The Judges Comments



Vicki Moritz GMPSA/g APSEM/g GPSA EFIAP/d3 PFIAP

I was privileged to judge Monochrome, Street and Nature at the 2026 Vigex Print Salon, an appointment I really enjoy as it is rare to see so many prints in one place. The value of the print salons is this introduces an additional dimension to the treatment of the image- capture, processing and PRINTING.

Overall the quality of the printing was good, but strong subject matter/composition, good image processing and appropriate paper choice were key factors to elevate some images to the standard required for awards. This year we were able to see a digital version of the print and it was disappointing when strong digital images were let down by poor printing. Some common errors included lack of the full tonal range in monochrome (where appropriate- there were some strong low key and high key prints), colour casts on some prints, underexposed prints (usually due to poor monitor calibration) and poor paper choice. The monochrome section is always a challenge due to the diversity of subject ma□er. Paper choice can also be an issue for monochrome. It was so good to see blacks well handled on a quality ma□ paper but semi gloss was the safe choice for many. As for other genres the better images had a strong sense of story and were well composed with no unnecessary elements.

I found the Street sec□on the hardest as I was looking for the “decisive moment” rather than purely documentary images. Again, some needed to be cropped for compositions which be□er reflected the titles and apparent story. However, we were able to award some strong- and in some cases entertaining- entries. It was pleasing that most (but not all) Nature images met the required definition. There was a good range of nature subjects- from the sky to underwater and in between! However, the “nature story” was the foremost element in the best entries. I know it can be a challenge with fast moving subjects- but do watch your sharpness. Some good narratives were spoiled by blur, and some also by entrants over sharpening to correct lack of focus.

Overall the quality was pleasing and I thank the organisers for all their work and for the judging invitation. I would like to encourage photographers to have something in their hands at the end of the photographic journey- a quality print!



Peter Roupas EFIAP, GMAPS

It was a great privilege to be invited to be one of the judging team for the 2026 VIGEX Print Salon. I applaud the VIGEX Committee for continuing their commitment to their biennial Print Salon, and a big thank you to all those involved in planning and running such a big event, including all the stewards and other volunteers, which made the judging process very efficient and enjoyable. I had the pleasure of judging the Monochrome Open, Street, and the Nature Sections.

Monochrome Open

All 3 judges on our judging team unanimously agreed on the Print that was awarded the FIAP Gold Medal – it was a very powerful and personal portrait. While there was an array of subject matter across the Monochrome sec□on (e.g. portraiture, architecture, nature, sport, still life), a common aspect of most of the award-winning prints was that they were high-contrast images, with total blacks and almost pure white in parts i.e. the makers used the full tonal range in their images. With printing of high contrast images, paper selection is also very important, with some papers being excellent at holding pure blacks.

Street:

While there were some interesting images in this section, my view was that overall, many of the images did not capture a telling or captivating moment, nor did they manage to tell any story of sorts or capture much emo□on that would immediately spark a viewer's interest. Hence, this was a difficult section to judge, with a number of the awarded images perhaps being better suited to a 'Travel', or 'World In Focus' section i.e. they were street photos in more exotic streets. I would encourage makers to try to capture moments in □me that perhaps show an interesting aspect of street life, or human emotions and interactions that would make their images stand out from the crowded space of images capturing quite mundane moments.

Nature:

This section was of a very high standard, with the awarded images and several others, being of the highest international standard. Endangered animals overseas in their difficult environment can capture a viewer's eye very quickly, but a number of the award winning and many of the accepted images also captured Australia's flora and fauna in equally captivating images that showed behaviours in their unique environment.

Finally, congratulations to all who entered and supported this VIGEX Print Salon, and to all the award winners. I very much look forward to seeing all the award-winning Prints, framed and on display, during the public exhibition in November.



Barry Feldman Professional Photographer

Colour Open

This category delivered an incredible variety of subject ma□er from photographers all over the world. It was captivating to see these global perspectives contrasted against one another. The winning prints were outstanding, with all three judges completely aligned on the top selections

People

The better prints in this section brilliantly captured the unique personality of each subject. The top-awarded images highlight the photographers' skill in looking past the surface to reveal the true character, depth, and spirit of the people in front of the lens.

Scapes:

This section featured an outstanding global collection of cityscapes, landscapes, and seascapes. The excellent work submitted by international entrants beautifully showcased the iconic landmarks and natural beauty of their home countries.

Many thanks to Vigex President Brien Cohn and his amazing committee for the honour of judging for the Vigex 2026 International Print Competition. It was a privilege to be part of such a prestigious event.



Mario Mirabile EFIAP GMAPS

In an age when photographs are created, shared and viewed almost exclusively on screens, the photographic print remains something special. A print is more than an image transferred to paper. It is a tangible expression of the photographer's vision, the culmination of decisions about composition, light, colour, tone and presentation.

Producing a successful print involves much more than simply sending a digital file to a printer. It requires careful consideration of how the image will translate from screen to paper. Decisions about tonal range, contrast, colour, sharpening, paper choice and print size all influence the final result. What looks impressive on a backlit screen may not necessarily translate into an effective print. It is a process that demands thought, judgement and often experimentation, encouraging photographers to look more critically at their work.

Unlike a digital image that can disappear with the swipe of a finger, a print invites us to pause, look more closely and appreciate its finer qualities. It has a physical presence and permanence that a screen cannot quite replicate.

It is therefore disappointing to see entries in this year's international decline by around 50% compared with the previous print edition. While the convenience of digital photography is undeniable, I hope this does not signal a diminishing appreciation of the printed image.

As a Judge, there is something particularly satisfying about viewing photographs as finished, physical works rather than images on a screen. Printing is an important part of the photographic craft, a creative discipline in it's own right, and one well worth preserving.

Alfred Zommers EFIAP/b GMAPS



Thank you for the opportunity to judge the VIGEX exhibition in 2026I thank the team, and especially Brien Cohn, for running the judging process efficiently and well organised.

Overall, the images were outstanding, with some quite exceptional. Some advice for the image makers would be to look at using light (dodging and burning) to enhance the impact of an image, especially in the Scapes section. Appropriate use of light leads the viewer to the most important parts of the subject matter in the image.