

Cambridge Photography Club
February 2025
Competition

Black and White

A Grade

Coffee Time

This is well thought out. The arrangement of the three images works well. The placement of the elements in each image also works well.

It may be an optical illusion, but the right image looks longer than the other two. Also, the border on the left end is narrower than the right side. It is important to ensure these things are equal, especially with dark borders as any variation will show up. There are a couple of things I would suggest changing to improve things.

First, I would make the background white as this will make the subjects stand out more. As this is presented, I would darken the blacks and increase the contrast.

14 Highly Commended

Dali at the Cube

Theoretically, this is someone else's creation so it should be disqualified; however, you slip in by a small margin is that you converted your image to monochrome. If you hadn't, I would have had no option but to disqualify it!

Actually this works well in black and white as it removes the blue and greens/yellows of the sky and grasses.

Personally, I would play around with the black, whites and contrast sliders to increase the contrast. You could have also played around with the B&W sliders in Lightroom if you had converted to black and white that way.

Another option would be to use Nik Silver Efex if you have them.

I suggest you straighten the image vertically to stop it from appearing to lean back. I suggest you also crop the left and right sides, so it is a little tighter. Also, I would remove the post at the right.

Dali-type art tends to stand out because of his surrealism and the clock and other things certainly help here.

You could also look at masking and darkening the sky and adding contrast there to help everything else stand out more against it.

Well seen.

16 Highly Commended

Desert Pylons

The wide cropping of this works very well as does the fact that you have converted it to black and white.

The low camera angle places the pylons against the sky so they don't get lost against the mountains.

There are a few things I suggest you look at doing to make this better.

First, I would mask the sky and then darken the blacks so the pylons don't get lost.

This will make it more dramatic. As it is presented to me, because the sky contains lots of bright clouds it is a bit dominant taking away the interest in the subject. If you converted it in Lightroom then go to the B&W panel and adjust things there.

Also, I suggest you remove the stray bits of grass that stick above the horizon. I'm talking about the one in the middle and the few at the very right.

I would also mask the very bottom and raise the shadows so the black area around Mount Ruapehu isn't distracting.

There is a bit of noise in the image and Lightroom can remove this if you shot in RAW.

12 Commended

Dreamy Dahlia

The square framing of this image works well. The placement of the middle of the flower in the bottom left corner is great as it leads the viewer up to the petals. The use of high key also works well.

Processing is generally good, however; I'd like to see a bit more separation between the petals and the white background. If you were to apply a linear gradient to the top of the image, and then reduce the exposure, raise the whites slightly and highlights this will achieve the effect. Without it I am left wanting to see a bit more at the top.

You have obviously shown some thought when creating this image.

18 Highly Commended

Essential Connections

Well seen!

The tight cropping works well to remove any extraneous elements, and Black and white works well.

I suggest that you could lighten the two gray objects, so they stand out a little more, as they tend to get a little lost in the dramatic sky. This is easily done using the mask objects in Lightroom.

Also, I would apply a range mask to the whites in the sky and lighten those areas as this would make the elements in front of them stand out more.

You could also look at adding some texture to the pole.

18 Honours

Fiordland

This is a nicely composed scene. The track leads the viewer into the scene from the bottom and curves to the left in the background which helps keep the viewer in the image.

It looks as if the bright sunlit patch has caused the picture to be underexposed by almost a stop. If you were to use the auto-develop button in Lightroom, it would increase the exposure by around 90%, while also opening the shadows among other adjustments.

Unless you were deliberately aiming for a silhouette, which to me, wouldn't work because there are not enough bright areas, reprocessing this so that can see the texture on the trees would definitely improve this and keep the peaceful look of the scene.

12 Commended

Fisher Row

Exposure and processing are good here. The image works well in black and white and gives a feeling of times gone by!

There is good contrast in sky and good texture on the end of the building.

I suggest that some cropping would help this. There is too much empty space at the bottom, and you could crop this to a landscape format to remove it. The other option would be almost square by cropping out some of the right side while still leaving a little of the water.

Have a look at increasing the light in the shadows a little to reveal a little more detail in the dark building in the background. You could also just mask it as an object and do it that way.

