

## CPS FIRST PRINT COMPETITION JUDGES NOTES

1. **THE LISIANTHUS TRIO** Choice of background very neutral but does nothing to enhance the colour of the buds. Makes for a very sombre image. Lighting needs some balance to bring out shadow detail. The top bud is almost completely in shadow and looks more like an approaching fish. I would prefer to see all of the predominant bud rendered sharp.
2. **AGAPANTHUS**. Another poor choice of background, has an unnatural pattern and does nothing to set off the colour of the bloom. None of the petals appear sharp and the image lacks good colour.
3. **ARUM LILIES**. Has strong impact. A nice arrangement of the flowers but has been cropped a little tightly. Lighting has rendered nice texture in most of the whites but there is a little burn out in the upper blooms. This was heading for a strong acceptance but is spoilt by a bad colour in the bottom left which needs to be corrected.
4. **BEALEY BRIDGE**. Strong leading lines here but they tend to point us out of the picture. The vehicle adds another dimension to an otherwise static image. I think the monochrome treatment is appropriate but there are still distractions with the highlight and graffiti under the bridge.
5. **BRIANA**. You have chosen to photograph Briana looking away from the light. This means the eyes really lack life and the skin tones have been seriously affected by the strong coloured clothing. Needed a reflector or some fill flash to restore reality.
6. **BUSY FINGERS**. Competing centres of interest. The boat with its stronger position and white sails tends to win the battle. Better to swing or move the camera to the right and only include a part of the model to indicate what the hands were working on.
7. **CAROL**. With a dramatic presentation like this I would expect a less literal title for the image. Why have you chosen this treatment? There are a lot of special effects you can easily use on images these days but you have to have a reason to do this. I think that for such a strong presentation, the pose should have been more direct and confrontational.
8. **CASS STATION**. Too much empty space at the top and you could lose the tree on the right. I can appreciate you wanting to get away from the other photographers to emphasise the loneliness but this gives the viewer little to take in. Serious crop top and left would emphasise all of the diagonal lines.
9. **CAUGHT OUT**. You have sensed the idea of a story but the model is not very convincing. He appears to be laughing. What is he holding? A fishing rod or net would have been more convincing that he really had gone down there for a purpose other than acting out your story.

10. **DANDY CANDY.** I can marvel at the work someone has done to create this fantasy but not really understand why. Good that you have arranged an appropriate background but the image does not retain my interest.

11. **EREWON ROAD.** A little bit of mood here but you have not made the most of it. The print lacks sharpness over all. The block of trees in the foreground is a barrier to the eye moving through. Far better to have moved to the right, got closer to the fence and shot through the gap to make use of the closer ridge as a leading line to the sunny spot. Yes, you have to make up your mind and move quickly on such occasions. If you do not have time for a tripod, increase your ISO to ensure sharpness and good depth of field.

12. **EVENING SLIDE.** A nice silhouette effect but you have some problems with light and composition. The girl is sliding out of the picture. Had you moved to the left, you could have given her space to move into and used the slide to avoid direct sun on your lens.

13. **FIRST LIGHT, KHWAI.** Some nice light and atmosphere here but the composition is too busy and untidy to be satisfying.

14. **GOLDEN SUNRISE.** It is very difficult to succeed with sunrise/sunset pictures as they are so common. You need a strong sky and interesting shapes. This photographer has worked hard to make a composition out of the surf line and buildings which gives some depth. There is nice colour in the sky but no interesting formation and overall the print looks a little soft.

15. **JAMES.** This image has a lot going for it. There is a lovely expression and the tilt of the head makes it a bit more dynamic. I was concerned that the highlights on the right are burning out and the lighting is so subtle that the contours of the face are not strong. Needs greater depth of field to render the lips and chin sharp.

