

Nelson Camera Club
August comp (B-grade Digital)

16 images

Title	Comments	Result
Bee on lavender	I really enjoyed the contrast between the tack-sharp bee and front flower stalk, against the lovely soft background. There's a little over-exposed path on the bee's abdomen which is a little distracting - underexposing by a stop or so might help avoid this, and the darker areas created should be recoverable in post. Beware of over sharpening images, there are starting hints of jpeg faceting around the edges, but it's minor	accepted
Boat watching Kaikoura	I love the concept here - the seals watching the people - including one apparently watching the photographer. The depth of field used has meant the middle-distance rocks and the boat are acceptably sharp, but the foreground seals are dropping out of focus; They occupy a large proportion of the image and this soft focus is quite distracting, I feel the story would be stronger with a larger depth of field (larger f-stop number) The positioning of the boat is good, though a little more space in front of its bow would be nice, so it's not directing me out of the frame	accepted
Brick house, Madagascar	This image of a brick building mid-construction gives me a nice insight into the construction methods in Madagascar - the scaffolding method is particularly interesting! The overcast sky has helped avoid any bright highlights but has also created very flat, even lighting across the whole image, which has reduced any feeling of depth or '3D-ness' about the scene, and I feel that the whole building is leaning over a bit to the left. I would like to see more of the setting around this building, to draw me through the image.	not accepted
Colourful Cutlery	The diffraction of light through the plastic cutlery and glass make some gorgeous colours, the tall, vertical format also works well to accentuate the shape here. On my screen the image comes across as very dark and I think a little playing in post-processing to brighten it up would create a lot more impact. Perhaps removing the small distracting area of light falling on the table surface would also help reinforce the story of form and colour. For me, is a nice still-life image that has lots of interesting features to explore.	accepted
Easy pickings	well done to get this macro image of a fly on a gerbera. The depth of field is quite shallow for such a close-up shot and I would suggest that upping the ISO to allow a larger F-number would help get more of the fly in focus. Regardless, the front edge of the fly is nicely sharp and that's the most important part for me. Overall, the image is quite dark - I think increasing the exposure/brightness a bit would bring it to life even more. I enjoyed the colours in the body and the simple background works well to give me context without being distracting	merit

Grumpy Face	Wow, what an expression. Beautifully captured and very tastefully processed to really bring out the atmosphere here - I love the texture in the hand, and what a great pose with his arm breaking the symmetry of his face without blocking the eyes - the gateway to the soul - and what experiences there must be in such a young face. My only suggestion on this is to perhaps consider feathering the vignette a little - I find it a bit distinctive and as such does pull my eye away from his slightly. The grime and snot on his face all add to the story of his life, and the high viewpoint works really well to accentuate how young and small he is. Just a minor note to finish - The National Portrait comp closes on Sept 30th (detail on the PSNZ website), I strongly encourage the photographer to enter this!	Honours
Izzy	Really nice focus in this portrait of Izzy. The depth of field is very nice to concentrate my attention on her face and expression. Take care with the background - the soft blur works really well, but finding a more neutral, complementary backdrop would help elevate this portrait even further	accepted
Kahikatea Swamp	The swamp part of the title doesn't come across to me - perhaps this is an image of reflected trees in a mirror-perfect pool, but without the context I am speculating here. From my perspective as the viewer it's hard to tell. The image is dissected by a central tree trunk, and both sides contain a lot of branches - my eye doesn't really find an anchor from which to explore. The focus is good and the warm, slightly desaturated feel suits the concept of the swampy forest, just a little more context is required to let me explore the scene.	not accepted
Living on the streets	The framing of our main subject with the umbrella is a really nice way of guiding my eye around the image. The dog's rather bored expression is captivating, and his implied eye line directs me past his water bowl, along to the Tesco's carrier bag, and then up the umbrella handle. I particularly like the black comedy of our homeless hero sheltering beneath a global real estate giant's umbrella. The clean honest processing is nice, I wonder if a monochrome conversion might help highlight the interesting textural contrasts and remove some of the colour distraction of the carrier bag handle?	accepted
Loop de Loop	The curls of paper and dramatic colour palette make a really enjoyable study of shapes and lighting here - reminds me of a lava lamp I had back in uni. I enjoyed exploring around these shapes, especially the use of three separate groups, the brightest of which has three loops of gradually increasing size - my eye travels counter-clockwise around these features in the middle of the image. I might consider removing a tiny sliver off the top of the image, to remove the hint of edge top-left.	Honours
Magnolia	The centre of this older, decaying flower is clearly the main subject here - It's central placement within the frame and the nice depth of field work well to isolate it from a rather busy background. The white vignette I find a little heavy, though I do like the use of white rather than black, it suits the lighter feel of these flower heads. To reduce the contrasty, colourful background and help concentrate my eye on the centre still further, it might be possible to try slightly desaturating it, using a radial filter perhaps	accepted

Morepork	(note: image is 1080x1620px) Nice catch-lights in the eyes and good focus help me engage with this beautiful native bird. I find the background rather distracting, with several bright highlights - the creamy-white branches, and the bright green spot upper left - as this is an open competition, cloning these out or significantly darkening them is definitely allowed. The branch in front of him is a little distracting too, but he (she?) is looking around it, and it does give me an opportunity to see the rather scary talons. Unfortunately, the image has been submitted outside competition dimensions, so is not accepted.	not accepted
Punga fern frond, Queen's gardens	(note: image is 1080x1120px) Native fern koru and unfurling leaves make great subjects for macro images. This frond fills the frame, and has been placed square to the lens, to help keep as much of it in the plane of focus as possible. There seems to be some odd haloing and jpeg faceting around the edges of the subject, and some areas of rapid change-of focus, suggesting perhaps over-sharpening or focus-stacking issues. I like the plain simple background. Unfortunately, the image has been submitted outside competition dimensions, so is not accepted.	not accepted
Tomtit, Brook Sanctuary	A nice pose and simple composition allow me to enjoy the nice feather detail in this tomtit. It seems that the areas around the bird have been significantly darkened down and blurred - It helps keep me focussed on the central subject, but I think that a slightly more subtle, reduced effect might help avoid the risk of distractions, particularly the brighter halo around the top of the head. nice framing and a simple background work well.	merit
Welcome to America	This graphic monochrome image of the iconic statue of liberty has created a fascinating view - I really enjoyed this unique viewpoint, creating a semi-abstract graphical image that also has just enough context to place the subject. I would love a little more space along the top of the frame - perhaps content-aware fill? I did really enjoy exploring the textures and rivets in the folds of the statue, adding extra little details to find as I explored around the image	honours
What goes up must come down	A lovely slow shutter speed has created soothing cascades of water in the river. Being the brightest area, my eye goes straight here, and then downstream to the foot of the image. From here I get to imagine walking up the weather-worn steps back to the top of the falls. The bushes and trees make a really nice frame around this visual journey, and the tones of the image are beautiful. My pick for best digital image (overall) in this comp.	Honours