

Photons September 2022 Photo Contest
“Summer Vibes”

Rusty Patch Bumble Bee 6.5

I love macro, so this really appeals to me! I love the bokeh in pastel colors for the background with the flower and bumble bee being in focus. With bees moving around a lot it can be challenging to get an image with an eye - good job. Good exposure and colors.

Since the bumble bee is facing to the right, you might consider having more space on the right to allow the bee to fly into the frame.

Hard at Work 8.0

Great job with positioning the bumble bee on the upper 1/3 line horizontally and capturing the eyes. Focus is sharp on the insect capturing the details of the bee. You got the focal plane on the bee, forward of the flower, which nicely separates the subject from the flower. the background is nicely blurred. Good colors and exposure.

I might have backed out a little bit to capture more of the flower, but the close-up of the bumble bee is well done.

Aphrodite Fritillary 8.25 - Third Place

A beautiful butterfly! You did a nice job with the branch flowing from lower left to upper right and the antenna and head of the butterfly are sharp. I really like the plain background color which sets off the butterfly and the flowers. Colors are rich and the lighting feels natural. Overall feel is very ‘summery’.

Next time you get a chance to photograph this, consider shifting your position so the head of the butterfly is not lined up with the flower behind it - I had to really look to see the butterfly’s head since it is lost a bit in that flower. There are mixed opinions about using content aware fill or cloning to fill in the damaged wing tip. I tend to favor presenting the true nature of the butterfly but it may be worth experimenting with this editing feature to see if it would improve the image. (No points lost for this, just an observation.)

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The Chase 7.5

Both runners are in focus and you did a great job capturing their facial expressions as they run. There is also a good sense of motion with the lead runner's feet both off the ground. I can almost feel the exertion by both of them. Good lighting, color balance and exposure. The story telling aspects makes me wonder if #21 is about pass and that keeps me in the image.

I would consider shifting the runners so they have more space in front of them to run into the image and think about some editing of distracting elements in the background. For example, the black marks in the grey behind the runner's leg could be easily removed and the overall background softened a bit to emphasize the runners more.

Bee's Summer Job 8.5 - Second Place

Nice straight on image of the bee capturing both eyes. Great job getting the focus on the bee and tack sharp on the head and wings. That can be difficult to do given how much these insects flutter around as they pollenate flowers. I really like the soft bokeh. Good color balance, lighting, and exposure. I like the way you positioned the bee and flower in the image, good use of rule of thirds.

The bee's backend tends to fade a bit into the background color and perhaps shifting your position to place the insect against the pedal of the flower would help to draw emphasis to the bee (but I know from experience this can be incredibly difficult!).

Lake Swim 6.0

The sharp focus on the competitor on the left helps to mitigate the busyness of this image. The use of freeze motion capturing the water droplets in the air coupled with the body positions conveyed motion and effort nicely. The color of the water and freeze motion almost make me feel the moisture. The “tri” on the caps nicely helps tells the story of a triathlon.

Photographing this scene from a different location that allowed you to get the swimmer's faces in the image would really help. The large, triangular orange object (a sail?) is distracting. Next time try eliminating the sky and have the top of the image be the tree line in the distance and play with the shadows to see if lifting them a bit would add emphasis to the competitors.

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Sailing through Summer 9.0 - First Place

A wonderful image that captures the theme of “summer vibes”. Your capture of the boat emerging from the fog or sea smoke which appears to be drifting the left while boat moves to the right creates a sense of motion. The overall pastel pallet, use of rule of thirds for vertical boat placement, lighting and color balance are all well done. My eye is drawn to the person sitting just forward of the mast enjoying a summer sail which helps me create a wonderful story about sailing through summer.

While I like the portrait orientation given the height of the boat’s mast, I wonder if a landscape orientation would help provide more space for the sail boat to move into the image. And I might consider cloning the yellow flag out since it tends to draw my eye away from the overall sailing experience.