

Creativity in the Canaries

by Dr Alex Tattersall

When Kat (my wife) and I received an invitation to come to Mogán, Gran Canaria to participate in the 6th International Fotosub UW photography competition, we began frantically searching for willing volunteers to babysit our rather challenging toddler. It was an opportunity to meet with, and be inspired by, some of the top talents in UW photography and one that I really could not miss (and Kat was immediately onboard with the idea of a free holiday J).

Every year, twelve UW photographers, six Spanish and six from other European countries come to Mogán to compete for some very significant prizes. And so far, every year the Spanish competitors have enjoyed wiping the floor with the 'very well looked after' foreign visitors. Although us foreign invitees were all guilty of complaining about the lack of a level playing field, indeed many of the Spanish competitors are residents of the islands, have the opportunity to practice shots for months before the competition and know exactly where all the interesting fauna resides, none of us could take away from the fact that we were witnessing some extraordinary talent, absolute masters at the Fotosub competition game.

Carlos Villoch, previous competition winner and owner of www.glowdive.com (filters for underwater luminescence), was in charge of the programme and had pushed to redesign the



The winning portfolio was from local residents Carmelo Andrades and model Warkydea Vega. The following photo won the category for best model photo, regarded as the most prestigious of categories for the Spanish contenders. Bear in mind that this photo was taken at 20 meters in water that was only 23 degrees Centigrade; you have got to admire the dedication of the models to the cause. (Nikon D300, Tokina 10-17 @ 11mm, 1/10, F7.1 ISO 500)



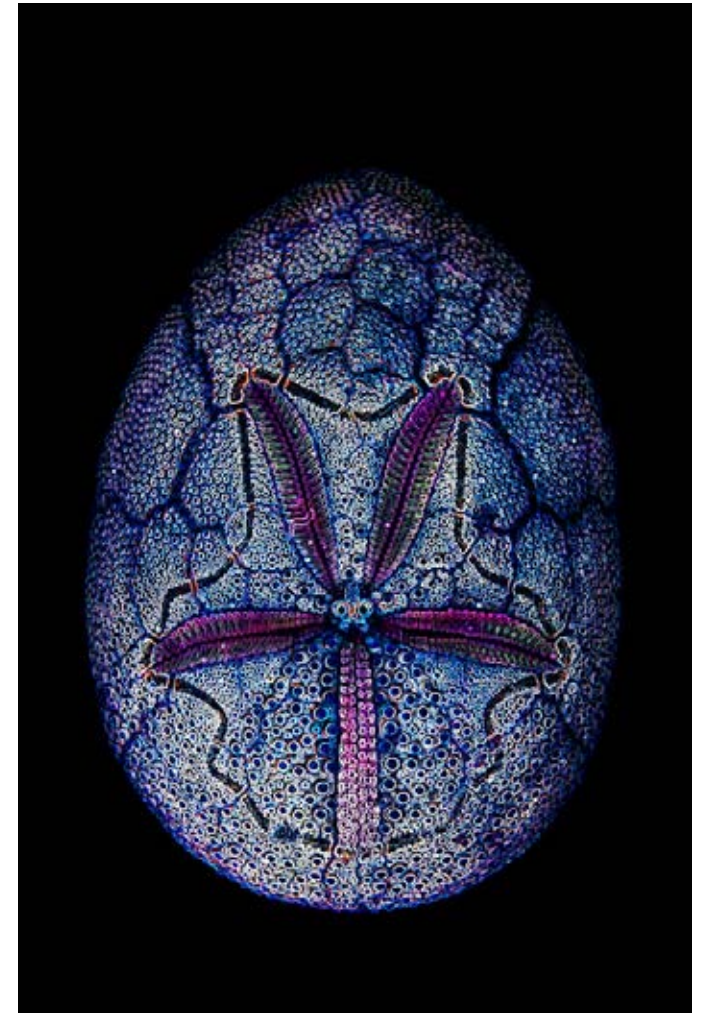
In second place was Arturo Telle who had the good fortune to happen across a frogfish on a site called 'Pasito Blanco'. Such good fortune did not seem to bestow itself upon us foreign guests. (Canon 5D MK 2, 100mm macro, F25, 1/125, ISO 200)



Third place was Esteban Toré who demonstrated some excellent macro skills. This first shot is certainly one of my favourites of the competition
(Nikon D300s, Nauticam NA-D300s, 105mm VR macro, F36, 1/320, ISO 200)



