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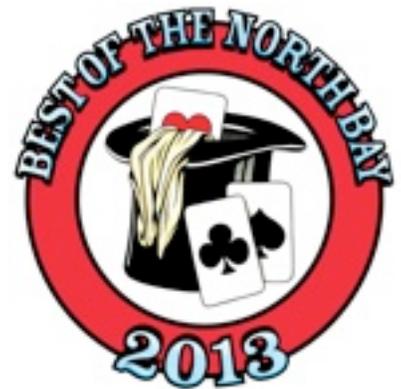
## THE GALLERY'S CURRENT SHOW THROUGH MAY 5

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### BOHEMIAN'S 2013 BEST GALLERY AWARD

You've honored us again--the 6th  
consecutive year of being voted the  
top gallery by the general public!

A heartfelt *Thanks!* from us all.



### THE CURRENT SHOW

#### **"Showin' On The River!"** JURIED PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW

Missed it? There's still time! Now in its second and final month, the juried show features 35 Bay Area photographers, with subjects as unusual as Leslie Curchack's ice crystals in a High Sierra stream bed, as beautiful as Robert Dweck's long exposure at twilight of the Golden Gate Bridge, and as creative as Linda Caldwell's abstract reshaping of her original images.

For this April coverage of the juried show, we will feature landscapes done using the high dynamic range technique, which has become a standard approach for many. Thus this issue and the show offer viewers an opportunity to become familiar with high dynamic range images. On the following pages, we will explain what the technique is and why it is used.

#### **CALL FOR ENTRIES** **"Showin' On The River!" Fine Art Show**

PAINTING DRAWING PRINT-MAKING  
MIXED MEDIA PASTELS ENCAUSTIC INK  
All Two-dimensional Artwork (except photography)

For downloadable guidelines and entry form,  
go to the lefthand menu on Riverfront's website.  
Scroll down to and click on Call For Entries. Save the guidelines pdf.

**Entry deadline: June 1**

## “Showin’ On The River!” THIRD ANNUAL JURIED PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW

### High Dynamic Range (HDR) In The Show

It was eye-opening to realize that nearly half of the landscape images in the photography show were shot using the high dynamic range (HDR) technique. Thus it seems reasonable to highlight this approach, and to explain what it does and why it is used.

But first, put yourself in this scenario. You stand on the shore, the blue waters spreading before you, a fiery sky arrayed above you. You literally gasp, “This is so beautiful!” You pull out your camera to capture the moment in its full glory. Then, when you first see the image on your monitor or as a print, disappointment sets in. The color is more muted than you remember, and the overall image just seems *flat*. Why? Because the range of light (and therefore the colors) has been condensed, the contrast squeezed out and diminished

Let’s be honest. Even today’s marvelous cameras are not able to capture the full range of light in a scene. Beyond that, film-developing processes, scanners, computer monitors, and printers each have their own specific limitations to the range of light/color they can produce. We assume the camera gives us “reality”, but what we get is not at all likely to be what we actually saw. These equipment limitations alter the contrast and tonal range in an image. Colors themselves get changed. Similar colors get scrunched into a single tint or shade. Often colors valid on one piece of equipment simply can’t be produced on another.

Given the frustrations created by the devices we use, photographers have always tried to hedge their bets to get the “best” exposure and to create prints that improve upon what came out of the camera. Ansel Adams famously produced dozens of versions of an image in his darkroom, trying to get it the way he wanted it. It was common practice with film to take three different exposures of a scene (bracketing the exposure) in an effort to get the “best” exposure, which still isn’t the full range of light in the scene. Today, it is easier developing images digitally, of course. We can, to some extent, alter the exposure, but still not reach the full range of light and color in the original scene.

So along comes high dynamic range. In this approach, photographers take multiple shots, each with the exposure adjusted to the specific area of the scene the shot is emphasizing. For example,

one shot for the shadows, one for the bright areas, and one or two for the middle tones--so that each portion of the image is more properly exposed. The intent is then to create a single image from the combined photographs. The combining of the photographs can be done by hand, but is more efficiently done by a computer program. The results can vary from a subtle glow in a forest to high saturation and vivid colors.

We asked a professional who works with HDR to clarify what HDR actually does. He responded that, when several exposures of the same scene are merged, the software ensures that the images are accurately aligned and then “takes the highlights from the shortest exposure, the shadows from the longest exposure, and various tonal ranges from the exposures in between.” This returns the lighting in the scene back to a more normal relationship between the darker and lighter areas and a more natural range of colors overall--something the camera was not able to capture correctly.



*Branch of Light*

Robert Bowman

So let’s look at the HDR photographs in the show. Robert Bowman’s photo, *Branch of Light*, taken on the grounds of Paradise Ridge Winery in Santa Rosa, is a fine example. Robert says, “The image is composed of three exposures. I also used an f16 aperture to get the effect I wanted for the sun and the correct depth of field.”

Why was HDR a good choice for Robert’s image? We all know that a bright light can cause the shadows in a scene to be rendered as dark areas, sometimes with no detail whatever, when in reality there was plenty of detail and good color. With a single shot, the tree would have been much darker

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High Dynamic Range, continued:

and with probable loss of detail. The bright sunset colors and grass would likely have been more muted.

