

## 2014 Photography Essay Winner

### **Chris Burkard**

#### *Arctic Surfing*

"The ocean in the Arctic is cold even looking at it with snow and ice everywhere in sight. With the air temperature in the teens (°F) and water hovering above freezing it takes a big commitment to paddle out. In 2012 I traveled to the Lofoten Islands, Norway with Dane Gudauskas, Sam Hammer, and Keith Malloy; braving the harsh elements in the hopes of being rewarded with a new kind of adventure. Sometimes we would wake to clear skies and rush to go surfing but have to retreat at the onset of a storm. Fulfilling our hopes, we were rewarded by the waves as Sam Hammer demonstrated pulling into a tube, and Dane Gudauskas showcased boosting off the lip during a sunset session. What we didn't anticipate were the moments in between surfing that left us with lasting memories. Shortly after surf outings we rushed to the "stump", a Norwegian hot tub that brought life back into frozen limbs. Keith Malloy preferred to leave his wetsuit on in the Jacuzzi® and quench his thirst with a cold one. A lasting memory and fitting end to our long days were the spectacular northern lights shows that danced above snowy peaks while we had little to do but stare in awe at the magic. In the Arctic you never know what to expect. You can be in a blizzard one day seeking shelter and then scoring some of the best waves of your life the next. The beauty amidst the struggle is what makes it all worthwhile."

Chris Burkard is a self-taught photographer and artist, based in Central Coast California, whose work is layered by surf, outdoor, lifestyle and travel subjects. At the age of 28, Burkard has established himself as a known name in the surf and outdoor industries, accomplished a deep body of work, held staff and senior photographer positions and has been recognized continually for his distinct creative compositions. Currently, Burkard serves as Senior Staff Photographer for Surfer magazine. With the ocean as his main muse, Burkard has consistently captured this subject in timeless and expansive photographic impressions, utilizing the tool of surfing to approach the ocean's intricate personality and then extending out to include the human personalities who draw meaning from this same source. Searching for wild, remote destinations and offbeat landscapes, Burkard portrays the humble placement of the human in contrast to nature.

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#### **Jury Comments:**

Chris Burkard's *Arctic Surfing* essay tackles a sport that is commonly spectacular, but takes it into a location that is also surprising and otherworldly. Each image captures a masterfully executed moment, is visually and conceptually distinct from the others, and fits together with just four others to tell a well-rounded and compelling adventure story. Not a word is needed and although we do see just enough, we are left begging for more.





