

DIGITAL IMAGES

01 And there was light. Accepted.

Beautiful building. I like the way the stained-glass windows are visible and bright and there's a message there. The lighting is interesting given the various angles from which it appears to come. I do find the light to the bottom left (presumably headlights of vehicles?) somewhat distracting, and it draws my eye away from the main subject. The small tree in the front middle of the image is also a little distracting and I wondered if getting in front of that with a slightly wide-angle lens might have given the author a slightly cleaner view. An interesting story with a clever message. However, I believe the technical side isn't strong enough to support the photographers' intentions. Good try though.

02 Blue Lake Saint Bethan's. Merit Ian Grant

What an interesting image with the range of colours, tones and textures in the landscape. The flow of the lake through the image really makes my eye want to traverse the picture via the lake before being brought back to the start by the lighter shades of the outcrop. Looking at the image on my screen it appears slightly noisy in the clouds and the lake and I wonder if those are artefacts of sharpening. Overall it's a lovely warm image with some nice flow to it.

03 Colourful persimmon. Merit Heather Knapp

Lovely colour palette within a simple composition. The image has a delicious old world feel. Your choice of a keylines to frame the image is well suited but I wonder whether straight white rather than black and white is necessary? Perhaps even a ragged edge to the image could be consistent with the mood the author is creating? I find the intense saturation of the slice a little inconsistent with the overall feel of the rest of the picture. The author has done a terrific job of capturing and presenting the detail in the leaf and I can really get a sense as to how it would feel in its autumnal glory. The almost square composition appears very balanced.

04 Deep sea fishing. Honours Graeme Skinner

A delightfully quirky image. Well composited. You've brought together some interesting imagery which works well. It's a lovely colour palette. An unusual concept. The placement in the frame of the fish, the lines, the person all just seem to work. Your ability to create a captivating narrative in a unique way is evident.

05 Dreaming. No Award

This composition is a blend of elements – the subject, bubbles, and aquatic flora within what appears to be somewhat like a fish tank – yet it remains an enigmatic creation. Other than being a composite and quite surreal, I wasn't able to understand or appreciate a sense of story. The integration of the subject appears disjointed, particularly around the hairline, contributing to a sense of incongruity. The pieces feel disconnected, and to my mind, the image lacks a cohesive identity.

06 First light. Merit

Carolyn Hope

This depiction of dawn illuminating the snow-capped mountains exudes a tangible chill. The cool bluey green tones in the shadows complement the bright white of the snow. Your skill in managing dynamic range shines through, revealing intricate details in the snow. I'm intrigued to see the wider setting in which this has been taken. The detail in the snow is lovely in the mounds, the hollows and the fissures. They all add character to the image. I'm intrigued to know if there is more of a story, or this is a backdrop to a particular scene here other than light being captured on what is a beautiful part of New Zealand landscape

07 Framed. Accepted

The author's choice of framing, incorporating tree branches, gorse, and rocks, adds a dynamic foreground. The landscape you've captured showcases a layering of elements that lend depth to the scene: the field in front, what looks like vines on the ground behind that, followed by a hill with trees before yielding to the majesty of the snow-capped mountains behind. I find the image as a little flat and wonder if a bit of clarity and possibly some sharpness might lift this further. However, the image might benefit from a touch more clarity and sharpness to accentuate its features. Exploring a lower shooting angle could maintain the upper framing while reducing foliage overlap, creating a stronger visual separation. It's clearly a pretty location and I wonder whether we've seen it at its best. Perhaps worth a revisit?

08 Fusion. Merit

Barry Doig

A delightfully abstract image. I'm thinking the Author has zoomed their lens during exposure to capture the trails. The lovely colour palette with the cool bluey grey is offset by the warmth of the orange and the red. The only suggestion I would make is to consider removing the last of the red trails on either side. I think that would make the image somewhat cleaner and give it some breathing space. This is a clever creation on the part of the Author. Well positioned in the frame and my eye keeps moving around but has a sense of peace and rest fullness with what I believe is the centre well positioned within the frame and where much of the energy appears to be emanating from.

