

The World Through my eyes

A Photography Competition

for people with familial dysautonomia



History

The *World Through My Eyes* photography competition began in 2009 when we set the challenge for people with familial dysautonomia to tell the story of how it feels to live with this rare genetic disease in a single image.

The disorder affects the development of the nervous system. Children grow up in a world without the ability to sense their bodies. They lack many of the normal processes that we take for granted including the ability to feel pain, temperature and regulate their internal organs.

Each year, the submissions are taken to an independent panel of artists and art collectors who select winners in different artistic categories and decide the leading prize shot.

Now in its 10th year, the *World Through My Eyes* photography competition helps people with familial dysautonomia tell their story of how it feels to live in a world without sensation.

A message from our Chair

Every year is a surprise, every year is a challenge for our eyes and for our brains to be part of this event. It is fascinating to leave aside our mechanism of appreciation of art and open in ourselves an uncharted territory of sensibility.

Nelba Valenzuela (28th, May 2019)

2019 Jury Members



Nelba Valenzuela (Chair)

Nelba Valenzuela is the founder of Spotte Art and a curator of contemporary art and design exhibitions. Her mission is to support young upcoming Latin American artists.



Aimé Iglesias Lukin

Aimé Lukin is a PhD candidate focusing on contemporary Latin American art. She was selected as the 2017-2018 Chester history Fellow at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Sabrina Merayo Nuñez

Sabrina Merayo Nuñez is a celebrated artist who specializes in biological art. Her work has received numerous awards and artist residency scholarships.



Álvaro Enrigue, PhD

Álvaro Enrigue is an award-winning Mexican novelist and Professor of creative writing with a PhD in Latin American Literature. His book Sudden Death received the Herralde Prize.



Nazarena Febrero

Nazarena Febrero trained as an architect and specializes in European contemporary industrial design from Denmark and Italy.



Rafael Bueno (Founding-Chair)

Rafael Bueno is an art collector and painter. His paintings have been exhibited in New York, Miami, Paris, Buenos Aires and Uruguay.

Overall Winner

Diana Esparza - "My Hair"



This year's winner of the *World Through My Eyes Photography Competition* was 8-year old Diana Esparza.

Diana's close up composition has an unusual orientation. Shot from above, something that should be horizontal is now vertical. The simple forms become like a Brancusi sculpture. She appears dressed in black, which adds a sadness.

From the image, she looks to have short hair, yet she frames the picture like she has long hair. As the photo runs to the right there is more and more hair. This creates levels of hair; the lashes, the brows, the combed hair. The true depth to the pictures lies in her ability to tell her story. As a young child, Diana lost her hair. Now it is growing back. This powerful symbolism within the image that she took herself was why she was chosen as the overall winner in 2019.

Runner up

Kamila Loera Gaytan - "Family portrait"



The 2019 Runner Up Prize was awarded to Kamila, who is 6 years old and lives in Mexico. The moment you look at Kamila's photograph, you learn a lot. Conceptually, she first marks the occasion with a colorful cake, and then defines the roles of the people on either side.

The purposeful symmetrical image centers on the cake. The frame is edited and the photo cropped to cut down her family members, reducing them to two bodies that are there, but not there. There is a tumbling blackberry, which adds a small imperfection to the moment. There are elements of British Pop in her family portrait.

Travel Perspective Category Winner

Yonatan Roytman - "Way"



Yonathan's image with its perspective and lines takes you along endless roads. The interesting angle creates a nerve-wracking moment, as the roads disappear around a sharp turn. Meanwhile, the blue-sky contrasts with the texture of the road.

The continuation of the lines speaks to the continuity of life, as they pass through space, past the lake and into the unknown. It's about circuits. The focus is low down, which creates a complicated spot to begin a sentence. You have to be there. The message says that it will be difficult, but there will be a way.

Life Photography Award

Sharon Profesorske- "Life writes in the hands"



Channa is in the picture. The more you see the more you feel. All we need to see is present in the two hands. Chana has child-like hands, with stunted growth, thickly clubbed nails from lung disease, and scars from repeated injuries. She's coloring cartoons with her fingers clasped around a marker pen. The hand of her sister has painted nails, and educated grip and holds a pencil.

