

Competition 1**Judge Alison Viskovic.****Assessment Sheet for Nelson Camera Club, April 2020****B Grade Prints**

A pity there only two images in this section. Both photographers had seen interesting subjects, but there was room to go further in both of them, one more at the camera stage and one more in in post processing.

Title	Grade	Comments
Lady's Rock Light	A	I see a quiet, undramatic image of a lighthouse, with rippled sea in the foreground and hills and a cloudy sky beyond. The central placement of the lighthouse makes for a formal composition. The depth of focus is good, but the overall impression is grey and lacking in contrast – while some of that will be due to the weather, I believe that in the post-processing you could have aimed for more contrast to give some life to the image. Accepted for B grade, but I would not accept if this were in A grade.
Steel Blue Ladybird	A	At first glance the vivid shell of the ladybird is very eye-catching, but when I look more closely at the whole image I find that too much of the ladybird is not in focus. Out-of-focus is fine for the background, but not for the main subject. I commend you for trying to record such a tiny subject and for the overall composition. Accepted for B Grade, but I would not accept if this were in A grade

A Grade Prints

This was in interesting range of images to view. There are more merit and honours prints than accepted or not awarded, so there was a lot of good work here to enjoy.

Lake Wendouree	A	A well-seen wide landscape with dramatic shapes, especially the strong horizon line in the background, and angled lines of reeds in the foreground. The water effects have been well captured. The clouds and their reflections add a further dimension, but for me the overall effect is slightly too yellow – the colour balance could do with just a bit more red?
Day's End Monaco	A	The mood of this sunset really appeals to me, reminds me of similar colours at dusk in the Adriatic. I think the main interest lies in the areas lit by the sunset, and so I wonder if you considered cropping off the left quarter of the image (about half-way through the land/trees area)? That would then give even more attention to the sunset areas of sea and sky. Focus and exposure were managed well.

Shadow Lines Dianna Hambleton	H	This makes a strong impression through the shapes formed by the lines and shadows. Very crisp tones and contrast, this really suits the monochrome treatment. This is an image I came back to several times and really enjoyed engaging with.
Where the rivers have gone Jean Willis	M	Here I see a quiet rural scene, with soft colour tones and a composition falling into three horizontal zones. Focus and exposure have been well handled, and the backlighting highlights the centre of interest, the water sprays that relate to the title. I think you could have cropped a little at the bottom to give more priority to the middle area?
The Leap	A+	Here I find a very busy scene in central Wellington – it is pin sharp and well and exposed for the conditions, but there are so many components that the eye can travel quite a bit before settling on the leaping figure that is the main subject. I wonder if you could have isolated the figure more by shooting up from a lower position, to catch the figure with sky behind, instead of a building? Or, while this is an excellent BW print, might colour have set the figure apart from the building a bit more?
Gumdiggers Jean Willis	M	This is a very nicely presented image of a building frontage, with a composition made up of interesting lines and shapes, and a good range of tones in the monochrome treatment. The title is a puzzle for me – I assume it may be the name of the building complex, but it does not convey the photographer's intention to me.
Storm Brewing Barry Doig	M	This has a lovely mood that for me comes from the sense of light in the various parts of the image. The composition really has two parts, the sea with lines of waves and areas that catch the low sunlight, and the area above the horizon that at first looks like just sky - then I realise there is a hillcrest line at the edge of the brightest clouds. Exposure and focus well handled.
Winter Glow	A+	This image certainly presents a strong glow in the sunset or sunrise scene, though it does not necessarily suggest winter to me. The technical aspects are fine – focus, exposure, cropping. The view has been well seen, but for me the colours look over-saturated – might something a little more subtle be worth trying?
Splash	NA	Here I see a bird silhouetted against watery ripples in bands of light and shade, some out of focus in the distance, and a very dark foreground of stones. It is only on looking closely that I see the splash of the title, near the bird's feet. There are some problems