16. **KAIAPOI LAKES WATER LILY.** I do not find the overall blue attractive. The bloom has been placed right on the edge of the frame. It would be better to zoom in a little and place the flower on the third. It would then be surrounded by green leaves. There is not much texture in the petals. Partly due to overexposure but could also relate to the lighting direction. You need to walk around and study the light from different directions. You may need to choose another subject if you do not want wet feet!

17. **LIGHTENING STRIKE.** I presume the lightening strike is in the past. This is another image which relies on a technique for effect. However the pattern and shapes in this subject are too complicated and detailed for the solarisation effect to be successful. Better to pick a subject with much simpler lines that you want to emphasise. The effect on the clouds is quite unnatural and maybe a clear sky would have been a better choice.

18. **LIKE FOLDS OF BUTTER.** Well seen but you needed to work a little harder to get your idea across. You need to have all the petals sharp and possibly an even closer approach would be better. If you want to pursue the

butter idea take out a little red, our butter is rich but not this much. Finally print it on glossy paper.

19. **LOADING AT DAWN.** There is something going on but it is not very clear as we cannot see what is being loaded and you have missed the peak of the action. A very murky print with no strong highlight and the red jackets are too small to make a successful pattern.

20. **MIST CLEARING WAIKATO RIVER.** A little touch of light has caught your attention but there really are not sufficient elements here to build a composition. All of the interest is in a little strip across the centre of the picture and that is not strong enough to hold a viewer's attention.

21. **MUM.** To you this is mum in the back yard. To me it is two separate pictures on one sheet of paper and Mum looks like she does not want to be in it. By all means show her environment but concentrate on getting all of Mum in the picture and making her the dominant feature. Nice lighting here, definitely worth trying again.

22. **MYSTICAL GIRL.** Another heavily worked image which has not worked for me. It looks a bit like a cut out because of the lack of depth and bad edges. The ears look elf like and this is exaggerated by the neckline of her dress. Maybe you should just concentrate on the face and go for a mask effect.

23. **NEW BRIGHTON PIER.** The top third of this image adds nothing. It should be possible to render the pier sharp throughout its length. This would contrast better with the movement of the water. There are some interesting lines appearing with the shadows and reflections in the bottom section. Suggest you take a long stepladder and a bean bag next time

24. **PUCKER UP.** If the saliva and nose are your point of interest then why not get closer and present only those elements? Otherwise it would have been preferable to move a little to the left to show more of the animal's head and eye in particular.

25. **RED ROSE STUDY 9.** Never comfortable with this view. The bud appears to be floating and unrelated to the background which is darker at the top than the bottom. Looked at this many ways even in the mirror and felt the most comfortable composition was an oblique one with the prominent petal over the top.

26. **ROCOMADOUR- ONCE UPON A TIME.** I googled to find out where this is and found it is quite an interesting spot. I do not think that this softened presentation does it justice. There is a nice composition in the line of buildings up the hill. However the strongest colours are in the bottom right which pull your eye away from that. In the old days we would have done a selective bas relief to concentrate on the line of buildings. I am sure there are several ways to do this in Photoshop.

27. **SERIOUS BUSKER.** The skin tones seem too bright but of course he is wearing make-up. I am not comfortable with the low angle here. It does

emphasise the funny nose but it would have been better to wait until he turned his face in another direction. Vertical format would have simplified the picture by eliminating some of the distractions behind the head.

28. **SOUTH ISLAND ROBIN.** The frame is nicely filled but unfortunately not all of the bird is sharp. These are confiding birds so it should have been possible to achieve a depth of field which covered the whole bird. It is unfortunate that the eye is in shadow. Some have the skills to remedy this in the computer. Better to use some fill flash or just wait until the bird turns it's head.

29. **STILL STANDING.** The foliage takes up more of the image than the old shed. Soft light denies us any texture in the building. The only thing which gives us any sense of depth is the out of focus leaves in the foreground. A pity as they are the most attractive ones.

