

Padre Trails Camera Club

Environmental Portrait - 4/16/25

Judged by: Meredith Mullens



Meredith Mullens is an internationally exhibited American photographer and journalist currently living bi-continently— in Paris and in Pacific Grove. Her work is in museum and private collections throughout North America and Europe, including the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Willem Photography and the Weston Gallery on the Monterey Peninsula. Her photographs also appear in several publications and printed photography collections.



She is the recipient of international photography awards, including the Grand Concours Photo sur Paris, the Paris Prix de Photographie (Px3), the Worldwide Gala Awards, the Julia Margaret Cameron Awards, and Photographers Forum.

Meredith has been a writer/photographer for National Geographic School Publishing, Paris Magazine, and Carmel Magazine and currently writes and photographs for Bonjour Paris, France Today, Eye Prefer Paris, OIC Moments, and Browntrout Publishing. She is the author of the award-winning photography book “In A Paris Moment.”

As a supporter for emerging and mid-career photographers, Meredith has taught photography for Monterey Peninsula and Hartnell Colleges, currently teaches photography in Paris, and is the Director and Co-Founder for the International Fine Art Photography Program and a juror for TerraQuantum, a program celebrating the beauty of the earth through photography.

Shown here are the images submitted for this competition from all three groups, Blue, Green, and Red followed by Meredith's selection for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Honorable Mentions in each group.

Padre Trails Camera Club

Environmental Portrait - 4/16/25 - Group Blue Submissions



01-Adrea at Wave Street Studios

Bill Brown

STAR RATING: 5 COMMENT: The beautiful lighting, deep rich colors, and camera angle make this portrait unique and powerful. Every detail is worth savoring. From the sparkling headband to the emotional moment in the song (her eyes lifted toward greater things), to the lace shirt to the hint of her guitar ... everything adds dimension to the story. We get a strong sense of this personality. Performance photography is not easy, especially with microphones being omnipresent, but **here everything hits the right spot.** The background design turning into diagonals (and its color) adds to the dynamism of the photo. Great job.



02-Flower Vendor in Mexico

Carol Silveira

STAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: This a beautiful scene, thoughtfully composed. I think it is often better in an environmental portrait to have your subject engaged in something rather than smiling/looking at the camera, and this is a touching moment as she so delicately works with her flowers, with such focus. The variety of colors makes this an amazingly rich image, from the varying shades of roses to the bright pink nail polish to the rich blue and red of her clothes and the color in her makeup. It is an added bonus that she is framed by her flowers and the colorful wall in the background. It is also a nice touch that we see people in the distance looking at something else. This, for me, reinforces the isolated, quiet moment of the subject. She is in her own world. Technically, the subject is a bit underexposed, so some exposure should be added. You can also bring up the shadows, which will bring up the darkness of her face and add vibrancy to the whole scene, especially the flowers. There is also a color temperature issue since she is in shade. The cool cast (blue) can be removed, so that the skin tone and the feeling of the whole photo can be warmed up. With these minor post-production changes, this photo is outstanding.



03-Heather Explaining Weather Balloon Technology

Ken Jones

STAR RATING: 2 COMMENT: This is a technically competent photo, but it is a bit hard to read. It's unclear to the "general public" exactly what she is doing or what her "job" or "environment" might be (although it sounds very interesting). Without these clues, we don't get a good feeling for her personality. The clothes and even the instruments don't give us context without more information. The depth of field selected was important so that the background crowd did not become distracting. Even so, the woman behind Heather's profile starts to compete.



04-Indian Chef

Lillie Grossman

STAR RATING: 4 **COMMENT:** The secret to good environmental portraits is to find an interesting character, to have that character engaged in something so things don't look stilted, and to surround the character with further clues as to the job and the personality. This image accomplishes that with style. The color palette of this scene is lovely, with warm colors, muted copper walls, and the saffron head band, complemented by the soft blue shirt. Everything feels "warm" in this kitchen. This subject's face is also a classic, with the carved features and the wild mustache. We want to linger on that face, especially one with kind eyes and the hint of a smile. The composition is excellent with the body position and arms sending the viewer to the stove and fire. Our friend the diagonal shows up in the line of the stove to keep us moving through all the details of the photo. Well done.



