

"Competition is the whetstone of talent."

Traditional Proverb

"Our human landscape is overburdened with competitions and contests."

Art need not be a contest. Art is a personal quest for quality."

Robert Genn

Abandoned Factory Photo Contest

Over a number of weekend days in 2013, more than ninety photographers explored two abandoned Delaware factories—a textile mill and a paper mill. Many submitted their favorite images to Horizon's "Abandoned Factory Photo Contest." The quality of submissions was truly outstanding, which made judging a pleasure. It was also difficult—only thirteen prizes were offered and there were many, many more worthy images. In this Horizonews, we celebrate the winning contestants' pictures...and the judge—that's me, Steve Gottlieb—provides brief commentary. As I've often remarked, judging photo contests is, for me, an emotional, highly personal, process. My selections are determined by gut reaction; whatever explanations that follow are my best effort to explain that gut reaction in words.

The pictures that were taken at the factories serve as a vivid demonstration of the creativity inherent in photography: photographers shot in the same locations, under the same basic conditions, and with similar equipment, yet *nearly every submitted picture (not just the winners) was different*. Even pictures of identical subjects contained distinct differences.

The three top winners are highlighted on the next page. Each will receive a cash prize plus a Horizon Gift Certificate. The ten honorable mentions featured on subsequent pages will receive Gift Certificates. Winning photographs will be framed and placed on permanent display at the factory office. Owner Bud Thomas, who graciously gave us access to his premises, will surely enjoy looking at, and showing off, these pictures.

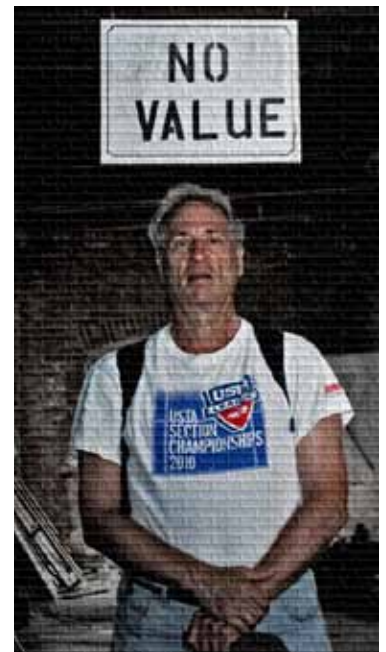
Thanks to all who participated and congratulations to the contest winners.

ABOUT THE JUDGE: Horizon Director **Steve Gottlieb** (at right) has judged over twenty-five competitions, and has competed in many himself. That makes him keenly aware of the pros and cons of competitions. They can heighten a photographer's effort as he/she seeks to capture a winning picture. They can provide validation, encouragement, exposure and, in some cases, financial reward. Moreover, viewing other competitors' images can stimulate and inspire.

On the downside, undue weight can be given to a judge's opinion, be it positive or negative; the arts, far more than other domains, are highly subjective and any one opinion doesn't deserve too much weight. Another problem: when winning becomes the primary objective, that can diminish the joy of the picture-taking process. (The word amateur is derived from the Latin "lover of," not "winner of.") In addition, competitors might, consciously or subconsciously, choose subjects or styles designed to please a judge. What should be most important, at least for amateurs, is to please oneself. Finally, losing competitions can cause disappointment, self-criticism and envy, all of which are anathema to the joy of photography.

Which direction do competitions take you?

[Photo: Gottlieb at abandoned textile mill by **Jim Auerbach**]





First Prize: Steve Ellis

The monochromatic tones that blend subject with background, the soft lighting that still reveals textures, the repetitive patterns (with the variations of bends in the boots) and the simplicity of composition hit the spot. This shot does what my favorite shots do: they get stuck in my head.

[\$150 + \$150 Horizon Gift Certificate]

Second Prize: Alan Wiener

Better than any other submission, this one captures the look and historic feel of the factory's exterior.

[\$100 + \$100 Gift Certificate]



Third Prize: Carole Debeer

Factory windows were a very popular subject. Carole's choice of windows, the number of panes she included and the ethereal quality of the growth on their outside made this image stand out.

[\$50 + \$50 Gift Certificate]

Honorable Mention



Bennet Garvin

Wonderful mix of diagonals, verticals and circles with a moody 19th century feeling. A perfect image for sepia-toning.



Ralph Kimes

It was as if people were working at the factory one day, and then they vanished the next...and then time deposited its dust on the scene.

David Liska

Poetic simplicity.



Steve Sattler

Doors and knobs have symbolic emotional power—they represent closing and opening, mystery and revelation. Tasty texture and color, too.