		here with exposure in the shadow areas, and the composition is not very dynamic. In this situation could you try zooming in more onto the bird as the main subject, and placing it on one of the thirds?
Lake Ruataniwha Caroline Foster	M+	The first thing that catches my eye here is the pale green water across the lower centre of the image, and the next thing is the rays of light coming down from the sky. Then I take in the whole scene from the foreground plants to the distant hills and the clouds above. This is a beautiful landscape that has captured a lot of elements and presented them very well. Use of a slightly metallic paper suits this image.
Venice Ghetto Wall Dianna Hambleton	M+	This image is another that suits the monochrome treatment. The composition is interesting, balancing the shapes of the figure in lower left against a range of rectangular shapes in the rest of the image. There is quite a lot of space on the right – you could try cropping some of that side without losing the story of the rest? Then the people would be on one third, and the main door on the other third. Focus and exposure well handled.
Rose Irene Callaghan	M	Interesting to choose an older flower for this image – the curled petals gave you extra areas to work on. The colour treatment here is very striking and shows the effect of well controlled post-processing. For me, the slightly out-of-focus vertical stem seems an intrusion on the rest of the image – did you consider cutting that out? Overall, not one I would live with on the wall, but well executed for what you tried to do.
Don't Barry Sangster	H	What a dramatic scene – the gun lined up with the the eyes draws my attention at once. The intense gaze does not look posed, is this perhaps an actor rather than just a model? The whole image is well done and feels real as well as scary – and really suits the BW treatment.
Misty Morn Caroline Foster	H	What a lovely quiet mood here, with varying tones of bush emerging from the mist. The linear composition, with the symmetrical reflection and no strong angles, suits the calm mood, and the flying birds add to the sense of depth and balance in the image. Lovely exposure and subtle use of colour. The hint of a metallic finish in the paper is also very attractive.
West Coast Sunset Stefan Herval	M	Subtle light and colour, contrasting with darker foreground stones and distant rock outcrops, makes an effective combination. Exposure and depth of focus very well handled. There is a lot of space in the middle – might a lower viewpoint have reduced that space a bit and brought the foreground a bit closer to the background?

The Blue Dress	NA	I see an absolute whirl of vivid colour, making an abstract pattern in a broad sweeping shape. This seems to me a study in light and movement. While the title refers to a blue dress that I assume was used in making the image, I don't think it helps the viewer much to know that. For my taste this image is a bit gaudy and lacks a clear composition, but the method is worth your trying out further.
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B Grade Digital

I felt that this was a strong group of images, in which everyone tried to do something than a "straight" shot of the subject. Good work technically, and some interesting composition in some of them. For that reason most achieved Merit rather than Acceptance.

Title	Grade	Comments
Enya	A	A good effort at using panning to suggest movement, though you did not quite sufficiently freeze the dog so that it really stands out from the background. For composition I suggest you could crop the top a bit so that the dog is placed more in the upper left third, and there is a bit less of the not very interesting background.
Red Dress Tom Young	M	An intriguing image – I wonder why the dress is there – did you put it there or did you find it there? The treatment of turning most of the image black and white, and just leaving the reds, works well here. The composition puts the bigger tree and dress very centrally but they are balanced on the left by the second tree and the large stump. You could try dodging the dark stump a bit? Overall, well seen and executed.
Florence at bath time Ruth Duffield	M	A very close view of a child's wet face at bathtime, with sharp focus on the eyes and eyelashes. I like the direct gaze at the photographer. The water adds shine to the face, which is well exposed, but I feel the red has been over-saturated - she looks too flushed. The image is very striking - for me an image so filled with the face feels a bit much, but that treatment was your decision.
Just Imagine	M	Interesting treatment of the background through use of enhanced colours and a texture, to contrast with the sharp figure in the lower left corner. This makes an effective composition that supports the title. Technically well handled.

Carol Michell		
Yachts at Mapua Ruth Duffield	M	A calm scene of yachts on calm water, with patterns of lines formed by the masts, horizon and the streaky effects where we would expect reflections. The soft tones add to the calm mood. Looking at the way the lines of the masts and rigging continue rather than slightly reversing in the 'reflection' areas, it appears there has been some movement of the image, probably in post-processing? This has been handled well and adds to the overall effect.

A Grade Digital

A nice range of subject matter and technical treatment in these images, though not many included people. Generally technical matters such as exposure and choice of dept of focus were handled well. In some cases I have added plus to a grade, to indicate I thought it nearly made the next level.

