

May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008

## International Garden Photographer of the Year, 2008

### The Winners

#### **Claire Takacs - International Garden Photographer of the Year, 2008**

The overall winner of the £5,000 prize for the best single image is Australian, **Claire Takacs** for *Kenrokuen Gardens*, Kanazawa, Japan. This evocative photograph of the famous Japanese gardens in a flurry of snowflakes was selected from the *Garden Views* category.

Claire works as a professional photographer in Australia having studied Applied Photography in Melbourne. She started concentrating on gardens after stumbling on *Cloudehill*, a garden owned by Jeremy Francis on the outskirts of Melbourne. It was here that she discovered the beauty of early morning light in gardens and the challenges a photographer faces in capturing the many facets of the natural world.

Claire has since spent one and a half years travelling the world photographing gardens. Almost completely self commissioned, she has travelled throughout the UK, Europe, Japan and Australia. Her passion for garden photography comes from her desire to record other people's life passions, capturing beauty and inspiring others to visit amazing places throughout the world.

Claire wrote of her work "*I find Japanese gardens so beautiful, and went to Japan specifically to visit and photograph them during the Cherry Blossom season. I was so excited to be there while it was snowing. It was like being in a painting. People were not deterred by the snow. It was such a sight to see the colourful umbrellas passing through the gardens and over the bridges.*" Go to [www.takacsphoto.com](http://www.takacsphoto.com)

#### **Henrique Souto - Best Portfolio**

The Best Portfolio Prize, for £3000 cash, plus £2000 Calumet vouchers, goes to amateur photographer, **Henrique Souto** from Portugal for *Leaves*, a collection of six images. These immaculate studio shots of autumn leaves reflect Henrique's passion for the natural world and above all, trees.

Originally from Mozambique, Henrique moved to live in Portugal at the age of 17. He lives and works in Lisbon as a Professor of the Environment and Fisheries at the New University of Lisbon. In 2002 he won the Prize Almirante Teixeira da Mota in Science.

Henrique has been passionate about photography for over 25 years and concentrates on perfecting macro images. His influences include Karl Blossfeldt's

plant portraits and Edward Weston's clarity of image. His work is mainly conducted in the studio where he can control the composition and light. However, he follows his passion for the countryside and recording nature with his photographs.

Speaking about his series of six photographs of leaves, Henrique states *"I don't have a garden but I love the natural world, gardens and, above all, trees. I do pictures of trees, flowers and seeds but I think that the leaves are disregarded."*

### **Fergus Gill - Young Garden Photographer of the Year**

The Young Garden Photographer of the Year title goes to **Fergus Gill** for the best single image from an under 16 year old, for *Partridge Reflection*. Fergus is 15 years old from Perthshire, Scotland. He wins a Canon EOS 40D complete with 17-85 lens, plus more than £500 worth of vouchers from Manfrotto, Kata and Visible Dust.

Born in 1992, Fergus has been raised surround by countryside abundant with wildlife. It was the nature around him that first inspired Fergus to pick up a camera when he was nine years old. His true passion for wildlife photography was started after an encounter with a pair of Sanderling on a remote Scottish island. The encounter left him with memories that he shall never forget and some decent photographs too. In 2004 Fergus had his first major success in photography, winning the 11-14 year old category in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition with a photograph of the Aurora Borealis.

Since then Fergus has had success in numerous other photographic competitions such as RSPB Under 18's *Goldeneye Competition* and has won several prizes in *Focus Environment*. In 2006 he received a highly commended in the *Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year* and last year Fergus won the 11-14 category for the second time.

Describing his winning image Fergus says *"I noticed these two red-legged partridges in the field opposite my house as I walked home from school, by the time I got my camera the two birds had come into the garden and were eating bird seed. As one jumped up to the window I couldn't believe what I was seeing and grabbed a shot before it jumped back down."*

### **Category Winners**

Winners of each category will receive £700 cash and over £700 of equipment vouchers from Kata, Manfrotto and Visible Dust. The winners of each category are:

- **Plant Portraits** - Chinch Gryniewicz for *Marguerites in Rain*.
- **My Garden** - Dennis Frates for *Desert Garden*
- **Garden Views** – Claire Takacs for *Kenrokuen Gardens*
- **Life in the Garden** - Andrew Bailey for *Tug of War*
- **Trees** - Colin Roberts for *Ash tree on The Downs*.

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