

AUGUST 2013 RESULTS

Hello Matamata and thank you for letting me judge your images. I loved the idea of the set subject and overall some clever ideas came through. Technically there's a bit of variability but I hope you can learn from my comments, after all that's the whole idea. My key comments would be around depth of field and keeping things steady. Control over aperture is one of the critical tools of the photographer and for close up type photography good depth of field is essential. F8 is the minimum and for those subjects which stand out from the frame, f 24 is better. Then you need to control shutter speed and your light sources to give you enough illumination.

Here a tripod is essential as you have to slow things down. Working in manual mode so that you can control all elements, ISO, aperture and shutter is essential and learning how to operate comfortably in that zone should be a priority for all photographers.

Open A grade



Ann

Carl

This is a subject with lots of potential but not that well realised in this case. You're using the window as your illumination source which is all good. But you're shooting full on to the windows which means that they have become the dominant space. Rather than the title subject of the image which is Ann who is in shadow. There's enough there to give some idea of character which is good but what would have been better is to have moved around to the left so that you used the light from the windows to throw light on the face and then a big enough f stop to give at least some definition to the objects on the table.

Accepted....Just.

Eastbourne

Tracey

A reasonable early morning shot of Eastbourne pier by the look of it. A nice place and I should go there more often.

You've cropped to a panoramic format with the water line centrally placed. Another shot with heaps of potential but also crying out for the use of filters. This is where a graduated neutral density filter or at minimum a polariser comes into its own. As it stands there's little to differentiate the sea and the sky. A bit of dodge and burn to darken the sky a bit would help set the mood. I'd look at cropping out some of the sea and the lefthand part of the pier so that the horizon is on the thirds as is the two lights on the end of the pier.

Accepted.

I can nail this

Brie

Great title and technically everything has been handled well though a tad soft. Bit of a toss up here as to whether it would have been best to zoom in on the action or leave as it is. But when you crop in definitely too soft. Why the softness I wonder as the lights good. I suspect that you're not at the sweet spot of your lens. There's a tendency in this case shoot on shutter priority go fast and let some Camera Engineer decide your aperture. Play with your lens and find its sweet spot.

It'll be around f8. If it wasn't soft it would be a merit but a good **acceptance** instead.

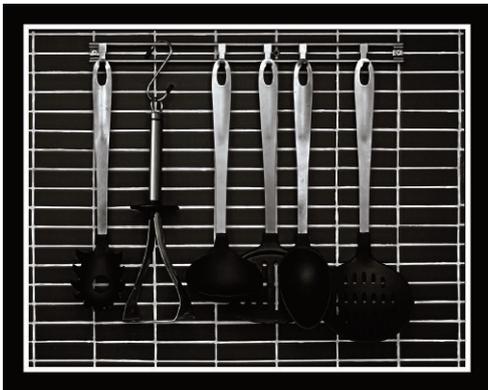
New Zealand falcon

Liz

Well done for getting the shot as these things are fussy. Some colour noise so you've pushed your ISO but that's acceptable. Not quite sharp again so think about your aperture and in this case I suspect you've zoomed in a bit too much. Like the lifted foot.

Accepted ...just





Odd one out

Sarah

Very clever title and well thought through. Nice composition, handled well technically, some loss of detail with the black on black but that's a minor quibble.

Honours.



Smiley man

Cushla

Good choice to go for the mono treatment as it works well. Light's a bit flat and a small push on the contrast would have made it pop just a tad. Slightly soft but depth of field good so reasonable aperture which suggest a too slow a shutter speed. Good effort though and it squeaks into a **merit**.

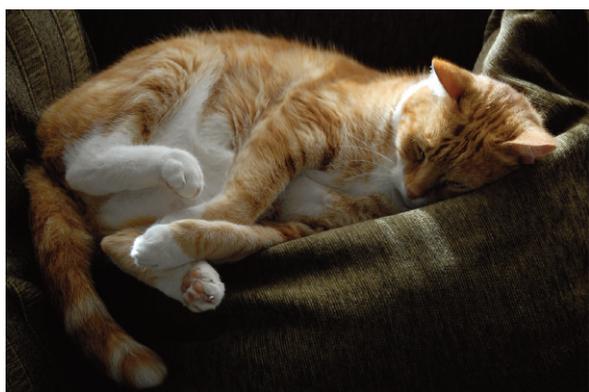
B Grade Open



Delicate by nature

Cassandra

Nice fungi shot showing a good understanding of dealing with the low light situation and need for depth of field. Possibly not quite enough as there's a distracting out of focus bit to the right of the centre of interest. F 24 is the number here and have everything else slowed down to accommodate. No convinced about the apparent panorama effect resulting from the black in the top of the image but a **merit** (just)



It's a cats life

Caron

Sure is and this epitomises the character of the cat. Bit static though and the all important face is a bit obscured. So move a bit to the left so the face is more full on. Technically pretty well handled. Very central but you've filled the frame.

