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American Photographer David Zimmerman wins L'Iris D'Or Award, 2009 Sony World Photography Awards Photographer of the Year

“a unique vision of the beauty, poetry, and power possible in great landscape photography” (Mary Ellen Mark, 2009 Judging Committee)

David Zimmerman has been announced as the winner of the coveted L'Iris D'Or Award, the 2009 Sony World Photography Awards Photographer of the Year. Zimmerman received the award at this year's Sony World Photography Awards Gala ceremony in Cannes, France on Thursday 16 April.

The American photographer's entry in the Landscape category beat off stiff competition from some of the world's finest photographers to win the esteemed title, accompanied by a \$25, 000 cash prize along with Sony camera equipment. His winning landscape series 'Desert' hauntingly depicts the American southwest desert environment as a fragile ecosystem.

Zimmerman said: “My documentation of these remarkable deserts throughout Arizona, New Mexico, California and Nevada continues in an effort to influence preservation through public awareness, opinion and action.” On the announcement of his award, Zimmerman said: “I am thrilled beyond belief, and I want to thank you for this award. There was some wonderful work from some wonderful photographers... I hope this work continues, to make us feel, think and laugh, and I share this award with all the photographers doing terrific work out there.”

The Honorary Judging Committee comprised 12 specially selected World Photography Awards Academy members.

On behalf of the Honorary Judging Committee, Bruce Davidson said: “We live in an era of environmental awareness. It is also an era of the image. Both can coexist to give us a sharper picture of the use and abuse of our deep oceans and beloved terra firma, which is far more at risk than we admit or know. Both image and meaning coincide in the imagery of photographer David Zimmerman. In his sensuous sharp focus, we become more aware of where we are as humans in the drifting sands of time.”

Fellow Judge, Zelda Cheatle, added: “I am very happy that these desert landscapes won overall as they represent skill in photography, an awareness of the environment and reach beyond mere pictures of land and sky.”

Zimmerman received his award from Fujio Nishida, President of Sony Europe at the glittering awards ceremony in Palais des Festivals in front of an audience of VIPs and industry leaders. The eleven other professional category 2009 winners also collected their awards at the ceremony. Vincent Foong, from Singapore, was announced as the Sony World Photography Awards Amateur Photographer of the Year for his image in the Natural History category. [X name], from [X Country], was awarded the 2009 Student Award.

Another major announcement on the night was the winner of the new Prince’s Rainforest Project (PRP) Award. Spanish professional photographer Daniel Beltrá received the prize which includes a fully-funded project to document the rainforests of the world. In a video message at the awards night, HRH The Prince of Wales, said: “Photographic imagery can tell a compelling story about the truth of the situation and, the truth is, if we lose the fight against tropical deforestation, then we lose the fight against climate change.”

The final presentation of the evening went to the acclaimed French photographer and former President of Magnum Photos, Marc Riboud, winner of the 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award. Riboud was presented his award by acclaimed photographer Elliott Erwitt and received a standing ovation from the audience of over 600 guests.

Astrid Merget, Event Director of Sony World Photography Awards, said: “We are exceptionally proud of the quality of this year’s winners who all demonstrate photography’s enduring power as a relevant and vital medium. The Sony World Photography Awards continues to grow and has become much more than an awards programme. Schemes such as the Student Focus initiative, the Global Tour and our week-long festival in Cannes, offer a celebration of photography and give an important platform for the international photographic community to come together to share their experiences and skills.”

“We are truly honoured to be part of this impressive showcase of photographic talent,” commented Yoshiyuki Nogami, Vice President of

Digital Imaging at Sony Europe. “We would like to congratulate all the deserved winners and look forward to offering our continued support to this inspiring event.”

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