

JUDGES REPORT

OPEN – April 2019

Judge: - Tryg Helander

Toowoomba

Grade	ID	Image Title	Comments	Score
A		Antelope Canyon Walls	Much to view here. Layers, texture, variations in tone and colour. This image gives so much. The payoff here, in my opinion, is the way the brightness increases toward the brilliantly lit entrance, the way the deeper purples and reds give way to orange and yellows. This is a feast for the eye and makes for a very interesting image. I really appreciate the thought given to the composition and technical excellence shown here.	9
A		From Earth to Heaven	Often, we hear that central horizons should be avoided, hence the choice of crop here. I would suggest humbly that the big sky gives a strong heavenly feel, but competes with the foreground subject, which could be given equal footing in a longer, narrower pano. The human in the scene gives strong meaning and I really enjoyed the isolation and placement of the gated grave in the near foreground. The slight softness and grain evident is actually working well in the image, but pushed any more, would be detrimental.	6
A		Give Us a Glow	Wow, pulling zoom effect is not used as much as it should! This is a striking image, given the colours harboured by the low horizon light and the flash fill on the star of the scene, but adds much by only partially adding more sense by partially illuminating the headstones in the distance. The effect is a well-used addition to create visual speed in vehicles, cycles and animals etc., and may or may not be as appropriate here, but does create a very stunning effect.	7
A		Misty Morning	This dead thicket was always going to be difficult to showcase with the similar colours surrounding and busyness of the background. Also, the strong greens here are simply out-competing the dead grasses. The mistiness is evident, but the overall softness is detracting. The crop is also not giving enough headroom to balance. I do like the hope of renewed growth among the death here though.	5
A		Gathering Nectar	There is almost a material like quality to the image, the way in which the heavy grain in the bokeh is visibly patterned. However, there is a heaviness to this effect, due to the marked negative space in the top right corner. This effect would serve better if there was even more of the image well into the DoF slice that is out of focus and producing the effect. The slight movement of the butterfly is giving life to the image. Given less overpowering concentration of the flowers, this image would score higher.	6
A		Settled for the Night	Being a boat owner, this does not look like chaos to me, more like organised mess. The longer exposure has given a slight softness to the water and afforded a good exposure, which also has developed strong noise in the sky. This is not offensive though and gives a nice granular effect that was	7

			almost sought after in the film era. The strong central starbursts really draw attention and do give a starting point for the story here. The imagemaker has been very considered in their choice of three boats in the foreground, rule of odds showing, well played!	
A		Gum-nuts	A strong and simple image. Because the image's background is very well contained by the heavy bokeh, an imagemaker is free to play with angles. In my opinion, that allows the stem to be placed at any corner and the composition to be given more space on the opposing side, to relieve the strong central placement shown here. Finding the gum-nuts covered in a spiders' webs is an excellent choice, adding to the complex textural elements shown.	7
A		Jewels in the Mist	An aptly named image, where the web does indeed look resplendent with jewels. The lighting caught by the hundreds of droplets makes for a strong display. The muted colour palette is broken only by the hint of green bottom left and if balanced out by something top right or desaturated to remove, this would be a stronger image, in my opinion. A very artistic and well composed image.	8
A		Richard	Cannot help smiling at this gnome's contented smile and placement in the greenery. The focus seems to have caught more the hat, than its eyes, as the focus is falling more quickly around the cheeks, such is the shallow slice of DoF afforded here. This DoF has worked well in regard to softening the background, a great choice of technique. The one strong diagonal leaf to the right has a slightly distracting marring of possibly bird droppings, which is possibly why the gnome is looking happy, it missed Richard.	6
A		The Cafe	The imagemaker is credited here with really understanding the scene before pressing the shutter. We are shown many elements in layers, including the half road in diagonal, the supporting boats placement behind the boatshed café and the mountains and sky adding well. The colouration is marginally strong, I humbly suggest being more judicious with the saturation or vibrancy enhancement in post-production. The blue hues are too strong. The banding in the sky is evident of the processing. A pleasingly well considered composition.	6
A		Got Our Eyes on You	Don't white horses look very majestic on a heavy green foreground?! I like the story and connection shown here. The fourth horse, replete with bridle and the electric tape fence adds a level of modernity that detracts in my opinion. It is probably impossible to image these majestic animals without containment but given the lack of the hand-of-man shown in the image, the thought of no fence or bridle is very alluring. A lovely image.	6
A		I Think I can Reach	Oh dear, how lovely. To perfect an image like this; add more space to the right, bump the lighting/luminance up on the bird and keep the competing reflective return of the water down. There is such beautiful sharpness and intimacy in this image.	8

