

Critiques August 2012.

Hi everyone. Thanks for inviting me to comment on you images. My general observation is that all of you understand the fundamentals of both composition and digital technique. However, from a content point of view I felt that some of the set subject images lacked sufficient interest to be much beyond a technical exercise. Still, I guess the set subject in a club competition is designed to make you try things outside your comfort zone, so good on you for getting into it.

On the technical side, I felt that a number of images were a bit softer than they should have been and I wondered if output sharpening was being neglected. Often our final step is to resize the image to meet the digital competition requirements and we forget that this should always be followed with a final sharpening.

That's it from me. All the best to each of you and the Club as a whole.

Regards,
Terry Cockfield

Theme Digital – Entranceways



C-Grade: WWWeb

The implied invitation to enter the spider's lair gives this image an emotional edge that boosts the impact. Technically I find it a little bit lacking in contrast, so increasing that and adding a bit of sharpening would be good. I also think you could crop about 10% from the bottom and left hand sides. A great idea though and well worth a. Highly Commended.



C-Grade: No Entry.

A well-presented image that tells its story very effectively. To me it would be a bit stronger if you cropped out the bright window area at the top left. Highly Commended.



B-Grade: A Remuera Entrance

The image fits both the set subject and the title, and is competently taken and presented. However, the content contains nothing to catch the viewer's interest and the lighting is very flat. Acceptance.



B-Grade: Aoteoroa House Ireland

A well arranged image with good tone range. However, the lighting is almost totally non-directional making the effect a bit dreary. Merit.



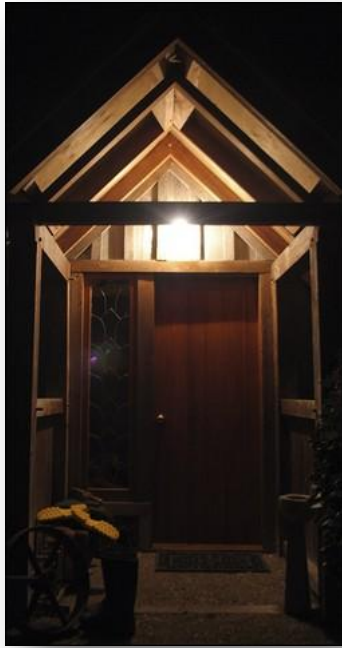
B-Grade: Chinese Vortex

A great sense of depth given by the closeness of the entrance and the pathway leading away from it. Although the lighting within the scene is fairly flat, the gold inlay on the path and the reflections within the shaped entrance give a feeling of liveliness and depth. Overall the composition works well and conveys the mood of the garden.
Honours.



B-Grade: Come On Inside

The line-up of boots provides a nice splash of colour and emphasise that we are outside looking in, reinforcing the title. I think the point of focus needed to be nearer the camera to have more of the foreground sharp. There is also a need for a bit of digital sharpening. I suspect the picture has been resized without following up with some output sharpening.
Merit.



B-Grade: End Of Day Return

The night time version of the previous image has a good feel to it. On the downside, depth of field and sharpness need to be greater.
Merit.



B-Grade: From the Inside Out

A good idea for a different sort of entranceway, although entering might be quite a difficult exercise! Good composition, with the tone of the walls and ceiling kept dark enough to convey the dungeon-like mood.
Highly Commended.



B-Grade: Gold Diggers Entrance

Nice lighting and good technique makes this image a pleasure to view. The soft cross lighting shows off the texture of stones and leaves very well and colour is good. I like the line of stones leading up to the main subject and the fact that depth of field is sufficient to keep the foreground and building face sharp. Honours.



B-Grade: Grand Entrance

Yes. A successful shot with plenty of information as to what is on offer through the entrance. Good quality and colour. If your software skills or lens choice allowed, a presentation with the pillars parallel and vertical would have given greater impact. Highly Commended.



B-Grade: Green Entrance

A striking piece of graphic design. Using the functional shape of the door and frame as a counterpoint to the abstract, but still geometric pattern of the mural is very effective. However, I do not understand why you didn't crop to square up the door frame. Doing so greatly strengthens the impact. Highly Commended.