09 Hikurere Stream. Honours

Rodger Ball

This image of water flowing softly over rocks makes good use of a longer exposure. The rocks themselves are beautifully sharp and clear with some lovely colour and tonality. I could really appreciate that the mosses and lichens had some real character. The sharpness and colour detail in the rocks showcase your mastery. The juxtaposition of soft flowing water against the static rocks is striking. It's just that sliver of the sky at the top which also helps to provide context. It's an interesting composition with plenty of water at the front giving it that "Arty" vibe. There's lots of interest in this picture. I think I would enjoy seeing this on a wall somewhere in large format print.

10 Immature black fronted Tern stretching. Accepted

The author has presented this image of the bird well placed in the frame and in an interesting pose. The eye is lovely and sharp. As I look deeper into the feathers around the bird, particularly towards the top of the raised wing, I can see the detail starts to drop away with some noise evident. The light in the image appears slightly flat. I wonder whether

slightly dropping the exposure or some of the highlights would assist to provide a bit more detail in this image. It may be that this has been cropped on from a larger picture to get in so close to what may have proved to be a difficult subject to get any closer to. When I look at the rock upon which the Tern is standing there is plenty of detail and sharpness, but this isn't the same in the plumage. The author has captured a fleeting moment and should be applauded for that.\

11 I've got my eye on you. Merit

John Miles

An interesting view or perspective on what I think is probably an elephant. I love the texture of the skin and which the author has captured well. There is the subtlety of the sharp eye poking out. The compositional decisions provide a very different view and interesting perspective presented by the Author. I can see the beautiful bokeh at the back. I can also see this image working well as a monochrome with a little bit more clarity and contrast just to make it pop. Well seen by the author.

12 Jump for Joy. Merit

Graeme Skinner

This image evokes a Renaissance aesthetic, reminiscent of Botticelli's work. The soft, artistic quality is captivating. The asymmetrical composition adds visual interest, whilst I felt that the brightness in the bottom right corner was competing for attention. I recommend you consider reducing the brightness in that area in post production. The image's soft colour palette is its strength, offering a sense of timeless charm. It's a nice creative piece. The aspect and proportions work well and the image overall has a lovely soft colour palette.

13 Las Vegas Nights. Merit

Ron Willems

This image exudes intrigue with its harmonious blend of red hues, elegantly reflecting the lighting of Las Vegas. It's a well-constructed scene and quite seamless. I can see a sense of story starting to emerge here. The composition works well with the subject on the lower edge of the frame. The closed eyes and averted head raise questions about the story being told. I'm unclear how the two parts tie together as a story perhaps it's around a dream or a desire to be elsewhere. A thought-provoking image.

14 Left in the attic. Merit

Carolyn Hope

This old photograph or record player is a real find. The author has captured the beauty even in its disrepair. The rich tones of the wood and the instrument's decayed palette create a harmonious contrast. I can see quite a bit of noise or maybe grain in the background and I think making this more consistent throughout the image, perhaps with some additional work in post-production would lift this image overall. I can really appreciate the detail in the instrument self and that tells a strong story. Compositionally you have captured and presented this from an interesting angle which again almost fits the state of disrepair and degradation. I wondered whether seeing all the instrument, that is to say it's front right corner, would have helped but on reflection decided it wouldn't have made any more of the image itself. It's an object well seen and captured and presented in a complementary way. Your ability to find beauty in the neglected is commendable.

15 Magnolia Magic. Accepted

This is a pleasant picture of a magnolia. I can see the author provided various degrees of sharpness and softness within the image and some interesting textures captured within the flower itself. The choice to present the image in a one-by-one format suits the subject perfectly. I suggest extending the depth of field more gradually to preserve detail throughout the image. There appears to be much more detail available, and which could be shared without detracting from the overall ambience of the image. The colours are nicely presented. I think what would raise my assessment of this image would be some slightly increased contrast. A touch more contrast and a slightly higher focal point could amplify its charm.

16 Mystical ship. Merit

Jon Coe

A nice creative image here with a lovely colour palette. Well done for trying something different. I can see you've connected the various aspects of the image well and you've captured and controlled the colour along with a pleasing total range. It's great to see an image that presents something quite ordinary with quite a different interpretation. Keep pushing boundaries with your artistic choices!

