

Assessment Sheet for Nelson Camera Club, May-June 2022

By Alison Viskovic

Thank you for inviting me to assess your images. I enjoyed looking at them and commend your members on finding interesting subjects and treating them in a variety of ways. As always there were some images on the Accepted/Merit borderline or the Merit/Honours borderline – I hope I have got the balance of numbers about where your guidelines suggest.

Title	Grade	Comments
A Grade Prints		
1 Chaos in Yesteryear's Classroom	A	Chaos is certainly right, and if I look into the image I see the sorts of school desks and chairs used from about 1960s onwards, and windows and display boards. For me, it seems almost too busy for a feel of classroom to come across, and the overall design does not have a clear pattern or centre of interest. The colour palette is interesting, and I think this idea was worth experimenting with.
2 Dog Tired Roger Ball	H	A very well composed monochrome, effective angle of lighting, and details very well focused. The diagonal line of the dog balances nicely with the framing lines of the wood and rails. I'm not sure the title feels right – yes, the dog is lying down, but its gaze on the photographer is very alert, not sleepy!
3 Don't Mess with Me	A	This is a striking triptych, very dark with three variant images of a skull, and the black mounting adds to the threatening feel. The light areas have a painted effect - I'm not clear how much of that is the original source and how much from post-production effects. I feel the centre and right images work well, but the left one is not so clear. Overall this is very dramatic, but I'm not sure how "photographic" the result is.
4 Expectant Mum	A	The facial expression says pleasure and pride, this image has a happy feel associated with the coming family event. Looking at it technically, the composition seems to fall into two halves – the face in the upper area, and the hands and revealed body in the lower half. Maybe a less directly frontal composition might have worked better? The depth of focus is fine, and the face and clothes are well lit, but the lower part feels a bit too bright, probably closer to the light source, so it could be burned in a bit.

		Overall, I see this as a family photo rather than a salon potential.
5 Fish On	A	Here I see a well-exposed, well-focused view of a flowing river with native bush beyond – and then I see at the edge a fisherman with bent rod, and then see his line stretched right across the image. His stance and the line suggest a fish has been hooked, but we don't see the fish – it's left to our imagination. The scene is very realistic, but the overall composition tends to emphasise the horizontal bands of the river and bush, because of the placement and relative size of the fisherman.
6 Georgia Harris Margaret Harris	M	This portrait feels very spooky, a bit unreal, and the monochrome treatment adds to that feeling. The face is placed very high in the composition, and is much brighter than the darkened hands and the rest of image. The dark effects round the eyes seem to suggest an injury, which gives me a sense of unease. The overall effect looks to me the way a partial darkroom solarisation used to look – I think that whatever post-production has been used has certainly produced a striking and moody effect.
7 Honey Bee (Apis mellifera) Tom Young	M	A close view of a bee, enlarged well over real size, makes a strong impact that is enhanced by the bright vegetation and dark background. The bee has been well caught in its position on the vegetation, providing context. It is a pity the petals to the right are so light and bright, as I find them distracting. Also a pity that the nearer wing is blurred (that may be the effect of focus or movement of both). Overall a well composed and well produced image.
8 Lake Benmore	A	The title of this image emphasises the lake, but for me the composition seems to fall into four parts: the strongly detailed foreground rocks and vegetation; the darker, less detailed area of the lake in the centre; the background mountains and sky; and the dark almost featureless area of cliff on the left. I find my eye keeps moving round those parts of the image. I think that the photographer might try cropping about half of the foreground, and lightening or cropping that dark cliff area, then the lake would become much

