

JUDGES REPORT

2025 - January - Open
Richard Foord - Cairns

Image Title	Comments	Score
Morning Light on the Bay	This is a nice morning capture. The challenge is the tonal range. A number of areas have blown out highlights. There are a nice range of colours presented, so it is probably best to go back to your editing software and try enhance the richness of the scene.	6
Pretty Flower	A simple pretty image. The centre of the flower is nicely in focus and the depth of field also helps capture the detail on the leaves. The composition is a little "square" in alignment and some tilting or rotating of image or camera may help drive more interest in this shot, as it feels the flower is wilting and drooping, rather than containing the vibrancy depicted in the strong colours you have captured.	6
Lizard on Granite	According to the details on this image it is quite old and doesn't have any camera information so am not clear technically on what to do to improve this. The subject's head is not quite in focus and the so the viewer is more focused on the tail than on the lizard itself. You will need to do some more editing to bring out the detail in this rock texture though.	5
Reservoir of Yesteryear	Simple, interesting, picturesque. The image has a postcard-like quality to it. It has good composition characteristics and nice sharp focus.	7
Christmas on the Rocks	An interesting idea, and obviously spur of the moment. Clearly the challenge here is that there was a lot of bright sun, but the subject is in full shade removing any contrast or dynamic range driving interest. I see many basic photographers taking these types of shots, without using handheld reflectors to bring a bit of light back in to the shade to drive more interest in to the image. Keep practicing this idea. Also – edit out the tag on the dress at the bottom of the image 😊	6
In a Killer Mood	<p>Congratulations on the creative theme attempted. The effort that went in to the make-up and the costumes shows an interest in the creative story. A couple of key points. The victim's eye make-up looks conveniently clean around the eyes.</p> <p>With selective colour editing it can be more realistic and moodier to not take it to complete monochrome but to take it to 80-90% desaturated. Also I like how you have blurred the background to make it less distracting but you have blurred the entire foreground also meaning that the subject on the pavement is in focus but the pavement they are crawling</p>	6

	across is not which gives a slightly unrealistic aspect to the image. Maybe less blur on the ground will have achieved a similar effect.	
Feather Star	These are very interesting and pretty creatures. Try to isolate the subject more and also try different angles to accentuate the subject and drive interest in the image.	6
Hanging in the Mist	You have tried to give the sense of the gondola hanging in the fog. A slight bump in exposure and potentially less forest on the left would help this. I do like how you have the length of the wire to show the distance it has to travel – potentially a panorama crop may be of benefit here.	6
My Red Centre Sunset	This is a great image where you have nicely brought in the foreground scenery with the log and shrub on the right to provide context for the landscape. The iconic Uluru is clearly present but does not dominate the image as it does in postcards. This is very worthy of printing, framing and hanging in a prominent spot in the house.	9
Young Leopard Hissing	Rich colours and clearly defined and in focus fur provide a good profile of the leopard and its mouth. Not sure what but there is something quite funky going on in the background, but I may have something to do with your auto-focus tracking selection and lens setting. While you have caught the action at an opportune there are some missing pieces to your overall story line resulting in a competent portrait but lacking a compelling interest.	6
Juice Time	I like the attempt at still life here and like where you are going with the image. The front whole lemon casts a fairly large shadow across the foreground given where your lighting is coming from. It may have been better cut in half with the open lemon side facing the light to pick up character. I also feel that the glass at the rear is a little too out of focus when it should play a more pivotal role in the story. With this type of studio shooting, take your time – try lots of placements – don't be afraid to experiment aggressively.	6
Thora's Lily	This is a very strong flower character. The black background helps accentuate the rich colours in the petals. Your focal plan appears to be a little to the frond of the image leaving the forward petals in focus but just bumping the flower stamens out of focus a bit. This can be distracting to the viewer as your eyes are constantly drawn away from the central body of the flower to those parts of the petals that are in focus. Practice with depth of field as well as focus stacking for subject and images like this. This is clearly a very strong subject.	7
Pondering	The thought behind this image of the lone subject and the empty expanse is a good one. The challenge here is there is so much detail in the surrounds, the lone subject fights for attention against his background. Try looking in to the Adamski effect to emphasize your storyline here.	5