17 Nelson South. No Award

This downward perspective on Nelson South introduces an engaging diagonal line formed by the road, leading the viewer's gaze towards the water. There's a nice line presented by the road which charts a diagonal course through the image and leads us towards the water. My eyes follow that but it doesn't quite know where to go once it reaches that. It takes me to what appears to be a causeway or similar and then flows into the water. The white cloud tends to distract me from my path due to its brightness and leads me out of the frame. I would suggest that the author repositioning themselves slightly leftward before taking the image might enhance the road's prominence. I can see the image has been composed to make use of framing on the sides. Further adjustment to the sky through some burning in or reducing the luminance in that area could redirect focus to the intended subject, allowing the scene's potential to shine through. I get the sense my eyes are supposed to rest further back in the image. The image has been taken from a good vantage point however I think that more could be made of this location and the perspective it offers.

18 Our George. Honours

Dianna Hambleton

Great portrait. Delicious detail and a real sense of character. The authors decision to present this as a monochrome image is well suited. The detail is spot on - you can see the hair, the pores on the skin and you get a real sense of character from this portrait the absence of colour. The setting of the block wall and the steps in the back provides nice environmental context. A slightly unusual aspect ratio but which works well for the image. I think you've made some very considered choices in your presentation of this portrait and it's well deserving of an honours grade.

19 Out of this world. Merit

Sharee Davidson

A whimsical and delightful composition, the neon flowers and coils harmonize with clarity. I get a real sense of the bright and high energy. The neon flowers are well separated from the

glowing coils. As an image this is well composed and I don't feel that any element is overly competing with others. The colours and the brightness all seem to work together leading my eyes in and up the stems towards quite interesting shapes and patterns. The image possesses a mesmerizing quality that engages the viewer.

20 Paragliding and Palouse. Honours

Ron Willems

A heartfelt applause for this image that resonates with warmth and vibrancy. I love the warmth of the orange alongside the vibrant green. Placement of the paraglider is to my eye perfect. There's strong detail in the paraglider - the lines and the chute itself are complemented by the softness of the landscape in which the whole image is sitting. The light and saturation really work with the shadows and highlights working to create what feels like quite a dreamy backdrop. I get a sense of energy balanced by a real sense of peace. Knowing what it's like to be up in the sky literally hanging on air currents while at the same time feeling the calmness that comes with an experience like this is something that's very hard to replicate. To my mind, the author has successfully captured all of that in this frame. Well done.

21 . Resting Up Accepted

These two seals are taking a bit of a break maybe having a rest before or after something more active. The authors choice of composition provides some nice context, but I wonder whether the image might have more balance if the image was made from a lower perspective and a little more of the rocks behind them was made visible. The use of a circular polariser might have just provided a bit more depth on the water. I can almost get a sense of how the seals are feeling. The one in the back looks quite smug and the one in the front perhaps is as curious about the photographer as the photographer is about the seal. There is clear detail in the coat of the one in front and a pleasing colour range. I think the image might be further enhanced by ensuring both seals were in focus. The decision or need to shoot from a low-down position suits the subject.

22 Sacred Kingfisher. Merit

Rebecca Bowater

Well captured and presented image of this bird. Well placed in the frame. Eye is critically sharp as is the beak. There is sufficient depth of field to see some detail in the feathers alongside a beautifully blurred background. Love the colours with the natural colours of the bird complemented nicely in the background. The depth of field, which is perhaps best observed by looking at the detail in the branch used as a perch, drops away nicely. Birds are a challenging subject as they often seem to have rapid and frequent micro movements. The author has managed to capture an uncommon moment here. If there was some slightly stronger detail in the feathers I think this would have been an honours image.

23 Sail, sail, sailing. No Award

Picture of lasers in a local bay or lake. While the image of the sailing boats captures a scenic moment, there seems to be a challenge in guiding the viewer's focus. The depth of field inadvertently leads the eye beyond the intended subjects to the hills and buildings. The bright sails initially draw attention, but the lack of a clear focal point results in wandering attention. The composition feels somewhat disjointed, and I couldn't discern a central

narrative or message. The image is suitably sharp throughout and what I perceive to be the intended subjects of the composition sit on or around the bottom third.