IMAGE OF THE MONTH
(ONE only for each Grade please)

Grade	ID	Image Title	Reason for Placing
A		Antelope Canyon Walls	Such a simple, well-composed image that makes great use of colours, textures, tones, shadow and light to entice viewers to linger just that little bit longer. (Elsbeth Twyman)

Grade	ID	Image Title	Comments	Score
AB		Beautiful Flower	Supremely complimentary, the strong colours of this image work very well together, as does the choice of aperture, the DoF blending out very nicely. The mosquito adds to the scene very nicely also. There is heavy blocking of pixels and even an artefact of large colour blocking above the rearmost left-hand stamen. This might only be due to the compression of the image due to entry requirements, but the perfect geometry of that square edge is very distracting. A nice find to show the strength of complimentary colours in action.	6
AB		Double Beauty	I really enjoy images that I can show as examples to the group that have taken care to choose an appropriate aperture, is also sensitive to the needs of exposure and is compositionally very nice. Here we see that, and that the colours are also very complimentary. That fraction more space on the right, for me, is really spot on. Additionally, I love that the DoF separates the background, but has enough clarity to be able to see what is there. This for me is an excellent image and is deserving of the lauding it receives.	9
AB		Bamboo	Penguins, cows, dogs and pandas. Black and white animals will always be the most challenging images for most cameras and photographers. In metering for the scene, you can see how the camera has chosen to split the difference. The whites blow out and lose tone, the blacks are slightly underexposed. It's always going to be a choice; a pro tip is to grab a fast series of bracketed images and combine as a HDR image. I really love the movement in the bamboo as the panda eats. Would be nice to see more of the animal's eye, but this is a good image, nonetheless.	6
AB		Lighthouse	There is a real mood in this image, because of the overcast and dreary day. The layers involved turn this into a journey for us and the colours all support the story. I humbly suggest there is too much foreground water, a loss of a third of it would enhance the starring lighthouse, because the reflection is not strongly evident. If the water was smoother and supported a better reflection, this should remain. A well-composed shot.	7
AB		Drop In	This is a well-conceived image, which is on the right track. The slice of DoF is too shallow and the sharpness of the fly is suffering a little as a result. That said, the choice of composition, negative space and brightness, colours and that one perfect red eye really stand out to best effect. I could ask the image maker to continue in this regard, as this is a really strong image.	7
AB		Kitty Comfort	I really don't want to come across as a crop, crop type of judge, but here the large foreground rock is too near and too large....half would do. The bright elements top left are competing with your serene looking ginger cat and this	5

			wouldn't be the case if they were cloned or removed. The star needs to be centre stage. I love the position cats put themselves in, and still look comfortable!	
AB		Feathered Friend	There is something lovely about our Australian feathered friends, these parrots are exotically coloured and very easy on the eye. I like the strong crop and deep bokeh. The connection is there, and the eye has a lovely, but soft catchlight. The image is suffering some pixel clumping in the bokeh, possibly because of rendering of the close crop after zooming to create the image. Overall, it's a good image.	6
AB		Spider Bites Bee then Flies Feast	This would have to be one of the most shocking and intensely interesting images I have judged or viewed over the last twenty plus years. Outside of wartime imagery, this is just something most of us would not stop to capture. With the movement, softness and blurring occurring, I get a sense of voraciousness and vigour. There are some issues with exposure, being too close to blowing out in the foliage and some colour noise evident also, possibly from cropping in. A great grab that would be impossible to set up for.	8
AB		After the Rain	I cannot assume the imagemaker had any room to maneuver in composing this image, but the image height is working against the title. The story here is the waters infiltrating the dry area and is not given the headline in the image, as much as the very tall gum. The foreground fir tree is also stealing some of the limelight and this could be reduced by cropping to below the half. I enjoy the low perspective, and this could be played on even further in future attempts at showcasing water.	5
AB		Out of the Pool	Nicely lit from the side, this kookaburra has a really strong feeling of movement and action. A difficult shot to take at speed, the imagemaker has done a sterling job, both achieving good sharpness where it is required and showcasing the action with wings blurred and water droplets lengthened. It is marginally affected by the wing touching the frame's edge and the addition of the bright yellow foliage far right. Suggest a square crop here.	6
AB		Imposing	Engineering creates some wonderfully strong and imposing shapes, which we often cannot see, due to them being the substrate under which we travel or experience. The parallel lineal nature of the supporting joists and the large legs are a fantastic view. I commend the photographer on the choice of diagonal aspect also. Please be aware that your lens had water droplets on the left and this mars the image somewhat. The verticals are off, a little looks lazy and a lot more could be interpreted as artistic....choose well there!	5
AB		Pretty in Pink	The high sun is a photographer's arch rival. Strong shadows can be purposeful, but never enhance in situations where we expect soft light, especially on delicate flowers...soft light will always trump here. There is a general softness in the image too, the focus point is difficult to detect on your subject. The background is also very harsh, the colours are representative of a dying landscape and this gives the image a very different feeling to what we are accustomed, so thank you for showing us this.	5
AB		In a Hurry	The fluid movement of water with the bird's running feet is an exceptional method of showcasing static speed. I get a real sense of rapid, but careful movement. The strong eye	8

