

Real Photo Wins AI Award at International Contest

Nature outdoes the machine – Miles Astray's picture FLAMINGONE wins AI award without being AI-generated. After the reveal, organizers had a surprising reaction.

NEW YORK, NY, USA, June 13, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Photographer and writer Miles Astray](#) announced today that his work "FLAMINGONE" received honours both from the high-profile jury and the public vote in the AI category of [1839 Awards, a large international photo competition](#). The twist: the photo of a flamingo whose head is apparently missing, is not AI-generated.



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With AI-generated creative content sparking an ever-fiercer debate about its implications for the future of content and the creators behind it – from creatives like artists, journalists, and graphic designers to employees in all sorts of industries – Miles Astray entered an actual photo into an AI competition to prove that human-made content has not lost its relevance. The picture is the first real photo to win an AI award.

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Miles Astray

In recent years, several AI-generated photos had made international headlines by winning photo competitions, in which they were not supposed to compete, highlighting

the new technology's increasing capacities. Turning this story around, Miles Astray reveals: “I wanted to prove that nature still outdoes the machine in terms of imagination, and that there is still merit in real work from real creatives.”

Nominated by an international jury that includes members of the New York Times, Phaidon

Press, Getty Images, Centre Pompidou in Paris, Christie's, and Maddox Gallery, the picture was shortlisted for two awards: the jury's award and the people's choice award. In the end, it could convince both the jury and the public, winning the people's choice award and finishing among the jury's winners.

Miles Astray had teased the ambivalent nature of the photo on his website and social media with the caption: "We've all seen a flamingo, but have you ever seen a flamingone? Only an AI could make that up. Or did I just make that up?" He elaborates: "In fact, the scene's only prompt is an itch, followed by a belly scratch, which explains the flamingo's missing head. Of course, I feel bad about leading the jury astray,

but I think that they are professionals who might find that this jab at AI and its ethical implications outweighs the ethical implications of deceiving the viewer, which, of course is ironic because that is what AI does."

"I'm glad to see that this experiment confirmed my hypothesis: there is nothing more fantastic and creative than Mother Nature herself," said Miles Astray who has no ambition to work with AI. "I don't demonize the new technology and see its potential, but currently I see its limitations and dangers even more clearly."

After revealing the true nature of his artwork to the organizers, Astray's entry was disqualified, but with a surprising reaction: Lily Fierman, Co-Founder and Director of the 1839 Awards, remarked that she appreciates the powerful message and that it was an important and timely statement. "We hope this will bring awareness (and a message of hope) to many photographers worried about AI," said Fierman.

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Miles Astray is a multidisciplinary artist, combining photography and prose. Inspired by a slow and immersive journey around the world that started in 2012, his work aims beyond catchy, one-dimensional black or white narratives and notions of misery, happiness, modernity, and exoticism to portray authentic glimpses of here, there, and elsewhere. The result is both homage



MilesAstray | a world, a pen, a camera

and appeal. Miles' work has achieved international recognition in a variety of photo contests and publications. He is also the representative of the Young Talents Award at this year's Cewe Photo Award, the world's largest photography contest.

Media Contact:

Miles Astray

contact@milesastray.com

www.milesastray.com

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Miles Astray

MilesAstray

contact@milesastray.com

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