

# I spy with big and little eyes

## EXHIBITION

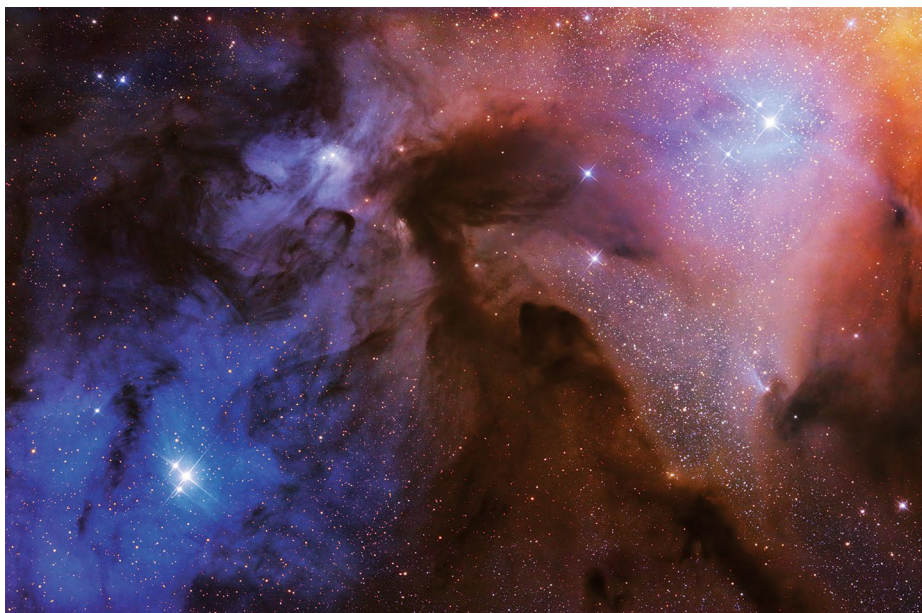
The cosmos is a photogenic place and we are spoiled by a stream of striking images from the Hubble Space Telescope and several space missions, including the recently deceased Cassini–Huygens satellite. So spare a thought for the judges of the Insight Astronomy Photographer of the Year 2017 competition, who had to select winners from over 3,800 entries from 90 countries. Fortunately,

those of us enjoying the award ceremony only needed to lean back in our comfy seats and goggle at the winning photographs displayed on the dome of the planetarium.

Each year, I look forward to the Young Astronomy Photographer of the Year awards. Most of the under-sixteen photographers are more skilful and better equipped than I am. And this year was no exception. One of the Highly Commended awards went to Andrea Imazio, aged eight. Eight! By comparison the winner of that category, at thirteen years, is an old hand with her photograph of Saturn. In fact, Olivia Williamson won one of the Highly Commended awards last year for her image of Jupiter, as well as in 2014. We can continue to expect great pictures from her.

The subject of the actual overall winner is a stunning riot of colour, the Rho Ophiuchi cloud complex, captured by Artem Mironov. His photograph (pictured) is rich and sumptuous in detail. It is almost as good as those obtained by the best telescopes. Indeed, the August cover of *Nature Astronomy* also featured Rho Ophiuchi, obtained partly using the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope.

It is perhaps unfair to compare amateurs with professionals, but amateurs with mobile telescopes can make up for their lower resolutions, which brings me to my personal favourite image this year: the winner of the People and Space section, taken by Yuri Zvezdny. Entitled *Wanderer in Patagonia* (pictured), it is a composition that somehow conveys the majesty of the Milky Way as well as the wanderer's connection to it. After the ceremony, when we were able to get up close to the high-resolution photographs mounted on light boxes, I heard from someone who knows the photographer that Zvezdny hiked for two weeks to reach his destination. I thank him for creating



Credit: The Rho Ophiuchi Clouds © Artem Mironov



Credit: Wanderer in Patagonia © Yuri Zvezdny

his breath-taking shot, and look forward to next year's competition.

Highlights and winners of the Insight Astronomy Photographer of the Year 2017 competition will be on display for free at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, UK, until 22 July 2018. The 2017 winners can also be

viewed online at <http://www.rmg.co.uk/astronomy-photographer-year-competition/2017-winners>.

Review by May Chiao

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