Merit at b grade.



The--frozen--forests--of--Arctic--Scandinavia **Helena**

Its extremely hard to photograph snow well but its been handled quite well here. No points for travelling to an exotic location. Overall reasonable co position but I'd crop a bit of the sky and hopefully you took a few shots moving around from left to right so that the edge of the road forms a leading line from the corners. Nice effort though.

Merit.

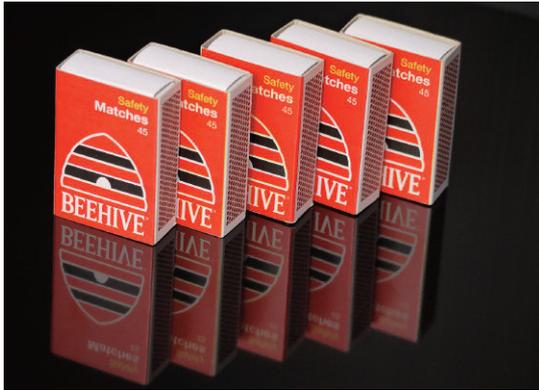


Together

Red is a primary colour and makes a great focus point. Looks like low light which has strongly illuminated the balloons blowing the highlights out a bit. What I'm struggling with here is the two balloons. They are both red and complete against each other so your eye tends to flip from one to the other without resting. Good to be tough here and Not accepted this but a good try.

Sue

Set Subject A Grade

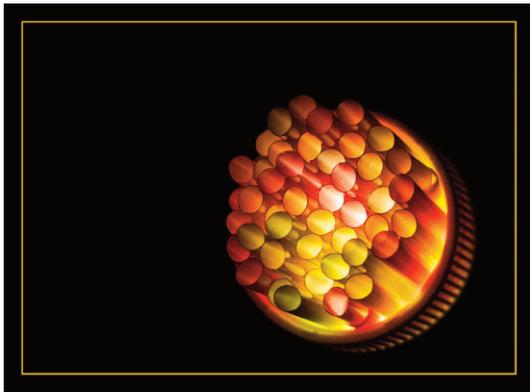


Line of boxes

A very well handled image but I would have pushed for a higher aperture as the depth of field drops off a bit. The reflective surface works well.

Cushla

Highly commended.

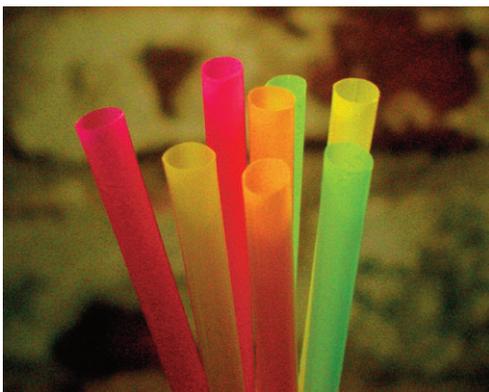


All Lit up

Stunning image handled extremely well nicely on the thirds and the negative space on the left balances the image and gives somewhere for the light to shine into.

Sarah

Honours.



Draw straws

I can see the idea here and the colour has been reasonably well handled. But heaps of colour noise in this image which in this case is not good. On a bright day ISO can be your friend in a dark environment it's a killer use a bedside light or a torch to illuminate and drop that ISO. Going to be tough here

Dan

Not accepted.



Face value

Nice idea and well titled. The post processing has been handled well and the story works. Good effort.

Tracey

A good merit.



Gargoyle

Liz

A nice idea here but I think you needed more light. The image is not quite sharp and the camera has struggled to accommodate the dark statue as well as the candle which is dominant and over bright. Difficult subject matter to deal with so brownie points there but not enough to accept.

(Not accepted)

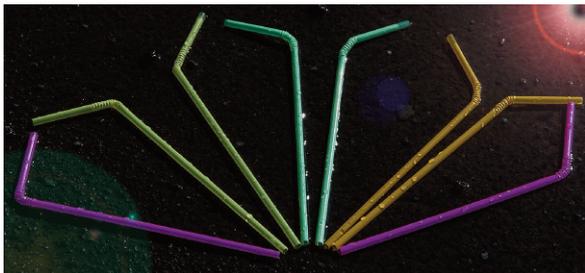


Metal discs

Liz

You've obviously thought laterally about the challenged and come up with a nice idea. For this to work you really need a good grip of your technique. Still life photography such as this should be treated the same as macro photography, so a closed of aperture, f11 at a minimum possibly f24 to give you the depth of focus. Tripod for stability as it will be slow and a neutral background. Good quality "specimens" are necessary as well. Looking at this example, the base of the candles are battered and one is dented and you can see the speckled background of what might be the kitchen bench. The image is soft due to using an open aperture.