05-Maasai Tribeswoman at the Entrance to her Home in the Boma

Sara Courtneidge

STAR RATING: 4 **COMMENT:** The Masai make dramatic subjects because of the vibrant red that is always present and the intricate headgear and jewelry that is often part of their dress. This images shows those treasures well, with flattering diffused light and excellent exposure and focus. The natural framing of the mud and stick structure also works well and adds additional context (about what is "home"). Her stance and smile, however, look a bit posed, making it seem more like a fleeting "visitor" photo rather than a real connection. She might have been more interesting if she were engaged in some activity.



06-Monster Truck Driver

Chris Johnson

STAR RATING: 3 **COMMENT:** A unique idea for an environmental portrait. And although I know nothing about monster trucks, this image makes me think I know. Complicated. Rough. Tough. Dangerous. "Wicked Strong." One has to have lots of protection for the body and the vehicle. We see that in the image. With that said, the composition gets a bit too complicated, especially on the right side of the image. I would suggest cropping very tightly, i.e. cutting the image in half. The subject and all the clues on the left side work well. Technically a solid photo especially if you use just the left half. All the light and white sky on the right pull the eye away from the real subject of the photo.



07-Nate Making Us Cry at Paper Wing Theatre

Bill Brown

STAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: A well-done performance photo, where lighting can be a challenge. Here, you nailed it, especially with just the light on the trumpeter's face. The depth of field is perfect also, so that we get just enough detail of the guitarist but he doesn't distract from the main subject. The DOF also allows the viewer to move into the photo (that, along with the diagonal of the guitar neck). (Am I talking about diagonals too much?) The camera angle also adds interest. Well done.



08-New Zealand Maori Weaver

John Drum

STAR RATING: 3 COMMENT: A nice capture of a character and a culture. We get clues to the weaver with her hair, jewelry and tattoo. (I would have loved to have seen more of her tattoo. So interesting and perhaps a window into the culture.) The sharp focus and good depth of field from foreground to subject, allows the us to savor the beauty of the weaving and the details of the character. I particularly like that the subject's face is right next to the wooden face in the background. A slightly humorous cultural juxtaposition. The exterior is the least interesting part of the photo, so I would suggest cropping on the left to bring the viewer into the subject. Otherwise, the viewer might tend to wander outside, toward the brightness.



09-Parisian Cheesemaker Saying Cheese for the Camera

Chris Johnson

STAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: Everything about this image is perfect, except perhaps the cheesemonger's expression. What emotion is that? The composition is well thought out, with the visitors on the left perfectly placed (and adding interest) and the colleague on the right serving to balance the folks on the left. The design of the cheeses in the foreground also gives the viewer details worthy of spending some time. The choice of B&W is a good one, adding to the old world, timeless feeling of French open markets. And the exposure and rich tonal range is well done. One could make a case that the expression is worthy of study. The viewer enters the story and decides exactly what the emotion is. For me, it just left me wondering.



10-Professional Makeup Artist Simulating Injuries for EMT Training

John Drum

STAR RATING: 3 COMMENT: The scene and subject are an intriguing and unique choice. We are able to enter a world that may not be a well known arena. The wounded subject is the most interesting part of the photo but we are focused on the makeup artist because it seems she is your choice as the main character. If that is the case, showing her from behind is probably not the best choice. We really don't get a sense of her personality, especially with the mask. What works well is the array of make up items on the table and the "made up" person. Since his head wound is a focal point, I would have loved to have seen his head turned slightly so we could see more. The bright exterior through the windows is quite distracting and not integral to the story. A different camera angle would have helped that situation.



