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New Brunswick photos shine at two displays in the city

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City shutterbugs' best shots are on display this month at the New Brunswick Free Public Library and Alfa Art Gallery.

The photos are part of the library's second annual photography contest, dubbed "Xpress Yourself," which asked area residents to photograph the people and sights of the city.

"The contest is just to engage the community and create community and to encourage more participants to use the library," said Kavita Pandey, the librarian overseeing the contest.

Fifty-four photos were submitted this year. The winner of the contest was Pablo Cosme II of Trenton, who submitted a photo called "Light Reflection" featuring rays of sunlight streaming down on a fountain. Second place went to Miriam LeClair of Milltown for a photo of the Court Tavern at night. In third place was Tamanna Mohapatra of North Brunswick for a photo of the rail bridge over the Raritan River.

The entries are being displayed in two exhibitions. The winners and some of the entries are at the Alfa Art Gallery, 108 Church St., through Sunday. The rest are in the Carl T. Valenti Community Room at the library, 60 Livingston Ave.

At a reception for the exhibit late last month, Cynthia Blue of Rahway said she entered three photographs this year.

"I had entered the contest last year and I really like photography a lot," she said. "I want to improve."

Blue said she really likes to photograph flowers. Library Director Bob Belvin said that was common this year.

"This year we had a lot of close-ups, and a lot more flowers," he said.

Erone Stewart, a city resident who said he came to the exhibit just as a casual observer, said he liked a lot of the photos.

"I'm still trying to take them all in," he said. "They're very interesting. I would say they all look pretty good to me."

The contest was funded in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and by a grant from the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission.