

# Discover UAE Digital Photography Contest 2013

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Christopher Medenilla, Grand Prize Winner, Scott Lorenzo, Winner of the UAE Architecture, Varuna Liyanage, Winner of the Nature Category and Spencer Guiao, Winner of the Live/People category

**Varuna Liyanage emerged as the Winner of the Nature Category with his photograph titled “Arabian Icon” at the first ever “Discover UAE Digital Photography Contest 2013”.**

Having graduated from Mahanama College, Colombo, Liyanage went onto follow a diploma in photography before becoming a freelance photographer in 1991. Initiating his professional career as a photographer Liyanage joined BT Options in 2000 where he worked for eight years amassing experience. “BT Options is the place that changed my photography career,” said Liyanage reflecting on the beginning of his career. “After I joined BT Options, I participated in many national and international events and learned a lot. I want to thank BT Options for all the help and guidance.”

In the year 2008, Liyanage went to Dubai where he started working for Dubai Media City as a press photographer. "Working with an international media source has added good experience to my career," affirmed Liyanage.

The Discover UAE Digital Photography Contest 2013, award is the first international award won by Liyanage and reflecting on the achievement he said, "this was the first time that I participated in an international photography competition and I am really happy about this achievement."

Organised by BrandMoxie and Abu Dhabi Photographers, Discover UAE Digital Photography Contest 2013 was launched in May in three categories: Nature, People and UAE Architecture. Over 600 entries were received from the five emirates, representing 30 nationalities.

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The grand prize of the competition went to Dubai based Filipino photographer Christopher Medenilla for his photograph titled "Endurance", that creatively captured a moment in a marathon race. The other first prize winners awarded at the ceremony were: Spencer Guiao, from India, who won in the Live/People category for his photograph titled 'The Gaze" and Filipino Scott Lorenzo whose photo "The Journey" won him the prize in the UAE Architecture category.

Beno Saradzic, an award-winning photographer and one of the jurors, said, "it was a difficult decision for all of us three judges to select one grand prize winner as all the top four photos were excellent and each deserved recognition in its own right. However we selected "Endurance" because the angle was atypical, and the photograph managed to capture movement, tradition and diversity."

Juror Darren Rycroft added, "each of the judges had their own favourites - my personal one from the top four was "The Gaze", because of the intensity of the eyes, the composition of the image and the quality of finishing. We tallied all our votes to come up with the final winners."

Shahid Saeed, founder of Abu Dhabi Photographers said, "we were astounded by the level of interest, the number of entries and the quality of the submissions. Some of the photographers were from our group, but the majority came from other

emirates. I believe the categories were appealing, and we believe very appropriate in celebrating the rich culture of the UAE."

Sana Bagersh, CEO of BrandMoxie and patron of the Abu Dhabi Photographers said, "BrandMoxie is proud to organise this event and offer patronage to the Abu Dhabi Photographers. This group is extremely active, and clearly has outstanding talents that need to be recognised and celebrated. We hope to cement this in the UAE's calendar of events, and look forward to organising it on a yearly basis."

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