

For immediate release

the EPSON international photographic

pano awards

PRESS RELEASE

Winners announced!

The EPSON International Pano Awards 2012

Professional and amateur photographers around the world were invited to enter *The EPSON International Pano Awards* to compete for over \$30,000 in cash and prizes.

The Third Epson International Pano Awards is dedicated to the art of panoramic photography. It showcases the work of panoramic photographers worldwide and is the largest competition for panoramic photography.

This year there were 3,853 entries from 893 photographers in 55 countries.

Prizes included an Epson Stylus Pro 7900 printer, an Epson Stylus Pro 4900 printer, an Epson EB-1775 Ultra-Slim Projector and US\$5000 cash!

Craig Heckenberg, Business Unit Manager at Epson Australia says, 'It's great to see such incredibly creative photography and the truly outstanding images that are entered each year in the EPSON International Pano Awards. As the premier photographic printer company Epson is proud to be associated with this annual competition that showcases excellence in panoramic photography from around the world.'

The overall winner of the Open Competition was **Craig Bill** of the USA with his stunning image of an intense storm over the Texas-New Mexico border, called 'Tempest'.



Craig says, 'Every once in a while, I get away for a night by camping at one of my favorite quick getaway spots. This night I decided to drive an hour to camp at a little group of sand dunes on the New Mexico - Texas border. As I was driving, I did notice some small local thunderstorms forming in the distance. I did not think much of it as there has been a terrible one hundred year drought gripping this part of the United States. Most storms and rain just defuse before much happens. As I watched this storm concentrate into a tight, nicely shaped thundercloud after sunset, the lightning began. This storm was not all that big, but it made up for it in intense electrical energy and light that was just incredible.'

'I set up my camera but did not think that much would come of the images because most lightning photos in the past just lacked timing, shape, composition, and drama. I was in luck, as this storm was highly concentrated so that the lightning was not all over the sky, but in a very specific area. My friends and colleagues knew after all these years that I wanted a great storm and lightning shot. In fact, several months before, a friend bought me a device that hooks up to your camera just to catch lightning bursts. I was excited to finally use it in a possible successful image, but was frustrated to see that the batteries were dead from me not turning the device off before storage! So I decided to try another approach. I set up my camera with the lens manually at infinite focus (since it was so dark to auto focus), and zoomed all the way to the horizon. If the storm had been any further away, my zoom would have given out (luck there again). I noticed the lightning bursts were every ten to twenty seconds. I used the "Bulb" setting for manual shutter release and remotely began opening, counting to around twenty and then closing the shutter. I also knew that if I left the shutter open for more than this span of time at this zoom, the stars around the storm would start to streak too much for my hopeful composition. Any lightning caught in that time frame signaled me to stop the exposure and start another. In this way I was able to catch enough outrageous lightning bursts, stars, illuminated clouds and finally the moon that I could hardly wait till morning to explore the results. After about an hour, the storm lost its gusto and disintegrated while others in the distance gained strength.'

'"Tempest" is an image that records an atmospheric and celestial event over a two hours time span (counting the moonrise). Most of the image, the storm and lightning, took only fifteen to twenty minutes to catch. "Tempest" fuses these various dynamic elements into one photograph - like a time-lapse. The entire images' time span had to be fairly tight as the processing challenge was to keep motion minimal. For example, the storm was constantly changing shape and sweeping to the right, while the stars had their own plans for racing upward.'

'I love photography especially because it can be an engine to capture our world in ways that, humanly, we cannot. For example, our eyes have limitations that allow us to "see" in a certain wavelength of light or only in instant time frames. However, by using different tools of cameras, filters, time, light, and patience I hope to share images that we can not easily or not at all experience directly with our own eyes, such as in "Tempest".'

Peter Blakeman of Australia was the runner-up in the Open competition, with his clever use of movement in a panorama with his image of the 2010 World Cup Track Cycling in Melbourne, Australia.



Peter recalls, 'After being told my accreditation did not include the Velodrome trackside because I was not with the Top Agency, I had no choice to search for a better image. I am never too impressed when I am excluded from areas even though I am accredited media. This image came about by standing in a position once again unavailable to media however I managed to get a few shots before being requested to move on. In my imagery I try to combine action, plus art to create a sport image like no other.'

The overall winner of the Amateur competition was **Sergey Semenov** of Russia, with his incredible aerial perspective of Central Park in New York City.



Sergey says, 'My first conscious acquaintance with photography happened in 2003 when a 1.3 Mp digital simple hand-held camera appeared in my hands. I was highly impressed by the ability to view the results on the screen! After that I became a fan of photography and gave it all my free time. Although I graduated from University with an honors degree in the sphere of International Economy and I am still working at that sphere as a consultant, photography took my heart forever.'

'The inexpressible romanticism and beauty of the secluded corners of Northern America National Parks, Patagonia's mountains, glacial lagoons of Iceland, sand of the Sahara, and the jungles of Brazil are the sources of my inspiration. I also like big cities with their attractiveness and energy. New York is

something special for me. I've been there several times and just love it. Probably because of my feelings I could take some of my best photos there!

Anita Erdmann of Canada was the runner-up in the Amateur competition, with her beautiful and gentle image of Yellowstone National Park covered in snow.



Anita recalls, 'The image of, 'The Lone Tree, Yellowstone', was taken on a cold, wintery, March morning at Canyon Junction in Yellowstone National Park. This was our first morning in Yellowstone National Park, our small group of photographers were the only people in that part of the park that morning... Yellowstone is so isolated and untouched during the winter months that it can feel like you are completely alone. We were surrounded by pristine, untouched snow and in the distance was a solitary tree on the hillside, surviving another harsh winter. I was inspired to photograph this lone tree, for it is just one example of how resilient and beautiful our untouched natural places can be. It was photographed using Nikon equipment.'

The VR/360 competition winner was **Eric Herrmann** with a highly polished action image called 'The Chase'. The full immersive version can be viewed on the website www.thepanoawards.com



Eric says, "The Chase' was born out of a desire to create something that would not only push the boundaries of the type and quality of 360/VR work being done, but also challenge my own photographic

and retouching skill sets. Taking inspiration from a handful of movies, 'The Chase' is as much about the story behind the image as it is about a cinematic visual. Seeing this project evolve from a few words written on scratch paper to the final 360 image has been a very rewarding experience. I'd like to thank all of the friends and crew that helped make that experience a reality.'

Thanks to **Epson Australia**, this year also saw the repeat of the highly popular display of highest scoring and winning images, this time held in Melbourne, May 25-27 at 'The Digital Show', and visited by more than 30,000 people.



The judging panel includes some of the world's top panoramic photographers and industry professionals, including members of the IAPP and IVRPA.

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For enquiries and more information, or to become a media partner, contact:
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Images are available for media publication on request.

