 f2.8. (Still have all of these and have used my Nikon F last year.) Also, we setup a darkroom in the back of the house complete with a light-trapping maze entry. I guess it was the ability to reproduce street scenes (and eventually modern dance) and the challenges of mastering the chemicals/processes that hooked me.

What interests you most about photography now?

I mostly concentrate on street photography nowadays but enjoy capturing more abstract, often geometrical images.

NB: Alex has won the following awards: rookie of the year 07-08; photographer of the year 08-09; 2nd place in 09-10 and in 10-11; photographer of the year 11-12.



My favorite image: Taken in the 70s, as a kid, it reminds me of the innocence of children and how watchful parents and family can support their development

Member Profile: Ceyda Oner



- Nationality: Turkish/US
- IPS member since: September 2011

Where do you work?

I have been with the Fund since 2005. I am currently in the Emerging Markets Division of the Strategy and Policy Review Department, where I do research on capital flows, follow developments in emerging markets, and focus more closely on Hungary.

What got you started on photography?

My dear teacher Aydin Ungan. He taught our photography elective class in high school and played a big role in developing my passion for it. I love the concept of keeping alive a moment or a mood from the past through photography, as well as the laborious and delicate process of capturing light and putting it on paper.

What interests you most about photography now?

Besides learning editing software and improving technically, I am interested in exploring further two lessons my one year at the IPS has taught me: The first lesson was what our photos teach us about ourselves and our styles. I approach taking photographs with no presumption; yet my images turn out rather similar: dark, textured and devoid of people. This has led me to think more about what I find appealing, and more generally, how one develops a style. The second lesson is that there are some generally accepted notions of "good" photography. Even though art is subjective, the professional photographers that visit the club each month make similar points when judging. So there is more to learn about having a unique perspective while still producing "good" photos.



My favorite image: My first ever image, "Fall(en) Leaves." I took it on the first outing with my photo class in high school, then developed and printed it in our darkroom. I loved the result and got hooked right there and then!

PSA

This month, let me write to you about the Study Groups offered by PSA.

Most PSA divisions offer digital or print Study Groups for individual PSA members and have appointed one or more volunteer directors to supervise and conduct these activities. Digital groups frequently have members from a various parts of the world. A group typically consists of 5 to 7 PSA members. During each cycle, which may range from 1 to 3 months, each member submits 1 to 4 prints or images for review.

Print groups use a round-robin procedure to conduct their cycles. However, digital groups make use of individual websites for on-line submissions of images and reviews.



*IPS is a member club of the
Photographic Society of
America*

www.psa-photo.org

This process allows members to work independently but still share knowledge and experiences. Some groups have senior volunteer photographers providing expert commentary. PSA members are welcome to participate, free of charge as a benefit of membership, in as many groups as they wish, within and across divisions. Over the years, these groups have served to increase the knowledge and expand the skills of all those who have been a part of these programs. Many lasting friendships have been formed, even though the members may never meet face-to-face.

The current available Study Groups: • Projected Image Division • Nature • Photojournalism Division • Photo Travel Division • Pictorial Print Division o American Portfolios o Portrait Portfolios o Canadian Portfolios • Print Workshops .

The PSA Journal, in October, carries quite a few articles on digital photography and also on using the iPhone apps. "Campbell's Digital Toolkit", "That's Not What It Looks Like on My Monitor!", and "iPhone Apps for HDR and Editing with Advanced Photo Techniques" are a few of them. Dr. Fujio Masuoka, the inventor of flash memory, was presented with the Progress Medal, the highest award of the Photographic Society of America (PSA), at the 74th Annual Conference of Photography held in San Francisco, California in September 2012.

And don't forget to check psa-photo.org for more updated information about the PSA activities.

Contributed by Ashish Bhateja

Do you know?

- That we need your suggestions on destinations for local field trips? Give us an idea of where you like to hang out when you take pictures and we'll line up a few trips. Contact any of the EC members or use our Facebook and/or Flickr groups.
- That the competition [rules](#), [guidelines for submission](#) as well as [themes](#) are posted on our site? Check them out as a reminder!
- How to take great shots of the moon? Check out our [Facebook group](#) for an article on how to establish that skill.
- What our accounts look like? Check out the latest [Statement of Revenues and Expenditures](#).

Confused about our online presence?



So we've got an IPS website and stuff on Flickr as well as on Facebook. What do we make of this and how do we use it? When it comes to the web and social media, the trick is to make sure tools complements each other. Let's look at how this works.

- [The IPS website](#): the quintessential reference point for all things IPS: what's coming up (meetings, workshops, etc), what's happened (winners of competitions, previous newsletters, etc), and of course, the complete encyclopedia of all of our rules and procedures and "how tos". When we send out announcements, we'll often link to info posted on that site.

- [Flickr's IPS gallery](#): the repository for all the winning images over time. Only designated administrators can post to that gallery, but it is visible to all.

- [Flickr's IPS discussion group](#): this is the place where you can post pictures on which you'd like to get feedback from other IPS members. Conversely, it's also the place where you can look at others' images and provide your own (constructive) feedback. You'll need your own Flickr account in order to join this group.

- [Facebook's IPS group](#): this is where you can post links to cool articles, exhibits or competitions you come across, info you think might be useful or interesting to your fellow photographers, anything really, except for your own photographs for comments (that's what the Flickr group is for). You may, however, post a photograph to help illustrate something you come across (e.g. tips on how to photograph the moon can be accompanied by a photo of yours on that topic). If you have an idea for an outing or something you'd like the IPS to do (or not to do...), this would be the place.