30. **SVENSBY BYGBEMUSEM.** While this appears to be a straight landscape it has been given a slightly surreal look due to over work and printing on metallic paper. The composition is not the best with two equally strong buildings in the foreground. You might have got away with it if one had been painted blue or green. As it is, you needed to find a position to make one clearly the centre of interest. This might have been achieved by including only part of the second building.

31. **THE DRUMMER.** This needs cropping at the top and right. The strongest highlights are across the top of the picture which pulls your eye away from the point of interest. There is a lot of detail in the drummer's equipment and I want to see this more clearly plus the expression on his face.

32. **THUNDERSTORM, CAPPADOCIA.** This was certainly a dramatic situation but having seen that there is little to retain our interest because the lighting is so flat on all of the highlight areas. We struggle to make out any detail of the town and the remarkable structures on the left. You needed to have been able to move around the rim and shoot across the light to bring up the relief detail of the foreground.

33. **TIED UP, SAILING NO MORE.** Another very sombre print. In a subject like this we look for texture but there is none offering because it has been printed so heavily. There is some profiling around the edges which gives a pseudo solarisation effect but is probably due to overworking some of the sliders in Photoshop. We should be able to see detail in the mooring rope and the pile it is tied to.

34. **TAIROA HEAD.** This is a very clean little print but heavily weighted on the left hand side. Obviously you wanted to include the lighthouse. To reduce the heavy black block you probably needed to try and get closer to it. Nice atmosphere in the distant hills and subtle clouds but just not enough to retain my interest.

35. **WAIMAK MAGIC.** For me you are just too early. The magic happens when the light hits that water in the foreground. The foreground is heavy so the eye goes straight up to the sky which is the lightest part of the picture. This however lacks any strong formation and would be better cropped down. Much better to resolve to return another morning allowing time to watch as the light gets into the riverbed.

36. **WATER LILY B.** This is the sort of shot most of us took on our first roll of film. We might not all have exposed this well or got the whole subject in focus, but most would have composed in this bullseye fashion. The image is good reportage and suitable for a flower catalogue but does not evoke any emotive response. You need to be looking at lower angles or trying to compose with other flowers or leaves to make a more interesting image.

37. **WATER LILY A.** I guess this is the person who has had the previous comments. They have chosen a lower angle which shows us the shape of the flower, petal formation and still enables us to look into the centre. Regrettably they have not got all of the bloom in focus including the centre. In such a case you need to focus in front of the centre as the depth of field is greater behind the point of focus than in front of it. If necessary increase your ISO to ensure you can get the entire subject in focus.

38. **WRECK AT MOTUEKA.** This print is heavily blue which is recognised as a cool receding colour. The maker has also chosen to present it very dark. This may have been to retain the last of the sunset. Because of the lack of texture and even tones the foreground is not interesting despite the inclusion of some water and one seagull with a halo. I hesitate to suggest moving closer to the boat, the photographer might disappear altogether. I really think you needed to be there a little earlier and get some colour reflected into the side of the boat. Then we could think about cropping to a more panoramic format.

39. **YELLOWHEAD REFLECTION.** Very similar in tone to the previous print. Again I think you left it too late. There is not really enough light to show the recession in the hills. It is not generally a good idea to have your horizon across the centre of the picture. Better to crop 60% off the sky area leaving just enough of the clouds to repeat the warm colour in the water. It is fortunate that you have some highlight in the centre of the picture to put some life in a very dark area.

## **ACCEPTANCES**

40. **BEHIND THE WIRE.** I guess you have to call it that. We can speculate on the significance of the wire or gate. I think that the top wire would have been better cropped out. The contre jour lighting basically takes any distractions out of the background and the fill light has been well managed. The image is reminiscent of pictures taken during the American depression.

41. **DID YOU SAY RABBIT?** Lovely capture here with nice action. Just a pity that the second dog is almost hidden.

