

**Theme – Painting with Light**  
**Judge – Aliah Jan**

Hello everyone,

Thank you for inviting me to judge your very interesting theme for this month "Painting with Light".

Just a quick introduction of myself for members who do not know who I am. I am Aliah and have been living in NZ for the last 11 years. I come from Malaysia and worked in television broadcasting before. I am a member of the Photographic Society of NZ and have been one of their panel judges for 10 years now.

This month's theme is an interesting one and when Geoff invited me to judge this, I had just signed up with a photographer to learn some of his techniques – playing with light and photographing using various light source, equipment and setups. Some more complex than others and some involving expensive equipment and some just a \$2.00 neon light or party sticks. I did have a play but not enough to produce a portfolio of images unfortunately.

The overall collection of images submitted for me to judge shows a good variety and different ways you have used for the theme.

Understanding artificial lighting whether using a modeling or strobe light in the studio or the good old flash gun or using any other light source including even the smartphone these days, I believe involved playing.

Yes, the ability to play and want to explore the possibilities. Then, getting the techniques right by practicing and fine tuning to try achieve the results you wish and then go back to play again. Because I believe it is also through play that we are bolder to experiment and to explore further. The "What else can I do?" often gives you surprising results that could be your next award winning image.

I have judged the images as they were presented, with the help of the titles of the images. My goal is to see if you have achieved what you had intended to with your image with the help of your title. I want to see that story that you wish to tell me with your image.

My personal preference to any genre of photography does not play a role in any of my judging. When I look at your image, I tend to look for the story from the image. In general, there will also be those images that mystifies more than others. Some images grab your attention visually but also emotionally. These images usually have a strong content value in its presentation coupled with interesting compositions and with successful use of light in the image.

Photography is about how we can capture the light of that moment we are recording and this element plays a significant role in whether the image is a WOW image or not.

The images I awarded Honours tonight would have successfully interpreted the theme with, strong subject/stories, and appropriate image processing (if that was used) to add to the overall look and feel of the images.

Many of the other accepted images would have the following in the imagery

- Strong story/subject content
- Appropriate composition or lines
- The lighting of the image
- The holding power of the image

Here are my comments on the images as presented and they are in no particular order.



**A GRADE**

**Black Illuminated**

**Keith**

I must admit I am little baffled with this particular image. I am not quite sure how this image was produced, whether this image was captured first and then post processed with painting in the light effects using a software. I apologise that I am not quite sure. Because the rules does not say such a process is not acceptable, I have accepted this image. (GEOFF- If this is a painted in image instead of a captured image, I would not accept this. Perhaps you need find out and help with the final decision. Thank you. )



**Boats at night**

**Robbo**

I love the simplicity of the composition and the placement of the orange boat. The sky in the background added some drama to the overall image and it is a successful image, well seen and captured. The warm colour also worked well with the subject matter. I have awarded this an Honours. Just a suggestion, perhaps a little vignetting might help just darken the edges a little.

Honour

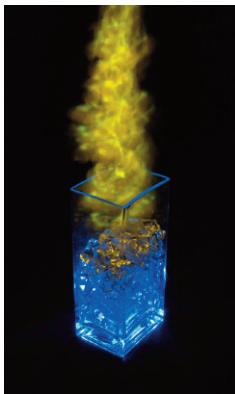


**Bright Light**

**Tracey**

This is a Highly Commended image with the very effective light bursting out at ceiling level. The effect is good. If it is possible, a suggestion to have a little more space at the bottom of the light. It is cropped just a little tight.

Highly Commended

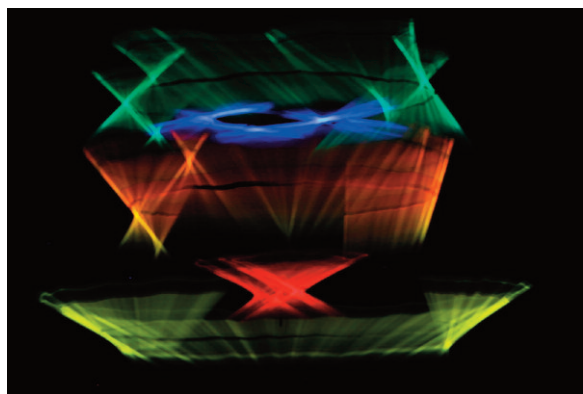


**Fire Ice**

**Hennie**

A good effort which I have awarded Accepted. The only suggestion I would have is perhaps to try a different colour smoke or 'light'. The yellow green just does not look quite natural with the blue clear vase with the glass crystals or ice in it.