Some History Here	The texturing approach to this subject has worked nicely to provide a painting-like image to removing any distractions. The halo over the roof however seems out of place and probably needed removing before applying the textured effect. These types of halos are not uncommon when apply effects and ideally should be treated as soon as they appear to prevent their exaggeration in later editing.	7
Look What I've Got	It's hard to appreciate the value of this image due to the low resolution. Obviously you have cropped to highlight the birds despite using a long lens at the time. Look to software that now has the ability to create larger versions of the image with little loss in detail. It's a great moment – just lacks the crispness of focus.	7
Sipping Nectar	This is a very strong macro image and contains the majority of elements for this genre, front-ish on shot of the insect. Nice sharp eyes. In-focus hairs on the foreground legs as well as petals on the flower at the same depth of field. Nicely bokeh-ed background.	9
Determination	I'm a big fan of barrel races. It is near perfect and at this low resolution still looks good as you have rider expression and horse body action all in play. Use some image enlarging software and noise reduction, plus sharpening to take this to the next level.	8
Figbird Feeding	Good capture through the foliage. Also good to get the bird in the process of feeding. The eye appears just a little soft but this is a good effort with the long lens.	7
Black-necked Stork Feeding	This is a good action shot with the fish mid-air and mid-bill. It takes patience to get these images. I do feel the inclusion of the other birds in the image are a bit of a distraction. They do however provide a context of a busy day foraging in the wetlands.	8
Ellery Creek Big Rockhole	Yep – this is pretty perfect. Absolutely flat mirror water. Clear detail in the rock and trees. Diagonals and leading horizon lines to the sky and setting sun. Well done	9
Black-necked Stork Taking Off	Commendable photo of a bird in flight. You have this technique pretty nicely demonstrated here with good sharp detail in the head and a strong frozen action image. Ideally you want this action type with the bird flying in your direction and/ or putting itself in a more neutral contrasting background.	7
Coming in to Land	Nicely timed and wonderfully coloured background sky. Images are well timed. The editing you used to burn out the highlights on the birds' heads needs a softer edge brush as there are some distinct and distracting artifacts there. Good job though.	7
Osprey	A majestic bird. Well captured. I am not convinced that the monochrome does it justice, as the sharp colour in the plumage may have been nicely off set by the duo tone blue and grey sky in the background. There is strong character in the face, and in monochrome rendering a strong contrasting	7

	and clarity treatment may have helped separate the subject from its background. I particularly love the direction of the light in this image.	
Tawny Eagle	This image is somewhat eerie and “looks” a little artificial in its rendering. The light on the bird’s body is not such that it highlights the textures in the feathers and there appears to be a softness of focus in the face and head. However the image is quite strong in its impression so just may need to be further tweaked in editing to bring out the best in the image.	7
Busy Bee	A pretty good shot using the zoom lens to get the bee and flower. The hairs on the bees’ legs are nicely defined showing sharp focus. More body or a more head-on shot would have scored higher for interest, but this was a good capture. Well done	7
Rhapsody in Blue	Nice bird portrait. The Blue on blue does work in this image and the branch that breaks diagonally from mid left to bottom right helps provide interest in the image. The eye and beak do look a little soft but not sure if this is due to the low resolution of the image.	7
Fishing on the Weir	There is a good sense of story here, and the twilight reflection is captured well. The image does somehow lack that compelling interest and whilst possibly contemplative the mood of the colours and lighting doesn’t quite give that impression. Maybe a lower angle shot to place the subject over the top of the trees may have helped.	6
This is My Smile	Cute face and smile. Eyes are nice and sharp. The background is nicely blurred. A bit more brightness in the face and/or the shadows will have helped accentuate the facial features. Similarly further cropping in to emphasize the face may give more strength to the character.	6

Image of the Month

Image Title	Reason for Placing
Ellery Creek Big Rockhole	It is a strong landscape image that is composed and rendered well. The image has real interest and there are no obvious editing artifacts. (Brian Dean)