# Whangarei Camera Club Competition: April 2022

## Street

## Preliminary remarks

In evaluating images, I seek to follow the principles taught by PSNZ for image evaluation as this process is subjective.

Principles taught by PSNZ for image evaluation:

Make clear that my comments are my opinion based on the following points:
- Does the image communicate with a purpose?
- Did the image create an emotional impact on me as the evaluator?
- Do I think the image exhibits freshness and creativity?
- Composition (visual design)
  - Has the photographer shown their intent (the story) for the image through the visual elements of the image? I.e., the title should reflect the visual story and not be the sole means of revealing the story
  - In other words, how has the photographer used the building blocks of composition to reveal their intent (Light: tone, colour; line, shape, texture, and perspective).
  - How has the photographer arranged the building blocks of composition to bring a sense of order, purpose, and clarity of the story.  What feeling, if any, does this arrangement of the building blocks give to me.
- Technical excellence (e.g., my thoughts on the lighting, depth of field, focus, framing)

Criteria for image evaluation set by the club are to evaluate your images considering the grade of the photographer (novice, intermediate, salon, as set out on the club website) as either

- Not accepted
- Acceptance,
- Merit
- Highly commended
- Honours

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Well, hello there  | My initial response to your image identified an intense connection with the eyes which gave me a feeling of wow. Kind of like, isn't this an amazing person or place. The position of the subject person along with the repeated vertical rectangle (the lamppost) left me in no doubt that it was the person who is portrayed as amazing.<br><br>One aspect of the image composition that detracted from my enjoyment of your story was the face being in the shade. When shooting a subject which has a key element (the face) in the shade, consider using fill flash to add light. This can be done with an onboard flash or an attached flash by reducing the flash output by about 1 to 2 stops (to your taste) For an onboard flash you will need to add a diffusing element to scatter the small light output e.g., a little bit of Sellotape or other opaque material over the flash, Alternatively fill flash could be added in photo software by using a brush tool to brighten the face using a brush tool, For me if the face and neck had a little more light, I would have had a stronger connection to the image.<br><br>I considered that the background presented a number of distracting elements which detracted from the visual story. Examples includes the clearly visible vehicle shapes, one of which cuts the frame to the right, and brighter toned lines and shapes. These elements tended to pull my eye away from the subject. With such a variety of elements in your background, consider a depth of field that could blur them out to a greater degree – something like an aperture of F4 reduced the depth of field (increased the background blur) or add blur in your photo software using a brush tool or one of the gradient tools. The brighter background elements could be burned down with a brush tool in your photo software – try this and see what you think. | M |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Expectant Busker  | I enjoyed the story of a typical busker scene where there may be a friend, or an interested audience (behind the NZPO mailbox) and another person there but seemingly not interested. Also there appears to be little interest shown in the busking by the person behind the railing and others within the image frame. I liked the way you have captured the busker's gaze – maybe surprise, maybe a little hopeful. The gaze shows me the busker is interested in what is going on around him.<br><br>I also enjoyed the inclusion of the wineshop in the background. I took from this that maybe a little bit of music may be best enjoyed over a wine. For me this was a good use of depth of field to make this element clear and in my opinion adds an interesting aspect to the story.<br><br>Aspects of the composition I found to be a distraction to my connection to the story were the placement of the fretboard and body of the guitar and the way in which the tiles seem to come from the busker's head. The hues of the fretboard and body, tended to merge with the hue of the NZPO mailbox. Always consider the background elements and how they connect to your subject before you press the shutter.<br><br>Overall, an intriguing story. | M |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Wandering Wizard  | For me the crowd numbers in the background suggest some kind of parade, especially when I see cell phones out in photo taking position and the direction of the gaze of onlookers to me shows interest in the activity of the painted person and bike.  I like the way you have used the depth of field to create separation between the "wizard" and the background crowd.  I like the way the join in the asphalt of the road creates for me a moment in time that gives a pause in the action<br><br>In my view, the position of the painted character and the bike, the tones of both, the triangular shape created by their positioning, and the sharpness of these two elements make clear to me that the person and the cycle are the main element. For me the triangle gives a sense of visual strength and dynamism.<br><br>I liked the way the curve of the kerb leads me through the image to the crowd.  In my view this creates a strong connection between the person with the bike and the background action.   I would have rated this image more highly had the highlights, especially on the road and right shoulder of the main character, been darkened down a little. This could be done using the highlights slider that is available on most photo software, or more selectively by using brush to darken down the tones on the road and the right shoulder. | HC |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Gas Explosion  | I noticed that the image shows some destruction of the premises. As there is no charring on any of the usually flammable materials, that suggests that the damage has been caused by and explosion. Given the premises seems to be a restaurant/café (based on the signwriting on the window), this is, most likely a gas explosion as an electrical fault would likely have resulted in fire. The title helps a little by making this clear. In my view the elements within the image support the title. | |