Title	Grade	Comments
"A girl and her horse" Lisa Trusler	M	A well balanced composition with a diagonal line from top left down across the image. The exposure, focus and colour balance are all well handled. The closeness of girl and horse is clear – I just wish I could see the horse's eye as well as the girl's, which might have emphasised the bond even more.
"Gran's Lily"	A+	A beautiful image that captures the feel of the flower – effective lighting, subtle colours, good depth of focus, some diagonal lines in the stems for balance. I feel, however, that there is just too much white space on the right, which I find distracting – if you halved that space you would still have plenty there without crowding the flower, and I think the overall balance would feel better.
Abel Tasman Track	A	A formal, central composition, with a track leading into the distance between overhanging trees, and contrast provided by repeated patterns of shadows. Given the lighting conditions you have done well not to get some areas too over- or under-exposed. Thinking of the colours in NZ bush, I wonder if the colour balance needs just a little more yellow? An attractive scene, but the centre is really just a disappearing point, not a interesting feature.
Action	NA	The story here is of a videographer shooting a subject that is outside our view. He may be saying "Action" but the overall image we see is actually very static! There are some interesting shapes silhouetted against the water beyond, but I feel the water may have been darkened too much, and there are white edges around

		many parts that suggest the image has been over-sharpened. Not an acceptance at A grade level.
Aracari Rebecca Bowater	M	What an interesting bird – the side view gives me a good idea of the overall shape and markings, and the blurred-out background helps to isolate the subject. Exposure, colour and cropping are well handled, but it is a pity that the upper beak is not as well focused as the body. If this were a natural history image I think we would also expect to see the whole tail? But overall as an open image I get a good feel for this bird – well done.
Artist at Work Helen Howie	H	Not a dramatic image, but a very satisfying study of an unusual artist at work. His concentration, the details that we can see of his work, and the muted colour palette all work well together. The composition falls into three bands, roughly a third each. Focus and exposure were well chosen. I did wonder if the table/platform really is on a slight slope or if it should be horizontal – the angle feels slightly uncomfortable, but the rest is so realistic that what I see may well be correct.
Bad Hair Day	A+	This is well titled. The photographer has found an amusing example of someone else’s artwork, and made a new picture of it by including contextual details of the wider setting. The combination of the main figure, the bit of window and the bit of door works to create a composition with informal balance, and there is lots to explore in this image.
Blowing in the wind	A+	A simple but effective image of rolling waters with two crest areas breaking and spray being blown back by the wind. The sombre colours are supported by the overcast sky, and glints of sunlight add highlights. Focus and exposure are good, and the nearly monochrome effect and the central composition work well for this image.
Captured	NA	This monochrome, near-abstract image is very intriguing, but it is hard to see an overall composition that relates all the parts. Has figure been captured in some way, or is the figure holding a cellphone camera that is capturing another scene? I find the area to the left, from the slightly blurred vertical pillar to the edge, quite distracting and unclear – you might try cropping that out for an alternative image?
Cascade	NA	If I turn the brightness on my computer screen up a lot, I can see brightness in the water and some details in the vegetation that are missing in the image as presented. The flowing water forms a diagonal pattern across parts of the image, and the time exposure used for water movement was good, but

		overall the under-exposure means this is not awarded an acceptance.
Church of the Good Shepherd	A	An attractive view of a well-known subject. Nice sense of depth looking through the church, added to by the distant view. The depth of focus and the exposure of both interior and exterior have been well handled. What gives this image something different is the warm sunlight coming across from the window on the left side. There is a problem with perspective – verticals near the sides of the image widen out towards the top, suggesting that there may have been some over-compensation for a narrowing effect in the original file.
Cloudscape Barry Doig	M	I really like the way you have seen that the curve and angle of the road are balanced by angled lines and shapes in the clouds. This is a well composed landscape, well exposed, with excellent depth of focus and a strong sense of depth and distance. The balance of about one-third land to two-thirds sky makes an image suits your title. Overall the image feels to me a just bit too blue and cool for a NZ scene – if you adjusted the red and yellow colour balance slightly, it might feel more real?
Collected Memories	NA	Here I see a constructed still life that has had post-production treatment to enhance the effects of aging and weathering, particularly through a reduced colour palette. An interesting mixture of objects, but my eye travels rather than settling in a main subject area, suggesting a lack of compositional pattern. The arrangement puts two basket handles in line, making a light streak through the image that I find distracting. The white spots on the upper right background also distract without giving me much information.
Coronated Frog Rebecca Bowater	M	I see a very dramatic maroon coloured frog grasping a stick covered with moss and lichen. The frog and stick are well focused and the out of focus background works well. The overall exposure is appropriate, but the upper edge of the frog's head is a bit over-exposed, you might be able to burn that in a little? Nice to meet such an interesting creature.
First Church	A	This is a very dramatic image of a large church interior, with details perfectly balanced from side to side. To my eye it looks surprisingly light – most churches I know with that sort of timberwork tend to look darker and browner in the wood areas. The focus is excellent for the depth of the scene, and the tapering effect of the height is acceptable. It's just the overall lightness and pinkness that that do not feel quite right for me.