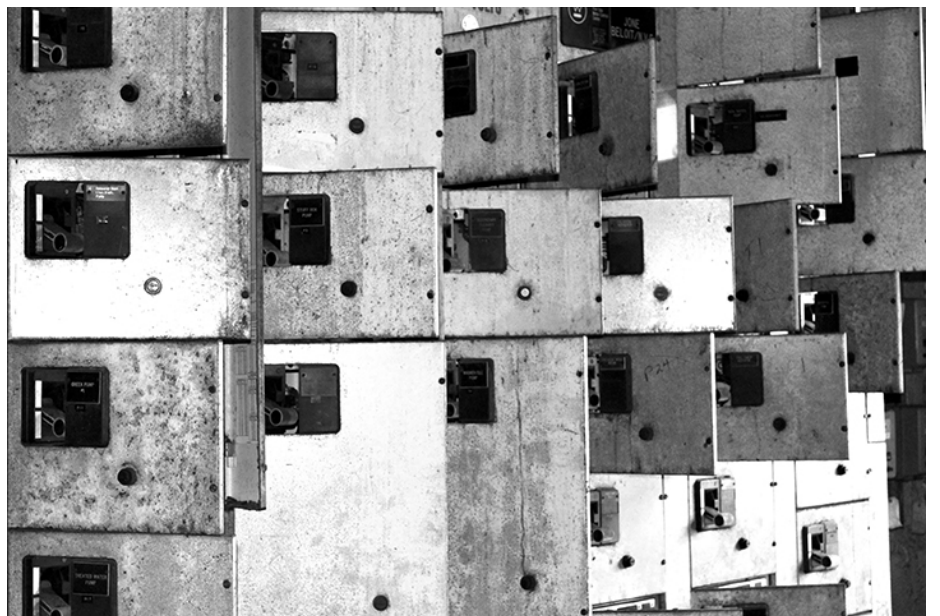
Cindy Vasko
Sometimes HDR
grunge really works.



Roger Singley
The faded, high-key
treatment suits this
subject matter.



Jessica St.Clair
A panel of electric fuse boxes
is transformed into a hypnotic
abstract of patterns and contrasts.



Tom Parsons
Contrast of reality and abstraction, thoughtfully composed.



Herb Rosen
Only three contest submissions included people in the picture. This one had the natural, gritty feel of great industrial photography from decades ago.



Bill McDonell
The power and beauty of industrial machinery. Gloves add a human touch. Tight cropping eliminates any distracting elements.



Horizon Annual Summit: Mar. 1 & 2 in Wilmington, DE

www.horizonworkshops.com/summit

- Presentations by 14 exceptional photographers
- Register for either one or two days (Sat/Sun)
- Saturday Keynote: Nikon Legend Lou Jones
- Portfolio Reviews
- Personal Lightroom & Camera Instruction
- Shoot Glamour Model with instructor guidance
- View/Buy equipment > Hunt's Photo & Video
- View exceptional exhibition (Wilmington Int'l)

[Summit: A memorable gift for friends & family]

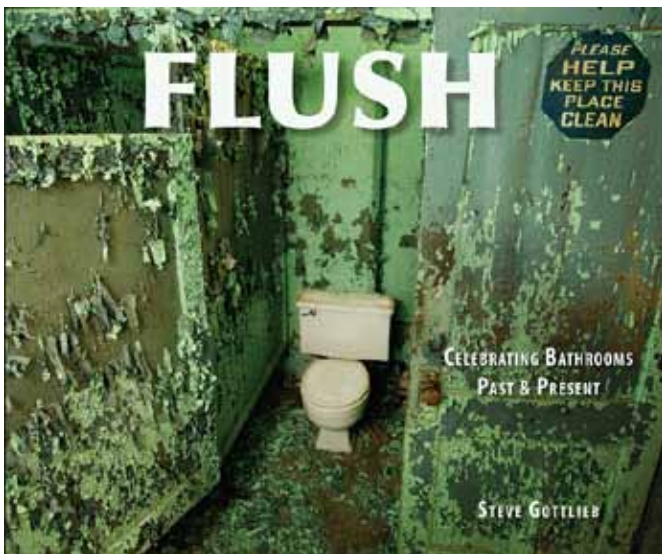


SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THE HORIZON SUMMIT. THANKS.

Horizon's 2014 Schedule is now posted on our website. Two highlights:

Eastern Sierras and Yosemite: June 22 – 29. <http://www.horizonworkshops.com/workshops.html?cr=199>

Ireland: Landscapes & Locals: August 10 – 17 <http://www.horizonworkshops.com/workshops.html?cr=201>



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