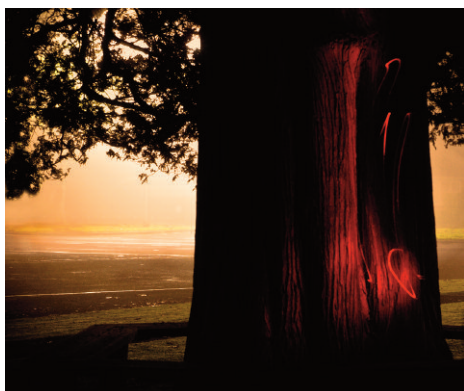
Accepted



**Glow Stick Glory**

**Liz**

I love the colour combination here and do like the effect. This is a Acceptance for me.



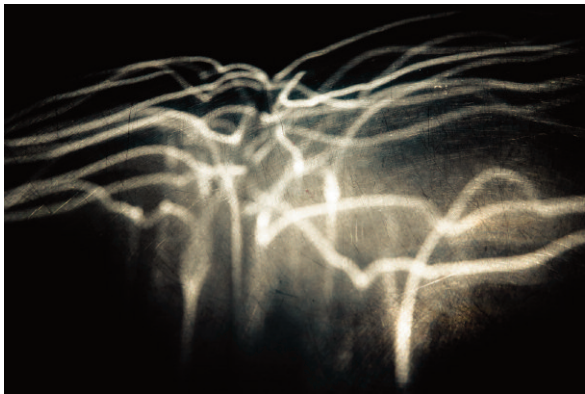
**Graffiti Tree**

**Sarah**

An interesting concept but not executed quite successfully. I would suggest to the photographer to darken the background on the left and also on the right because the eyes will tend to go to these two bright areas in the image. This is also because there is lacking in details on the dark tree trunk. The graffiti would have been better if there was more of the red light painting. Do go back to this nice big tree and try again. I have Not Accepted this image.

Another thing you could do, if you are going to use a long exposure is to use a Neutral Density Filter like ND6 or ND8 or even an ND10. It does help cut away light and helpful with long exposures.

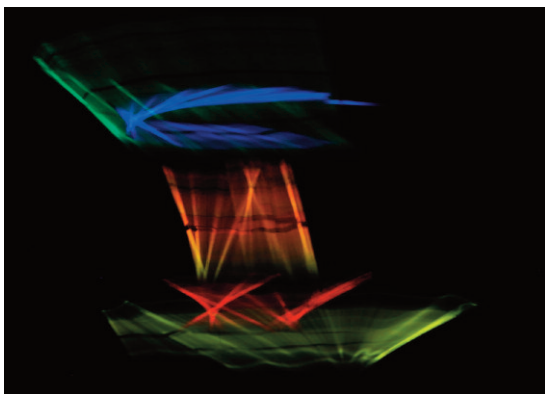
Not Accepted



**Light Scratches**

**Carl**

Awarded Merit because the BW look and feel is good with this light effect. Adds a bit of mystery to the image.  
Merit



**Moving Light**

**Liz**

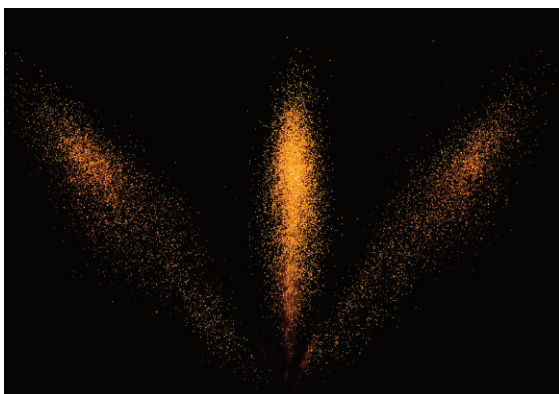
This is compositionally better if I compared this to Glow Stick Glory. Again, there is a good balance of colour in the overall image. This is a Highly Commended image.



**Night Tractors**

**Tracey**

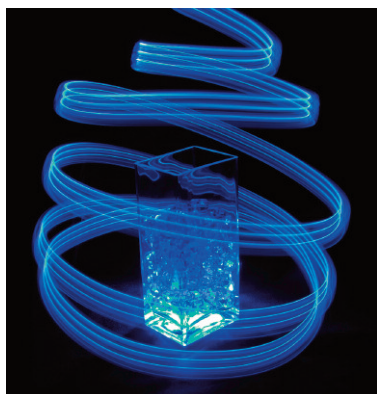
Another Highly Commended image for the way this image was captured. Good overall lighting and the background not too bright. I would like to suggest to try with one tractor and use different angles to add a bit more drama to the image. ie. lower wider angle.  
Highly Commended



**Shooting Sparkles**

**Brie**

Well captured and a pretty balance image.  
I have Accepted this image.



