

Polis Photography Competition: “Communication”

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Post by Charlie Beckett

We wanted the winners to reflect the range of the idea of communication as well as being great images in their own right. Of course, an image might be great for all kinds of reasons including its colour, shapes or narrative.

The joint runner up by Irina Rasskazova tells a series of stories. Yes, it's a nice Amsterdam bridge but 'Bridge of Divergence' is a tableau that catches a very emblematic modern moment where a group is more than the sum of its parts. Look at the people looking at people with devices while the others are talking via text as well as mouths and ears. The way they are dangling across the canal on a bridge (very solid forms of communication!) seems to symbolise the way that humans are always focused on keeping in touch, crossing from one place to another, always 'on air'.

Elliot O'Connor's ice cream van doesn't have any people or any devices in the frame but it is a bold statement about the visual as branding. This riot of gorgeous colour has all the joyful tacky appeal of a Cornetto or 99 Flake with strawberry sauce. This is commercial communication that sends signals about much more than just price – it's about pleasure.

But the winner taken by Gustav Gidenstam was this stunning and somewhat disturbing image of a child, perhaps in an airport or a bank? I love the contrast in scale between those marble walls and the crouched boy. It's his arm on his head that first catches our attention before his eyeline – hidden by his elbow – takes our gaze to that smartphone held delicately in his hand. There is something very ancient and human about that squatting position but this youth is surrounded by nature tamed and technology at his finger tips. What is he communicating and with whom? Or is he simply listening to music on this multi-media device? What back-story lurks behind this image? Of what social or cultural networks is he at the centre? Who knows? Who cares? They are all great pictures and we hope you enjoy them and the rest of the entrants that you can see here.

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