

## JUDGE Gerard Saide Toowoomba

### A GRADE

**Buddhist Pilgrims 8.5** This is a strong social documentary image which has some interesting detail included. It is certainly worthy of an honour. The composition, set within a frame, is excellent. Each person has their own character and while they seem a coherent group, so much is happening. The only jarring aspect for me is the two women looking at the camera. This is not a major concern as it can be debated if this adds to or distracts from the story. Of especial interest are the plastic water bottle and straws, all of which seem to be anachronistic when compared to the clothing, prayer beads and overall setting. The top part of a walking stick is a nice little detail. Well done.

**Could Almost Be Tinplated. 5** The author's intention is clear from the title. My knowledge of plants and animals is limited but this looks a little like a Bird of Paradise. You have chosen a strong pattern in the plant to crop and the juxtaposition of the stalks and leaf is well-balanced. This could make a good black and white image.

**Dinner for Swamp Tiger Butterfly 6** Composition and colour are two positives in this image. Even though they say "blue and green are never seen", the two main colours blend in well. The 'tatty' leaves that have been chewed add to the message and create a more interesting image.

**Hold On 7** An apt title as the insect (dragon fly) seems to be doing just that. You have chosen a narrow depth of field which has really enhanced the insect against the lovely, blurred hues in the background. Enlarging the image shows that the sharpness is good but could be better. Regardless, you have done well to capture it as you would not have had much time.

**I love Mud Baths! 6** Raoul Slater, a celebrated bird and animal photographer, says that the days of static animal images are over. Photographers need to show animals in action, doing what they do, in order to keep the viewers interested. The author of this image has managed to do this. The elephant seems to be loving his dirt bath. However, the rather artificial setting detracts from the main action. Could you have used a lower angle and changed your position so the grass shades weren't visible?

**Mountain Trees 9** This is just a magic image. Can you see more in it than mountain trees? There is a ballet going on here. The lead dancer is centre foreground and the rest of the dancers all make the same flowing motion to the left. The colours are perfect (all dancers are dressed the same) and the mist is the coup de grace. A scene staged and just waiting for photographer to come along. I wonder if they were doing Swan Lake!!

**Pandanus Art 7** Pandanus can be very 'messy' at the best of times. Your choice of filter and the high key effect has simplified the Pandanus and made it into an art form.

**Pollen Alight 7** A very different approach compared to the pandanus. The flower has so much natural beauty that it is strong as it is. Purple and gold always look good together and you have made the most of this by cropping close and limiting the background greens. A slight sliver of green on the left of the image is a bit distracting and can be easily cloned out. The image celebrates the beauty of nature in its smaller parts.

**Stanislas Square 6** I was almost waiting for 'an artist's impression' to appear in the title. This image has that sort of appearance that you often see in newspapers when new buildings are announced but have yet to begin construction and are therefore accompanied by a sketch. It seems that a filter has been applied. If so, it has made an everyday scene more appealing and more arty.

**The Ornate White Temple 6** What an amazing structure! I thought it was one of those ice sculptures you see during winter in the northern hemisphere. You have enhanced the site by including a wide view to allow the reflection. The light is strong but there would be little

you can do when you are shooting in the middle of the day. It would be interesting to see this building in early morning or late afternoon light that would give the details more modelling.

**Through the Mist 7** It was a good move to present this as a monochrome image. The mist creates the dreamlike quality of the scene and softens the overall appearance of the branch.

**Uluru 5** It is good to see an image of Uluru that takes in the foreground to give the icon a context. We tend to forget that it is the surrounding flatness of the land that makes Uluru so noticeable. Unfortunately, the light is a little harsh and flat where it falls on the Rock and the horizon has a slight slope. Some digital editing would help you address this.

## IMAGE OF THE MONTH

**Grade A Elsbeth Twyman**

**Image Title Mountain Trees**

**Reason for Placing:** This was a difficult choice as I tend to be a bit more biased towards social documentary/people images. Buddhist Pilgrims really appealed to me but in the way I judge, Mountain Trees kept coming back to my mind after two or three days of looking at the images. It also is very poetical in its theme. The trees are personified as dancers and, like a poem, they have grace and rhythm. This is my top photo in all the Open sections.

## AB GRADE

**Covered Bridge 6** It is interesting how we can know something without having experienced it. Cultural clues suggest this bridge is somewhere in Asia. The photographer is taking us somewhere through his/her eyes and we can respond in many different ways. It is good that the people on the bridge have been include. The dull gray of the bridge is a good balance to the foreground greens.

