Results Portrait Trophy – May

	01 Phil – Merit - A thoughtful portrait that made me stop and think. Beautiful lighting with nice catch lights in the eyes and you have managed to avoid the usual problems with people wearing glasses which can often be a challenge. The light complements the skin tones without any harsh distractions. I do find myself wondering what he's trying to hide with the hand across his face and maybe it's just a moment in thought, although getting him to maybe frown a bit more may have added to the mood. The placement on the left third is unusual for a frontal portrait which allows my eye to be drawn into the negative space on the right – did you consider cropping a little differently so that the viewers eye remains on the subject?
	02 Bollywood Starlet – HC - The colours sing in this image and help to frame the face of this young girl and keep me engaged with the subject. Great catchlights which adds to the depth of colour. The lighting is complimentary to her skin tones with no distracting highlights and being down at your subject's level achieves the right mood to this image. I'm not sure if you have tried to tone down the distraction in the top left corner during processing but you might want to look at this again as there seems to be a kind of halo effect in this area which might need to be corrected.
	03 Mia – Acc - There's such a feeling of fun about this portrait, from the warm smile to the tilt of the head. I like how the late sun highlights her hair and just makes the whole image glow. You have engaged well with your subject and she is relaxed and this really comes across in this image. The blue of her top reflects well with the water behind and is then framed by the tree line. Please check your horizon line – you might have enough to straighten the image and still retain the feel of this lovely portrait.
	04 Nichol – HC - A very engaging portrait which clearly demonstrates the connection between photographer and subject. The strap lines and necklace take my eye into the image where I'm met with a warm smile and bright eyes. Lovely detail in the fine whisps of hair and pink hue of her cheeks. I find my eye drawn to the strong horizonal lines of the background which are a little distracting and wonder if this could be addressed in processing.
	05 Carole *(actually Christi)* – Acc - There is the making of a good portrait here. The dark make-up, black collar and nails, all giving a clear indication of a gothic theme. The use of low lighting from the side adds to the dark mood of the image. Her expression and hands imply more of an impression of thought than power which I would have assumed would relate to a gothic stance. There are a number of highlights that draw my eye; those on the collar, cheek, nose and rings which could all be corrected in processing. There is also a highlight/mark along the RHS which could easily be cloned out. The crop on the right is also a very tight and on closer inspection it may be that you have focused on her cheek and her eye as this is not sharp.

	06 Emotion of the Song – Merit - A moment well caught. This singer deep in thought and caught up in the moment of her performance. The closed eyes give a peaceful mood to the whole portrait, I think if they were open there would be a very different feel to the image, so well captured. You have managed to remove all the distractions from what would be a very complex background that would tend to draw the eye away from the subject. Your angle has ensured that the microphone has a suitable gap from the face but is there to add to the whole narrative. Her face is well framed with the beautiful colours of her top and headband which ensures that my eyes remain focused on the subject.
	07 Goth for the Night – Acc - For me this is an image that can be read in a number of different ways. The use of the black clothing, make-up and clothing implies the goth theme however the lighting, the smile and her posture/open gesture implies a more friendly image and this leaves me very confused as a viewer of the image. What feeling as a viewer do you want me to experience? My eye is naturally drawn into the image from the lower left as I follow her arm into the frame, exploring the tattoo of the bird then up to the shoulder, then to her face framed by the collar and black hair, bright eyes and red lips. My eye flows down the left shoulder to find a very dark and opposite kind of tattoo of a spider on the left forearm giving a very dark feeling before I leave the frame. I find the contrasting feelings make the image difficult to read and the fabric across the arms and body cuts the image in two so I'm not sure where to look.
	08 Reflecting on the years – Acc - I definitely get the feeling that there are many stories to be told here, every line holds a memory but there still remains a spark in those eyes. There's a strong feeling of connection with the photographer, he seems relaxed and comfortable maybe recounting the day. I find the background really distracting with my eye drawn to the clock coming out of his head, the wire running down the left side of his face and the bright object over his right shoulder. I wonder if you processed this as a black and white image it would remove these distractions and really bring out the detail on this gentleman's face.
	09 Gothic Glamour – Acc - For me there is a real crunch between the title and the image presented. Gothic gives a very hard, black, moody feeling but the lighting you have selected and the angle of the body is very soft. The eye is sharp and there are no distracting highlights, but for me the image lacks any mood or emotion. It would be interesting to consider this as a black and white to try and really bring out the feelings that could be made from this image.
	10 Nanas Joy – HC - A lovely environmental portrait of this young lad. There's a real feeling of achievement on his face and in his fist pumps as he comes to the end of what I'm assuming is a long climb up the bank of this river. I like how you have included space around him to add to the narrative of this portrait, giving the viewer an insight into the reason behind the image. This just adds to the strength of the image. Nice catchlights in the eyes and the whole feeling of energy have been well captured in your subject as well as the environment behind. Well done
	11 Evening at the beach – Merit - A lovely story here of this family spending the last few moments on the beach, brings back memories of summer holidays and really not wanting to leave. Capturing a group is never easy and selecting one to focus on can be difficult but you have managed to organise and capture this young family well. Allowing the crop to be wide and including some of the environment adds well to the narrative. There is a strong feeling of family here with the smiles and the linked bodies. The side light from the sun really highlights some of the facial features so in future you might want to consider the angle a little more.