			colour, seconded by the bright, well-lit legs and water reflectivity in the distance adds beautifully here. There is a slightly unnatural saturation of blues here, but it may have been just that kind of day! The composition and placement of the bird is both intimate and also purposeful, giving just enough space ahead. I really like this.	
AB		Landing Pad	Such an unusual shot, well seen and caught. The dragon fly looks happy to take a breather, whilst the amphibian comes up for breath. Exposure is nearly perfect, excepting a slightly overexposed head and body of the insect. I would also check your sensor for an abundance of spotting, which is visible just above the submerged neck and bottom right of screen. If you can, rectify this so it does not complicate future images. Such an interesting piece.	5
AB		Puff Ball	Such a feeling of delicateness and softness. The choice of aperture here really takes advantage of this fact and turns this into something we can almost feel. The near macro nature of the image has also developed a very beautiful bokeh, with just enough shape and clarity to be visually interesting, but not overpowering. Being overly central in the frame may be polarizing, but this a beautiful image.	8
AB		Smile	An image enhanced by the strong overhead sun, of a ratty Arabian ungulate in the midst of dense bush. This dromedary looks to be more likely remonstrating than smiling, but I take the point of the imagemaker! The muted palette here makes for an overarching feeling of a dry and largely un hospitable outback. This is a nice capture.	6

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Grade	ID	Image Title	Reason for Placing
AB		Double Beauty	Such a fine example of technical excellence combined with thoughtful composition and expected outcome. Really fine work. (Patricia Anderson)

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B		Doesn't Hold Water	There is a delicious irony at work here. Having a split right next to a tap is cruelly funny. Clearly engineers should think more about strengthening this very stressed area. The earthy colours and variety of angles, lineal activity and directions travelled herein makes for a very strong image. I commend the imagemaker for their thoughtful composition. I would humbly suggest increasing the aperture here though, as the foreground tap need to be more in focus, as we naturally look at it as an operational part of the very recognizable piece of equipment. Lovely work.	7
B		Moorhen Breakfast	This is an exciting image of breakfast being caught or consumed. There is a lot of colour noise in the background and plumage of the bird, though. There is a general softness to the image, although it is often difficult to get these grab shots, with an often-fleeing animal. I thank the imagemaker for their effort.	5
B		Afternoon Play	The rule of odd is well at play here. As we have been told many times, odd numbers are pleasing to the eye in imagery. The dogs stand out well on the very kempt grass,	7

			although there is a fraction too much background, which does little for the image. Be aggressive with cropping, as it raises interest in the subjects and gives a strong intimacy. The loss of the righthand dog's hind is not injurious to the image as our minds fill in the gaps. Try losing as much on the left and see if this works as I humbly suggest it might.	
B		Happy at Work	There is a wonderful sense of joy in this image, I feel this is a display, not actual work! A ball of wool looks to have been caught mid toss, between the loom makers behind the joyous weaver. The background shows hint of the mountainous scenery. This would make for an aesthetically pleasing travel documentary inclusion for many print and internet modes.	7
B		Field of Light	Oh dear, so much love! I believe the foreground black area detracts somewhat and the big sky feel is evident even with a little less sky. Turn this into a long and very strong pano. This is so epic; I have just put this place on my bucket list! Marginal banding is almost certainly due to compression of the image, but I bet the original is sensational!	9
B		Flower of Cannon	Red is always an excellent choice for a subject. Especially when the background is also devoid of that particular colour. Nothing draws our eye faster. The sharpness is not as precise as it could be, and the vibrancy has been lifted a fraction too far. The blue hues are lifted too much in the branches within the bokeh. I would also suggest there is a general busyness to the background left. An interesting flower and beautiful stamen.	6

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B		Field of Light	3P's = Picture Postcard Perfect. (Kaye Hinds)