It is within these contrasts that we see something of a choreography between the two. We become interested in the contrasts, instantly recognizing the honesty, that draws attention their capabilities. The simple image is a reminder of companionship, differences, and how much we see in the hands.

Nature Photography Winner

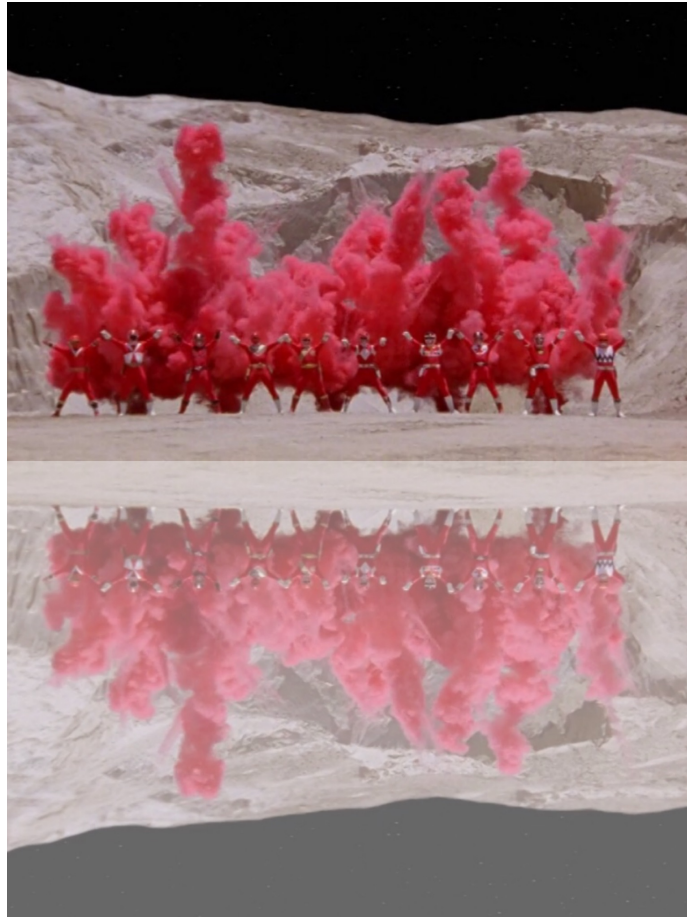
Carrie Baker- "When life gives you limes"



Carrie's almost fairytale image transports you to a twilight zone within the lime trees. The film marks visible on the frame, cross the leaves, and dance like dots of light. The whimsical mood captures the ripening of the lime, which hangs precariously from a twig, slightly out of focus. The focus shifts to the strong leaves clustered at the center, which give an optimistic, smart and alive feeling.

Visual Arts Category Winner

Joshua Kietz - "On the surface of the moon"



Joshua's 2019 submission was praised by the jury for his use of opposition. The superhero characters add humor to the photograph. They are reflected back in the lower picture, which has a different tone.

The cheerful superheroes look like cotton candy on the surface of the moon. The situation makes no sense. Yet the composition is balanced, bright, and lighthearted. The opposition of the two images creates gives the feeling of water and reflection, in a strongly visual entirely fictional world.

Landscape Photography Winner

Ravid Mendelevitch - "On track"



Ravid's picture has horizontal geographic layers that formulate a well-organized composition. The judges liked her technical abilities to play with lines and then play with texture.

First you see one flower, then you see three. The open space creates a sense of calm, accompanied by the movement of the ocean. The tracks, close to the waves provide a sense of wanting to go places.

Animal Art Category Winner

Rachael L. Eisenson - "Companionship"



There is something approachable about Rachael's self-portrait. Her choice of framing plays a critical role in her story. At first you think that the picture is about her dog, which looks fantastic and has a Star Wars-like expression. As you look closer, you notice the dog covers the paralyzed side of her right face.