24 Shackles, ropes and chains. Merit

Caroline Foster

The framing of this image with window sides is a commendable choice, maintaining a balanced composition. The author has presented and maintained the uprights well in the image and it's an interesting assortment of objects hanging on to the bar. The image has a pleasing colour palette to it and the lighting is well-controlled. It's great to be able to see a little bit of detail in the background without the viewer's gaze being led too far in and distracted. Your manipulation of light and shade provides a pleasing tonal range. Cropping the image on the right to reduce the amount of the door's edge showing could further enhance the composition's equilibrium. Your ability to capture the essence of a scene is evident.

25 Silence is golden. Merit

Dianna Hambleton

This portrait has captured a beautiful expression on the face of the subject. The sharpness in the eyes and softness throughout the face work well to provide a captivating image. There is clear detail captured in the hair and the way the light falls off the background works well for the subject. I'm unclear whether there is an overlay or there's been some face painting or something else in terms of the green markings. I'm intrigued by these markings, which add an element of mystery. I would suggest that lifting the shadows might enable viewers to see a bit more of the detail around the neck area. The subject's enigmatic expression and upturned gaze are reminiscent of the Mona Lisa's allure, prompting curiosity about her thoughts and surroundings. I would think the subject herself would find it quite complimentary and flattering. The composition brilliantly accentuates the subject's gaze, making it the focal point of the image.

26 Stand-off. Merit

Jon Coe

The captured moment between wrestlers radiates tension and intrigue. They're clearly staring each other down and there's some noise by the gentleman in the black and red costume. I can see this as part of a larger story or an event. Your choice of framing has kept it quite clearly focused on the two protagonists. The angle at which you have captured it results in the two wrestlers offset and I felt this creates a nice tension in the image. The image is suitably exposed and you've given consideration to your framing. My only suggestion would be to eliminate the central rope to enhance the image's impact further and I wonder whether you could have just pushed forward a little bit to remove that from the image. Overall I would say it's a moment well seen.

27 Stoke in winter. No Award

This image firmly plants us in Stoke near the shops and right by the hills. The village scene is framed by trees and further framed at the top by the hills. The shops and vehicles in the front are clean and sharp. To my thinking distractions like light fixtures and power poles compete for attention. I appreciate this is the reality of this location, and indeed many other places we might wish to take photos from. The decision to crop the image at the bottom leaves me wondering what the author was intending to present here. The image is level, but the way that the cars are situated, and the natural fall of the road has them appearing

almost submerged. The figure on the left lacks a clear role in the narrative. I am left unsure as to what the author intended them to represent in the image other than being cold. My gaze is drawn up and to the right simply because of the increasing brightness with the white buildings by the pharmacy and then the lighter green of the grass on the hills. About a third of the image is sky and although I appreciate the different colours, the shades, and tones in the clouds, when I look at the sky on my Mac there almost appears to be some banding and I wonder if the sky has been edited as it doesn't appear natural. Consider balancing the image by incorporating more foreground details and minimizing the sky. I think showing a bit more of what's immediately in front of the photographer is probably a better way of representing the scene rather than having so much sky.

28 Swan plant seed pod. Honours

Heather Knapp

Your portrayal of the seed pod is truly enchanting, emphasizing exquisite detail and masterful luminance control. The background elegantly complements the subject, guiding the viewer's gaze to new points of interest. The image's construction is a testament to your skill, inviting viewers to explore the intricate beauty of the seed pod.

29 The icing on the lake. Not awarded

When judging it's important to look at the image rather than the title but I do like the play on words used to describe this image. It's a classic New Zealand scene with small icebergs floating in the lake. The lovely green and blue hues from the minerals in the water complements the blues of the sky. There is a fairly deep field of view but I would question where the author would like my eyes to focus. I think there is an opportunity to place the focus on the icebergs and really call them out at the hero set within the beauty of this area. I did wonder if the author had intended to use the iceberg to act as a leading line and draw the viewers eyes to the peak but in this case, I find my eyes follow around to the left due to the other icebergs which are present. Repositioning the icebergs in profile view may enhance their visual impact and crystalline structure. Compositionally the edge of the lake and the bottom of the sky / top of the ranges are roughly on the bottom and top third. Again, I am unclear what the author is wishing to showcase with this image and some re-composition along with slightly different treatment of focal plane might lift this to another level.