If you were to tone this in sepia it could look like something out of the late 19th century.

15 Highly Commended

Hands of an Artisan

Composition is good because you have got in close. You could crop the left side to closer to the knob.

I would raise the whites slider and reduce the highlights very slightly. This will increase the contrast and reveal a little more detail in the area around the hands. If you look at the histogram, there is room to move at the right end.

There is a bit of noise in the image probably from shooting at a high ISO, but nowadays, removing this is easy with RAW files in Lightroom!

13 Highly Commended

Ice Queen

Composition is ok here; however, I would crop a little off the right side to balance it.

The image would be improved with reprocessing. I am guessing the flower by its name is white! Because the flower is large in the frame the meter has been fooled into thinking the scene is brighter than it is. This has resulted in underexposure of at least a stop. Just increasing the exposure by a stop will improve things and you won't clip anything. You could also darken the blacks to make the background darker. Increasing the shadows slider will reveal detail in the dark parts of the flower.

4 Accepted

Into St Kilda

I like the foggy atmosphere here. That combined with the desolate scene helps convey a moody feeling.

There are a few things I suggest you could do to improve this.

First, is there more in the image, especially at the top? I would like to see the distortion corrected which as it is presented may involve losing some of the top and cutting off the top of the right pole.

Even though the scene is foggy, some preprocessing would result in a brighter image that won't lose the atmosphere.

An increase of half a stop in exposure is a good place to start. Also, introducing some negative dehaze (moving the dehaze slider to the left) will add to the foggy effect.

I suggest you could also remove the distracting objects in the foreground such as the posts at the left and the fence and letterbox at the right.

If you had moved in front of the first set of poles, you wouldn't have been bothered by the distractions. I suggest you also move to the centre of the road.

This is a classic case of taking a shot, then looking again and seeing how you can improve it. Back when we shot film, every shot cost money so we were ever mindful of that. Nowadays, with digital, this doesn't come into play!

5 Accepted

Invader

I like the composition here. The track leads the viewer into the scene from the bottom middle to the bush and rocks at the right.

The white frame with black keyline works well around the image.

I'd like to see less contrast so that some of the detail, is revealed in the shadows, especially the large shadow on the right. There actually is detail in that shadow. Even if you just adjust the shadows slider it will help the image.

I suggest that you have a look at the cropping as there is not much on the left side and you could crop some out.

Well seen.

14 Highly Commended

Just Hangin

Composition is good here with the flower and subject filling the frame.

I would suggest darkening the background and lightening the subject to make the butterfly stand out more.

I'm intrigued as to why when butterflies are normally brightly coloured, you chose to render this in black and white.

The front wing is nice and sharp, however everything behind it is softer. This is a case where focus stacking would be good, if the subject would stay still long enough! Macro and close-up photography has the side effect that depth of field is very limited, so either the use of focus stacking or a longish tilt-shift lens is the best option.

11 Commended

Lady at the Window

The composition of this is great and the direction the lady is looking creates a feeling of mystery.

While this is a low key shot, if you look at the histogram there is no information in the whites and highlights where the specular highlights on the dial on the hat and on the brooch should be placed. This won't change the low-key look.

I suggest you look at reprocessing this image by raising the whites by around 60 and reducing the highlights so there isn't any clipping there.

I would also increase the exposure by around 80-85%.

As a viewer, I want to be able to see more in the image, and the very dark image doesn't do this.

5 Accepted

McLaren Falls in B&W

I like the composition you have seen here. The close framing and contrast between the rocks and water works well.

Personally, I would make some processing adjustments to reveal some detail in the darker areas. I feel the contrast is too much. You could do this by moving the blacks slider and the shadows slider. The shapes of the rocks should be revealed as they will make a more interesting image. As you have presented it, I feel that the only focus is on the water, whereas the rock structure also plays a big part and dominates the image.

11 Commended

Milford Sound

I like the fact that you have found a different composition of this over photographed location.

For me, I see two points of interest, the mountain and the clump of trees at the bottom. I'd like to see more detail in the clump of trees. If you could have got higher to lower the trees, I feel it would work better.

It appears that you have done some processing on the upper part of the image.

