

Edinburgh College wins big at photography awards



Edinburgh College has swept the board at the British Institute of Professional Photography (BIPP) Scottish Region Image Awards, with students picking up 22 awards and graduates snapping up eight prizes. The haul included the prestigious Student Photographer of the Year award and the Professional Photographer of the Year prize, which was won by a former student.

As well as the Student Photographer of the Year award, HND and BA Professional Photography students claimed first places in the Advertising & Fashion, Social & Portraiture, and Open categories. They also picked up 18 second and third places and merits, meaning the college took home all available prizes in some categories.

This is the fifth year in a row that Edinburgh College photography students have had a winning streak at the awards, picking up 21 category awards and merits at last year's competition.

Antonio Castro – who studies BA Professional Photography at Edinburgh College – won the title of Student of the Year 2014 with his striking photograph portraying the themes of loneliness and love in a sterile, modern world. The image is of a man with a bouquet of red roses alone in an elevator, leaving his story open to the interpretation of the viewer.

Antonio, who is originally from Spain and is 27 years old, said: "It felt amazing and almost unreal to find out I had won Student of the Year at the British Institute of Professional Photography Awards. I really believe that winning competitions like this will help me when I eventually become a professional

and set out on my own.



“The inspiration for my image came from a number of portrait shots that I have produced with hidden and subtle narratives during my time at college. I wanted to create a scene that would trigger some kind of emotion in the viewer, which may vary depending on their own outlook and experiences. By using a single man standing alone in a lift with a bouquet of flowers, looking slightly disappointed, I wanted to leave his story and the meaning of the photograph open to interpretation.”

Four Edinburgh College graduates also grabbed the spotlight with awards in several categories. Former star student Lee Howell was crowned Professional Photographer of the Year 2014. He also claimed first prize in the Industrial, Commercial, Fashion & Advertising and Pictorial & Illustrative categories and second place in the Portraiture category. Lee has now set up his own commercial photography business in Edinburgh, which specialises in creative advertising and contemporary editorial portraiture.



Lee’s fellow graduate Angela Isac won the Press & PR category.

Edinburgh College photography lecturer Jon Lee said: “The number of students winning awards this year has been outstanding and underlines the continued quality of work produced by our photography students year after year. Winning the top prizes in the student and graduate categories is exceptional enough, but the number of other placings shows the incredible strength in depth we have here, and how our students are constantly pushing each other on to achieve greater things.

“Our graduates’ success is testament to the talent we have at

Edinburgh College and how our courses prepare students for employment in the creative industries.”

BA Professional Photography graduate Lee Howell said: “It’s just incredible to have been awarded BIPP Scottish Professional Photographer of the Year 2014. None of this would have been possible without the hard work, mentoring, nurturing and encouragement I received from my lecturers while studying at Edinburgh College. I am eternally grateful for everything that they have taught me. It was such an amazing foundation to build a career upon and it’s not an understatement to say that for me it has been life changing, and this is only the start.”

The students and graduates will now go on to compete at the BIPP UK National Awards in June.

All students’ photographic work will be exhibited at the college’s Let’s Glow creative industries festival. A full list of the events can be found [here](#). The photography events include [BA Photography Free Range Exhibition and Exposed ‘14](#), where HND and BA Professional Photography students’ work will be on display.