		more the centre of interest. Lots of potential in this scene, but his image may not do it justice.
9 Last Light on Lindis Caroline Foster	H	This image is well titled, it tells me the story of what is going on, and explains the areas of light and darkness. I find my interest focuses first on the main lit area, which is well placed in the overall composition, but there is still detail and interest in the contrasting shadowed areas and sky. I think the wide panorama shape works well for this image. Focus, exposure and colour all work well together.
10 Lichen Coated Gate	NA	This image needs the title for me to know what I am looking at. Overall the image seems to lack colour, contrast and crispness of focus, except for the strange intrusion of a bit of metal – a large nail-head? There was potential here to create a much more vibrant image through greater contrast and colour, and perhaps changing the angle of view so the lines made stronger diagonals. Even turn it into something more abstract? For A grade this is not awarded.
11 Pupu Track Jean Willis	M	This view feels like a real piece of New Zealand bush, with a boardwalk curving through it. The pathway gives a sense of perspective as well as a centre of interest. The focus, exposure and colour have all been handled very well.
12 Resting Place	A	Soft lighting and warm colours make this a pleasant image to look at. Exposure and focus have been handled well. The title draws my attention to a small seat area within an image of a path winding through woodland. But for me, the overall composition is not strong, as my eye tends to wander among the various lighter areas, and the seat referred to in the title is not significant enough to be the centre of interest.
13 Smoko Time Dianna Hambleton	H	“Smoko” sounds casual but this image looks very deliberate and posed. A monochrome portrait, it has a well-balanced off-centre composition, very effective exposure and focus, and a contrast level that enhances fine details against a dark background. Overall a very strong image.
14 Spooners Tunnel	A	A well balanced image - a very symmetrical design with lines leading from the edges in to the figure and two bikes near the centre. The lighting conditions

		range from dark shadows to bright sunlight, with the shadows well reduced but the sunlit areas left a bit too bright. The depth of focus is well handled and there is a good sense of perspective. Well done for the lighting conditions – the image makes this look an interesting place to visit.
15 The Lordly Arum	A	This image gives a lovely side view of an arum, with droplets of water round the upper rim. There are subtle tones and colours in the lower part of the flower, but the further edge of the top feels not quite sharp enough. I like the simple, off-centre composition but feel that the upper edge of the flower is too close to the upper border of the image, and so that area feels feels crowded. This was nearly a Merit.
16 Velvet Rose Irene Callaghan	M	Here I see the centre of a rusty-red coloured rose, enlarged to give almost abstract effect of swirling shapes. Exposure and focus work well; the texture feels rather grainy and contrasty, possibly as a result of post-processing, but seems to suit the overall effect. The square format also suits the semi-abstract treatment. Overall, a striking image.
A Grade Digital		
1 Astrophotography	NA	Here I see starry night sky above some treetops, with some slight clouds across parts of the image. The exposure and focus seem appropriate, but compositionally there is little sense of design or a centre of interest. I commend the photographer for trying this, but suggest you consider looking for a foreground that has more shape or frames the sky, and a more interesting area of sky, such as the Milky Way.
2 Autumn Glory	A	Well titled, this image has a nice warm feeling as I look at a roadside lined with trees and fallen leaves. There is a good sense of depth, and the brightest tree makes a strong centre of interest. Exposure and focus spot on – well seen and captured.
3 Buddy Jean Willis	M	Buddy's gaze at the photographer makes a strong impression – very direct, rather inscrutable. The exposure and focus are excellent and so both colour and texture details are really well captured. The eyes

		are lovely, and the cat looks so real. I find the cushion colours behind on the left rather distracting – perhaps they could be darkened a bit, or maybe the left side cropped a bit. With a more consistent dark background this would have been an Honours.
4 Cabbage tree in bloom	A	A nice clear image that is exactly what its title says, a cabbage tree in bloom, and it has a nice bush backdrop. The focus is fine, and but overall it feels slightly over-exposed, and more so in the river shingle area. The composition is very formal, and so feels rather static – if the tree were less centrally placed the image might look more dynamic. Given the title, maybe a closer view could have emphasised the flowers more?
5 Cloud Over Nelson Haven Barry Doig	H	The photographer has seen an interesting cloud, and made a very dramatic image out of it. The contrast level and the strong blue colours make the cloud shape stand out well. The low horizon draws our attention to the large area of sky, yet there is also some interest in the lower area with the boats – and the brightest boat is nicely placed to balance the bright cloud shapes. Technically fine and compositionally interesting.
6 Cuppa Time Irene Callaghan	M	I love the effect of the smoke and steam in this image – it makes me wonder if there is some magic going on. The exposure and depth of focus feel right, for both foreground and background. There are lots of interesting details here, but for me the main interest is actually the hazy area – well seen and well caught. (Maybe crop the bottom or darken the bright area there?)
7 Ebb and Flow Irene Callaghan	A	The shapes we can find in water surfaces always intrigue me, and this image has added to those shapes through post-processing. I see remnants of curved reflections and foam, that have had colour changes and some reduction of details to end up with an abstract design. I find my eye does wander, not finding a centre of interest, and the edges that taper off into nothing are a bit disconcerting – cropping so that there are more definite edges could strengthen