There is a dark area on the top of the lower ridge which looks strange. Also, there is a dark area edge to the tree line at the top left. The mist behind the trees and the dark area above looks strange. If you masked the dark area at the top of the ridge and lightened it and applied some negative dehaze the image would look more natural. Masking the treeline ridge at the left and lightening it slightly will also help.

Finally, there is a strange dark area in the top right area, and I would lighten it. It may be naturally occurring, but it looks strange! If you could lighten the clump of trees that would also help.

12 Commended

Motorhead

The long shape of this image works well because of the length of the guy's beard. The texture of the beard shows well.

This is well exposed, but I would suggest is masking the dark areas at the bottom and lighten them so that there is a little detail there.

I would also darken the bright patch near the guy's ear, so it isn't distracting. You could also mask the shadows around the eyes caused by the peak of the cap and lighten that area so to reveal the eyes more. Increasing the exposure there by 80-90% will help but will still leave the hint of a shadow.

A lovely image.

17 Honours

Mountain Sheep

The wide cropping works well here. While the image is titled Mountain Sheep, in fact the first thing that attracts the viewer is the mountain.

I suggest you increase the light in the shadows at the bottom so the trees aren't so black and the sheep have a little more detail.

The image shows some noise and I would remove that. Also, be sure to remove any dust spots!

The trees at both the left and right side are cut off and therefore make the image look a bit odd. Either crop so they aren't in the picture or remove them in Lightroom.

I found myself wanting to see more of them!

9 Merit

Mt Raglan

I like the way you have composed this and the fact you have seen it in black and white.

The fact that bottom is losing sharpness is worrying as the eye tends to move there because of this! If you could crop this out, I feel it would help.

If you look at the histogram all the information is around the middle area. If you increase the exposure, darken the blacks and brighten the whites this image will have more impact. It appears too flat to me.

4 Accepted

Mussel Men

The idea is good here, and the fact that you have decided to render this as a silhouette is good.

There are a couple of things that could help improve this. It is a pity that the object on the right end is cut off! Is there any more on the original image?

I would crop some off the bottom as the visual weight makes the image unbalanced!

I suggest you mask the sky and tone down the highlights then duplicate and invert the mask and add some light into the shadows. As this is processed the bright sky tends to draw the viewer away from the subject.

You could also look at using the transform tool to correct the falling effect.

10 Commended

New From Old

I like the way you have seen and composed this. However, I think that cropping the left side so it is closer to the leaf at the end would help. Have a look at cropping this to a 16:9 format. You will still have the out of focus elements for context.

I suggest that an increase in exposure of about half a stop and a slight increase in contrast as well as adjustments to the other sliders will make the branch separate from the background more. I would also increase the texture which will make the cobweb more obvious.

The use of a white border with a black keyline works well in closing the image.

14 Highly Commended

On a Mission

The use of movement here is good. The image works in black and white

I suggest you look at cropping the right side because there is a big area of black which tends to dominate. I would crop so that the head is near the right third and still leave more space in front.

An increase of around half a stop in exposure as well as an increase of around 50% on the shadows slider will help this.

5 Accepted

On the Road to Mt Rushmore

This image is well seen and composed. The fact that you have rendered the tunnel and the motorcyclist as completely black works well as it makes Mount Rushmore dominant but gives a sense of context.

All I would do here is mask the mount and darken the blacks, increase the shadows and increase the exposure by about 25% in that area. You could also slightly lighten the bottom to bring out the highlights which will help lead the viewer into the image. I suggest using the shadows slider here.

14 Highly Commended

Outback Band

The idea is ok here; however, because all the tones are similar the subject gets lost in the image. I suggest that when you are converting this to black and white work with the Black and White panel in Lightroom to adjust how the colours are rendered as grays! Darkening the grass and changing some of the tones in the subject will also help. I would also look at cropping this to a 16:9 format as it will remove some of the trees in the background which will make the subject more dominant. Even doing just this and levelling the image improves it.

You could try to mask the background and lighten it to separate the subjects.

5 Accepted

Owharoa Falls

This has been well processed. The moody sky stands out well and the silky rendering of the waterfall is great.

