

Artichoke

An intriguing & artistic photo. The focus, exposure & detail are good, and the post processing suits the subject very well. Compositionally the image has some tension, this is due to the subject being close too, but not exactly in the centre of the frame. I assume this was an intentional decision by the photography to balance the weight of the shoulder in the image. For me I feel like there is just a little too much negative space in the image and would have preferred the image to be square.

Accepted

Boom

A very nice capture. The exposure is spot on, with the fireworks making a lovely display. I particularly like the silhouette of the people in the lower right corner.

There are a few light blurred areas, which I assume are smoke, and two little lights on the bottom left edge that cause some distraction. I would suggest trying to clone these out. Compositionally the image would have been stronger if the fireworks were central in the frame. This could be corrected somewhat by cropping a little from the left or even extending the frame on the right and cloning into this space. Overall a good image, of a difficult to shoot subject.

Accepted

Chinese New Year

What a pretty young lady! I like the way she is looking straight at the photographer with a lovely friendly expression. Unfortunately, there is a bright red piece of fabric directly behind her head and the background is very bright with some detail, this draws the viewer's eye up and out of the image.

With portrait photography it is usually best to have your aperture wide-open e.g f2.8-4.0. This will soften the background and help remove distractions. As this young lady is sitting it is also a good idea to get down and shoot from closer to eye level.

Not Awarded

Chrysanthemum

This is a lovely image. The detail across the whole flower is very good. The composition and exposure are also good. I love the solid black background, this suit the white flower beautifully and makes it pop.

Honours

Dahlia

There is lovely detail in this image and the composition is good. I like the small bud off to the left, this adds a little more interest. The only issue I have, is that it is under exposed. I would suggest increasing the exposure in post processing to fix this issue.

Accepted

Dancing Feathers

An interesting artistic photo that has a nice sense of motion. This image is nicely exposed with good contrast. The feeling I get from the image is very Sci-Fi, maybe a black hole with a galaxy rotating into it!

I cannot see any technical errors, and the image is a nice piece of Art. In the right setting this would look great as a large print been displayed in a darkish environment.

Merit

Godwits Mot

A nice capture of an abundance of wildlife in its natural environment. The number of birds and activity has been well documented.

The image does not feel level to me, this may be to do with the slope of the beach, and I would suggest rotating the image to balance this slope somewhat. I also find the post in the lower right of the image distracting and as there is not much to see in the sandy foreground, I would suggest cropping the bottom third of the image off.

Not Awarded

Hall of the Mountain King

This image has a lovely feeling of Grandeur. It was only after looking at the image for a second or so that I noticed the sailing ship. It is the size of the ship against the mountains that gives the image the feeling it has. The timing with the placement of the ship is great, in any other position the ship would have been lost.

The mountain behind the ship has nice light on it. A viewer's eye is always drawn to the lightest or highest contrast areas of an image, so your eye naturally goes to the bright sky, which leads onto the mountains in the distance. Unfortunately, this does take the eye away from the foreground, which I find a little dark and I would suggest some selective dodging in this area to make the ship pop out from the background and draw the eye to it.

Accepted

I don't want to look

I like the concept behind this image, it has been very well constructed and has a lot of promise. For me the symmetry is a little off. I believe the placement of the images has been done to create a bit of tension. It is not the placement that worries me, it is the weight in the images that does. My thoughts are that in each of the smaller images the size of the head should be close to the same, and there should be the same amount of negative space around each of the heads.

As the model's shoulders are bare, I would prefer that there was no headband. I also think the image is a little under exposed.

There is real potential here for a great composite, the model is beautiful, and idea is very cool.

Accepted

Lovely Lindis

A lovely landscape of a stunning part of our country. The path that leads the viewer into the image works well. This leads you through the image to the small hill in the distance, your eye then travels up to larger hills in the background.

When I first looked at the image, I did think it was a shame that there was not more light on the top of the hills. Upon reflection, I believe this may add to the image, as it gives a bit of an ominous feeling and adds some drama. The right of the image is very light in comparison to the left and I would suggest darkening the right side a little to balance this.

