







Results – Projected Image of the Year

	<p><u>Iris Entwined</u> - I'm no flower expert but I feel like this is a flower emerging and I get a sense of a shedding of skin. For me it brings to mind a sense of dancers twisting and in sort of ballet. The tones in the paper like shell that is being discarded are beautiful. The overall control of light and the textures has been well managed. To nit-pick slightly, there is a small bright area on the large blue flower that is slightly distracting and could be cloned out. And there is a small amount of ghosting when viewed at 100% around the flowers, perhaps a really small amount of movement or from adding some extra background blur. I really enjoy the way this simple image of a static subject conveys a sense of movement. <i>H/C</i></p>
	<p><u>Lively Lady</u> - I am mostly a portrait photographer these days so I instantly connected to this face. She is looking right down the barrel of the lens and these images are so hard to pull off. They either work really well like this or they seem very intimidating. I don't feel anyone could be intimidated by such a warm and welcoming expression. I personally don't think you can go wrong with monochrome for a portrait and I love all the grain, it really suits this image. There is some blurring and there are some artifacts around her hat on the right-hand side. I'm guessing this is from editing and I do feel they are a little too obvious and do pull this image back a tad. I love the tonality in the skins and the choice to fill the frame seems perfectly executed to me eye. <i>Merit</i></p>
	<p><u>Amongst the Club Moss</u> - I get a sense of wonder in this image. When I look at this, I can imagine myself kneeling in the undergrowth and exploring this other world. The colours are super saturated, I assume from how wet everything was. I do wonder if we need as much of the left-hand side and cropping would certainly remove some of the more distracting bright spots. Perhaps just toning them down with some burning in post-production would work. I noticed a fair amount of noise in the shadows. That's fairly typical for a shot taken in a low light setting and it is easily resolved in Lightroom with a tweak to the luminance noise reduction slider. I really enjoyed the vibrant greens in this image. <i>Merit</i></p>
	<p><u>Long Walk to the Elevator</u> - This image really draws the viewer's eye. I love street photography and need to do more. Images like this motivate me and I hope they motivate the club members. What appeals to me and why I feel this works well, is that we take the everyday, those small moments that can be easily ignored and we focus our entire attention on them. For example, the repeating patterns of the lights draw my eye into this picture and then the people give me somewhere to land. Then I can play a little movie in my mind's eyes about where are they going, where have they been. Do they know they are being watched? It's like people watching but on another level.</p>

	<p>I do wonder if this might be even stronger with a decent chunk cropped off the bottom, I'm not sure we need quite so much. And perhaps in from the sides enough to even this up a touch. Perhaps aligning the edge of the path with the corners of the frame would further reinforce the leading lines that draw the viewer into the image. The colour palette is calm and the light has been very well controlled. <i>H/C</i></p>
	<p>Campbell Albatross - Isn't he handsome! I almost thought he looked like a cartoon character at first, it's so up close and intimate that it caught me slightly off guard, in a good way. I love the direct, unflinching stare, the eyes look like they can see into our souls. I felt like I was the one being judged. The control of light is superb and the details in the feathers are amazing. It is so very hard to photograph a white subject on white background and the photographer has accomplished this with aplomb! <i>Honours - Winner.</i></p>
	<p>Flying Takahe - I was instantly taken by the colours and composition here. The Takahe has such wonderful colours and this pose shows them off really well. There is lovely background blur that lets us really concentrate on the bird. I do wonder if this would be even stronger with slightly less on the bottom. I find the title misleading as the bird isn't actually flying. Titles can be tricky. This image really shows off how beautiful these birds are. <i>H/C</i></p>
	<p>Tuatara - This wee dinosaur is a handsome chap. I wondered if this was taken in the wild or a zoo. Either way the conditions are very challenging and very dark. The shallow depth of field works but the drop off on focus is rather abrupt, maybe just a touch more would have helped. The dark conditions tend to force us to go as wide as possible but I feel that choosing depth of field is more important than the noise from a higher ISO. As these creatures stay pretty still you may have got away with some focus stacking. There is a bit of noise which is to be expected but adjusting the luminance slider in Lightroom handles that well. I like the sharpness on the face and the side lighting gives a good three-dimensional feel to the head. <i>Accepted</i></p>
	<p>Lunch Time - There is an instant impact here from filling the frame with the bird. The placement to the side works well. This has probably been quite heavily sharpened and that works well on the feathers but looks a little off in the water. I suspect that sharpening was applied globally. In Lightroom you can sharpen with a mask or you can apply masking in the sharpening tool. Luminance noise reduction can fix the background but it will soften the feathers so it's better to only sharpen where needed. In Photoshop you can use a layer and mask to apply the sharpening where required. This is well seen. <i>Merit</i></p>