**Tornado**

**Hennie**

This is visually exciting and the overall exposure of this image is good. The highlights at the bottom of the vase could possibly be toned down a little as while the overall image is strong, the highlights are drawing the eyes straight to the bottom of the vase. We must remember to watch out for bright areas in images especially when that is not where you want the eyes to focus on. Having said that, I still believe this was successfully executed and I have awarded this an Honours as it is a rather successful lighting painting image.



**Under the Blue Light**

**Keith**

I have given this an Highly Commended. This is because the image has a gentle soft feel that suits the subject of this little child and the mood of the image is captured. Highly Commended



**Waiting For Morning**

**Robbo**

Compositionally this image works but it is not as strong as Boats in the Night. I compare these two images because they have the similar subject and scene. Perhaps those shapes might look a little more spooky if it wasn't as bright. I have Accepted this image.



**Some Me Time**

**Carl**

I wonder if the subject was placed on the left hand side of the image would be better compositionally? Or add a little more background on the right side of the image. It is still a good attempt and the light on the steps is quite beautiful. I have given Merit this image.



**B GRADE**

**Bling In a Thing**

**Helena**

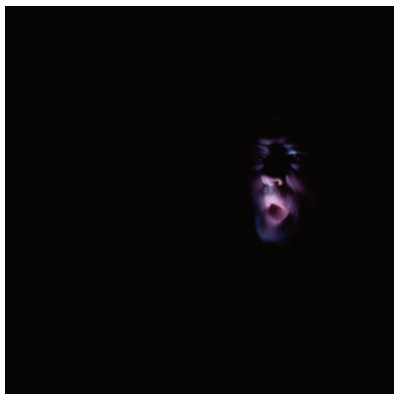
I see two different images here. The lighting on the glass and jewels as one and the light effect as another. I would suggest light painting with more interaction with the jewels to tell a strong Bling story. The lighting on the glass could be improved with a more dramatic lighting instead of quite a flat direct lighting. I have not accepted this image.



**Hollywood**

**Cassandra**

Like the mood of this image. The car would probably have benefited with a little more lighting on the right hand side to show off more of the car. Also there are some white dots on the bottom right of the image. They could be darkened out as they do attract attention. I have Accepted this image.



**Lurking in the dark**

**Cushla**

Creepy and effective. It's an Honours for me. Try cropping in just a little more into the subject. Would probably look great at a head shot portrait!! Well done!  
Honours



**Orchid Magic**

**Helena**

This is a lovely image with good colour balance, composition and flow. The exposure on the flowers is ethereal and I have awarded this Honours.



**Reflections of a time gone by**

**Cassandra**

I get a good nostalgic feeling looking at this image. Well seen. It is a Merit for me. Just to try – decrease the brightness of the image just a little and see if it works better.  
Merit



**The Pheasant Plucker**

**Geoff**

The lighting on this image is quite strong. A little vignetting might help tone down the overall image to create a little more control for the eyes to focus on maybe the funny looking pheasant!?! Stage lighting can be quite harsh and direct. But we can further process the image to control the story we would like to tell.  
I have Accepted this image.



**Theatre Singer**

**Geoff**

Like the expression on this high contrast image. Works well I think with the look on the singer's face.  
I have Accepted this.



## UFO

## Cushla

Yes, don't we wish one would actually turn up from outer space to say Hi to us!!?The light quality is quite nice. I have Accepted this image as well.

Overall, I do believe all the images have worked the theme of 'Painting with Light', some using more creative lighting effects than others but all they images did used artificial lighting of some sort, some with long exposure and others with flash or directional lighting.

Even when painting with light, our images should tell their own stories. For example, why was the light used that way? How has the light used enhanced the image? Is the colour balance? Does it work compositionally? All these basic guide to imagery should be included in the process of creation.

I have sent an image that I hope Geoff will be able to project that I thought is a rather amazing image. It was posted on Facebook recently and I do not know the name of the photographer.

There are quite a few website on this subject that I have

enjoyed learning from and here are just a few of them. <http://www.lightstalking.com/20-special-effects-photography-tutorials> <http://photoextremist.com/the-complete-guide-to-long-exposure-photography> <http://vandelaydesign.com/blog/design/photoshop-lighting-effects/>

and the course I signed up to learn from is <http://trick-photographybook.com> You do have to pay for the course.

Hope some of my suggestions help. This is a fun technique and I do hope you will continue to experiment further.

Have a great evening and thank you again for sharing your images with me.

Best regards,  
Aliah Jan