

Northbridge/Castlecrag PHOTO COMPETITION 2016:
“Art in Nature”
Presentation Sunday August 28

The entries came to the judges anonymously. They were numbered and titled, and viewed by the judges on their respective computers so that they were able to view them independently and make personal notes.

Judging

There were three judges: Andrew Mason, film producer; Val Gomm, ceramicist; and Antoinette McSharry, visual artist. They met on the evening of Monday 15 August to view and judge all entries: 94 in the ‘Adult’ category and 8 in the ‘Youth’ category. Rev. Yangrae kindly undertook to manage all technical aspects of the event.

The judges viewed all the entries on the large screen once, while making notes. All entries were numbered but the entrants’ names remained unknown to the judges.

The entries were then shown again and discussed, and by a process of elimination we arrived at 6 winners for the ‘Adults’ and 2 for ‘Youth’.

Technical aspects of the photos, while taken into consideration, were not of paramount importance.

The criteria focused on the following aspects:

- Is the theme of “Art in Nature” respected in the photo, either literally or metaphorically?
- How does the photo’s overall composition work, and how do the various elements ‘sit’ within the frame?
- Does the photo have emotional appeal?
- Does the photo ‘speak’ to you, whether or not you can identify with the subject matter?
- Does the photo tell a story?

And now to the clever and lucky winners:

In the Adult Category:

Commended No. 44: “Window on Outlook”

The composition of a moss-covered figure sculpted in a resting position in a natural setting evokes a feeling of peace and tranquillity. However, it also raises interesting questions: what is the figure doing in the park? What message is it trying to convey?

A well positioned photograph, a sight to behold.

It is a literal response to the theme, taken at a good angle and the framing manages to make it difficult to be certain of the scale.

Congratulations to Gladys Blake

Commended No. 81: “Sri Lankan Sunrise”

This image derives power from the severe contrast between the uniform amber of the sky and water, and the deep black of the foreground branches. And the solitary bird perched on the stick. This kind of image is often the result of laborious work with woodcut techniques – and yet here it is in nature.

The light which is captured showcases the wonder and peace of this special place.

Congratulations to Sam Wyper

Highly Commended No. 4: “Autumn in Blackheath”

As is often the case, the good image can be found by confining our view to a small part of the world, and choosing the right time of day to take the shot. The overall aspect is almost abstract. These plants of bizarre colour are a reminder of the visual excitement to be found in nature, when we take the trouble to take a really careful and loving look.

Congratulations to Nancy Axe

3rd Place: No 39 : “Entwined”

Art in Nature in an even more abstract presentation. We see muted natural tones, texture and line. A great example of how framing and lighting changes the way we see an object. These overlapping and entwined roots, or branches, start to acquire the look of human limbs when isolated from their context.

Congratulations to Caroline Del Aguila

2nd Place No 52: “Early Morning Dew”

This is a classic example of a photographer looking carefully and attentively and so finding an artistic creation in a particular slice of nature. It focuses our attention on the beauty of the shading, the apparent oddness of the shapes and the subtle play of light. We must use our imagination to interpret what we are being shown. It is a perfectly balanced composition and full of interest.

Congratulations to Mi-Yong Son

1st Place No 72: “A Seal Painting”

With echoes of the impressionists and the radiating swirl of oily colours, this beautifully framed and timed shot shows us just how frequently human concepts of art are a reflection of closely observed events in nature. The clever echoing of shapes and colours in the reflections add to the movement of the swimmer in the foreground. Truly fitting the subject of “Art in Nature”.

Congratulations to Susan Peake

Youth Entries

There were fewer entries in this category than in previous years. As a result we have only 2 prizes:

2nd Prize No. 8: “Nelson Bay Shell”

What could have been just a pretty but unremarkable view becomes a delightful work of art, and a representation of the feeling of the time and place – rather than a documenting of it.

Shells are truly Art in Nature. It is possible to feel the photographer's discomfort while lying on the wet sand in order to capture this image. Quite adventurous!
Congratulations to Rowan Lord

1st Prize No 4: "A Painted World"

Some clever camera work has produced a beautiful photograph of movement and texture while still revealing a natural background. The monochrome is striking, and is another example of shot selection introducing mystery and delight and allowing us to dream ourselves into another space.
Congratulations to Jackson Denneen

We now have a **surprise** : we have created an **Encouragement Prize** for our youngest ever competitor: all of 7 years old, for his photograph No 1: "Bird and Statue". This young photographer took the photo entirely by himself and has a great love for nature. This shot is another which exploits contrast for dramatic effect - and (I guess because the photographer is smaller) the angle is stronger than the normal view would be.
Congratulations to Lewis Ryan!!