**Eastern Yellow Robin 7** Although the bird is scanning the area and just perched on the branch, the sharpness in the detail of the plumage and the out-of-focus background make this image worthy of a merit.

**Finch 6** In contrast to the Robin, the detail in the colour and bird's plumage is still very good however, the closeness of the bird to the ground has made it difficult to throw the ground more out of focus. This is where a bit of creative photoshopping with layers could help.

**Finches Flock 8** Though this image could be sharper, the interesting capture of the finches in one location makes us take more notice. Can we compare human behaviour with the birds? They seem to have separated themselves exactly with the spaces in the grid. Each bird has a respectable distance from its neighbour. Each is involved in looking around in different directions. The one on the left looks a bit agro. It would be amazing to know what is going on with/amongst them. Well done for the shallow depth of field and for capturing something different.

**Kookaburras 5.5** Good composition is the strength of this image. It needs to be a little sharper and there are some small areas of burnt out highlights in the bird on the left. It is good that you captured one bird with some food in its beak.

**Lewins Honeyeater 6** Hey, it's upside down! JUST KIDDING. It's not only flying that some birds can do that humans can't. The Lewins seems to be a popular choice among bird photographers. This image is sharp and clear and the tricolour background adds interest.

**Lunch 5** As mentioned earlier, it is good to see animals doing what they do in images like this. There is a lot of space taken up by water where nothing is happening. I would try to home in on fewer of the animals and try to get more detail in what they are eating. As an

example, the three in the foreground make a fairly good arrangement and there is enough water around them to place their environment in context.

**Nice Day for a Dip 5** Your intention is clear from the title but it hasn't translated in to the image very well. The two essential elements are there - the bird and the water, however, you need to bring them together. Pre-splash the ground if the bird is tame enough or try to get the kooka looking at the water.

**Number 254 7** This is an excellent example of good panning and cropping. We don't really need more background to place the image in its context. Despite there being some highlighting on the tyres in the background, it doesn't detract from the action and their blurring adds to the effect. The big bonus is the clarity of expression on the rider's face.

**Orange Bug in the Tomatoes 6.5** You have done well to spot this. The composition works well in your favour due to the criss-cross pattern of the vine. One or two highlights are a little distracting and could be toned down. The variation in colours is an added plus.

**Ruins at Ayutthaya 7** This is a rather interesting structure. The image tends to be a straight shot done as well as possible under the conditions present. The sky is bland but that is an advantage here. It helps draw attention to the power of nature over human endeavours. For me, that is a subtle message in this image.

**Tidal Sand Patterns 6** This is moving into the area of art photography using natural features of the landscape. Having seen many images like this, I can say this is one of the better ones. The fact you haven't used too much contrast allows the pattern to speak for itself. It begs us to ask how nature seems to copy itself like this, limiting features that are recognisable in other natural areas.

## IMAGE OF THE MONTH

**Grade AB Dawn Furmage**

**Image Title Finches Flock**

**Reason for Placing:** This image went a bit beyond a classical bird image. Adding more elements to a photo makes it more difficult to produce something special. In this case, the photographer has given us an insight into human aspects of other animal life with relative ease.

## B GRADE

**Here's Looking at You 5.5** The koala is a favourite for photographers but often hard to capture because they are so high up. You have managed a reasonable shot here. Unfortunately, the foreground leafage is intrusive and blocks part of the mother we need to see. You caught a lovely expression on the joey's face and he seems happy to pose for you.

**Kata Tjuta from the Air 6.5** There are beautiful rich colours here and you can see what inspired the likes of Namatjira. Though we often hear not to place the subject in the centre, in this case it would work really well to have the rocks in the very centre of the image. I am intrigued by the concave shape of the horizon.

**Mother and Child 7** There is more to this image than first meets the eye. The photographer seems to be making a statement. This is not your usual kangaroo/wallaby photo. The similarity in colour (grey) between the roos and the shed is significant. The photo could be a comment on how humans have encroached on the natural territory of the local wildlife. Even the expression on the mother's face seems to suggest a sense of concern about where they will go next as their home 'disappears'.

**Mt Tambourine Markets 5** A whimsical set-up to attract the tourists no doubt. Worthwhile recording. The bright rectangle of light at the left could be easily eliminated by

cropping. There is too much space on the right as well. Hence, an overall crop to include just the two figures would make this a stronger image.

### **IMAGE OF THE MONTH**

**Grade B Gaye Higgins**

**Image Title Mother and Child**

**Reason for Placing: The photographer may not be aware of a subtle message here. I chose it in the hope that photographers look more closely at their work for meaning that they may not have been aware of at the time they took the image.**