

Whanganui Formal Portrait and Open assessment September 2022  
Judge Tracey Scott

AO- Canada Geese     MERIT

Well captured action shot, the three geese on the right are causing a block in the compositional flow of the image, try using a square crop keeping only the group on the left. It may help with the overall composition.

AO- Cicada             HC

Technically well-handled image, sharp and well exposed with good use of a shallow depth of field, a tighter crop on the sides or even a circular crop could have improved the composition.

AO- Dart River waves     MERIT

Congratulations to the photographer for making the effort to get down to shoot from the water level to help the viewer feel like they are in the water. The solid straight riverbank almost cuts this image in half to create two images and the light through the trees on the right side is drawing my eyes out of the frame, as is the bright highlights in the water bottom left of frame. A square or circular crop could have brought the viewer's eye back to the main focal points, those being the wave and the mountain beyond.

AO- Evening Flight     HONOURS

This image has immediate emotional impact created through well-chosen light and composition. This image has a wonderful timeless painterly feel.

AO- Gannet preening     MERIT

Strong diagonal compositional lines in the wing of the bird. Good lighting with good feather detail. White highlights top right background is distracting. Some careful cropping off the right side and a little off the bottom then adding a little to the top would have created a spiral composition leading the viewer's eye up the wing around the neck and down to the focal point in that lovely blue eye.

AO- Lantern Hotel     MERIT

Wonderful rich colours and textures, creating a sense of pattern, only let down by burnt out highlights. This could have been remedied by taking two exposures, one for the high lights and one for the shadows and then layering them in Photoshop to create the perfect exposure. The cropping is excellent, had the highlights been dealt with this would have been an honor.

AO- Once loved         ACC

The use of Black and White has brought out all the beautiful textures. The composition is very busy and the highlights on the edges of the frame are distracting. Sometimes less is more and often if you spend more time just looking you will be drawn more into exactly what it is that you are enjoying, which in this case maybe just the shape of the window, or just the rust on the roof or just the textures of the rotting wood.

AO- Practice Day      MERIT

Good choice of black and what to remove distractions. A tighter crop at the top could help keep the focus on the riders. If possible, remove the rider in the distance as they are converging with the second rider. More contrast especially in the Blacks. Good action shot, well-handled technically.

AS- Alan                      HONORS

Well posed with good use of light. The photographer has included the hand showing the wedding band and watch which adds to the narrative. Wonderful detail has been kept in his hair and eyes. Great connection between subject and viewer.

AS -Beautiful              HONORS

Good story telling, well posed model with good lighting and the circular crop adds to the composition. If I had to be picky, I would suggest darkening the arm bottom left under the hand and not include the bra straps. Very strong focal point with the word beautiful above the eye.

AS -Christine              HC

Fun portrait which tells us a lot about the colourful character of this lady. The use of the tunnel as a location gives me as the viewer a feel of a time tunnel which she is passing through. There is some movement in her hands and feet which I do not mind as it gives a feel of movement. The lightened vignette however has affected her shoes and cane and I feel this would have been better if painted back to full opacity.

AS -Colorado Dave      ACC

Well exposed, but the highlights in the background could have been toned down. The label on his top is very dominant and drawing my eyes away from him. Could have done with more breathing space at the top as it is cropped very tight. Lacking connection with the viewer.

AS -Damon and Daria HC

Well posed, good connection between the subjects and between the subjects and the viewer. Good colour palette. Highlights top left of the window and the wood knot by her shoulder are both drawing unwanted attention.

AS- Dave                      HC

Good lighting, Well posed with the instrument telling us a little bit about who Dave is. The bright yellow tie may be of significance to Dave (or not) but whichever way it is taking my attention away from Dave, He may have been better with just the shirt and no tie then our attention remains on Dave and his instrument

AS -Dennis the menace ACC

Dennis has a cheeky glint in his eye and an equally cheeky smirk, hinting to us that Dennis just might be a menace. Could have been improved by leaving more space at the top and bottom of the frame as the current crop is uncomfortably tight yet space has been left at the sides which makes the composition feel unbalanced.

AS -Formal Model HC

Lovely positioning of the model, good lighting. when photographing portraits, it pays to have the arms covered as the brightness of the arms can draw the attention away from the face.

AS -Liana with curtain and Hibiscus HC

The use of the curtain colours and the hibiscus give flow and continuity to the composition. The lighting is soft and flattering. The expression is direct and cheerful giving us an overall feeling of youthful joy.

AS -Man in Black HONORS

I had to do a double take when I first opened this Image, I thought it was Hugh Hefner. The choice of black and white works well to simplify and add weight to the sense of rugged masculinity in this image the postproduction work and lighting has brought out all the detail that comes with age. Strong connection between viewer and sitter with that intense gaze.

AS -Mana HC

Good clean background well lit. could do with more connection with viewer as opposed to looking away. Good emotion with the tears in the eyes. A gentle vignette to darken the feather at the back and top edges would have helped.

AS -Mum and daughter MERIT

This is a fun Mother daughter shot enjoying a shared moment, Good clean background, could have done with a little more lighting in the eyes.

AS -Nessa ACC

The Image appears to be a bit pixelated, there is a nice natural expression on the girl's face. Lighting could have created more separation between her and the background. Could also do with about ¼ removed from the bottom of the image to improve the composition.