The commonality of Flickr and Facebook is that these tools enable people to connect to one another virtually. And that's something we'd like to see a bit more of, so that we get a better sense of 'community' among our membership. As usual for these social media tools: your active participation is what makes the tools useful and even entertaining. :)

Contributed by Michele Egan

September 2012—Winning Images



Undulation © Emine Gorgen



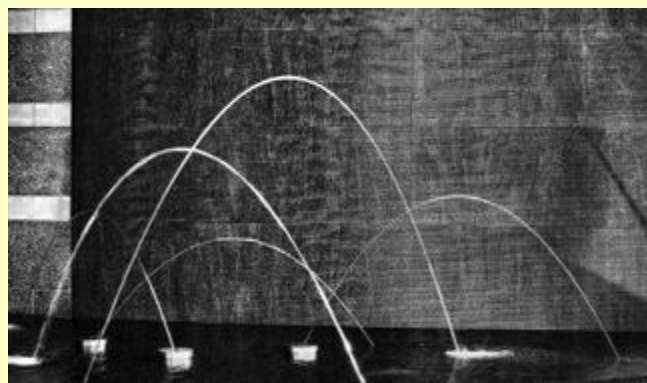
Aerial Dance 2 © Marco Pinon



Pose 1 © Gerda de Corte



Stairway Dynamic © Emine Gorgen



Lyon Staircase © Alex Culiuc

Aquatic Arches © Aung Thurein Win



Arc de Triomphe © Alex Culiuc

Inca Abstract © Alex Culiuc



Corner Relationship © Alain Cornet



Pattern in Gray © Adriana Triana



Urban View 22 © Jevgenijs Bujanovs



Remembrance 1 © Michele Egan



Head Strong © Emine Gorgen



Hershy Park © Monarma



Blue Jean Wall © Ceyda Oner



Chaos © Jevgenijs Bujanovs

September 2012 Competition Results

Electronic Image Competition-Curves (Group A – 28 Entries)

1st place - Emine Gurgun "Undulation"
2nd place - Marco Pinon "Aerial Dance 2"
3rd place - Gerda de Corte "Pose 1"
HM - Emine Gurgun "Stairway Dynamic"

Electronic Image Competition-Theme: Curves (Group B – 53 Entries)

1st place - Alex Culiuc "Lyon Staircase"
2nd place - Aung Thurein Win "Aquatic Arches"
3rd place - Alex Culiuc "Arc de Triomphe "
HM - Alex Culiuc "Inca Abstract"
HM - Alain Cornet "Corner Relationship"
HM - Adriana Triana "Pattern in Gray"
HM - Jevgenijs Bujanovs "Urban View 22"
HM - Michele Egan "Remembrance 1"

Prints Competition—OPEN (Group A – 13 Entries)

1st place - Emine Gurgun "Head Strong"
2nd place - Monarma "Hershy Park"

Prints Competition—OPEN (Group B – 10 Entries)

1st place Ceyda Oner - "Blue Jean Wall"
2nd place - Jevgenijs Bujanovs "Chaos"

Competition Reminder

No comments or interruptions of any kind from the audience are allowed under any circumstances.

Points Standing | 2012–2013 Season

Last Name	First Name	Class Opening	Sept. 2012	Oct. 2012	Nov. 2012	Dec. 2012	Jan. 2013	Feb. 2013	March 2013	April 2013	Annual Exhibit 2012	May 2013	Total
Gürgen	Emine	A	16										16
Culiuc*	Alex	B	13										13
Oner	Ceyda	B	10										10
Bujanovs	Jack (Jevgenijs)	B	9										9
Pinon	Marco	A	8										8
Rani	Manorama	A	8										8
Thurein Win	Aung	B	8										8
De Corte	Gerda	A	7										7
Cornet	Alain	B	6										6
Egan	Michelle	B	6										6
Triana*	Adriana	B	6										6
Boyd	Jean	A	5										5
Cakici	Kemal	B	5										5
Cochard	Fred	A	5										5
D Sen*	Asmin	B	5										5
Eggli	Stephan	A	5										5
Eken	Sena	B	5										5
Elahi*	Raihan	B	5										5
Forest-Sarr	Louise	A	5										5
Franzetti	Carlos	A	5										5
Jamal*	Mustafa	B	5										5
Karsten*	Junies	B	5										5
Kundu	Pritthijit (Raja)	B	5										5
Lumanau	Angela	B	5										5
Morin	Denyse	B	5										5
Nardello	Renato	B	5										5
Palmioli	Manuella Lea	A	5										5
Ringlien	Clarisa	B	5										5
Sarr	Bassirou	A	5										5
Titworth	Jack	B	5										5
Titworth Morin	Raphaël	A	5										5

* Eligible for Rookie of the Year

Please check your awards & score. For questions, please send an e-mail to Manuella Lea Palmioli: mpalmioli@worldbank.org

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SHUTTER RELEASE welcomes article ideas and submissions from club members. Unless specified otherwise by e-mail, the deadline for submissions is close of business on the last business day of the month prior to the issue month. Please send submissions by e-mail to the editor(s) as unformatted word or text files. If you wish to add images, please make sure that the longest side does not exceed 800 pixels.