Merit

Millie

An interesting thought-provoking image. I believe that this is a composite image, and the original background has been replaced. I am not sure that the blending of the subject with the background works for me. I find this a little distracting. Millie seems to be happy and has a lovely smile, however I do think the direction she is looking and the way her hand is pressing on her face is not as nice as it could have been. What a beautiful hand and smile she has though.

Not Awarded

Monaco Sunset

What a vibrant sunset, this is the sort of sunset we all wish to see when we are out there with our Camera's.

The image has good depth of field and is sharp from the foreground to the sky. While the sky is lovely, I do find the foreground too dominant in the frame. One of the recommendations of landscape photography, is to avoid having the horizon in the centre, which this image has. To better balance the image I would suggest cropping a few inches from the bottom of the image.

The foreground in front of the dingy does not add anything to the image and does not need to be there. It would also have been nice if the dingy was on an angle to the photographer rather than fully side on.

Accepted

Panama Shipping Dilemma

I really like the treatment the photographer has used with this image. The muted colour palette and the use of a texture works very well. There is nice detail in the ship & I particularly like the smoke coming from the ships smoke stacks. I am not sure about the image title as I can't really see a dilemma, unless it is the small craft in front of the tug boat. In my opinion this small craft (if that is what it is) does not need to be in the image and I would suggest cloning this out. Still a very nice image.

Merit

Playground Chimes

Another interesting photo. The image appears to have been purposely underexposed to make the bark in the background less noticeable & to highlight the main subject. I think this was a good choice, as it has simplified the image. While I don't mind the slope of the subject, I do think this could have been accentuated more. I would also suggest removing all detail from the bark to make the background solid black and increase the exposure in the highlights to make it bolder with more contrast.

Accepted.

Poolburn Dam

I like the soft pastel colour tones in this image, it has a wonderful peaceful feeling of a place forgotten by time. The image seems to slope downward to the right and I would suggest rotating it a little to straighten this up. I would also suggest cropping or cloning out the rocks on the bottom left. I do not believe that they need to be there, as they draw the eye to the edge of the frame. A slower shutter speed would have removed some of the texture in the water, making this area a lovely soft blur that would have balanced the soft colours of the sky better, and added to the peacefulness of the image. Still a nice image taken in a very cool location.

Accepted.

Rata

Timing, composition, & simplicity are the key components to a great photo. An interesting subject needs these three things to really shine. This image does have an interesting subject however the position of the photographer has let this subject down. The background is distracting and takes the viewer's eye away from the boat. When composing an image try to look into all parts of a scene and

try to find angles of view that can separate or show off your subject in the best way possible. Using the water as a backdrop, removing some of the sand in the foreground and shooting at dawn or dusk would all have improved this image.

Not Awarded

Royal Spoonbill Fishing

These birds are so unique, and the photographer has done a good job to capture this bird in the wild. The exposure is spot on as there is nice detail in the feathers, which can be hard to achieve with white subjects. The use of a fast shutter speed has frozen the water droplets that are coming from the bird's bill nicely. I don't think the dark rocks in the background are needed and would suggest cropping these out. I would also suggest rotating the image to straighten it. Water is always level and even though there is no horizon in the image the slope of the water ripples accentuates how sloped the image is.

I am in two minds about the title, yes, the bird is fishing, however by having the word fish in the title I was expecting to see a fish, and as there is no fish, I was a little disappointed.

Accepted.

Shades of Paua

A nice artistic image. The spiral effect the photographer has achieved is very cool. I like the placement of the subject in the frame. While I like the colour palette, a Paua does have beautiful vibrant colours and I think this could have been accentuated a little better. Still a very nice arty & inventive image.

Merit

Shine Through

This image evokes fond memories of my long past Grandparent's home. They had a very similar image sand blasted into a mirror that always fascinated me. Compositionally this image has been very well handled & the exposure is very good. I am not sure if the landscape in the glass was part of this image or has been superimposed in post processing. Regardless, I think this area of the image could have been lifted a little, either by being taken at a different time of the day or by increasing the vibrance and contrast in this area. For me the lighting in the landscape is a little flat and the horizon appears to be a little off horizontal.

Accepted

Soulful Mood

This is a lovely Image!

I love the way the subject is looking straight at the camera and even though there is very little emotion in the subject's face the intensity of the gaze is neither threatening nor uncomfortable. There is lovely detail in the subjects face and the exposure & composition are spot on.