This second shot from Esteban won the most creative macro, it was taken using Cokin creative filters to create the radial blur and, considering this comes straight from the camera, it is to my mind one of the star creative shots of the competition.
(Nikon D300s, Nauticam NA-D300s, 105mm VR macro, F29, 1/125, ISO 200)



Fifth portfolio was that of Pedro Carrillo who, despite being disqualified from one dive for being 23 seconds over the allocated time limit, managed to product winning shots in two categories. The following image of an urchin shell took a well-deserved gold in the processed image category:
(Nikon D300, Seacam housing, F38, 1/250, ISO 200)



(Above) David Barrio came in fourth. Among his shots was this fireworm taken with Carlos Villoch's glowdive filters (www.glowdive.com) in order to highlight the luminescence of the worm.

(Nikon D300, Hugefot housing, 105mm VR macro, F16, 1/160, ISO 400)

(Top right) Team Norway, Lill Haugen and Helge Veum clearly had a lot of fun with their underwater homage to their countryman, symbolist painter Edvard Munch

(Nikon D300, Nikon 10.5 Fisheye, Nexus housing, INON Z240x2, F5.6, 1/100, ISO 400)

(Right) This is probably my favourite image of the competition, again from Pedro Carrillo, making use of the visible lens hood on a circular fisheye lens.

(Nikon D300, Seacam housing, F16, 1/250, ISO 400)





And if I have to add one of my own photos to this collection, it has to be this backlit shot of my amazingly hardworking model, Kat, through a small hole in the wreckage.

(Canon 7D, Nauticam NA-7D, Tokina 10-17mm at 11mm, 1.4 teleconvertor, Zen 100mm minidome, INON Z240x2, F13, 1/30, ISO 640)



12 photographers and 12 models ready themselves for the days ahead

competition into one focusing on creativity. The event was organised by Daniel Rodríguez (<http://www.hotelpuertodemogan.com>) and was judged by a panel of international judges including the legendary Spanish UW videographer/singer/composer/airplane pilot, Leandro Blanco.

What follows are, to me, some of the most impressive, most creative shots of the competition. The rules are simple. Photographers have four (very stressful) 50 minute dives in which to collect a portfolio of eight images. 400 shots can be taken in total, no post processing is allowed, and all shots come directly from the camera (except one category which allowed post processing). I am so used to using Photoshop to clean up/colour manage/add contrast/adjust composition with my images that I was in trouble from the outset. Indeed, it was only on day two that I realised I could preset my 7D to take black and white photos in camera. In camera white balance.... Huh?



Competition winner, Carmelo Andrades (second from left), celebrates his victory with runner up Arturo Telle (left), 4th place David Barrio (third from left) and myself (right)

To see the entire portfolios, follow the link <http://grancanariafotosub.com/>.

All in all then, I think readers will agree that given the conditions of this competition, some excellent shots were taken. It is also welcome to see how a creative push in this competition has resulted in shots less typical of this style of competitive genre. I'm hoping now to raise the funding to bring the competitors and their red-dress sporting models over to balmy UK waters. However to match the warm welcome and the generous hospitality of our Spanish hosts would certainly take some doing.

Oh, and our new friends David Barrio and Arturo Telle have offered to help us next year by taking my camera with them for half an hour each!

Dr Alex Tattersall
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Specifications

Battery Pack..... NiMH module
Weight..... 1.3 kg (2.75 lb)
Size..... 9.6 cm dia x 17.9 cm
3.75" dia x 7"
Depth Rating..... 90m - 300 feet

Strobe

Energy Rating..... 160 watt-sec
Recycle Time..... 1.5 sec
Angle of Coverage..... 90 degrees
100 degrees with diffuser
Guide # (ISO 100) feet..... 76 surface - 38 underwater
Guide # meters..... 24 surface - 12 underwater
Color Temperature..... 4800 degrees Kelvin
Full Power Flashes..... 225 flashes per full charge
Firing Modes..... TTL, Full, 9 fractional powers

Movie

Movie Light..... 15-watt LED
Angle of Coverage..... 45 degrees
Brightness..... 500 lumens
Color Temperature..... 5000-5500K
Burn Time..... 5 hours at max intensity
Power Settings..... Full, 9 fractional powers, SOS



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