30 Tackle. Honours

Caroline Foster

A moment well captured. Iconic Saturday or Sunday morning image seen throughout New Zealand. Focus is spot on where it should be. Great to see the detail and the action in the energy of the game. The author has captured a critical moment with the look of the player with the ball. The tackle and the fending off equally well portrayed. I wonder whether someone had a blackeye or a headache after this game? The author captured this image at the perfect shutter speed in my opinion with the critical action sharp including seeing the debris suspended in mid-air. You have paired this with the fall off in focus which although providing context, doesn't compete with the centre of attention the heroes in this image.

Your decision to present the image in black-and-white is a great choice and removes any colour distractions from the colours of the jerseys, the grass and earth, or the clothes worn by spectators. I get the impression the author knows and understands the game, something which is key to capturing sports images. She or he has been well positioned for this particular move which isn't easy and has successfully captured a great image. This isn't easy to do given the pace of sport for sporting events. Well done.

31 Timeout. Accepted

Another interesting composition. The feeling I am left with is that it is as if the photographer might have been experiencing a 'bad day at the office'. This image seems to be saying that life is rushing by. The eyes seem defiant as if to say, "So let it rush. I don't care". A mixture of the subject being firmly in place but there being indications of movement with the blurred areas in the right-hand side of the image. I get the sense that this isn't a terribly restful or peaceful break the gaze is quite strong, and that combined with the sharper angles of the hand and that the hand and face are actually separated by the red cellophane. The notion of contrast, setting the subject aside from the busy-ness of her world is evident with the blues and greens on the right-hand side of the image appearing to be almost moving and in a rush. The rush of the blues and greens is then contrasted with the warmth and softness that emerges in the reds. In my opinion, the contrast between the face and what looks like cellophane appears quite jarring and softening this down might enhance the image further. I think the proportions of the image work well - the placement of the subject is appropriate with the eyes roughly towards the top third.

32 Time to go home. Accepted

In this moment, the rider and the horse share a mirroring expression, their teeth and slightly open mouths offering a touch of humor. Your handling of the sun's positioning adds depth to the scene. The mutual gaze between the rider and horse is a poignant touch, delivering a heartwarming moment. I wondered whether the full image was needed to showcase the similarities and whether a tighter crop would have accentuated it. If the author was intending more of an environmental portrait providing more environment may have contributed to a greater sense of place.

33 Watching as the world burns. Merit

Irene Callaghan

Viewing this image, I got the immediate sense of the message the author wanted to project. Your powerful message is conveyed through this thought-provoking image, with pipes and pylons symbolizing our energy consumption's impact on the environment. The use of red hues ignites a sense of urgency and heat. The inclusion of the eyes and face as part of the composition heightens the message, effectively presenting the environmental narrative. The choice to present this as a subtle triptych works well. I can imagine this in large format being a somewhat symbolic entry to a show centred on the environment.

34 Wind in my hair. Honours

Roger Ball

I love the irony in this image. This is a classic street photography picture. You have captured the essence of marketing material in the window portraying the sense of peacefulness of the wind blowing through a young woman's hair contrasted with the reality of the urban environment and the impact that it's having on the passers-by. I love the fact that the wind is travelling approximately the same direction and creating quite different sensations between the two groups. While it's a very busy setting the critical elements aren't lost. I do think this image could be even stronger presented in black and white so as to reduce the visual noise created by the different colours but that is always an artistic choice. Similarly a darker vignette to focus attention could also assist. However, this is all about seeing and capturing a moment in time and in a place. I'm not bothered by the passer by who is largely cut off on the right hand side or the passer by in the green jacket at the back because the irony of the two experiences of the passers-by and the wind and the person on the billboard just absolutely makes it so well seen.