AS -Peter HC

Good environmental portrait, where the sheep in the background help to tell us about Peter and who he is. Beware of bright areas as that is what will attract the viewers eye and in this instance the sheep are very bright and Peters face is rather dark. My suggestion would be to lighten his face and darken the sheep a little.

AS -Princess Liv           MERIT

A very beautiful model with a stunning dress and excellent lighting, I wanted very much to give this a higher mark but unfortunately, I found the straight arms and the crop through the arms not very feminine and delicate and in keeping with the rest of the Image. I'd like to suggest you google Sue Bryce's portraits and look at how delicate and feminine her poses are especially the hands. If you can get the same model and dress and try again with a different pose, you could find you'd get an Honors as you have done the rest well.

AS -Reflection           ACC

There is a strong connection between the title and the girl's expression. The light is coming from above casting eyelash shadows down the face and flattening out the rest of the facial features. Very heavy vignette to contain the eye could have been avoided with a tighter crop.

AS -Rules Official Alan       ACC

The Orange vest and what looks to be a golf cart help to tell the story of an official. The relaxed expression shows a good rapport between the photographer and the model. His outstretched arm creates an unnecessary void between him and the cart, perhaps try having him simply leaning against it for better connection. Also, his hat is casting strong shade causing some disconnect from his face. You could lighten it in post-production or use a touch of fill flash.

AS Simon       HC

Good clean background and detail throughout the image. The purple reflection in his glasses could have been dealt with by photographing with and without glasses then painting the glasses back in in post-production. Good expression and well posed. I would like to have seen the hands a little more in focus as they are so much a part of the overall pose.

AS -Sugar Rush           MERIT

The costume, balloons, icing on the face and hands all tell a wonderful wee story. I feel having the hands cropped so they are all in or all out of the image could have finished it better.

AS -Turning One       MERIT

Lovely props, beautiful costume, well lit. Just be careful with your backgrounds. Take note of the intersecting elements such as the greenery behind the face and the balloon behind the child's bottom. Try to be sure to get separation between elements.

AS -Watching           ACC

Cute facial expression on the child and well lit, However the assessment is called Formal portrait. The child's pose and the lens cover up the arm give the feel of a snap of a fleeting moment as opposed to a deliberate set up.

AS -Young Lady            HC

Beautiful eye contact with the viewer. The choice of makeup and headdress add to the sense of mystery about her, the only improvement that could have been made would be to the arms .my eyes are drawn to her arms which could have been covered by sleeves or draping of material.

BO -Float Planes in the Fog    HC

The photographer has chosen a great time of the day to photograph these float planes. The colors are glorious. I also enjoyed the birds on the wings. The only issue that held this image back from an Honors was there a halo effect around the planes and birds.

BO -March of the pylons        ACC

The title relates well to the Image. The photographer has chosen a good time to photograph with the colors in the sky adding interest and silhouetting the pylons. I did however find the trees competing for my attention. Creating a disjointed compositional flow.

BO -Morning Mist                MERIT

Congratulations to the photographer for making the effort to get up early to capture the beautiful light. The composition could have been strengthened if the photographer was able to move more to the right to get the whole of the tree in on the right and this could have brought the trees to the left closer closing the central void. Great atmosphere.

BO -Te Waihou Spring         MERIT

I am making the presumption this is an infer red filter or the like, but it does give us an interesting effect. Nice lead in lines down the river. Be careful with bright patches on the edges of the frame as they can be very distracting as here on the right-hand side of the image.

BO -The Blue Shed        ACC

The shed is well framed by the foliage, and the path leads the viewers eye well, However the path leading off to the left is distracting and could have been removed by cropping or darkening. The shed being the focal point could also do with being lightened a little.

BS- Irene                    MEERIT

Great character in her face with a very natural relaxed expression showing she feels relaxed with the photographer, I would like to have seen a little more connection with the viewer and there are some burnt out highlights on the right-hand side.

BS -Lady in Pink            HONORS

Excellent use of props and lighting, Lovely gentle expression and looks as though it may have had a paint filter applied which gives it a timeless painterly feel. Well thought out and executed.

BS -Looking on with Interest ACC

For me personally this feels more like a documentary styled image as opposed to the Assessment title of Formal Portrait. The subject is looking away from the viewer with dark glasses on completely blocking any connection with the viewer. Be careful with strong highlights such as the line above the head leading my eye out of the frame.

BS -Pensive HC

The title Pensive is well echoed in the sitter's expression who is well placed within the frame giving a lovely composition. The color palette is delicate which is in keeping with the rest of the image. As a formal portrait I would like to have seen a little more connection between the sitter and the viewer, however this has been well handled in all other aspects.

BS -reflection MERIT

Good clean background well posed but I would have like to have seen more connection between the sitter and the viewer. Well lit except the brightest area is on the neck which I would suggest you tone down a little. The vignette on the arm helps a little but it has left the arm looking muddy, I'd suggest in future to get the sitter to wear long sleeves or to cover the arm with draped material. Some very promising work here just need to work on the details.

BS -You are kidding me ACC

This is another Image that feels as it may be better placed in a Documentary assessment. The two people to the right are focused on the lady to the left and she has her back to us, so as a viewer I am blocked from connecting. As a photographer it is our job to lead the viewer to what we want them to focus on, this is done through composition which can be made up of lines or objects that the eye follows until we reach our destination (The focal point) Here I am left unsure what the focal point is.