Honours

Summer Breeze

This image had me a little lost for words. There is nothing technically wrong with the image. The focus, exposure, & composition are all pretty good. From an artistic view I do find it a little wanting, for me the image is very like the advertisements that you see on facebook. I do like the way the lens ball is framed by the large parachute. I also like the small upside-down parachute in the ball, but I would have preferred to have seen less of ground in the ball and for the image to be more simplistic or abstract.

Accepted

Sun burst – Acheron Road

I like this image, although it does break a few rules of photograph. The sun is very bright & right in the centre of the frame. This really draws the eye in to it. The sun rays on the hill are lovely & the details across the rest of the image are also nice. The image may have been slightly over sharpened as there is a bit of a halo where the hills meet the sky.

I particularly like the tyre tracks that go across the road from the left, these add a nice story to the image.

Accepted

The Journey

A lovely image that really appeals to me. The colour tones, exposure & placement of the person in the lower third work well. I realise why the photographer has left so much space on the right of the person, however I do wonder if this is needed. Compositionally I would prefer the person to be closer to the right of the image, even though this means the end of the fence would be cut off. This is however only a very minor issue, and many would argue that the end of fence needs to be in the image.

Merit

Waiting for the wind

Another lovely image. The composition is great with the subject & horizon in the very bottom of the frame, the background is beautifully simple, and the angle of the parachute and parachutist about to take off are very cool. There is a small dust spot just above the trees on the left that I would suggest cloning out.

Merit

White Fronted Tern & fish

A very nice capture. The image is lovely & sharp, the exposure is very good along with the composition. The background is plain, but beautiful, with no distractions, only the hint of a horizon. There is a tiny bit of blown out highlights on the ridge of the wing, but this does not bother me at all, it adds some nice contrast that leads the viewer eye to the head and the fish.

Merit

Prints

Just Married

This image has a lovely feeling, the expression of both subjects shows just how happy they are. It captures a lovely moment on this special day. Technically the image is not perfect, there is a lot of noise, which is especially noticeable on the skin. This may be able to be minimised somewhat in post processing. The rocks in the foreground are not ideal, as they have cut off the feet. They are also very light and the viewers eye is automatically drawn to this area. It may help to darken these or crop the image to just above the rocks.

Accepted

Young Monarch

The composition in this image is pretty good, the subject and the plant the subject is on are well separated from the background, with no other distractions. I think this image may have been cropped substantially or it may have been taken with a low-resolution camera, as even the sharpest areas of the image do not have nice sharp detail, and photographic artefacts are very visible over the entire image.

Not Awarded

Waiohine Gorge

A lovely image that showcases the beauty and wilderness of this area. The movement of the water in the foreground is great, and for me it is this area that makes this image stand out from an average photo. The foreground and the river lead the viewers eye to the native bush that is untouched by man. The perceived horizon (where the river meets the land) is very central in the frame & I think the composition could be improved a little by cropping the top of the image off, to be just above the tall tree on the right.

Merit

Farewell

The title of this image is good, as this adds to the story that the photographer is trying to tell. The light that is hitting the side of the ship & the placement of the ship in the frame are nice. The sky above the clouds has a bit of a muddy or under exposed feeling, and I would suggest lightening and increasing the vibrance in this area. I also do not think as much sea is required in the foreground, and I would suggest cropping a few inches off the bottom. This will help accentuate the main subject better.

Accepted

New Zealand Sea Lion

A very nice capture of this animal in its natural environment. The image is nice and sharp, the way the water is frozen and the way the Sea Lion is looking directly at the photographer is great. I can't fault this image.

Honours

Dance of the Macrocarpa

When I first looked at this image I thought, wow. And I still think this is a stunning image, even after looking deeper into it. The vibrancy of the green foliage pops beautifully from the blacks and silver/greys in the rest of the image. The composition is great with the large green tree situated right in the middle of the frame.

There are two very minor areas that are stopping me from awarding top marks. These are the areas in the background behind the main tree in the lower mid left and upper right. These areas show a little light and detail in the background, I would rather these were solid black.

The mounting, printing and processing of this image are exceptionally good.

Merit – but about as close to Honours as you can get.