B-Grade: In Through The Out Door

The title is a bit enigmatic, but I enjoy the quality of the image. The depth and pattern of the "entrance" is very pleasant. It lacks a "kicker", perhaps something colourful or living at the crossing point that would push it into the Honours class, but it is a good Highly Commended.



B-Grade: Iron Gates

The gates themselves are quite striking, but the effect is spoilt by a lack of any order in what we see behind them. I think the first option to look at would have been to choose a lower viewpoint, then move around a little and see if significant background objects could have been framed within the spaces in the gate. A second approach would have been to use a longer focal length from further back. This would have reduced the amount of background material included and also allowed it to be thrown further out of focus.

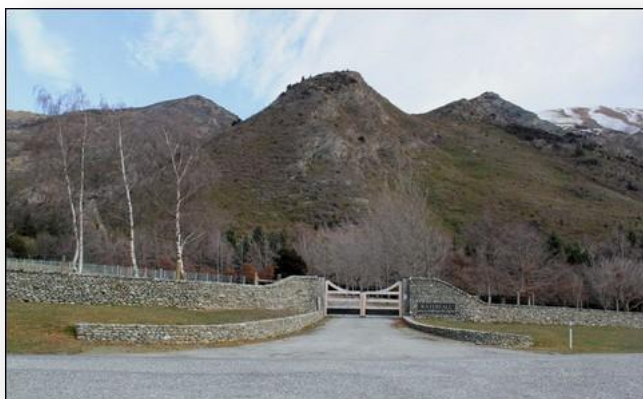
Acceptance.



B-Grade: Kaimai Tunnel

Good use of perspective and tonal gradation to convey depth and a sense of mystery. Cropping the left hand side would have added to the impact.

Merit.



B-Grade: Majestic Entrance

You've described this as majestic, but nothing in the presentation is backing that up. What about moving in close and exposing from a low viewpoint so that the gate and the stone work dominate? As taken, the image would have more impact with a little more contrast and some sharpening applied.

Acceptance.



B-Grade: Museum Entrance

I don't know how to approach critiquing this image. The elements are well arranged in the frame, but even with the title it is hard to interpret their purpose or to see them as anything but an unfinished jumble. Maybe that is the point you're intending to make! I'm going to "kick for touch" and Not Accept this image on the basis that you can then try it again on a possibly more perceptive judge. Entry.



B-Grade: Ray Of Sunshine

Lovely tones and great feeling of depth. The big problem is that the ray (or rays) of sun of the title are totally burnt out. Consequently there is a progression of lines and shapes leading us to a white blob in the doorway. I think this is a case where a bit of dishonesty is needed and something plausible inserted to look at through the door frame and a bit of texture cloned into the highlights on the floor. Merit.



B-Grade: Seen Better Days

Nice tone, colour and detail. Compositionally, the lines lead pretty much to the dead centre, which sometimes works, but not in this case I feel. I think taking the picture from a couple of metres back and placing the top of the arch near the edge of the frame would have been more effective. Acceptance.



B-Grade: Step On In

Great use of monochrome and the reflectivity of the wet pavement to create a suggestion of mystery. The white foreground line creates a good lead-in and balances the square format. Excellent tone range and contrast. Honours.



B-Grade: Tunnel To Bridge

A good idea that could have been improved on. I feel that the amount of dark tunnel wall shown is excessive and that it needs to be either cropped or shadow density reduced to show more detail in the walls. I would also like to see more contrast in the bridge and bush beyond the tunnel. The very central composition is appropriate in this case. Acceptance.



B-Grade: Use Other Door

I like the cartoonish feeling of this picture. The low viewpoint has added to the impact and exaggerated the leaning together of the buildings. I think the photographer has carefully controlled all aspects of the taking and presentation to create the mood. Honours.



A-Grade: Enter

I like the lighting, tones and colour, but can't get any story out of it or see any strong composition. Acceptance.



A-Grade: Graffiti Door

Strong design and very colourful. It is a picture that raises the question of "Photographer's input" versus "Original artist's input" and I don't have a firm response. I think you've done a good job of presenting the graffiti and its context, using the door frame as part of the graphic design. Highly Commended.



