Floods, fires, Zika and a hidden portrait

August's sharpest science shots, selected by Nature's photo team.

Daniel Cressey

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Zika in Cuba



Desmond Boylan for Nature

Clouds of pesticide, such as this one, regularly waft through Cuba's neighbourhoods. It is one of the measures that has kept the Zika virus at bay, although the disease has now arrived even in Cuba. Desmond Boylan, who accompanied *Nature* reporter Sara Reardon on a recent trip to the island, took this shot earlier in 2016.

Burning problem



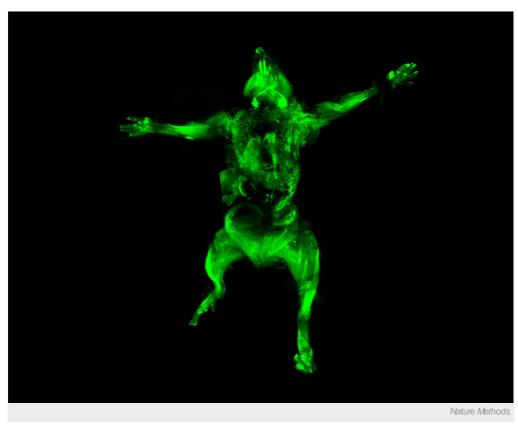
Drought in California is becoming an annual occurrence, which means that devastating wildfires are too. In this 17 August photo, embers from a blaze are seen near Keenbrook.

Water damage



While California longs for rain, people in other parts of the United States are cursing devastating floods. Thousands fled rising water levels in Louisiana this month, shown here at Denham Springs in the state. Several people have been killed and a state of emergency has been declared.

Ultimate disco



Ali Ertürk at the Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich in Germany and his colleagues have created a technique called ultimate DISCO which removes pigments and lipids from the tissues of dead animals. Their method also shrinks bodies by up to 65%, making it

possible to image whole animals using a technique called light-sheet microscopy.

Borderlands



Davide Gaglio captured this sunrise at Kgalagadi Park, which lies on the border between South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. It won the overall prize in the BMC Ecology Image Competition 2016.

DNA labyrinth



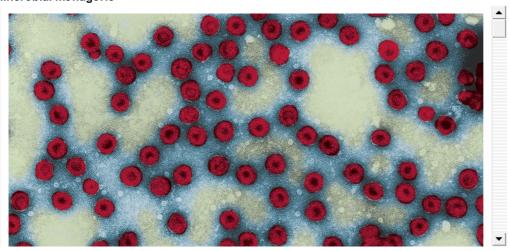
This labyrinth is made of closely packed DNA molecules, created on a biochip by a team who have developed a method to make onedimensional fibres 20 nanometres wide and 70 micrometres long.

Hidden Degas



Researchers probing the circa 1880s *Portrait of a Woman* by Edgar Degas with X-rays have revealed another woman's portrait under the oil paint.

Microbial menagerie



Environmental microbiologist Marilyn Roossinck presents the story of 101 viruses in her recently published book, and shows portraits of them in electron-microscopy images that *Nature*'s reviewer found "have more than a passing resemblance to the paintings of Jackson Pollock and Wassily Kandinsky".

Blooming corpse



The NYBG Corpse Flower Bloom – Time Lapse
New York Botanical Garden

This time-lapse video shows the New York Botanical Gardens' *Amorphophallus titanum* coming into bloom and then collapsing. Although it looks pretty, this huge blossom is called the corpse flower for a reason – it stinks to high heaven.

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