11-Spinach Ravioli

Lillie Grossman

STAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: A good example of environmental portrait. A woman at work in her environment. The spinach green that frames the subject is a great touch, especially the hint of the green ravioli in the foreground and the repetitive design of it going through the conveyor. The subject is engaging and natural and seems to have a rapport with the photographer. I particularly like that she has "busy hands" with another phase of the process. The composition is good. The fridge in the background is a very different color palette, but I kind of like it. You might experiment by cropping it out and see what it does to the overall color feeling and mood of the photo. Exposure, lighting, and focus are excellent.



12-Splicing Rope

Sara Courtneidge

STAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: The circular movement in the composition of this photo is a treat, with the circle of the rope repeating the "circle" of the subject with head down and arms in semblance of circle. We get a good sense of the subject through his clothes, necklace, tattoo, and determination to get that rope spliced. He seems to be a man of the sea. I also appreciate how the background element seem to spoke out from the circle. The image could use perhaps a boost to the color through brilliance or contrast. Although the color of the rope already pops nicely.



13-Spring Branding

Carol Silveira

STAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: What gives this image impact is the unique and vivid capture of this (some would say inhumane) western ritual and the tight cropping and angle of motion. There is great movement. The viewer can feel the force of the branding iron and smell the result. The small puff of smoke reinforcing the burn is a great touch. The cowboy's outfit mesmerizes me with the seemingly elegant shirt and the heavily embossed leather chaps, plus a well-worn hat. Technically solid with good exposure, interesting lighting and an effective use of depth of field. The earth tones and muted yellows are a beautiful color palette. It does take a while to take in all the detail because of the complexity of the action, so a quick first glance might not have immediate impact. One hopes for viewers not in a hurry.



14-Toby the Ontario Tour Guide

Ken Jones

STAR RATING: 3 COMMENT: Ah Toby, if only I knew what you did without the photo title. I'm a huge fan of the visual standing by itself without need for words. Here, we don't get enough clues to know what's going on. I understand that the mic is important in this scenario, but I wish it weren't right in front of her mouth. Her eyes, though, are an important focal point. The strengths of the photo are its composition and unique camera angle. Also the complementary colors of the red of Toby's outfit and the cyan of the city background work well to create drama and richness in the photo.

Padre Trails Camera Club

Environmental Portrait - 4/16/25

Judged by: Mark Massy



Top Three Winners - Blue Group



First Place - Adrea at Wave Street Studios

Bill Brown



Second Place - Flower Vendor in Mexico

Carol Silveira



Third Place - Spring Branding

Carol Silveira

Winning Images Group Blue Honorable Mentions



*Nate Making Us Cry at
Paper Wing Theatre
Bill Brown*



*Indian Chef
Lillie Grossman*



*Parisian Cheesemaker Saying Cheese
for the Camera
Chris Johnson*

Padre Trails Camera Club

Environmental Portrait - 4/16/25 - Green Group Submissions

Judged by: Meredith Mullens



01-911 Fire Response

Karen Schofield

STAR RATING: 5 **COMMENT:** Wow. Right place. Right time. Outstanding execution. A perfect shot in many ways ... technically well done (exposure and focus) and a powerful choice of a subject with immediate impact. There is so much to look at in this image. The beauty and force of the flames. The range of tones and detail in the smoke. The perfect position of the two firefighters, where we can see the work of each one clearly (as well as the detail of their equipment, which is very interesting). Even the “decisive moment” captured where the front firefighter is raising his arm to speak. Bravo.



02-Actor Participating in Civil War Recreation

Carol Fuessenich

STAR RATING: 4 **COMMENT:** I love this shot. The subject is interesting and engaged in thought, as well as action, albeit just a sip of coffee. His pose is perfect, with raised hand and legs extended in a graphically interesting way (our friend the diagonal comes in the form of his front leg). That diagonal line is repeated in the line of the tent. The components of the environment give us great clues, from the tent to the shining old-fashioned drinking cup. The composition is good and technically, the exposure is OK, but it doesn't account for the range of light and shadows. I just want to better see the face of our star subject. An easy fix in post-production. Bring up the exposure slightly and bring up the shadows so that we can really see this grizzled face and the “civil war” clothes. Perhaps you want us to feel the coolness of the shade and that's one option. But for me, I find the subject so interesting that I want to see more. With these minor post-production changes, this photo will be outstanding.