In taking away the layers, you see that she is putting her best face forward. The matching bright pink of her glasses and the dog's collar tie the two together figuratively. Ultimately the message is about how we choose compatible friendships.

Digital Editing Winner

Sam Landau- "Senses"



Sam uses his technical abilities to tell a story about a world with different sensations. The manipulated colors give the photograph a psychedelic element. The human character is the only one that has his real colors. The sound coming from the saxophone becomes an anchor. Sound is one of the few senses that are preserved in his disease.

Overtime, patients lose their ability to sense where their limbs are in space. Sam draws attention the visual aspect gravity. The negative effect, creates an image connecting the floor and the people from the shoes upwards. He relies on the ground as a stabilizing force to avoid falling.

Self Portrait Category

Gabrielle Jassie - "Tear-shaped"



Gabi's digitally edited self-portrait can be a metaphor for many things. On one hand, the droplet can represent the obvious – her failure to produce tears, which all patients suffer from. On the other-hand the happy expression within the droplet adds complexity to the composition. Ultimately, her message can be taken in different ways.

Her intention is to create an image that represents something real to her. She appears in both the back and the front of the frame, which places her directly in the story. This is her. This is how she feels.

Urban Photography Category Winner

Rebecca Newman- "Street talk"



Rebecca inner city scene captures a trip to London through Chinatown. Taken from a similar low perspective as other photographs, it draws the eye to a well-centered image of bright yellow triangle created by the bag. From a technical aspect, it is precisely oriented.

With time, the layers of detail breakdown into individual components. The sky is crisscrossed by red lanterns hanging from buildings above the street. The details emerge of the three men together as they slowly become part of the frame, and eventually the picture becomes about their animated gestures in conversation.

Countryside Category Winner

Sarah Zucker- "Ability"



Sarah makes a strong statement in her photograph. Taking an elevated point of view, she holds on to the horse. The luminous colors of the halter and lead rope form a connection between her and the horse, against the endless background.

Sarah makes her presence in the photo clear. She shows us she can handle the situation. By marking that ability, she tells us this is my achievement. The tones are strong and colors lead the eye towards the symbol of the horse.

Conceptual Art Award

Veronica- "Legs"

My walker!

My
support!



There is something interesting about Veronica's composition that begins to unwind her story. She photographs her top half where she keeps her clothes, next to a pile of neatly folded bright sweaters, but cutting the image at her legs. She photographs her legs separately, together with her walker and water bottle as support.

By separating her legs, she represents herself in two halves. The ideal and the reality. By judges recognized her for her clever use of collage to create her own personal statement that is both brave and personal.

Still Life Photography Award

Shavit Avidan- "Finding my own path"



At first Sahvit's photograph seems simple, with the elephant and the book. The happy colors contrast with the wheelchair, on which the elephant is sitting, which is replicated on the cover of the book.

The diagonal arrangement of the objects has a work of perspective. The proportions become interesting, with the Hebrew newspapers rolled into a wheelchair. The grass also provides texture, as the colors become saturated, but the blades of grass remain well defined.

Graphic Design Award

Andrew Sigman - "Somewhere in paradise"



Andrew's photo with a heavy filter looks almost painting like. There is a play with texture, with the floor and the leaves. The physical elements of the photograph relate to one another and lead on to the question of what is at the end of the path.

At eye level, the path ahead is slightly obscured by leaves dangling down. Meanwhile, the brick surface provides a way out through the center of the image that gives the feeling of brushing aside the obstacles to continue on.

Winners

2009 Rachael Eisenson
2010 Jackie Goldberg
2011 Jamie Goldblat
2012 Chana Perelstein
2013 Joshua Keitz
2014 Aaron Menzel
2015 Gabrielle Jassie
2016 Sharon (Chanie) Profesorske
2017 Lisa Gross
2018 Frances Cohen
2019 Diana Esparza

Congratulations to all the photographers who have contributed to the project over the last decade. This unique collection of images from very special people is an archive of expression. The competition exhibits the strength and courage of those living with familial dysautonomia and their abilities use the camera lens to capture their world.