		this image. I commend the photographer for experimenting with this.
8 Fern of many shades	A	This reminds me of a stream I knew where ferns hung over dark water and shafts of sunlight came through and lit just some of the leaves. Given the conditions I think the overall exposure and focus have been handled well, the angle of the leaf is dynamic, and the warm colour makes for a centre of interest. The photographer might consider burning in, or cloning out, the bright white area on the lower border.
9 Floating Bubble	NA	There are some interesting lines and subtle colours in the bubble that is the heart of this image, but no area looks really sharp, and the divided light/dark background does not enhance the subject. If the bubble were sharply focused against an all-dark background it would be much more dramatic – and maybe cropping to a square might also contribute to the composition.
10 Full Moon Rebecca Bowater	M	I like the soft, dreamy, almost romantic feel of this image. The photographer has caught that time late in the day when colours are not quite gone, and the full moon is low in the sky and so has a warm tone from the atmosphere. The lines of hills in different shades, the low horizon and the off-centre moon come together to make a pleasing composition.
11 Kaimanawa Mare & Foal Caroline Foster	M	This feels as though the photographer has captured a high summer moment – the mare and foal are moving through a sunny scene, framed by long grass. We see enough to know what is going on, and while the foal is partly masked by the mare together they make a unified shape in the image. Exposure and focus are spot on. I like the way lines in the horses (such as the mare’s neck and mane and the tails) echo the angles lines of the blown grasses.
12 Kingfisher at the Estuary	A	The soft colours and lack of strong contrast make this a very peaceful scene, which frames the stronger shape and colours of the kingfisher. We get a good sense of the waterside context – I like the reduced depth of focus for the background. The overall scene feels a bit over-exposed to me, but may reflect the lighting you get from a high overcast.

13 Lake Ruatanawhia	A	A clearly focussed, well exposed view of the lake, with buildings and hills in the background, and a buoy in the lower centre. I like the sense of calmness given by the expanse of water. The buoy is such a different shape, and such a strong yellow colour in contrast to the blues, that it tends to become the centre of interest and distract me from the lake as the main subject. If the buoy had been a bit smaller and perhaps placed on one of the intersections of the thirds, I think it could have contributed without dominating so much.
14 Maestro	A	A striking image of a violinist performing outdoors. The setting is some steps with a wall behind, and a panel of the wall makes an L-shape background for figure in front. Some hand movement tells us that he is performing, and his gaze along the line of the violin adds to the composition, giving a strong profile view. The colour palette is interesting - the figure clothed in black, skin tones and violin in a dull bronze, and grey stonework. A pity there is a bag on the side – it does not add to the composition. Also a pity the image has been over-sharpened, leaving white lines round the edges, especially of the violinist. (Nearly a Merit)
15 Mapua	A	A clear aerial view of a panoramic scene - a settled peninsula area, coastal waterways, and background of hills and mountains. The side lighting from the sun provides shape and texture, the focus and exposure are fine, and the converging shapes of the peninsula and left-hand waterway lead us into the image as a whole. This looks a lovely area to come for a holiday!
16 Morning coffee Ian Grant	M	My immediate response to this was - lovely shapes and lines – but what a pity there’s an umbrella pole intruding at the top. I like the near monochrome effect, with the contrast of the coloured coffee in the black and white cup. I like the diagonal lines of the grainy wooden table, crossed by the alternate angles of the spoon and fork. I think some post-production has been done to emphasise structure as well as the colour effects, and this has worked well. (I wonder why someone ate all the cake but has not touched