03-Amanda, Beertender

Bill Shewchuk

STAR RATING: 4 **COMMENT:** A nice shot of Amanda. We can feel her personality and are definitely invited into the image to have a beer. The extended arm adds movement and depth to the photo. The exposure, focus, and composition are all solid. I love the detail of the background cabinet, with the neatly arranged bottles. And the contrast of the condiments, neatly arranged, on the counter. Maybe it's just the way Amanda smiles, but I can't help but feel that the smile is a little forced and the action a little staged/frozen. As an experiment, try cropping the sides so that just the cabinet in the back is showing. It brings us much quicker to Amanda and lets us focus on a “closed” scene, without the side distractions. The crop even, oddly, makes her smile better.



04-Carlos, Printmaker

Bill Shewchuk

STAR RATING: 4 **COMMENT:** This image has a very appealing palette. The muted greens, blues, and grays, with splashes of yellow, offer a unified and comforting environment. Because Carlos is “in action,” the moment seems very natural ... and engaging for that reason. His body position with outstretched arm and print roller give the viewer a pathway to move into the photo. Some might look first at the yellow roller and move up. Some might look first at the face and move down. Either way, there is wonderful movement in the photo. We get a good sense of personality through the dedicated look on the subject’s face, his clothes (jewelry and apron, hair) and his hands covered with paint (an artist at work). The details of the studio also add to the story. Technically well done re: exposure and focus and the use of diffused light. My only comment is the slight distraction of the wood leg on the right. I would like to see more of that or less because it is dominant in a space with not much else going on. It has the potential to take our eye off Carlos to a not very interesting part of the photo.



05-Carmel Street Musician

Karen Schofield

STAR RATING: 4 **COMMENT:** The spirit of street music lives on ... even in Carmel. An excellent capture of a moment. The B&W is a wise choice to allow a focus on the magic and timelessness of the scene. The exposure, depth of field, focus, and lighting are right on target, showing a full range of tones in glorious B&W. The composition is working well with the feeling of a narrow passageway and the diagonal bench and brick wall line leading us through the photo. The idea of an observer is an interesting addition, but this particular observer seems a bit stilted, as if frozen to the sidewalk unable to move his dangling arms. Get in the groove, buddy.



06-Diverting Carmel River at Flood Stage (1)
Jeff Hobbs

STAR RATING: 2 **COMMENT:** The difference between this image and the second version of this same subject/action is significant. Good for the photographer for exploring all the options of this interesting scene and subject. In this version, I get lost in the tangle of machines and workers. There is no clear “portrait” subject, nor is it clear exactly what they’re doing or why they’re there (title notwithstanding). The image is a bit overexposed, muting the colors and vibrancy. If I cut the image in half and use the right half, I get to a simpler composition, which works, although it still falls short of an “environmental portrait.” I like the rock formation, as well as the spectators popping up from the foliage in the right half simplified version. But, overall, let’s move on to #2.



07-Diverting Carmel River at Flood Stage (2)

Jeff Hobbs

TAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: Aha! This image is the one. The uniqueness of a vehicle pushing through the ocean is enough to draw anyone into this story. The position of the vehicle, the rising sand dune in the foreground that we have to climb to get into the story, and the beauty of the crashing wave in the background all work together to create drama and movement in an excellent composition. Even though the human subject is at a distance and a bit vague as a personality, I consider the vehicle AND the driver as the subject. We get a good understanding of what it takes to do this job. Partly because the photographer is shooting into the sun and partly because of a bit of overexposure, the colors and tones are muted. I suggest adding a touch of brilliance/saturation and contrast and underexposing just a tad to liven up the image.