	12 Mr Pullman – HC - A very well-lit and exposed portrait considering the subject has glasses which often cause issues. You have managed to engage well with him in what is often a very uncomfortable setting for most. His body language is relaxed and open and despite the formal title of the image I get the feeling you know each other. His face is well framed by the open jacket which takes my eye into the image and to his face. Nice catchlights and detail around the eyes. The cap stops my eye and completes the frame.
	13 Granddaughter Acc - There are the makings of a really nice portrait here. I like the low angle that you have selected, and cropping so I'm not seeing all of her body implies that she is about to leave or turn away from me. The turn of the head gives the impression of trying to look into the future or maybe contemplating the past with a very sorrowful feel/mood, this is helped by the use of the soft lighting. There is a strong feeling of opposite here, the lighting implying one mood but the clothing, makeup and jewellery implying a very different image/feeling. I find my eye is drawn to the highlights of her eyes. I wonder if this could be corrected in post processing or not looking so far to the left.
	14 Painted Lady – Acc - A well-executed image with the hard lighting and dark background resulting in a very dark mood to the image. I like how you have angled her body across the frame to draw my eye into the image from the lower left corner straight to her eyes, which have some nice catch lighting. From these I'm left to explore the rest of the image. I like how the left side of her face is being lost to the shadows giving a very moody feel and then I notice the smeared lipstick and I'm drawn to her hand that sits on the RHS. This takes my eye from the frame and the moment is lost. For me the lighting is a little too bright on her right shoulder so that I'm losing detail and wonder if this could be toned down a little in processing?
	15 The Lady's not for turning – Acc - There is the makings of a good tryptic here with a strong triangular form based around the three images that blend well however I have a few concerns which I think could be corrected in the constructure. My eye is drawn to the image on the left and as she is looking out of the frame my eye follows that direction, did you try swopping the left and right image so that both face into the frame this will keep the viewer engaged and directed to the centre portrait. I find the mix of moods and lighting across the three images very distracting; a consistent theme/mood would make for a stronger narrative. The layer of what seems to be scratch marks has resulted in all three portraits looking unsharp, you may want to check your files and see if the image looks stronger without this layer/effect.
	16 Princess Charlotte in her bubble Crown – HC - A moment of fun that has been well captured. Her hair frames her face beautifully keeping my attention on the mischievous smile and rosy cheeks. The bubbles acting like her crown that tops of a lovely portrait of what I assume is a fun summer moment in the garden. I really like how you have managed to capture the row of tiny freckles across her cheek and bridge of the nose, gives the whole image a very innocent and fun feel, well done. The background echoes the bubbles with its circular design, however in places there are some highlights that I find a little distracting but these could easily be toned down in post processing.
	17 Willows World – Acc - There is a good sense of fun in this image and you have managed well to capture her in this moment as I can only assume she doesn't stay still for very long. There is a real feeling of movement which could be from the subject having just sat down or the wind catching her hair. She has a lovely smile and is obviously engaged with someone or something over her right shoulder.

The depth of field used isn't shallow enough to remove all the distractions from the background and so my eye is drawn to the buttons of the chair and the wooden wall with strong horizontal lines. The crop is too tight as you have cut the top of the crown from the frame. As the photographer you are looking down on your subject which puts you in a very dominant position and changes the power dynamics and mood of the image, trying to be at eye level would give an overall softer and fun mood to the image.

18 The BFG at Sea – Acc - This portrait really did remind me of the Roald Dahl character and made me smile. His image jumps from the frame and really dominates and there's no mistaking where you want the viewer to look. I'm not 100% sure how you achieved this but I'm assuming flash. I like the catchlights that give a little spark to his eyes and the fishing cap that helps form a narrative to this image. For me the use of flash and colour has resulted in a rather flat image and wonder if you had considered black and white? An angle to the body would also help as I feel he is disappearing into the background. The unbalanced negative space on the right draws my eye away from the subject.

19 Rail Buff – Merit - A simple straight on portrait that has been well captured. Good use of a shallow depth of field to reduce the distractions in the background. Both the shirt and hat frame the face and keep me focused on the hazel eyes looking straight back at me. The smile is engaging and there is a clear feel of fun and engagement between the viewer and the subject. Apart from the label on the shirt I didn't really get a feeling of belong to or involved with rail and the highlights on the top of the hat are a little distracting which could be addressed through post processing or even a closer crop at the top of the frame to remove it all together and help really bring attention to his face.

Winner image   -   4: Nichol

Runner up   -   16: Princess Charlotte in her bubble crown