| | I was interested to see the image includes the safety equipment required for a fireman – for example, the fire suits, the gas bottle for breathing masks to protect face from fire/smoke. I was not entirely clear from the image what the group standing on the road were there for, and as their position is dominant in the image, I was left with a feeling of ambiguity about the story. I could not discern how this group related to the smaller group within the doorway – rather the firemen on the road seem to be a little remote from the action inside – for example, see the direction of gaze of the figure in the centre of the group on the road. For me, the way in which the rectangle of the road group overlaps and obscures some of the rectangle of the group in the doorway, along with my perception of ambiguity distracted from my connection with your story. | M |
| | For me the image presents an interesting moment in time that conveys the damage caused by a devastating explosion to the premises, the various stages of evaluating the safety of the premises, and the extent to which fire service must go in the interests of community safety. | |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Waiting at the bus stop  | In my opinion, this image conveys to me a sense of diversity in the community, and for me this includes the portrait in the shop window behind the bus stop. I enjoyed the way the pedestrians and window shoppers behind the bus stop are darkened in tone to make these elements secondary to and supporting the main story. In my view this combination of the primary and secondary elements illustrates how people get on with their daily activities, no matter what is going on around them. A bus stop where people wait for their bus are part of daily life and while those waiting are the main story; the background tells me about this other aspect of getting on with daily life.<br><br>I liked the way in which you have created similar tonality between the people waiting and the shop window display. For me, I was not sure if the shop window display being the brighter tones should be as strong a distracting element as it seemed to me. In my opinion, the brightness of the tones in the window display created a distracting element that that impinged on the story. Maybe if the depth of field had not included the shop window in sharp focus (i.e., a little blurred), or if the shop window tones had been darkened down a little, I would have got a stronger connection to the story.<br><br>I noticed the lack of interaction between each character waiting in the bus top. This lack of interaction suggests to me that an urban bus stop is not a place where strangers will tend to strike up conversation. Maybe the photographer is asking a question about why people are not interacting when social communication is part of a society. I was left a little unsure on this point mainly because of the tension between the tonality of the shop window and the people in the bus stop. | M |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Getting ready for the day  | I found the image interesting.  As I considered the title, I could not find anything within the light of the elements that tells me that this story is about the end of a day, the beginning of a day, or even a meal break. For me, the title needs to reflect the elements within the image and not have wording that explains the image story that are not supported by the visual elements.<br><br>In my view, the subject is presented as a nice oval shape next to a rectangle.  This oval shape suggests to me a sense of peacefulness, and that might suggest it is time to go home.  Equally, the oval shape could suggest to me that the man is largely at peace with himself.  I liked the way you have arranged the visual elements which have allowed me to have a moderate sense of connection to your story.  I just wasn't sure how all the space to the left of the image supported the story.<br><br>I would have rated the image more highly had there been more tonal contrast between the pavement and the main element. | M |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Dusk Life in Oman<br> | I am not sure how the elements in the image convey anything about the geographical location of this particular story.  For me, the visual story and the title need always to be in harmony.  The wording of the title creates a tension for me if it adds information that is not evident to me in the visual elements of the story.<br>The rugs on the grass suggest prayer time given the time of day (shown in the sky) based on my scant knowledge of the prayer habits of the Islam world.  I like the use of the triangle and wider rectangular shapes (ground) to frame the scene and the way in which the rectangular shape of the sky provides a nice colour contrast in the background.<br>I did find the strong highlight areas of the image to be serious distraction from my enjoyment of the image.  Consider using neutral density gradient filters when shooting into a sunset scene to decrease the range of contrast between sky and land.  Alternatively maybe a neutral gradient filter tool could have been used to reduce the impact of the highlights in the lower portion of the sky.  The success of any digital correction could depend on whether you made the image in a jpg or raw format.<br>For me, I also found the haziness in the air to be a distraction.  I wondered how this image might connect with me had the dehaze filter be used to reduce the haziness (available in some photo software). | A |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Umbrella Alley<br> | In my opinion, this is an interesting story about alfresco dining and how umbrellas are used to protect alfresco diners from rain instead of veranda overhangs.  For me, I would have more connection to the story if the café had had some customers dining outside given what I see in the story.  Consider how to maximise the impact of your story for a viewer – is the story just about the umbrellas in isolation, given the alfresco dining seating?<br><br>I wondered why the brighter tones of the alleyway were left as prominent elements as they created visual tension for me.  The brighter tones led my eye down the alley away from the story of the umbrellas and alfresco dining.  This could be addressed by burning down and/or blurring the area in the image from the end of the line of the alfresco dining seating.  A shorter depth of field in camera could be used to diminish the sharpness of these further away elements.  A brush tool or a radial gradient filter could be used to burn down the brighter tones further down the alley.  Try this and see what you think this could do for your image. | M |