		their coffee yet?) Very nearly honours – try again without that pole?
17 Onekaka Wharf Tom Young	A	A very peaceful scene, that seems to fall into two parts – the foreground shingle beach and water, with sharp details; and then the further shingle bank, wharf remnant poles, sea horizon and vaguely cloudy sky. The focus and exposure seem appropriate in both areas but the upper edges of the poles look as though they are over-sharpened a bit. Maybe cropping the bottom and left sides would give more attention to the wharf that the title says is the subject?
18 Punakaiki Drizzle Dianna Hambleton	H	I love the mood of this image, created by the shapes of the damp rocks and wet vegetation, the near-flat water and the reduced colours – all because of the drizzle. This has an interesting composition because of the way the lines of the foreground shapes lead to the central water with the reflection that links it in turn to the distant cliff and trees. The little island and the rocks in its reflection make a nice balance and emphasise the horizon. Focus and exposure fine for the conditions – I really like the calm but strong feel of this image.
19 Reflechie Graeme Skinner	H	I turned to my French dictionary to check the title, and find it can mean deliberate, reflective or thoughtful. So that is very suitable for this image, which has a sense of reflection in the repetition of the base image, but the facial expression also feels calm and thoughtful. Very interesting treatment – the texture gives me a sense of old stone, as though this might be some antique or memorial. I commend the photographer on a well chosen original image and on the postproduction work that brought together the final effect.
20 Road to Nowhere	A	Well seen effect of a lit road that just seems to fizzle out where the lights stop. Exposure, focus and colour all suitable for the conditions. The photographer might consider cloning out spots of light other than the street lights, so that there really does appear to be nothing beyond the lit area.
21 Sentinel for the Sailors Caroline Foster	H	The sentinel lighthouse is well framed by some lighter clouds in a dark, menacing sky, and the blown grasses

		of the foreground. Interesting that this is a land view of a lighthouse – not the view that sailors would get. Exposure and focus fine, and in this instance I think the central composition works well, giving a sense of stability and safety. Everything comes together very effectively in this image.
22 Storm Brewing Margaret Harris	M	The monochrome treatment suits the mood of this image. The composition falls into a series of bands sloping slightly across the image and building up till the foreboding, stormy sky is reached. The different details in the bands add interest and a sense of depth, as well as showing us the context.
23 They travel, horse and rider	A	An interesting image - horse and rider on a path through some pine trees form the centre of interest. There is a blurred effect, probably from deliberate camera movement but maybe some other process. That seems to be vertical and I am not sure that it emphasises a sense of travel for me – maybe a more horizontal shift would do that? Pleasant colours and contrast level, good exposure. It does look a bit as though a tree is growing out of the rider's head, and a bit of lighter warmer colour on the right is a bit distracting – could be cloned out?
24 Time for a cuppa Graeme Skinner	M	I really like the composition, exposure, lighting and colour palette of this image – the light through the window onto the face is very effective, and the light outside is not too bright compared with indoors, as so often happens. One thing puzzles me – he has a book and the cuppa, yet he seems to be looking out the window rather than at them – a different title might make something of that?
25 Tuatara	A	The main part of this image of a tuatara is clear, well lit, and mostly in focus – lots of interest there, especially round the eye. I find the out-of-focus lower part of the animal distracting, and wonder if cropping that area, plus some of the large out-of-focus background area to the right, could strengthen the main part of the image.
26 Wharariki Evening Roger Ball	H	This framing of this scene is really effective, with both framing and the scene having interesting details. The sunburst draws our attention to the horizon, the

		<p>headland, and a key area of the cloud patterns. The solitary figure adds scale, and its position at an angle from the sun is well balanced. Very well seen and composed – but some bright edges suggest this has been slightly over-sharpened.</p>
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