



# AGENCY EMPLOYEE LANDS ‘SIGNATURE EXHIBIT’ AT PHOTO FESTIVAL

By Sam Rousso, DCMA Public Affairs

There are countless examples of a seemingly Hollywood-ish story, where someone parlays an interest or hobby into fame and fortune. The first step to making it happen, however, is exposing that talent.

For James Gonzales, Defense Contract Management Agency NASA Product Operations software specialist, the field was photography. “I’ve been an amateur photographer for pretty much all my life,” he said. “I started to take and develop pictures at the age of 12.”

Last year, Gonzales decided to enter San Antonio’s photo festival, which draws the work of photographers locally, nationally and internationally. “Oddly enough, my first thought wasn’t about how to enter the festival but, rather, whether my work was even good enough to try and enter,” he confessed.

Although Gonzales had done some wedding photography before, the work he wanted to exhibit — the work that meant something to him — was abstract work and not the typical photojournalistic or photorealistic type of pictures often entered in the festival.



*James Gonzales, Defense Contract Management Agency NASA Product Operations software specialist, poses with his photographs exhibited at a San Antonio photo festival recently.*

Before entering the exhibition, Gonzales floated a trial balloon and showed his work to the curator. In short, he was advised not to enter but was offered constructive criticism. “Two years later, and after considerable work, I went back to the curator. He not only liked many of the photographs, but he asked to curate my show and made my show a signature exhibit of the festival,” Gonzales remarked.

While he was elated, this development created some conundrums for the budding photographer. “New questions appeared on the horizon: how large to make the pictures; what order to

put them in; how to present them; how many in an edition; who would frame them; what new materials to get; how to publicize the event; what to say in interviews?” he wondered. “It’s a good thing I had acquired good project management skills as part of my DCMA job!”

The opening was a thrill for Gonzales. “Attendees came from the city museums, photography teachers from local colleges and universities and the local newspaper. Even my supervisor showed up,” he remarked.

Overall, Gonzales described the experience as “awesome, and it left me with a great feeling of professionalism and achievement.” ■

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