For me the bottom could be cropped as the area below the falls is all dark and the shoreline at the very bottom being dark tends to make me want to see more of what is there, which takes away from the subject!

Because of the sky and the bush around the waterfall, without seeing the colour image, I think this would work better in B&W than colour because the colours could be distracting.

17 Honours

Pondering the Moment

I like the positioning of the window here. It provides a bit of tension in the image.

Personally, I would add some light to the shadows to just lighten the person a little.

You may need to remove noise before doing this, but increasing the shadows slider by around 25-30 should be enough.

Well seen!

15 Highly Commended

Raglan Roast

A very nice image. The use of monochrome helps bring out the texture in the wood panelling and the shapes in the image.

All I would do here is increase the contrast and darken the blacks as well as reducing the light in the shadows. For me, this gives it more punch!

Very nice!

15 Highly Commended

Rishikesh India

This is well captured. Black and white works well as Indian culture tends to have bright colours which could overwhelm the image.

The fact that you have included the trident gives a sense of context.

Exposure is good. However, I would tone down the wall a little so that it isn't so bright. The brightness tends to draw the viewer away from the subject.

16 Highly Commended

Rua Waahine

This looks like it is an image scanned from a negative. The bluish tone and the grain suggest this.

First, I would crop the left side, so most of the white door frame is removed. Because it is brighter than anything else, the eye tends to migrate to it. I would also crop a little off the top.

I assume you saved this initially as a RAW file so first I would remove the noise/grain!

I would convert to black and white, as the blue tone doesn't add anything.

After cropping increase the exposure by around 80% and a slightly increase in the light in the shadows and the whites.

This comes across as a record shot for something and the title doesn't add any idea.

4 Accepted

Rugged Calm

The white edge and black keyline work well here and without it there would be no edge to the image on the top, right and bottom.

The use of a long exposure which blurs the sea and the cloud movement, works well.

Exposure is excellent and all I would suggest is adding a little texture so the rocks at the very left are a little sharper.

I like the way you have composed this with the rocks leading the viewer into the frame diagonally.

You could look at very slightly darkening the blacks and brightening the whites, but that is a personal preference.

Finally, have a look at whether lightening the lighthouse helps. I think it does.

18 Honours

The Kelpies

I like the fact you have made the subject very dominant in the picture.

As the subject looks like it is metal black and white works well here.

I would like to see some contrast between the sky and the subject.

I feel that the sky is a bit dark. If you look at the image the tones of the sky and subject are very similar!

I would lighten the subject to make it pop. Increasing the exposure on the subject by 50-60% and adjusting the whites and blacks will help.

There is a person in the middle of the foreground which I would remove to allow an uninterrupted view. Also, I suggest you remove what looks like a boat at the very left.

I would also lighten the trees at the right as being very dark they are distracting.

Adding some texture to the subject will help.

10 Commended

Those Feet

The diagonal placement of the girl works very well here. As the title is the feet, I would lighten them. The lightness of the skirt tends to draw the viewer away from the rest of the image. I would darken the area under the girl so that the stool legs disappear.

I'd like to see more separation between the girl and the background. If you mask the girl and raise the light in the shadows you see detail in the hair which helps separate her from the background.

I would go back and reprocess this because it has more potential.

11 Commended

Tin Dog

I like the fact you have composed this as a diagonal as it shows the shape well. While black and white works for this image, the dog does get somewhat lost in the background because they are of similar tones.

I suggest you mask the dog and lighten it then duplicate and invert the mask and darken the background to provide more separation.

I am wondering what the colours are in the RAW file. If there is contrast there, then converting it to B&W in Lightroom and working with the colours in the B&W panel will allow you to control the effect more.

It is important to remove distractions such as the bits of grass especially at the bottom left.

5 Accepted

Weathered

The composition is good here. I like the fact that you have composed this so that the viewer is led from the left into the image to the right.

Personally, I would crop this to a 16:9 format and use it to crop off the bottom.

I would darken the sky a little, so it isn't so bright, then do the same to the sky reflection. To do this first create a sky mask and adjust it. Next rotate the image 180 deg and again select a sky mask. This will again select what the Lightroom thinks is the sky. Adjust that mask and finally rotate the image 180 deg so it is now the right side up again.