| Heard It All Before<br> | For me the visual story shows interaction with interest between the two main characters.  I found the title may try to give a perspective that is not evident in the visual elements of the story.  The title suggests boredom and I couldn't see that in the gaze of the man or the expression and gesture of the woman.<br><br>In my opinion, the image feels underexposed and lacks in contrast and both of these choices impinge significantly on my connection to your story as the lighting chosen doesn't create a lot of interest for me | A |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Where To Next  | I enjoy the contemplative expression shown in the image. I like the placement of the lines implied by the parked vehicles to hold the eye on the bike and the character of the main element is emphasised by its placement in a position of dominance near the left edge with the vertical element emphasised by the vertical element (the white signpost).  For me the blacks lost their detail a little on the main character and the left side of the bike.  For example, does the bike have a sidecar or not and what do his pants really look like – do they have the modern holes or are they worn or what? Lightening these very dark areas with a brush could allow the details in these darker tones to be seen more easily. The shadows slider in most photo software programmes would allow this adjustment. This would have allowed me to see into the details more | M |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Where to<br> | I see a strong blue cast in the shadow areas on the road.  It is important to understand how to adjust your white balance in camera to counter this kind of effect in an image (usually by setting the white balance to the shade setting).  This is because the light in shadow takes on a blue colour to the "camera" sensor – our eyes automatically adjust for this. While the blue cast impinges on my enjoyment of the story. A minor adjustment in your photo software using the tint slider (toward the green end) would help reduce the strength of this blue colour cast.<br><br>I did enjoy your composition.  In particular I enjoyed how you used the lines of the road marking and the edge of the road to take my eye through the image.  The composition leaves me with two questions - where am I going? And where am I coming from. For me the composition works well to tell the story I can see. For me the light and white balance are a strong detractor and the fuzzy nature of the bush detract from rather than support your story.?<br><br>To my eye, the image seems a little out of focus or slightly blurry.  I wondered if the clarity slider in most photo software programmes might help improve the sharpness.  Try it and see.  maybe a use of sharpening slider might help. | A |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Look I Can Walk<br> | I enjoyed the light in this image as it reveals to me the intense concentration of the young one, and the intent of mum keeping a watchful eye on the pride and joy.  I really enjoyed the moment in time in which the step is half completed and the lines and curves and circles all around the image.  I found these circles and curves indicating a tension withe the rectangular brick shapes complements the step in the air knowing how unsteady young ones can be. Nicely seen and well composed.<br><br>I would have rated this image a little more highly had you maybe made the mum and child a little more dominant in the frame though an off-centre placement. rather than being centrally placed.  For me this balance of background gives equal weight to the direction coming from as well as the going to direction.  Consequently, I felt that the image didn't have the strongest emotional impact on me.  Try a small crop from the right and also from the bottom to leave the mum and child more toward the right of the image and leaving space for the child to move into and see what you think about how this might create a stronger connection for the viewer. | HC |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Ma And Pa<br> | I love the interaction between the man and the woman and the context of what seems to be a market like atmosphere with people wandering freely down or up the street.<br><br>Compositionally, the feet of the man are cut by the frame.  I was left wondering if the man had lost his shoe or had different shoes on.  I noticed that you have isolated the main elements from most of the background by your depth of field.  Nicely done.  In my opinion, I would have had a stronger connection to the story had there been a little more light on the lady's face and had the lady's face.  A brush tool could be used for this. This would have allowed me to better see here facial expression which seems important in the context of your story.<br><br>I liked the way that the two main characters together form a rectangle that is placed slightly off-centre.  This gave me a sense of action of going somewhere.  In my opinion the road contains a magenta cast in the shadowy areas.  This colour cast could be addressed by reducing the luminance of the red and magenta channels in the HSL tool in lightroom. | M |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| And Teddy Came Too  | This image gives me a strong sense of a creative approach to presenting your story of the family outing including the two teddys. The nature and direction blur suggests intentional camera movement. I like the way the young girl is looking at what's ahead and the little boy is seems to be wondering what is going on outside the frame. I wasn't sure how the space to the left of the all the children supported your story and this impinged on my emotional connection to your story. I wonder how much more impact the story would have if this space to the left were reduced? I also found the trees and parked cars in the background, and the shapes to the right distracted my eye from the story of the children and the water fountains. A brush tool or a radial gradient tool might help reduce the distracting elements in the background – for example darkening down the trees and parked cars and blurring all these background elements. I really did enjoy your creative approach to this image. | M |
| Where's That Phone  | Well, I can see in the image that the woman is certainly looking for something. Whether it is a phone or a purse to pay for entry or a sunhat I don't know. I found nothing in the image to suggest that she was looking for a phone. There is a lot going on in the image with peop0le engaging with the display both in the front and to the rear of the display model. I found that the placement of the woman so close to the left edge leaves a lot of empty space to the right of the image For me, I wondered if I would have had a stronger connection to the story had the visual weight of the image been a little more counterbalanced by reducing this space on the right of the image. Consider your composition and what is in the frame as it relates to your story before you press the shutter. Yes, this can be adjusted in photo software. However, I have been exposed to several tutors who all emphasised that it is desirable to get the framing of the image right in camera to match as closely as possible to your vision for the image. | A |