The last ride

Based on the title I assume this image is a tribute to a loved family member or friend that has recently passed. The image appears to be made up of various layers overlaid onto one another, with some of the images possibly been taken while on route to a final resting place. This does create a story and adds emotion. The placement of the man and the expression on his face is very nice.

I do think the image of the man could have been blended slightly better into the frame, maybe with a different blending mode, something that made him not so sharp or bright and more like a faded or fading memory. This image is artistic and inventive and would resonate deeply for this man's family.

Accepted.

Rose abstract

An interesting portrayal of a Rose. The post processing of this image is probably about as far removed from what you would expect from a photo of a Rose as you could get. The treatment has made the rose hard and bold with a vivid almost jarring colour palette. The more I look at the image the more I like it, especially if viewed at a distance or from an angle. It is a very artistic abstract.

Merit

Mammoths Foot

Another Artistic Image that nicely portrays the texture and age of this grand old tree. The composition and use of a vignette draw the eye to the lighter raised area of the roots in the lower left third. There are two "eyes" on the trunk that may or may not have been overlaid in post processing, these give the tree the feeling of being alive and that maybe this is not a tree trunk and roots but something quite different. And it is this feeling that lifts this subject to be more than just an old tree trunk, but something rather magical.

Merit

The Haven

Compositionally this image is strong. The horizon is low and positioned well on the lower third, which is good. The clouds and the distant hills are nice, although there is some banding in the clouds that I assume is due to this area being darkened in post processing. For me the rock in the foreground is too solid black and while I do believe this area should be dark a bit of detail in that space would have improved the image.

Accepted

Rakiura Robin

This Robin looks a little bedraggled, possibly from having just fluffed up its feathers. The composition is good with the bird situated in the centre. The background is nicely blurred and there is good detail in the bird's feathers. I do think the image has been slightly over sharpened. This is especially noticeable on the branch, which the brightest part of the image. I would suggest that this area be darkened and if sharpening was applied that it be removed from this area.

A good capture of this bird in the wild, in what I assume was difficult low light conditions.

Accepted

Murray Beach

The beautiful blue tones in the sky are just lovely, (they are my favourite colour) The feeling I get is one of serenity. In my mind there is little that compares to the feeling you get when you watch a sunrise or sunset and this image evokes some of that feeling.

The slow shutter speed has softened the waves nicely, which simplifies the image and adds to the feeling of it. The only issue I have is that the horizon is very centred, which compositionally lets the image down a little. This is something to think about when composing an image, tilting the camera up or down to accentuate either the sky or the foreground would have strengthened the image.

Accepted

Rachel Getting Ready

This image asks a lot of questions. Who is this woman? Why is she dressed up like she is? What is she holding? And what do the facial designs mean?

I believe the image is a composite, made up of at least 2 images, but looks like there are several others. The background tones match the subjects clothing well and make me think that some sort of earthly ritual is about to take place. The black tray and flames, that appear to have been overlayed into the image are at conflict to the earthy vibe and the way the flames have been overlayed do give the feeling that the Rachel's hair is either on fire or is about to catch fire, which is a little alarming.

It appears that Rachel has stunning eyes that I think could have been showcased better by getting closer. Overall the image is a good attempt at a composite, and I would encourage the photographer to keep practicing.

Accepted

Out in the Wild

This image has a very 70's vibe, with a look that is very reminiscent of what you got from one of the kodak cameras of that era. The shed in the back ground is positioned well, however I am not sure that the gate or bare earth paddock need to be in the image. I find this area very bright and unattractive. Knowing what to keep in the image and what to remove is the key to a good image.

More often simplicity is that key. Getting closer, shooting from a higher angle and framing the shed to minimise the foreground may have improved this image substantially.

Not Awarded.

Little Kaiteriteri

This looks like a lovely beach on a beautiful clear day. This is the sort of image that entices viewers to get out there and explore our beautiful country.

I like the positioning of the person in the frame and the position of the horizon on the lower third. However, I do think there is a little too much empty space in the image and would suggest cropping some of the sand and sky from the image. I would also suggest lifting the shadows in the darkest area of the island to bring out a little bit of detail in this space. Just be careful when lightening/dodging, as lifting the shadows too much will introduce noise.

Accepted