The image would benefit from some more contrast in the rockface at the left, especially the top left.

This has more potential, and I suggest you could go back and try some of my suggestions to see if they help.

12 Commended

B Grade

Beach Buoys

I like the way you have cropped this to a wide format.

I cannot see any buoys as per the title and wonder if it is a play to the two people in the midground.

This image shows that you have thought about the composition and placement of the foreground elements. I suggest you lighten the foreground slightly with a linear gradient. I would also put a linear gradient on the top and darken it, so it isn't so dominant.

More depth of field is needed here. Because the sky in the background is very light it tends to lead the viewer away from the foreground. The fact that everything behind the two people gets more out of focus lets this down. I suggest that you stop down at least two more stops and place your focus point on the strip of water just behind the people. Doing this will maximise your depth of field by placing the focus plane about a third into the image. This is because Depth of Field extends about one third in front of the focus plane and two-thirds behind.

The resolution of the file you submitted is not enough to properly access sharpness etc.

9 Merit

Breakdown

The composition works well here. Placing the subject diagonally helps create tension and shows more of the shape of the object.

As you get closer to an object the depth of field gets less and less at a given aperture. I suggest you could either stop down more to increase the appearance of what is in focus. Another option would be to set the camera on a tripod and use focus stacking, where you take an image then move the focus back very slightly and take another shot until you have enough focus points. Then process all the images in Photoshop. Get someone to show you how to do this if you can. There are also many YouTube videos that show you how to do this.

I would and mask the light area at the very left, so it doesn't distract the viewer.

Generally, exposure is good, and about all I would do is increase the light in the shadows such as in the area between the subject and the vice.

14 Highly Commended

Buenos Aires Cinematic Skyline

I like the fact that you have provided a negative effect to this. I am guessing that you were trying to create a black and white infrared effect.

The high contrast effect works well here, and the white border provides closure around the image.

Processing is great and all I would suggest doing is increasing the whites and highlights to brighten the trees and greenery.

This is well seen and executed.

Well done!

19 Honours

Classic Structures

The first thing I would do here is add some texture and sharpening because the image looks a bit soft.

Exposure is fairly good here and I like the way you have composed this. You could include more of the leg bones though.

I would add some light to the shadows and tone down the highlights so the light on the window frame isn't so bright.

If you have the skills, I would mask the skeleton and increase the shadows slider and whites slider and finally reduce the highlights slightly.

You could look at slightly cropping the left side and the bottom.

10 Commended

Derelict Sawmill

The composition is great here. The bits of wood lead the viewer to the old wheel while the gap at the right leads the viewer out into the open to whatever the structure is.

As it is presented this image needs some re-processing to enhance it. The meter has been fooled by the sky outside and underexposed the main part of the image.

I would mask the sky then duplicate and invert that mask, so it covers the rest of the image.

I would increase the exposure here by about one stop (100%)

I would also increase the light in the shadows by up to 50. These adjustments will reveal more detail in the area under cover.

Ideally this is a case where shooting an HDR would help. This involves shooting either three or five exposures at different settings bracketing at one stop or two stop intervals, with one exposure being what the meter suggests and exposures both under and over the meter reading in whatever difference you decide on. I would shoot at 2 stop intervals and take 5 shots!

You could do some extensive editing here by using the masking and brushes to select different areas and adjust them separately, but you may need to get some tutoring on how to do this.

13 Highly Commended

Dressed for the Occasion

This is a good portrait with the eyes nice and visible even though he has a hat on.

I like the way you have captured the man with the skull on the stick at the bottom and his hand on the hat. Really all it needs to score higher is to apply the suggestion I have made.

I like the fact you have put a black keyline around the edges because the background being white will otherwise lead the viewer out of the frame.

I suggest you crop this as a vertical because there is nothing in the background and the white draws the viewer away from the subject.

Exposure is ok, however, if you look at the beard the middle is blown out with no detail at all. If you shot this in RAW it is possible that there is detail, there so I would go back and look. If there isn't any detail you may be able to fix this with the healing brush. Photoshop works better for this.

