

Humans in Nature: New Vision at the Art in Nature Photo Festival

By Kristie Clattenburg

The Art in Nature Photo Festival is one of my favorite events we put on at the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, Salisbury University. As a hobbyist photographer, I love seeing all the photos come through and photographers putting themselves out there for the community to appreciate their art. When I picked Andy Warhol to feature as the pop-up exhibit during the festival, many people asked why. Why Andy Warhol at the Ward Museum?

Andy Warhol was a master at capturing the human animal. Much like people today, who are constantly posting their lives on social media, Warhol was fascinated by humans' everyday lives. Elizabeth Kauffman, our keynote speaker and the director of Salisbury University Art Galleries and associate professor of art, explained Warhol most likely would have enjoyed the use of Facebook and Instagram. Warhol utilized Polaroids to capture his subjects, many of whom were famous humans, to make silkscreens of their likenesses, but he also captured photos of his everyday life, much like we do today.

Andy Warhol relates to a nature photography contest because he was innovative in his approach to understanding human behavior through this medium – and humans are part of nature. We enjoy it, explore it, destroy it, exploit it, try to fix it, observe it, modify it and live in it. We build habitats for ourselves, grow food and try to preserve natural places. We try to replicate nature, not just in an art form, but in ways that will improve our everyday lives.

Harrison Ford said, "Nature doesn't need people – people need nature; nature would survive the extinction of the human being and go on just fine, but human culture, human beings, cannot survive without nature." Taking this mindset into consideration, we decided to highlight other aspects of photography in the contest. Technology has evolved, and so has the competition.

We examined the human animal through Andy Warhol's eyes, and through your eyes. The ninth annual Art in Nature Photo Festival, held

August 9-11, 2019, saw the creation of two new categories: Humans in Nature and Nature vs. Man. Humans in Nature was included as a new print category, while Nature vs. Man was our first ever online category. This evolution gave the competition a larger reach, with entries coming from as far as France. We had 916 entries from 153 photographers. Competitors enjoyed lectures, workshops and classes during the three-day event. Our judges this year were Edwin Remsberg, Andrew Tawes, Alan Wycheck and Brian Zwit. Judging took place Saturday night after the Museum closed for the day.

The 2019 Grand Champion was Jerry amEnde from Wilmington, DE, with his photo *Help Me*. Peggy Udinski of Ocean View, DE, received the Best in Division for Professionals with her photo *Snake and Dragonfly*, and Jerry amEnde also claimed the title Best in Division for Amateurs with his photo *Gray Ghost*. Riley Watson of Salisbury, MD, claimed the Best in Division for the Youth: Bill Wallen Memorial Award, with his photo *A Walk in the Woods*. The public, both in person and on social media, chose Russell Taylor III of Laurel, DE, for People's Choice with *Hunter's Innocence*. Online, Viewer's Choice was again Russell Taylor with *Green Machine*.

Thank you to all who participated, attended and volunteered their time! July 10-12, 2020, marks the 10th annual Art in Nature Photo Festival. Watch to see how the contest continues to evolve as we examine ways to improve not just the categories, but the festival experience. We hope to see you, and your photos there!



Professional photographers and the 2019 Art in Nature judges during judging. From left: Andrew Tawes, Edwin Remsberg, Brian Zwit and Alan Wycheck.



Standing next to the 2019 winning photos, professional photographer Bill Whaley of Hurlock, MD, discusses his winning photos with judge and professional photographer Brian Zwit.



The Championship Gallery is lined with hundreds of photos submitted to the Art in Nature Photo Contest.



Photos submitted for the contest.



Elizabeth Kauffman, director of Salisbury University Art Galleries and associate professor of art, gives the keynote address on the pop-up exhibit *The Everyday Life of Andy Warhol*.