Gerbera	A+	A formal central composition, with lots of interest in the details of the different series of petals going out from the centre. Very attractive muted colour gradations, and well-chosen background colour – I find the overall image very attractive. There are some slight streaks and patches in bits of the background that suggest maybe some uneven burning or dodging? If they did not catch my eye this would earn Merit.
Hump Ridge Roger Ball	M	A lovely wide landscape, with upper sky colours echoing the warm foreground colours, and shades of blue-grey tones between those two areas. Interesting placement of the boardwalk so close to the left border leading nicely to the mountains beyond, then in turn the bright tarn relates to the light sky area above it. As my eye travels over those areas, it then rests on the small peak in the upper middle as a final focus for the image as a whole. I really like this image, its sense of space, I would love to go there. Did you consider moving to the left of the boardwalk so that it went more diagonally across the image from lower middle to the distance?
Layers	A+	I love the effect you can find when hazy light reveals a series of overlapping mountain ranges, with gradual changes in the light density. When this is combined with evening light the effect is beautiful. In this image the shaded band of cloud above also contributes to the effect. Well seen and well captured.
Leading Lines Irene Callaghan	H	High side lighting clearly shows the details of the upper rock surface and the stones that have collected in the grooves. The linear pattern of the grooves also leads us to the far distance, where two figures add a sense of scale. A useful geological shot but also a strong vertical landscape. Technically very well handled.
Little boat, big sunrise Caroline Foster	M	I'd have said miniscule boat! A well seen landscape with side lighting adding to the sense of depth. I like the way the band of water in the foreground is balanced by the dark clouds across much of the top. Exposure and focus just right for this scene – well captured. The tiny boat emphasises the immensity of the mountains around it. Looking at where the sun strikes the clouds and the angles of slight rays across the middle, I feel the sun is higher than just sunrise, and wonder if the warm colour on the right side has been enhanced to suggest an earlier time?
Magic boulders	A	An effective time exposure at Moeraki Boulders, capturing details on the tops of the nearer rocks and the hint of swirling water around them. Well chosen point of view, with a diagonal line of rocks from the

		lower left of the image. For my taste this feels as though the red in the sky and magenta in the sea/rocks are a bit over-saturated, which is why it is accepted rather than merit, but it is certainly a striking image.
Making a Splash	NA	There seems to be a divided subject here – the title refers to making a splash, which is being created by the person, while the most eye-catching element here is the floating pineapple sunbed. The image also feels too dark – if I brighten my screen a lot the splash is whiter and the green water looks better lighter. It looks an inviting situation, so try again maybe?
Matanaka Farm Caroline Foster	H	I feel there is an interesting mood here, with the peaceful foreground and buildings in an attractive arrangement, then quite threatening clouds in the background. The muted colours work well together and make a landscape image I could live with for some time. Technical aspects all well handled.
Me and Mrs Jones Graeme Skinner	M	Intriguing – is this an illicit meeting that needs to be hidden or veiled in some way? It looks as though a personal encounter has been interrupted as the figures turn to look at the photographer. The details and colours of the figures look well focused and exposed, even though they are affected by whatever screen has been placed over the image. I really like this image and would like to know what the overlay material was – in some places (eg the hands) it is too intrusive. But overall I enjoyed this, so it gets Merit.
Nobody's Home	A	Nice idea to use just the reflection and not include the main building. The black windows and lack of people do suggest the title may be right. The colours feel over-saturated to me, especially in the upper left border area. If you had moved further to the right could you have got more of the building reflection, and less of that surrounding path and wall?
Now Here's a nice Bunch	NA	This seems a very busy image, and the two hands seem to compete with the grapes to be the main interest. The strong shadow shapes in the leaves can be distracting. I wonder if this might have worked better in colour, which would give more differentiation between the various elements, and also with a reduction in the contrast levels. A nice idea, but it does not come together effectively for me.
Rapahoe Beach	NA	A clear aerial view that shows me patterns in the lines of waves, the relationship of sea and land, and the strong line of the shore curving to the headland in the distance. The colours feel right and the depth of focus is good. But the horizon should be straight in an A

