

# “Y/OUR Denver” presents captivating views of Denver by photographers across the city. And it’s all online.

 [theknow.denverpost.com/2018/12/16/your-denver-online-photo-exhibit/204059/](https://theknow.denverpost.com/2018/12/16/your-denver-online-photo-exhibit/204059/)

By Ray Mark Rinaldi

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Fernando Boz's "DIA Moonrise" is featured in the online photo exhibit "Y/OUR Denver."  
(Provided by CPAC)

The online photo show “Y/OUR Denver” is a lot of good things rolled into one: a contemporary art exhibit; an armchair tour of a city growing at warp speed; a primer on some of our best architecture; and nothing less than a 100-year history lesson on civic progress.

And on top of all that, it’s probably the easiest high-quality cultural offering to consume this year, since its exists on the website of the Colorado Photographic Arts Center. A couple of clicks and it’s all yours.

On display: smashing views of structural icons, like Denver International Airport, Republic Plaza and the Colorado State Capitol; intimate peeks into quiet building interiors usually off-limits to public view; and close-up shots of architectural details many of us pass by each day and hardly notice.

It’s a fast-and-deep look at two subjects — building design and photography — co-produced by major proponents of both subjects, the Denver Architecture Foundation and CPAC. The two nonprofit organizations worked together on soliciting submissions as a way of advancing their shared goal of helping people to see the city in richer ways.



Peter Collins, "Angular Light" took the award for Best Detail in the photo show "Y/OUR Denver." (Provided by CPAC)

Their process for putting together the exhibition was purposefully democratic, opening up the call for entries to both experienced pros and hobbyists, and broadening the media requirements to include "film, scanner, screen-capture, digital camera and any means of mobile photography." The only rule was that the photos had to be shot in Denver.

Just over 200 entries came in; 30 made the cut. CPAC executive director Samantha Johnston made the final selections.

"As a juror, I was looking at the architecture but also looking at the image itself, how strong was it compositionally," she said.

Naturally, Johnston's picks include images of familiar Denver gems with big-name architects at the helm, such as Gio Ponti's original building for the Denver Art Museum, a stairway designed by Charles Deaton, and Philip Johnson's Well Fargo Center, popularly known as the Cash Register Building and the most recognizable feature on the city skyline.

Beyond selecting photos for their visual qualities, she hoped the final batch of images would have some narrative to give the exhibition heft. She found that in the way the photographers organically documented both the city's past and its present-day building boom.

And so, the exhibition includes shots of time-honored icons like the Denver Botanic Garden's Tropical Conservatory, designed by Victor Hornbein and Edward D. White Jr., and South High School, designed by Fisher and Fisher. But there are also new landmarks, like the Triangle Building downtown, designed by Denver firm Anderson, Mason, Dale in 2016.

Filling in the timeline are romanticized portraits of vernacular buildings like Lake Steam Baths on Colfax Avenue, and assorted scenes of residences, churches and office buildings.

Some photographers hit the sweet spot of capturing the old and new in one setting. Michael Rieger’s “View from the Bow,” offers a street view of the Brown Palace Hotel with a ghost-like Republic Plaza, Denver’s tallest skyscraper, hovering in the background.



Hailey Cothran’s “Bold” focuses on a more colorful side of local architecture. (Provided by CPAC)

Similarly, the State Capitol holds its place in the background of the recently built Ralph L. Carr Colorado Judicial Center in Richard Eisen’s photo “Gold Dome.”

For the most part, the exhibition showcases familiar structures, but often in surprising dimensions. That’s certainly the case with the Wells Fargo Center, the subject of multiple photos.

Photographer Francisca Morgan’s “Iconic Site One” captures the building in stark black-and-white, presenting a view that highlights the structure’s heft and the unrelenting grid pattern on its facade.

The same building is frozen as pure reflection in Roy and Lee Goettling’s “Reflections.” Their image captures the 50-story high-rise’s well-known silhouette as it appears in the glassy surface of another building that stands adjacent to it.

Paired together, the two Wells Fargo photos give Denver a new way of seeing — and appreciating — a landmark; it is functional and monolithic, but also a part of a community of buildings that all contribute to our downtown.

“Y/OUR Denver” isn’t a complete picture of Denver architecture. The exhibit spotlights the best angles of our most handsome structures, then and now. It’s an optimistic spin on what we’ve built over the past century. It overlooks the gritty reality that we’ve also added plenty of unattractive and unlivable elements to the local landscape. In that way, it can feel like urban propaganda, a bit on the booster side.



Kevin Mohatt’s “Glass Ceiling” won the prize for Best in Show at “Y/OUR Denver.” (Provided by CPAC)

But it’s just as easy to enjoy it as a celebration. Buildings present physical evidence of a city’s ambitions, they measure its self-esteem and project its image to the world, and there is a lot to be proud of in the photo lineup on display.

It’s not just another online photo gallery to buzz through. “Y/OUR Denver” offers plenty of good examples of how beautiful design and construction can improve quality of life. It encourages us to look around in new ways and inspires us to build better going forward.

*“Y/OUR” Denver will be available through Dec. 31 on the website of the Colorado Photographic Arts Center. The address: [cpacphoto.org](http://cpacphoto.org).*