08-Next King of the Cowboys

Sandie McCafferty

STAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: This is an image that springs to life with a mastery of the technical and an engaging subject. The lighting is beautiful, soft on the boy's face and ethereal highlighting the white hat and the top of the fence posts and the lasso. The on-target exposure and crisp focus add to the quality of the image, and the vibrant trees in the background provide added context. The only tiny criticism is that the lasso covers the boy's mouth/face. It's a problem for me, but one could argue that it's an intentional message that the boy and lasso are one personality.



09-Pouring a Beer

Brian Spiegel

STAR RATING: 3 COMMENT: Although blurred motion is not everyone's cup of tea, I find this image interesting for its mystery and hint of sensuality, augmented by the overall warm light cast to the photo. It is a "group" environmental portrait. The four characters in this story are all in their own worlds, each worth taking a longer look at to see what they're doing and who they are. A viewer will spend some time here, which is a goal for all our images. The grainy quality adds to the idea that we may have entered another era. I only wish the bright computer screen were not so dominant. It destroys some of the mood.



10-Pouring a Drink

Brian Spiegel

STAR RATING: 3 **COMMENT:** The action in this image is what will draw the viewers in, as they wonder what is in this giant bottle. The setting also is part of the story. The warm light, the sparkling glasses, the lines of bottles and the lovely arches in the bar's design add to the feeling of elegance and decadence at the same time. Kind of a speakeasy quality. The subject is just an ordinary human doing his job, neither more nor less interesting than the rest of us, but his focus on the job is an important part of this environmental portrait. The composition is a bit rogue, defying the guideline of thirds, but the interesting things in the right two thirds of the photo make up for putting the subject on left facing out of frame. The foreground candle is a nice touch for added depth and a connection to the warm color cast of the whole image. The blown highlights (no detail) in the lower right-hand cabinet, which makes this the brightest part of the image, has to go. It is overwhelmingly distracting. The fix is an easy crop, which actually makes the overall composition stronger.



11-Retired Leon Panetta Tilling his Walnut Orchard

Joni Zabala

STAR RATING: 4 **COMMENT:** No matter who this man is (and I personally greatly admire him), this shot definitely captures personality. We feel good just looking at this genuinely kind smile (which, interestingly, belies the depth and serious nature of his character if you know him). The tractor and the farm "blues" add clues to the story. A good exposure and effective use of depth of field to add depth to the photo, as the background falls out of focus. The contrast of the red of the tractor, the rich blues of the subject, and the lush green of the background is a lively addition to the image. Perhaps some extra saturation to make sure the red of the tractor pops? And it's too bad that part of the tractor structure is in competition with Leon's head. I wish it weren't.



12-Road Warrior in the Middle of Nowhere, NE Alaska

Sandie McCafferty

STAR RATING: 4 **COMMENT:** An interesting character to capture in an image. He is like a dancer with his body position and graceful grip and artistic tilt of the sign. Or is he just cold? The hair is the pièce de résistance. Love it ... and it gives us an additional clue to the weather challenges on a windy mountain road. The subject is slightly underexposed. I would suggest adding some exposure and definitely bringing up the shadows in the subject's face so we can see more detail. I understand why you included a segment of the car (as environmental clues), but it would be cool to crop it out and leave "Mr. Slow" alone on the road ... without context. "Waiting for Godot."



13-Supervisor Marciano Working QC for Pinot Harvest

Joni Zabala

STAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: A well-composed, thoughtful image of a wine harvest worker on the job. The shallow depth of field is particularly effective in this image so we really focus on the subject and those tiny grapes (who knew Pinot Noir grapes were so small?) The profile orientation and extended arms keep the viewer moving across the image. Only the title tells us more of the story ... that this politician is a man of the earth. Thus, that message does not come through here visually. But this is a solid image of a phase of the wine industry that is universally interesting.



