

# JUDGES REPORT

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**2024 – January - Open**

**Judge - John Blessas - PSQA Mackay**

Image Title	Comments	Score
Hard Day	A whole lazy story.	7
Resting	Formal portrait. Well-lit and nicely posed.	6
Norfolk Island Coast	Wonderful but menacing scene. There is so much beauty here. Then there is the dark mood of the sky as contrast. Magnificently caught. However, is the image over sharpened? There are a lot of halos and some other artifacts visible in the image. This is very noticeable with the cliff against the sea. This can be removed with a small clone brush and a paint brush darkening in the trees. A wonderful location.	4
Spot the Photographer	Wild scene. First viewing without titles, this was puzzling. Then saw the photographer. A nicely thought-out image. There are a lot of artifacts from post processing. On the photographer there is also Chromatic Aberration. This is easily fixed in CameraRAW. See notes Norfolk Island Coast. A wonderful location.	4
Pedal Car	Well done	8
Uninvited Dinner Guest	Lovely spider. These St Andrews Cross spiders are vividly yellow and black. Could you bring this out in CameraRAW? If there is no information in the blown-out areas you could look at possibly trying the following; if using flash, dial it down to 1/16 and work from there. If in sunlight, cut the aperture right back and bring the colour out in post processing.	6
Fun on the Water	Emotion. This is an image that brings two different reactions. It is not sharp. However, how much does the emotional content override this technical fault? Possibly the out-of-focus of the little girls' face hides a lot of the story from the viewer. A really nice emotional shot.	5
Red Rose	Another flower portrait. Simply spectacular.	8
Gazelle With Oryx	An odd pairing. Nicely seen and a good well composed image. Has the post processing been overdone? The halos (particularly on the onyx's horns) are a bit	5

	detracting. Looking at the foreleg of the gazelle, is there a little pixelation? A nice memory shot of a trip.	
Watching the Weather	A good bold image. Well composed to draw the eye to the lighthouse. Is there a different image there? Shooting from a more direct angle on the path in portrait may have given a very strong leading line with the majesty of the sky dominating the image. Well done.	7
Clouds Over the Cane	A memory image. Growing up in North Queensland this is a "we were there" image. Is the image a little flat? Possibly a Curves Layer with a nice "S" curve to brighten the sky highlights and darken the blues would bring out the sky more powerfully. Mask out the cane fields and use a levels layer to pop the brightness there (masking out the sky). The flare doesn't detract from the image. A really pleasant image.	6
Dazzling Weed	Wow. Simply brilliant shot.	9
City Lights	Different. Nicely exposed with lovely staring of the lights. The almost mono treatment is very different.	7
Reflection Puzzle	This is beautiful in its quirkiness.	7
Magnetic Attraction	Nice shot. The eye commands the viewers' attention straight away. Would judicious lightening of the eye and some of the shadowed fur bring out the eye colour and the stripped patterning in the fur? This would be easily done with the free MCP Touch of Light™ and Touch of Darkness Photoshop action. Very good image.	7
Tiny Skies & Big Heart	IMPACT! The red colour simply makes the image.	9
Flying Free	Nice shot of the Bee eater. The post processing brought the bird out well. (Although this was only looked at up to 100%, a slight missed area at the back of one wing does show.) Well done.	5
Good Catch	Very nice image.	8
Gaining Possession	Action. So much is happening here. Horse shots present a problem. Size. Shooting from normal height puts them in the background. Shooting from a low stool or crouching will lift them out of the background a bit but put their legs against the clutter of the background. This image works. Two of the three are clear against the trees and mountains with the ball also up and in plain sight. Nicely set up and shot.	6
Heading For the Sea	A simple nice story with a sense of time and place. The incredibly peaceful feel of the image works so well.	7
Eastern Great Egret	Magnificent portrait. The light/dark contrast makes a spectacular image. Would a slight lightening of the shadowed side of the bird have lifted the image a little? Very nicely shot.	8

Notch Point Sunset	Wow. Simple and spectacular. (The possible over sharpening halo around the tree works as backlight.) Well done.	7
Night Cactus	Nice shot. This is technically a very difficult image to get perfect. It presents the problem of depth and brightness. Depth is best handled but making it a studio shot and using an aperture of f28 or more, or focus stacking it in Photoshop. In post processing keep in mind that brightness is the enemy of detail. A good image and keep going back to it. (My record is a couple of hundred shots of a tree, a few at a time, over a few years until I got it right.)	6
The Old Saddles	A visit to a very interesting tea house. The time of day was not helpful here Possibly fill in flash may have allowed you to cut back the exposure on the outside of the shed. An interesting shot.	7
Looking to Land	Well shot. The Bee eater is really showing its flying ability here. The shadow is a real bonus. Interestingly the image appears to be tilted to the left. This goes through all of the background. This almost adds rather than detracts from the feel of the image. Well done.	6
Now That Was Close	A wow shot. Lightening shots are very hard to get perfect. You have a perfect lightning shot. However the only other reference in the image is the slight silhouette of a tree at the bottom of the strike. There appears to be a lot of cloud information in the image. Could this be brought out in CameraRAW or using Midtones in a Levels layer? This may give more story to the image. Spectacular image.	8
Little Pied Cormorant	Nicely shot. Would lightening the eye a little have helped the image?	6
Lorikeet	Noisy, argumentative, and aggressive, but beautiful. All this so well caught. The birds' eye is simply commanding in the image. Excellent image.	8
Grapes on the Vine	An image of questions. The tasty fruit against the gnarled bark of the vine. Technically a good image; it asks the question, what is the subject? Yes, there is the story of the old vine, the care it gets and the fruit that results. This is a nice image, and possibly should be used in a themed subject.	5
Water in Motion	An image of lots of different types of movement. Resisting the temptation to "milk" the water totally has worked well here. A lovely image.	8
Buzzing	Wow. A very hard image to capture. Getting the bee right made the whole image. The image has a very dark tone. Would a Levels Layer with the Midtones lifted to	8

	show more of the flowers behind the bee have lifted the image? Well done.	
I'm Hungry	Every known seagull is always hungry. This one is simply letting us know the state of affairs is normal.	8
A Bit Tired After My Mud Bath	A really different image. The fairly central positioning brings the subject out well. The expression adds to the story. Possibly the focus does not quite show as much detail on the face. A very different image.	5
A Wild Hornbill in Borneo	Very nicely shot. The detail on the bird brings the eye in wonderful relief. Two minor points, could the eye have been brightened a little to show the colour there? In the post processing the whole bird has a slight halo. This is slightly distracting. (It can be removed in several ways, possibly the easiest being a small clone brush run around the outline.) Quite a magnificent bird.	6

<b>Image Title</b>	<b>Reason for Placing</b>
Dazzling Weed	Against the other choice of #33 this had a higher degree of difficulty. The snow shot is quite spectacular and of equal merit. <b>(Sharryl Whiting)</b>