

Krappy Kamera Competition 2005

Vision and Craft in Plastic

by Brandie Erisman

The winners of the Krappy Kamera Competition are in. The competition, conceived by members of the Soho Photo Gallery in New York City, invites photographers to submit images taken with plastic cameras such as Holga, Diana, toy, and homemade pinhole cameras. This year marks the 7th National Competition and the 12th Members' Krappy Kamera Exhibition. As well as exhibition in the gallery, this year, winners receive prizes from sponsors, Freestyle Photographic Supplies and *CameraArts*.

The Krappy exhibition concept was born 13 years ago. Sandra Carrion, Allan Schill, and Alan Basset, then members of the gallery, were enjoying a glass of wine and discussing the beautiful and unusual imagery attainable only through the use of pinhole or low-end plastic cameras. The idea to invite other members of the gallery to exhibit their work during the March schedule was met with enthusiasm and generated great interest from the public. Inquiries began streaming in from around the country from similar photography buffs: "How can I show my work during this Krappy month-long show?"

Eventually, the exhibition was redefined as a competition and notices were circulated to the photographic community. It became apparent that despite the growth of digital photography, a deep-rooted movement toward simplicity was spreading. The contest rules are simple. Images taken with toy or plastic cameras are eligible. Point-and-shoot and disposables, considered by event organizers to be too technologically advanced, are not. "A Krappy Kamera makes you work," said Carrion. "The idea that compelling imagery must be produced by low-end equipment offers a challenge to all creative minds. And the work is stunning."

Dan Burkholder, a photographer known for his work with digital technology, juried this year's competition. He

said judging the exhibition was a daunting task. Beyond the obvious, he looked for original vision, elements of craft, and some indication that the artist has something to say. "There are certain indefinables that determine whether a piece gets thumbs up or thumbs down," he said.

"The Krappy Kamera show is, by its very 'krappy' nature, flooded with aesthetic variables that only sprinkle into

other photo competitions," Burkholder said. "Where else do you find work that is prized because it was made with a cheap, imprecise, and optically impure camera? And where else would a juror get to witness artists—working with cameras missing the full range of image control and accuracy—produce some of the finest photographs I've seen in years. Such was my job and my joy."

Given the terrific response to the Krappy Kamera show, only one photograph was admitted to the show from every two dozen submitted, admittedly excluding a lot of good work. "It was nothing short of agonizing to eliminate work that I would be honored to hang in my home," Burkholder said. Of the 1400 images received (from 238 photographers, in 42 states), only 60 made the final cut.

During March, 2005, the Soho Photo Gallery celebrated a "Month of Krap." The entrance to the gallery presented the Members' Exhibition, showing 18 photographers, and the main exhibition gallery held the Krappy Kamera Competition results. Guest space was also devoted to the junior high school students of the Cedar Drive Photography Club (New Jersey). Each student member shot and processed their own images that were made with inferior equipment.

To see these images in full color and for information on entering the next Krappy Kamera competition go to www.sohophoto.com.

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Grand Prize
Angel & Shasta
Patty Lemke
Los Angeles, CA
Holga



1st Place
Ghost
Louviere & Vanessa
New Orleans, LA
Holga



2nd Place
St. Mary's Church
John Beaver
Appleton, WI
Homemade, shutterless,
fixed-focus camera



3rd Place
Brighton Pier
Martin Anderson
Brookline, MA
Pinhole

Honorable Mention 1
Christmas Card
Mark Hickman
Morganton, NC
ACME (Diana Clone)



Honorable Mention 2
Woman in Field
Jillian Pichocki,
Clifton, VA
Holga

Honorable Mention 3
Tower Windows
Bill DeLaney
Voorheesville, NY
Holgaroid

