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Colorado Pro Photographer Showdown Celebrates a Sold Out 2025 Debut, Honors Award Winners, and Showcases Emerging Youth Talent



Durango, Colorado (November 21, 2025) — The inaugural Colorado Pro Photographer Showdown on Wednesday night lit up the Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College with a full house and an electrifying atmosphere as five of Colorado’s top professional photographers presented breathtaking visual stories from around the world and across decades of personal experience.

A panel of five judges selected Shaun Stanley as the Best of Show recipient. The audience, voting live through a mobile app, awarded Shanda Akin the People’s Choice honor. Akin also earned the Best Train Photo award, presented by the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, for her dramatic nighttime image of the historic train.

The Showcase featured the extraordinary work of all five professional photographers:

- **Michael Lutfy**, whose stunning wildlife and landscape images are complemented by compelling cultural street scenes from around the world.
- **Shaun Stanley**, presenting striking worldwide imagery of people and natural disasters, along with haunting documentation of the Covid response, and rarely seen photographs showing the lasting impacts and aftermath of atomic testing in the Southwest.
- **Nick Kogos**, who presented a deeply personal journey through his lifetime of photography, weaving together striking landscapes, compelling portraits, action, and meaningful moments from his own history.
- **Shanda Akin**, presenting images from her twenty-five year Air Force career, action sports and outdoor photography, and her award-winning Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad night shot.
- **Divine Windy Boy**, whose photographic passion honors Indigenous culture through ceremonial events, dancing, and family images from both her Southern Ute and Chippewa Cree heritage.

Adding to the evening’s energy, the DJ kept the audience engaged and excited throughout the show, while images from the Alpine Bank Youth Photography Showcase were projected before the professionals and during intermissions. More than fifty middle and high school students participated, with their photographs on exhibit at the Durango Arts Center from November 17-22.



This event is made possible through the City of Durango’s Lodgers’ Tax Arts & Culture Fund and the Durango Creative District.

The enthusiastic response from attendees, photographers, students, sponsors, and community leaders has sparked discussions about establishing the Colorado Pro Photographer Showdown as an annual cultural tradition and an important economic driver for Durango. Event organizers, sponsors, the Creative District and city officials will evaluate the success of the 2025 debut and explore opportunities to continue expanding the event for years to come.

“The Colorado Pro Photographer Showdown is needed now more than ever. In a world of buzz words and memes, still photography invites us to slow down and appreciate the power of a single moment,” said Kathryn Waggener, Durango Creative District Executive Director.

“Durango Creative District is proud to partner with the Colorado Pro Photographer Showdown and help expand statewide photographer participation in 2026 and beyond as this grows into one of Durango’s premier annual events.”

This landmark event was made possible through the generous support of its sponsors, including the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, Alpine Bank, Purgatory, Durango Hot Springs, and REI Co-op. The organizers also extend special appreciation to the City of Durango and the Durango Creative District for their seed funding through a Lodgers Tax grant that helped launch this first year of the event.

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For photos, media inquiries, or additional information, please contact:

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Visit: PhotoShowdown.org



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