42. **GRANDMA BARRY LUBIN.** A lovely expression and warm tones won me over. The lighting has been very suitable to retain detail in all areas of the face while still having some texture. You do have a problem with your printer as close inspection reveals horizontal lines on the print. You need to deal with this.

43. **50 YEARS MARRIED.** They say you should not try to compose two equal subjects. No problem here as there is a very clear connection. This captures a special moment very successfully. It is sharp throughout and has been well cropped so there are no distractions.

44. **ARLO.** A high key portrait. I would like to have seen the iris darker, but on the other hand the shadow on the throat is a distraction. Possibly would be improved with a slight crop off the left.

45. **GREEN BUG.** This is a Katydid and has been well photographed. There is very good depth with just a part of the closest leg out of focus. It should do well in a NH competition properly titled.

46. **KAITORETE SPIT.** This is an interesting print which will not be to everyone's liking due to the yellow bias. There is a striking blend of light and shadow across the plains to the well lit mountains. I would have liked the author to provide a more interpretive title to perhaps explain this treatment.

47. **LOW TIDE.** A competent small print with a better balance than the earlier boats we have seen. There is a lot more interest in these mudflats with the light skimming across the surface, the dark land mass is not too heavy and the sky beautifully rendered. Good composition.

48. **MOUNTAIN STREAM.** This is a popular subject but that is no reason for us not to try for these movement effects. I think this one works quite well. It tends to high key but there are two solid rocks to hold it together. My preference would have been to point the camera a little more to the right to give us more of the entry and bring the lower rock more into the picture.

49. **OPARARA RIVER.** This is another pleasant print to look into. It appears very straight forward but the bush is not that easy to photograph. We do have good detail and depth in this picture. There are nice compositional elements with the moss covered tree at left and colourful lead in of the river. Lovely range of colour in the foliage on the far side.

50. **PASTORAL PATTERNS.** Quite a different approach to landscape. This is a tight composition with the leading line zig zagging its way from bottom left to top right. The light is strong enough to show us some textures within the various sectors. The print is very green and needs some relief. In the absence of a red tractor I would have been tempted to work with the colour channels to strengthen the yellows and browns. The green mat exaggerates the green in

the image. A cream or brown mat would have been a better choice. It is unfortunate that the image is not sharp at the bottom.

51. **SHADOWS.** There is a nice idea here but I keep feeling the amount of shadow on the left is just too much. Then I start to get picky and worry about the leaning verticals and sloping horizon. In terms of the message conveyed here these are not critical things and I do applaud the photographer for seeing the potential and making an interesting composition.

52. **SMOKE BREAK AT THE FORBIDDEN CITY.** This sort of breaks a few conventions with the figure placed and pointing to the right. However it is the Forbidden City and the dynamics are that the line of the body duplicates the orientation of the palace. This is a good clear image with nice shadow detail and creates a good idea of a citizen in modern China.

53. **STORM POWER.** A strong dramatic image. The lines of the pylons and the main cloud lead us to the well positioned highlight in the centre of the image. The silhouette of the landscape is fortunately not too obtrusive and is interesting as are the clouds.

54. **WATER PATTERN.** There is some nice colour in the water and an interesting pattern created by the shape of the drain. I had reservations about the composition as there is space at the top not really contributing. Could not make my mind up about suitable cropping.

## HONOURS

55. **AFTER THE BATH.** This is a lovely image in the impressionist vogue. Enough information to register and let the viewer complete the story.

56. **ALL ALONE.** Here is a good example of a manipulated image which succeeds.  
The author has started with an image that had simple but strong composition. There is a lovely combination of angles here. Then reduced the colour range so that we concentrate on the bike. It is clever that the warm tones are close to the bicycle while the cold tones are further out.

57. **MORNING MIST.** Another deceptively simple image. It is unusual to present a landscape as a square format but this works okay. There is nice detail in the wet grasses and the fence line quietly takes you into the mist. I did wonder whether the mat paper was the best choice given the water droplets on the grass. However it certainly warrants its award in this company.