I would darken the blacks a little to give a little more contrast. To do this in Lightroom, hold down the Option/Alt key and move the blacks slider to the left until you see black showing through.

14 Highly Commended

Lift

This shows that you have given some thought to creating this picture.

The use of black and white is excellent.

I suggest you crop the left and right sides so you remove the bottom bits of the nearest uprights. I would also even the left and right sides. I would also crop some off the bottom.

Have a look at increasing the contrast by sliding the Shadows slider to the left and also reduce the highlights.

It is a pity that the person in the middle isn't closer to the camera and the objects at the left aren't removed.

Otherwise, it's quite a good image.

11 Commended

Looking Back

Excellent shot!

The placement of the cattle and the way you have composed this is great. I guess the placement of the cattle is just good luck!

the processing is great, thought you could mask the sky and reduce the exposure slightly and also the blacks. This will darken it slightly, so it doesn't draw the viewer away from the subject.

Ideally, you could remove the fence stakes and the cow pat at the bottom but it isn't absolutely needed as this is a rural scene!

19 Honours

Rooted on the Spot

The use of a panoramic format is good given the shape of the tree roots.

I suggest you could crop out some of the bottom as the light tones of the leaves keep the viewer below the roots which are the subject.

As this image is presented, I suggest you darken the bottom a little by applying a linear gradient from the bottom and reducing the highlights. You could also look at darkening the blacks slightly to add contrast.

Adding a little texture will help.

8 Commended

Sitting Pretty

This is an excellent image. The way you have seen this and executed it is great. The white border is good. The panoramic format works well.

All I would do here is increase the exposure by 50% (1/2 Stop), and darken the blacks by 30-40 and slightly reduce the shadows!

Well done!

20 Honours

The Old Gate

Composition is great with the angle of the gate leading the viewer into the image from the left to the path which then leads the viewer around and into the background. Normally high contrast doesn't work, but here it works well. I suggest that you could reduce the highlights at the end of the path, because bright areas (and sometimes dark areas) tend to draw the viewer away from the subject.

The black line around the edge works well.

Maybe have a look at the image with less contrast especially in the black areas to see if it helps.

15 Highly Commended

Wading

I like the fact that you have composed this as a close up showing just the girl's head. There is good use of depth of field with the background well out of focus.

I think that the image would be improved if the girl was looking at the camera.

I suggest you increase the exposure by about half a stop to make it slightly brighter.

11 Commended

Wired

Exposure is good here. I would increase the whites to just when they clip then reduce the highlights. I would reduce the blacks the same and increase the shadows slider.

The fact you have placed the centre of the wheel off centre is good; however, I would like to see more depth of field at the bottom because with the centre of the wheel being off centre the eye migrates further downward!

9 Merit

Wrapped in Fog

This is a subject that can work well in B&W. Because the fog tends to mute the colours, Black and white can shift the image to showing the shapes without the distraction of colour. But if the colours are warm colour can work.

Here because of the large objects black and white works well.

I suggest that you add some light in the shadows to reveal just a hint of detail in the trees, especially the centre one. You could adjust the whites and highlights as well.

You could also crop some more off the bottom to remove some of the foreground as it doesn't add anything to the image.

5 Accepted

Young Wood

The light in this image is lovely. The image has a bit of an Ansel Adams look to it!

I would crop off the tree at the left as it leads the viewer out of the image because of its curved!

I suggest you reduce the blacks until there just a slight clipping then back off slightly. I would also increase the whites until they clip then reduce the highlights! These adjustments will add a slight increase in contrast.

14 Highly Commended

Open

A Grade

Marine Iguana Galapagos Islands

The depth of field is great with the background completely out of focus probably from the use of a long lens (I wouldn't want to get too close!)

I suggest cropping some off the left and the top to make a tighter framing!

Exposure is pretty good; however, have a look at increase the exposure half a stop, reduce the blacks and increase the shadows slider as this will reveal more in the body.

Well executed!

16 Highly Commended

A Hobbit Box

The way you have framed this is good because the angle shows the shape of the box.

Normally selective colour in images isn't popular, but I think this one works well. If the image was either all black and white or colour, the box would get lost in the rest of the picture!