| Photo | Evaluator's comments | Eval |
|---|---|---|
| Kiribati Street Cleaner  | This is a great character study.  The title adds information that is not entirely evident in the story, and she appears not to be close to or to b holding anything that speaks to street cleaning.  I loved the light, the position and oval shape of the subject which all create a strong sense of peacefulness within herself. This created a strong connection to the story for me.<br><br>The facial expressions are beautifully exposed for.  Despite not having a title that reflected the elements of the visual story, I considered this to be a most outstanding image. | Hon |
| Next Stop Is...  | Born and bred in Christchurch I always enjoy visual stories about Christchurch.  I am very familiar with the trams having been back to visit family in Christchurch on many occasions. I like the way the image captures the length of the tram and implies motion with the green light and the space in front of the tram.<br><br>For me, the image seems underexposed, and this impinges on my connection to the story. This could be adjusted for in most photo software.  More contrast (by increasing the clarity) would help create a stronger connection for me to your story. Try these and see what you think.<br><br>I noticed the red scooter cuts the frame on the left and the lean on the lamppost and traffic lights both create a distraction to my enjoyment of the image. Remember to scan the edge of the frame quickly before you press the shutter.  The lean of the posts and lights could be addressed to some extent with straightening/rotate tools in photo software. The transform tool in Lightroom could also help. Try them out see what you think. | A |