St. Marks - This one really got me scratching my head. I'm a keen classic car enthusiast so I noticed the cars look old, as does the signage. I'm guessing this is a reasonably old image. If not, I apologise and if I am correct then well done on entering an old image. One of the best things about street images is their ability to preserve history and to transport us back in time. As a pommie that's been here about 20 years or so, I often feel unable to place things and buildings but I thought, this looks like St Matthew in the city. And again, I apologise if this is just a really similar church somewhere else but I thought the name might be wrong. I pulled up Google maps, everything seems to line up, even the trees! For me that's wonderful, even if I'm completely wrong. What a thrill to see a slice of history. On the technical side, I do find it a little bright and felt that just pulling back the highlights would make it easier to view. Viewed at 100% is a little on the soft side so if it's a film scan, perhaps a higher resolution scan could improve that. I really enjoyed viewing this image, it feels like a little time capsule and everywhere you look there is something interesting to explore.

Merit



Feather Art - I loved the shapes and the fine details here. I really enjoyed the layout and the way the feather sits in the frame. I find that to be well considered and it sits comfortably without too much space around it and not too close to the edges either. There looks to be some purple fringing but for this more sort of abstract image that's probably a dangerous assumption. That sort of electric feel works well with this image and may have been introduced deliberately.

I like the swirls in the eyes that to my eye suggests vortices that suck my eyes into them. *H/C*



Droplet - Amazing colours! This image is worthy of some time to really sit and absorb the details. As a judge I have seen many similar images but this is a really great example of the style. There are a few little things that could be easily done in post processing to lift this even higher. On the bottom right there is a small blemish that could be easily cloned out. The extreme sharpness in the centre is wonderful but the soft blurred background has some noise. This might be from sharpening the whole image rather than just the droplet. Luminance noise reduction will fix this. Those vibrant colours are really pleasant and work super well. *Honours*



Azalea with Ant - I was instantly taken by a sense of calmness and serenity when viewing this. It has a pleasant feel to it and the colour palette is wonderful. The image isn't super sharp all over, it seems to be sharpest on the far left but the obvious place for us to look would usually be the stamen. There are some artifacts in the petals, possibly from adding some sharpening in post-production. The ant was a lovely touch and adds an extra point of interest. *Merit*



Frozen Fence Line - This has a very geometric and slightly abstract feel to my eye. It's quite interesting to see how the ice has cracked around plant life, I assume from movement. I felt that black and white was a strong choice for this as there would have been minimal colour contrast and the black and white highlights the ice well. It is well seen but I do wonder if we need a hero subject for our eyes to land on. I find my eyes bouncing around which can be good for very detailed images, yet I am less convinced here. The detail below the surface on the bottom left is really interesting and I wonder if a heavy crop off the right between the two ice fractures might simplify things. The black and white conversion was really well executed. *Merit*



Orchid Trio - Who doesn't like Orchids, they are so elegant and colourful. Three is always a strong number for compositions and works well. I find this image a little static. Perhaps as it is framed head on and the light is even so that the flowers look rather flat. I wonder if the author had been able to light this from the side whether this would have been stronger. *Accepted*



Wind Blown - I once heard it said that there are no new ideas in photography. That may be true and I have definitely seen this idea before. However, you rarely see it done this well. For my taste, the depth of field is perfect. We can see all that wonderful details where the seeds attach to the head of the plant but then the focus falls off quickly so that the background seeds are nice and soft. The black background works really well to contrast and highlight the details. On my calibrated screen the highlights might benefit from being pulled back ever so slightly. That one detached seed resting on the top adds another visual quirk for extra interest, wonderful work!
Honours – Runner-up