		grade image – getting it straight would make such a difference to the overall picture.
Riwaka River Stefan Herval	M	This feels a very attractive scene to be in. I like the framing effect of the overhead branch and the backlighting effects on that and the mossy rocks. Looking into the distance the furthest little waterfall provides a point of interest. Your focus and speed/aperture decisions have worked well - good to see some movement in the water, though there is one small area where the brightness is blown out. A pity there was not a rock or bush in the lower left corner to complete a framing effect.
Smile	NA	An interesting combination of monochrome and texture screen used here, with some attractive soft tones that suit the curves in the subject. I wonder why it is titled “Smile” when the smile is right on the top border and we don’t even see the whole mouth. My eye tends to travel between that and the left breast that is the next darkest area, with little sense of an overall composition. For me the texture is too prominent and therefore distracting, and the angled streak across the image does not seem to have any purpose. I think this is worth revisiting, to consider how the screen is used and how to emphasise the main subject.
Splish, splosh, splat	A+	Very eye-catching, and I get a sense of fun from this image. It does not feel quite like a real splash, but that does not matter. The use of the colours in a series of circles does suggest the outgoing ripples from a splash. It reminds me a bit of the colours in an oil spill in a puddle, but over coloured and made grainy. I enjoy looking at this as an abstract design.
St Kilda Pier (Melb.) Roger Ball	H	A beautifully clean, sharp image, with a formal, central design that is counter-balanced by the lamp standard on the left third of the image. Lovely sense of light and colour, subtle and not over-done. The sense of depth and detail is very pleasing – I know this is in Australia, but it makes me think of the effects we see in some Graham Sydney paintings.
Tahuna, Nelson	NA	Here I see another wide view, showing the space we can find on many New Zealand beaches, emphasised by the single umbrella and beach bag placed on the left side, and the isolated small figures. The exposure, focus and colour all feel just right – but – for an A grade image that is so simple that every detail shows, you really do need to get the horizon straight.
The Great Escape	NA	This image is very eye-catching, but the main feature that strikes me is the folded back corner of the cloth or canvas that the cat image has been painted on. The

		<p>title is “The Great Escape” and once I explore the rest of the image I do see a painted cat jumping over what might be a balcony edge. The main story here seems to be the contrast between the smoother lighter blue area and the dark grainy effect of the rest, and I don’t that is enough to award an acceptance.</p>
Thought-provoking	A	<p>A close view of the head of one of the ape family, sharply focused, set against an unfocussed background that echoes the colours of the main subject. There is lots of detail in the hairs because of back lighting on the edges. The face feels as though some of the colour may have been oversaturated a bit as the catchlights in the eyes seem toned where I would expect something a bit whiter. Quite a large area of the image is background – I feel you could halve that to put more emphasis on the main subject.</p>
Vintage	A	<p>Old cars like this offer lots of scope for interesting images. I like the contrast of the rusted tones and the remnants of blue-grey in the colour scheme, and the effect of a filter or other treatment on the edges of shapes and lines. Given that the object is static, it seems a pity that on the left side the edge of the mudguard is cut off – that would not matter if you had gone in closer and cropped other edges as well to concentrate on found patterns, but this seems intended as an image of the whole car.</p>
Wairau Lagoon	NA	<p>My first impression of this landscape is that it was well seen as a subject but it seems a bit unreal, and does not make me feel I want to be there. There are interesting components in the foreground, middle and further distance, and in the bands of clouds, but as a whole it looks under-exposed or over-burned and lacking in contrast. The foreground land elements also look as though there is a bit much red and yellow so that the colour balance feels odd. I think this would be worth returning to on the computer to try varying some settings.</p>