I suggest you play around with the shadows, particularly regarding the box door. Lightening it up will help. You could also look at reducing the highlights on top of the box!

The white frame around the image works well. I suggest you either darken the block of wood in the left background as it is distracting!

12 Commended

Available for Restoration

Composition is good here, with the wreck nice and large in the frame!

It is a pity there is so much overgrown grass as it does lessen the impact of the subject. To improve this, you could look at black and white. Regardless I would remove the grass stalks that intersect the steering wheel. This will help the wreck stand out more!

You could also try cropping so that just the wreck is shown, to make it more dominant!

5 Accepted

Golden Fern

This is an interesting image. I like how you have tried to use the lit fern as the subject.

Personally, I would crop this. If you look at it, the orange leaves are distracting and so is the bottom.

I would crop the bottom off to just above the bottom of the large leaf beside the trunk and crop the left so that the tip of the lit fern is just left of the left third.

This will make the fern much more dominant.

I suggest you adjust the blacks and whites and reduce the highlights.

7 Merit

Magic of a Frosty Morning

The use of depth of field here works well, ensuring the background is completely out of focus. If there were more depth of field in front of the ball that would help. The bottom left corner is dark and out of focus so the viewer goes there. The eye goes to out of focus areas wanting to see more there.

Considering it is a cold morning the white balance needs to be much colder. There is an overall green cast to the image.

I suggest that you look at recropping this as a vertical as this would result in a much tighter image and will remove the bottom left corner. If you then place the bottom third line in the middle of the ball it will achieve a better image. To do this you will need to crop some of the top then reposition the crop so the ball is equal distance from the left and right.

7 Merit

Pacific Sea Nettle

Composition is good here with the subject placed diagonally, and the tail going down to the bottom left corner.

The image would benefit from some processing. If you were to increase the exposure by at least a stop, reducing the whites slightly and increasing the shadows slider to nearly 100 as well as slightly increasing the contrast you will end up with a much more punchy image that will really stand out!

As you have presented this the tail and the strings are lost in the black. If you do brighten things then I would remove the blue spot.

9 Merit

Surf Time

This is well composed with both surfers intersecting the third lines.

I would adjust the highlights, Shadows, Whites and Blacks sliders to give this a bit more punch in the colours. Exposure is great otherwise.

I suggest you crop out the sky as it really doesn't add anything to the image because there are no clouds!

It looks as if you placed the focus point behind the front surfer as he appears to be a little soft. Some texture and sharpening will reduce this appearance. I would also add a little dehaze.

If you had stopped down another stop, you probably wouldn't have these problems!

12 Commended

Wet Feet

Unfortunately, this image isn't sharp. It looks as if you may have focused behind the subject as the hedge on the right looks slightly sharper than the foreground.

There looks to be some chromatic aberration, particularly at the bottom!

You could turn this into a monochrome and increase the texture and sharpening to make it appear sharper than it is, but it will never be perfect!

4 Accepted

B Grade

Kaka

This is well captured. Composition is good.

I suggest that you reprocess this because it will benefit from making it pop more. Increasing the exposure by around 40%, reducing the highlights, increasing the shadows and the whites while finally darkening the blacks very slightly will make it look better. I would also add some texture and sharpening.

By doing this the colours will pop more, and the bird's body will stand out a bit more. Have a look at further darkening the bottom left corner as it looks a bit odd.

14 Highly Commended

Out of the Bush

How you have framed this is good. However, I would crop both the top and the bottom! This will tighten things!

As presented the image is underexposed. However, it can be rescued in processing. Have a look at the histogram and you will see that there is no data at the right where the whites and highlights should be. If you adjusted the exposure so that the highlights were just kissing the right of the histogram it would improve things.

Set the black and white points then increase the exposure by at least one stop (100%). Finally, adjust the highlights and shadows to suit.

I would also add some texture and some sharpening.

There is a weird green area just to the right of the waterfall. Was this taken at night?

If you can remove it that would help as it is distracting!

5 Accepted

Top Images

Black and White

Sitting Pretty. The graphic nature of this image is what makes it stand out from the other contenders

Open

Kaka. The light and composition are what makes this stand out.