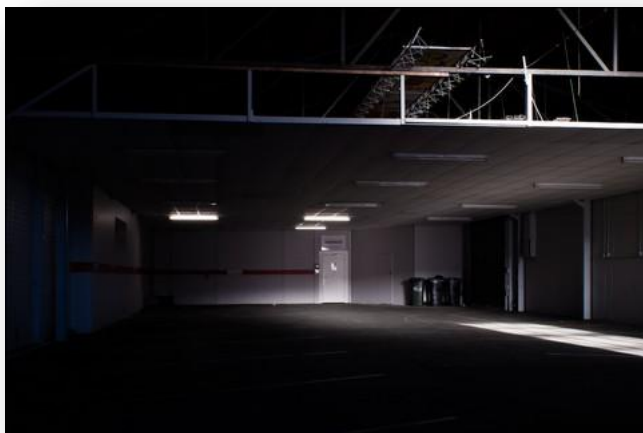
A-Grade: Mini Door

This raises the same question about creativity v recording. I feel the recording component is quite high, but the quality is good and the low viewpoint is the right choice. Acceptance.



A-Grade: Secured

Interesting lighting and good control of the tones gives this image a sense of drama. A crop on the left hand side and a bit of dodging to disguise the photographer's shadow would improve it I think. Highly Commended.



A-Grade: Undercover

Good use of the light and technical control of the image quality. For my taste, there is not enough interest in the picture content and I feel it is about the space rather than the entrance. Merit.

Open Digital



C-Grade: Beach Sprites

A Lovely lively picture. Minor changes I suggest are to crop a little left and bottom to make the subjects less central, and to open up the shadows on the right hand girl's face.

Honours



B-Grade: All Lips

A well done study that catches the mix of pride and struggle. I'm not so keen on the title which I think actually distracts from what I see as the real story. A good picture though.

Highly Commended.



B-Grade: Bareback

An entertaining bit of photo-journalism. The main subject is a bit close to the left hand side, but the story comes through fine. Strong output sharpening would give it a bit more bite.

Merit



B-Grade: I'm Ignoring You

A very soulful portrait of the donkey. I like the pose, the colour and the sharpness. The fence is a small distraction, but an appropriate part of the story. My only criticism is the bald sky.

Highly Commended.



B-Grade: Morning Watch

This is an almost iconic country scene – cattle indulging their curiosity, en masse (or hoping to be fed) and you have caught it well. However, the very even lighting fails to convey the early morning mood. I know the representation is truthful, but I would have preferred the image to be darker overall with just the cattle rendered lighter. It is an enjoyable image though and a

Merit.



B-Grade: Noted

The better the pun the louder the groans, so I hope the title got a reaction! This is a very nice portrait of the musician that brings out his concentration on the job in hand. The only small distraction is the very crisp clear brand on the mouthpiece. I think it would have been worth cloning that out. Honours.



B-Grade: Old Boots

An excellent still life arrangement, with good composition and colour. I like the way the shadows provide a subtle fill of the foreground space. Honours.



B-Grade: Silos At Night

A very clean precise image, both compositionally and technically. The warm colour of the tungsten lights gives an inviting feeling to the house area, making it seem a haven from the cold blacks and blues of the rest of the scene. The sharpness and care taken to keep the vertical lines parallel emphasises the geometry of the scene. Honours



B-Grade: WOL

and a very nice WOL he is too! The face and eyes are good and sharp, but a little more depth of field to keep the breast feathers sharp too would have been good. The full frontal flash gives a good record of the bird, but doesn't allow much mood to be generated. Highly Commended.



A-Grade: County Office

Very good creation of an "old time" look to the picture. The heavy vignette creates a brooding feel to the image. Highly Commended.



A-Grade: Sunrise Sunset

Sunrise – sunset: This is a good moody shot. The Frame is well utilised, with enough tone variations and suggestions of detail to avoid any feeling of wasted space. My only criticism is the flat sides on the orange area against which the branches are silhouetted. I think this is supposed to be the sun, but the flat sides suggest is actually lens flare. Highly Commended.

Quote: "Reason has always existed, but not always in a reasonable form." – *Karl Marx*