In *Barney Lake*, Michael Shea used HDR to ensure that the shadowed side of his early morning image did not get lost.



*Barney Lake*

Michael Shea

*Marsh Sunset*

Bob Gingg



Bob Gingg loves “the natural beauty of colors and textures that occur from the different seasons and weather patterns here in the Bay Area.” Reason enough to go to HDR. Note the increased three-dimensionality in the clouds due to better contrast in his *Marsh Sunset*. Seeing the clouds and going to McInnis Park where he and his wife often walk, Bob explains, “I took 5 raw images on a tripod at +2, +1, 0, -1, -2EV.” He then used software to combine the photographs into a single, colorful image.

Improved color range and contrast are one benefit of HDR, but photographers are not limited simply to more accurate documentation. HDR allows for an individual interpretation of the scene as well.

Ben stein can be counted on to bring the full beauty of his subjects to life. In his idyllic Bell Vista, HDR enabled him to give the vineyard a three-dimensional effect and to emphasize the fall colors.



*Bell Vista*

Benjamin Stein

In general, it is the exposure that is changed between shots, however, Joe DiGregorio has come up with a variation on the theme. With *Point Arena Lighthouse*, he explains that he uses HDR’s multiple photographs at different exposure levels to more “accurately capture the range of color and intensity levels not visible to a single-image shot.” He is willing to share his “trade secrets” with us as well.



*Point Arena Lighthouse*

Joe DiGregorio

“In addition,” Joe says, “I am able to give the final image a “painted” look by 1) shooting the multiple photographs over a finite period of time (usually

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High Dynamic Range continued.

about 10 to 30 seconds), 2) shooting scenes in which there is some, but not a lot of movement (e.g. waterfalls, ocean waves, clouds, grass, trees, bushes, plants, etc.), and 3) using a very low f-stop on the camera (usually at 5.6).” To further the sense of texture, Joe likes to print on canvas.

As hinted previously, HDR can lead to freer, more artistic renditions of images, not just the augmented color that Ben does well or the multiple approaches fused together that Joe does, but HDR can also push the scene to new levels of interpretations, as we see with Clyde Thomas’s images.

As a fire investigator with the Petaluma Fire Department, Clyde has photographed much of the city in documentary mode. With the HDR technique, he now interprets the city artistically, giving life to the colors in Petaluma River Turning Basin and capturing in American Alley the grungy feel of our less frequented passageways.



Above: *Petaluma River Turning Basin*

At left: *American Alley*

Both by Clyde Thomas

At right:  
*The Pool at St. Regis*

Merrill Mack

Now let’s continue with a review of other aspects of the juried photography show that were not covered in the March issue.

### A Look At Trees

It is always interesting to observe how a given subject is handled by various artists. With seven photographers dealing with trees as a subject or main feature of their image, we can consider how they differ in approach.



*Morning Fog*

Rawls Frazier

Rawls Frazier has produced an evocative black and white image with the glow of light being dispersed through fog contrasting with the backlit tree and leaves. In *Morning Fog*, we can almost feel the softness of cool air.

Giving her romantic image, *The Pool at St. Regis*, a hand-tinted look, Merrill Mack has produced a delicately-tone, nearly monochromatic work in blues and greens and a touch of white and pink. There is a decidedly nostalgic feel to this treatment, where the dark trees and plants frame the elegant pool.



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Invoking a different nostalgic tone with his semi-sepia-toned *Bouverie Oaks*, Bob Alwitt, a docent at Bouverie Preserve in Glen Ellen, shot his much-loved trees while wandering amid them with his wife and grandson. He says, “I try to capture in a photograph the sense of place that I feel.”



*Bouverie Oaks*

Bob Alwitt

Giving us very much a sense of subject in *A Hole in One*, Scott Williams presents us with a picture of tenacity and resilience through this old oak, scarred and broken through, bent to the ground, but still beautiful in its form and in its determination.



*A Hole in One*

Scott Williams

Michael Shea’s *Pine Against Rock* also celebrates the tenacity and beauty of his chosen subject, rooted as it is in solid rock, fragile, fleeting yet a dynamic life against the impassiveness of its host.

Robert Gilbert, no longer able to get around easily, says, “I find beauty and wonder literally at my feet or within a very short distance. I have discovered intimate and glorious worlds that most people never perceive.” His closeup of curling bark in *Manzanita I* allows us to appreciate the richness of color as well as the quirky form of manzanita bark.



*Manzanita I* Robert Gilbert



*Blue Vessels* (on aluminum) Barbara Bally

In *Blue Vessels*, Barbara Bally has undoubtedly submitted the most unusual image. She explains, “It’s a reflection of trees on the back of my car. I volunteer at the Marin Humane Society and as I was getting into my car I noticed the trees above were reflected in the back window and on the trunk. I thought it was lovely and looked like a collage with blood vessels. I think the image lends itself to a metallic surface, so I have printed it on aluminum.”



*Elongated Bamboo*

Norm Catalano

The silky fluidity in *Elongated Bamboo* is due to Norm Catalano’s use of in-camera motion during the exposure of the subject. Edges soften, colors tend to blend, and the (in this case) vertical is emphasized, giving the image an abstract appeal.



*Pine Against Rock*

(printed on fabric with cherry dowels)

Michael Shea