14-The Accompanist

Charlie Gibson

STAR RATING: 2 COMMENT: I admit that if I hadn't read the title, I would not have known who the portrait subject was. The idea is brilliant and wonderfully timeless. But there is just too much going on here. I suggest cropping in tight on the screen and the organist, and, with such a crop, you'll get a few rows of heads to set the scene. That crop will make it clear what we are supposed to focus on. With that said, you exposed well for a difficult lighting situation.



15-Time for a Break

Carol Fuessenich

STAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: A moment of reflection in beautiful soft lighting. The variety of neutral/earth tones helps to set the stage. You almost smell leather and feel dusty looking at the image. This is another example of a true environmental portrait. We have so many details and clues to tell the story of this young woman. The saddle, the tractor, the wood structure, the clothes, the iconic cowboy hat, the boots, and, ultimately, the lasso. I feel as if the photographer spent time thinking about the setting and, while keeping the composition simple, provided only the most important clues to tell the story. Technically ... excellent exposure, a good use of an extended depth of field, and nice sharp focus. As an experiment, try cropping in tighter, eliminating the vertical on the right side and cropping in tighter to the left side. I understand why more space makes this a more contemplative moment, but cropping in tighter also makes for a strong photo.

Top Three Winners - Green Group



First Place - 911 Fire Response
Karen Schofield



**Second Place - Diverting Carmel
River at Flood Stage (2)**
Jeff Hobbs



**Third Place - Retired Leon
Panetta Tilling his Walnut
Orchard**
Joni Zabala

Honorable Mention - Green Group



*Actor Participating in Civil War
Recreation
Carol Fuesennich*



*Next King of the Cowboys
Sandie McCafferty*



*Carlos, Printmaker
Bill Shewchuk*



*Time for a Break
Carol Fuessenich*

Padre Trails Camera Club

Environmental Portrait - 4/16/25 - Red Group Submissions

Judged by: Meredith Mullens



01-Care to Try Our Chowder

Brooks Leffler

STAR RATING: 3 **COMMENT:** This image tells a Monterey Wharf story in an engaging way and presents a subject that invites the viewer in. Her outstretched arm not only provides depth to the photo, but also makes the viewer feel an important character of the photo as the recipient of the chowder sample. The red shirt is an added bonus, providing further drama/interest. I'm curious about her expression. It's a bit hard to read and I'm not sure she would be crazy about this particular moment chosen, but her personality is also revealed in her friendly eyes, wild hair and fingernails. The diffused lighting is perfect and is always flattering for a subject. Great exposure and focus. The composition seems a bit skewed in my opinion. I'd suggest more of the chowder vat and less of the right side detail (which distracts).



02-Charlie Brown Vacation

Rick Verbanec

STAR RATING: 3 **COMMENT:** You have captured the spirit of the subject in many ways. His smile, the placement of his hands, and, of course, the drained bottle of wine are all part of the story. Every element on the table is well placed, although I can't figure out why he's drinking good pinot out of that kind of glass. You handled a difficult lighting situation, exposing well, but having a few unflattering shadows on the face and a highlight spot on the nose as a result of shooting in direct sunlight. I like the layers in the photo, from the foreground reflections to the background foliage and the other folks relaxing in the distance. Often, we like to see the eyes of a subject, but here, the sunglasses fit the scene (and he would have been squinting without them). BTW, if your subject placed his hands, he is a natural. If you placed his hands, you're a true artist.



03-Coffee with Aileen

Andrea Madsen

STAR RATING: 3 **COMMENT:** This image is a wonderfully natural capture of a personality. It does not seem posed in any way, and yet every element works----the arm positions, the angle of her face, and a very natural smile. I like how the Dunkin' Donuts cup colors repeat the color of her shirt. And do the crumbs indicate that she just polished off a donut? I am distracted by the right side of the photo, particularly the little triangle of light peeking out. I would suggest cropping that side a bit. I also mention that her glasses are great pushed down to avoid reflections, but they cut her eyes in half when I would have wanted to see the whole of those friendly eyes.

