

Phil Hutinet

Touch of Red, Juror's Essay

Multiple Exposures Gallery presents *A Touch of Red*, a themed group exhibit open to gallery members which runs November through December 2023. Unlike other exhibitions I have been asked to jury, I operated solely on the works submitted, devoid of biographies or knowledge of the artists behind them. Despite this limitation, a certain serendipity unfolded—I found myself discerning the distinctive styles and thematic nuances that marked each photographer's work.

Working without textual interference proved to be a liberating experience, allowing me to evaluate each piece on the merits of its inherent quality. The submissions spanned the spectrum from the figurative to landscapes and even included several photographers' ability to create abstract compositions from movement. Some images predominantly embraced the richness of red, while others played with subtlety, featuring small elements that highlighted the vibrancy of this prominent color.

Contemplating the array of images, I delved into the essence of red—its emergence in nature and humanity's perpetual pursuit to replicate it. As a result, the selections for the exhibit are a visual exploration of red's dynamic presence, both as a dominant color and as a nuanced element interwoven in the intricate tapestry of artistic expression.

Red stands out as one of nature's most conspicuous and striking colors. From the flamboyant plumage of the male northern cardinal, a result of a diet enriched with organic yellow pigments, to the deep red hue of blood, created by the intricate dance of hemoglobin and iron, red manifests itself in diverse and fascinating ways.

Cinnabar, a naturally occurring red ore with a history dating back 30,000 years, adorns ancient cave walls, attesting to early artists' recognition of the allure of this vibrant color. The cochineal insect is still used as a source of red dye in food. Flowers, whether roses or poppies, draw upon anthocyanin pigments to tint their petals in shades of red, as do an array of fruits, like strawberries to tomatoes. Red maple leaves, aesthetically pleasing to the human eye, pragmatically deploy anthocyanins as a defensive armor against the autumnal chill.

Ultimately, red emerges as one of the most conspicuous and striking colors, whether occurring naturally or synthesized artificially. Each photograph I selected for *A Touch of Red* not only acknowledges the intrinsic quality of red but also adeptly positioned the color within an expertly shot image.