Stirling Falls - You can almost hear the water splashing here. It certainly reminds me of some wonderful trips to various falls and they do always inspire. There isn't much colour here and I was surprised this hadn't been converted to black and white but that's just personal taste I suspect. I feel this could benefit from some extra contrast. It really helps emphasise the water and the movement or perhaps some clarity which is just contrast in the mid tones. It might add some extra impact. The shutter speed selection works well, there is enough detail in the water to get a sense of the movement which is important to this scene. *Merit*



Rushing Water - It certainly looks like it is rushing and I don't think I would want to stand in this water. I certainly get a sense of the power of the water. This image has lots of potential but I feel it needs a little bit of post-production. The light looks a touch flat and I suspect it would be lifted by increasing the exposure a little and boosting the whites. This sort of image can play tricks on us. If you looked at a histogram the white of the water will hit the far right. This can make us doubt the exposure but there should be lots of white in this image so it is perfectly fine. One suggestion I would make is to boost the cyans and blues using the HSL sliders in Lightroom or the ACR filter in Photoshop. It would just add some pop to the water. The low angle works really well, it immerses us in the water. *Accepted*



Hoist the Moon - A clever image that plays with perspective, the title helps sell the trick. The colours are nice and that light after sunset can be so soft and it complements the coloured lights on the structures. I would have liked to see more context. I think this is a mast on a yacht but without more of the boat it feels a little detached to me. This is a nice original idea. *Accepted*



Broken Beans - When I looked at this, I instantly thought of Kintsugi which is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending the areas of breakage with precious metals, usually gold. It's very beautiful and to my mind suggests that when we are broken all is not lost. Once we are repaired, what is left is more beautiful than the original. This seems to work really well here.

There are some technical issues that hold back this image but I would urge the author to rework this concept and address some of them. The image is really noisy and that would be easy to fix by taking this with natural light rather than an overhead light. The focus isn't spot on either and maybe some extra light would help with that as well. Place the scene next to a window with a net and let the soft filtered light play across the surfaces. For my eye, the plate is uncomfortably close to the edge, however, this maybe be deliberate.

The concept here is really strong and shows a photographer going beyond capturing what is front of them and making an artistic statement. *H/C*



Dry Putiputi - There is a nice combination of shapes here. The colour pallet works well. I think the composition could be improved as it feels very static and we get a sense of looking up which makes the image feel slightly distorted. The light is very flat here and having side light on a subject like this would really emphasis the shapes and folds. *Accepted*



The Goods Arrive - This is an interesting window into something we don't see every day and that is one of the aspects of photography I personally enjoy. If it were not for us photographers, we would not be very aware of how the world around us operates. I find the weight of the ship and dock is balanced by the negative space around it. I feel it might benefit from some extra contrast to make things pop a little more but that may well be a personal taste issue. I really like the layout of the image, there are lots of little touches like the way the lights line up that work well. *Merit*



It's Snowtime - This is a very classic Kiwi scene and these strong landscapes make most of us want to head out with our cameras. The light is a bit hard here and that's one of the hardest parts about travelling with our cameras, unless you have an unlimited budget it can be hard to be in the best spots at the best time of day. The photographer has done well with the available light but as always, getting that golden hour light would probably take this up to the next level. I enjoy the symmetry of this composition. *H/C*



Benmore Surprise - Wow! These colours are stunning and this is a real statement isn't it. It's really common to suggest that the author picks either the sky or the water but I felt that this is an image where you really could not pick, the colours are wonderful. This isn't super sharp, and that's often because we get these colours in low light settings. My advice is to use a tripod and a low ISO and take a super long exposure. It takes a bit of work but the result is just that bit better and just that bit more rewarding. Those colours though, it's hard to look past them. *H/C*



It's Blue Today - What a wonderful structure. I have no idea where this is but of course I now want to go there. I feel the colour set against the blue sky works really well. The composition works, it has a strength to it. This image is a little bright and I felt it I might be strengthened by just pulling the exposure back a bit. I applaud the author for looking up, there's much to be said for it. *Merit*



Patterns - This has a very other world sort of feel for me. The image isn't as sharp as it could be, this sort of image probably needs manual focus to absolutely nail that. Amazing colours. *Merit*