Padre Trails Camera Club

Environmental Portrait - 4/16/25 - Red Group Submissions

Judged by: Meredith Mullens



04-Deep Fly to Right Dick Light

STAR RATING: 5 COMMENT: Wow. Absolutely outstanding in every way. It is so difficult to capture an instant such as this, especially seeing the expression and eyes of the boy, the eyes of the umpire, and the grace of the swung bat. Great focus, exposure, and composition. My only question is ... where the heck were you standing? In the infield?



05-Falconer

Rick Thau

STAR RATING: 3 COMMENT: What a great opportunity to capture such a unique subject. The ability to savor the details of the falcon and the falconer's glove (up close) pulls the viewer into the scene. Such a beautiful bird. Technically, the image seems a little overexposed and lacking in contrast. I would suggest bumping that up. I am also wondering if a different environmental setting might have been more effective. The cars in the background are distracting, and a natural setting might have created a different mood. Perhaps, though, you were going for a juxtaposition of urban vs the wilds, man vs nature, or "why CAN'T I train my falcon in a parking lot?"



06-Fish For Sale

Soaring Uyematsu

STAR RATING: 2 COMMENT: A true environmental portrait. A man at work surrounded by the elements of his job. I like that his face is reflected in the counter and that he seems boxed in by his fish/his job. However, because he is such a small part of the image and the lighting is not great, I can't get a sense of his details. I would have loved to have seen more of the foreground fish. Such intriguing colors, detail, and design. The "From Dock to Plate" signage is a great element. It may have been difficult, but could he have come closer to the counter and could you have perhaps repositioned the sign that is cut in half? Also I would have suggested moving him (well, really his reflection) away from that center counter line. The image is slightly underexposed, which can easily be fixed in post-production. We want to see the "whites" really white.



07-Gordon

David Eisen

STAR RATING: 3 COMMENT: Nothing says environmental portrait like the subject sitting “in” his job. A really nice image of an interesting character in a nicely designed environment. The composition is excellent and the soft light a bonus for a portrait. The image is a bit overexposed (in the background). (The dynamic range of a shadowed interior and a brighter background was a challenge.) Easy to fix in post-production by underexposing and pulling up the shadows in the subject so the background doesn't look so washed out. I would also suggest cropping the top just a bit to remove the sky light. That light could have the effect of inadvertently pulling viewers to the top of the photo.



08-Home Depot Coach

Soaring Uyematsu

STAR RATING: 2 COMMENT: The subject is interesting and the composition really gives a feeling of depth and of “place.” I love the range of warm colors in the cart, flags, and apron. However, the lack of focus is troublesome. I want to see the subject's face in focus as well as the hands and apron printing. (Although, I can't tell if this is the quality of the image file or a photographer focusing error.)



09-Lift Operator

Ilene Eisen

STAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: This is an excellent, natural environmental portrait. All technical elements are good---exposure, focus, and lovely diffused lighting. The subject's stance, although perhaps seemingly posed, feels very unposed -- showing the subject very much himself. The multiple diagonals make for a dynamic composition (the ceiling, the train, and the floor) all adding interesting movement to the image). The position of the subject slightly in violation of the guideline of thirds makes for a unique and more engaging photo (ordinarily he would be on the right-hand third with some space to move left).



10-Michael Gaines Bassist

Dick Light

STAR RATING: 3 **COMMENT:** A moving moment, where the passion of the music and the dedication of the musician can clearly be felt. The downward tilt of the head and eyes adds to the magic and mood. Technically well exposed, focused and lit. My only suggestion is that the clutter of technical equipment distracts from the purity and beauty of the scene. I would especially like to remove the wooden bars that ruin the graceful line of the scroll of the base. Would another angle have addressed these distractions?