Not accepted.

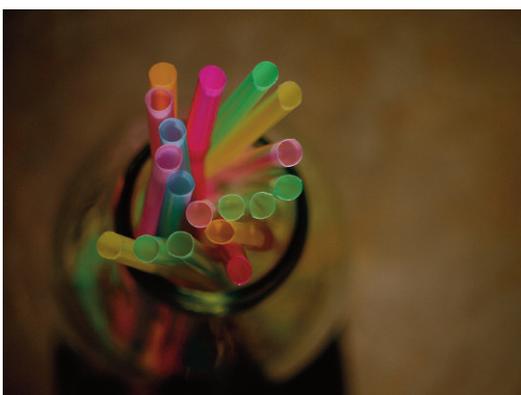


Strawmetry

Tracey

Another clever idea. Good depth of focus and the idea of the light source in the top right was clever and almost worked well. Let down a bit by the spots of flare and a few of the specular highlights.

Accepted.



Straws in a bottle

Cushla

Another idea with lots of potential. Getting just the right depth of focus was necessary here to get this right. In this instance you are looking for a relatively shallow depth of field to lose the background and key to the success of the image was getting all of the tips of the straws tack sharp. In this case not quite but f8 would have worked better rather than the open aperture used here. I would have moved the bottle up the frame a bit so that the bottom wasn't cut off, then you'd have a cascading sequence of circles progressively fading away the further away from the camera you go.

Accepted.



Two Fat Ladies in Candle Light

Dan

A clever idea and I like the title. Exposure has been handled reasonably well as the candle has not become a burnt out highlight. On the other hand there's quite a bit of noise, the image is quite soft and as the light available drops off towards the cards, you get a colour cast. It may be your camera, but this is a subject that requires good technique. Shooting in manual, good depth of field, slow shutter speed and a tripod are essential.

Accepted...just.



Winter Leaves

Sarah

I like this. It's a simple but effective idea and its been handled well. The juxtaposition between the dead leaves and the playing card creates just the right degree of ambience. Good technique. Like the vignette.

Merit.

B Grade



Burnt Hand

Caron

Another clever idea and pretty good in the execution too. Nice and sharp although depth of focus could have been slightly more. Highlights from the candle handled well. I possibly would have liked to have seen all of the cards but then I'd also see what's holding the cards up, hopefully not fingers and that flames getting close.

Merit.



Matchsticks Galore

Cassandra

A very well handled subject, good creativity shown in the post production. The image would suit a square format but this is a good effort.

Highly Commended.



Royal Love

Sue

Yet another good idea and the story is good. Reasonably sharp without being tack sharp. I have the feeling that it would be better balanced if the two royals were both fully in the frame and on the same plane making it almost like a portrait (although as inanimate objects its not a true portrait).

Merit.

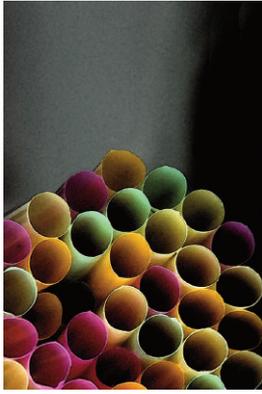


Straws by LED

Cassandra

A simple idea. Well lit, not quite sharp due to a shallow depth of field and the background reflection is neither here or there and so becomes more of a distraction rather than adding to the image.

Accepted.



Suck it up

Caron

Well thought through idea. Straws are quite sharp where it counts and overall technique has been well handled.

I'm a bit troubled by the band in the background formed by the light source and in this case the negative space at the top of the frame doesn't work. I'd crop in hard just on the straws and that works well.

Accepted.



Tubescape

Sue

A similar idea to "Suck it up" and shows the strong graphic effect you get when you crop in. Lighting is a bit flat and checking out the levels on my image viewing software its obvious that more punch is added if the levels slider is moved to the right. Slightly soft possibly due to being handheld...at a guess. This is one of those situations where the old maxim about tripods applies....There are two types of photographs; those taken with a tripod and those that should have been taken with a tripod.

Accepted.