11-Muscian at Work

Patti Gilbert

STAR RATING: 4 **COMMENT:** A great shot, full of mood and power. The composition is perfect, with the natural diagonal of the instrument keeping our eye moving. The crowning glory of the shot is the dramatic lighting, lo-key in feeling with the rich black background. My only hesitation in not calling this shot outstanding is the resolution, which is just a tad too pixelated. Probably a small file or an older iPhone. (I remember those days trying to get good concert shots. The phones just weren't up to the challenge). One might also quibble with some the highlights being blown out, but that doesn't bother me here. The image becomes more graphic design/impressionistic than documentary. It works.



12-PG Heritage Society Croquet Team

Brooks Leffler

STAR RATING: 4 **COMMENT:** This is just a fun image. It could have been a cliché shot of a group of friends or teammates, but the energy of the group and the artistic arrangement of the mallets makes it come alive. Great exposure and super sharp focus. Composition works well, except for that darn car on the left. I would suggest cropping in on the left to eliminate most of it so it doesn't draw the eye.



13-Sheep Herder

Jerry Loomis

STAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: To have the environmental portrait subject in action makes an image so much more engaging. So, this shot stands out. The main character is interesting. We don't see his face but the details of his clothes, gait, demeanor (and helpful dog) tell the story. The composition is good, with strong movement from left to right, but also pauses to study the individual sheep faces. The one sheep face on the right really keeps the viewer in the scene. Technically ...the focus is excellent but the significant underexposure does the image a great disservice. The full tonal range does not reach its full potential. Increase the exposure and perhaps bump up contrast and this image will be outstanding. I may be run out of town for awarding this image a place, but I can visualize it with the small post production tweaks.



14-Ski Patrol

Ilene Eisen

STAR RATING: 4 COMMENT: It's always a pleasure to see folks enjoying their job. This is the definition of an environmental portrait, the ski patrol whizzing through their snowy environment. A technically excellent shot, with sharp focus even with the movement and good exposure of snow (which is often hard to do because meters tend to underexpose snow). I would suggest re: composition that the verticals be straightened (the trees and white pole). And I find myself wishing that the tips of the skis were included.



15-Tank Museum Docent

Rick Verbanec

STAR RATING: 2 COMMENT: What an interesting environment and character. I wouldn't expect anyone else to be a docent at a tank museum. He checks all the boxes. I get a good sense of his personality, with his facial expression and clothes. A plus in the composition is having the tank in the foreground. Really adds depth to the photo. The minus is the chopped off arm. Technically, the image seems muted (overexposed). I would suggest underexposing in post-production. The other nagging issue with all those who wear glasses ... is how to eliminate the reflections. Here, the reflection detracts from the subject.



16-The Glass Blower

Andrea Madsen

STAR RATING: 4 **COMMENT:** A great action shot of subject at work in an interesting profession. The composition is interesting with the diagonal of the fire and his arm keeping the movement active. The foreground showing some of his work and other tools is also effective. Technically, the movement has been well captured. For me, the image is slightly muted. Just a bit of underexposing in post-production and perhaps bumping up contrast and brilliance would make the shot nicely dramatic.



17-Weaver

Jerry Loomis

STAR RATING: 4 **COMMENT:** A lovely shot, full of color and culture. The angle of the shot is effective in bringing depth and movement to the photo ... inviting the viewer into the story. I love how her clothes are as colorful as we might imagine the finished weaving. Technically excellent. Compositionally, I find the legs in the background distracting. They also suggest to me that this might have been a tourist stop rather than a natural discovery. Without the legs, I can imagine that she was a stumbled upon treasure.

Padre Trails Camera Club

Environmental Portrait - 4/16/25

Judged by: Meredith Mullens



Top Three Winners - Red Group



*First Place - Deep Fly to Right
Dick Light*



*Second Place - Sheep Herder
Jerry Loomis*



*Third Place - Lift Operator
Ilene Eisen*

Honorable Mention - Red Group



Musician at Work
Patti Gilbert



The Glass Blower
Andrea Madsen



PG Heritage Society Croquet Team
Brooks Leffler