

Matamata Camera Club

May 2015 Critiques

Thank you Matamata for inviting me back to judge your photography. I thought the theme Inspired by Noise was particularly interesting and spent some time researching images and narrative that dealt with how to visually portray the sense of noise or sound. Several years ago, in the Canon EOS Photo 5 competition, Noise was one of the 5 set subjects. I wasn't able to find a link to the results on the internet to share with you, but I do recall one image vividly. It was tiny little balls (may have been 100s and 1000s) bouncing on a stereo speaker. They were moving because of the vibration caused by noise. Very clever I thought.

In reviewing your imagery I was looking for innovative expressions of sound. I do feel that some photos relied too heavily of the title to convey the fact that noise was involved. I would encourage you towards subtly and also towards careful thought in decisions on titles. I was looking for images that transcended a documentary portrayal of an object that might create noise; for images that had elements that conveyed another sense (hearing) through the visual medium.

I reiterate to you that my critique is just that – my opinion only. I trust you take my comments in the constructive manner intended.

Karen Lawton

Theme - Inspired By Noise A Grade

Returning Fire *



Robbo

I feel this image fits very well with the aim of conveying noise. The gun is very obviously in active mode, and I can hear the rattle of rapid fire in my mind as I look at this image. Technically I think that the subject has been handled well, capturing the muzzle flash to give a distinct sense of immediacy and noise. Focus falls off quickly which concentrates the viewer on the subject. Well done.

Honours and runner up

Boys Toys



Sue

I assume from the fact I cannot see the individual teeth of this chainsaw that they are blurred, it is in action and will therefore be making noise. From that perspective this image works for me. I do find the post production blurred treatment over powering. I understand that it focuses the viewer on the subject, yet I feel it is too heavy handed and detracts from the overall outcome. I would like to be able to see what if anything the chainsaw is cutting.

Accepted

Bratatat



Carl

I felt this image and title melded well, complementing one another. The gun is obviously in the process of being fired (not just staged) and the earmuffs reinforce the fact of noise being made. This effectively conveys sound to me. Your monochrome treatment has removed distractions and concentrated my eye on the piece of equipment that is making this noise. I find the highlights on the sleeve and in the hand (and possibly in some of the grass) a bit blown out. **HC**



Buzz

I couldn't find anything in this image that was distinctly sharp and in focus. Creating a soft, dreamy focus effect may have been your intention however in this case, as the viewer and to make sense of this set subject, I feel I need a distinct point of focus. I would suggest that noise would have been more effectively conveyed if the bee's wings had indicated movement. The subject is static.... do bees buzz when they are not flying? I don't think so.B10

Sue

Accepted



Going for It

I can hear these motocross bikes for sure! I can almost feel myself ducking to get out of the way of the dirt that is flying towards me. I think it is great that there are so many bikes involved. There could be an argument for the fact that with so many bikes it is hard to focus on the 'subject' yet here the subject is sound and you have really conveyed that to me very effectively.

Robbo

Honours



Grind

The action of the grinder in this image conveys noise very effectively to me. I became an active participant in the image, hearing the noise and watching the sparks. The choice of monochrome treatment works really well to focus my attention. I find the white arc of the front of the machine being worked on overly bright though it keeps drawing my eye away from the action. In addition, I suggest you consider cropping in closer to concentrate the viewer and potentially darkening the window and door scenes in the background as they also distract my eye away from the focus of your image.

Carl

Merit



Crashing Waves

The subject of this image is inherently full of sound. In my opinion you don't need to reiterate that in the title. Beautiful colours and lots of action make for a pleasing image. I found that the patch of breaking wave bottom left distracted me from the main event and wonder if you considered cropping that out? I also see some unusual artefacts in the sky that detract from the overall impact of these crashing waves.

Cushla

Accepted

B Grade:



Bark from an Angry Seal

Brie

Without the title, I would have thought this seal was mid yawn. Nicely captured, well focused with a depth of field that falls off nicely to concentrate my eye on the subject. You might have considered exaggerating the DOF even further to isolate the subject more perhaps though obviously you have had to make a snap decision mid bark.

Merit



Harmonica Man

Liz

While this subject undoubtedly has noise potential, I found the staging of this image too static to encourage me hear the harmonica. I can find no clues to indicate it is actually being played, not simply held to the mouth. That might simply indicate my lack of harmonica playing knowledge. I felt the B&W treatment worked well; compositionally there is space for your subject to look in to, but the lack of direct gaze leaves me feeling unengaged with your subject.

Perhaps a shift in DOF to reduce the clarity of the brickwork might have helped engagement too.

Accepted



Roar of the Bikes

Brie

I found it interesting that 3 no doubt noisy bikes created a far less immediate response in me than the earlier image which was overwhelmed with bikes. There is so much dust being created by these subjects, clarity is hard to find. While convention tells us that 3 is a more pleasing subject number than 2, I found that a vertical crop concentrating on the 2 bikes on the right gave much more focus and energy to the image.

Accepted



Wild Waves

Liz

You have captured and conveyed the power, volume and sheer noise of the ocean to me well. However the horizon in this image is far from straight. This is a basic fault and more care needs to be taken. Here is your opportunity to realign the horizon and re enter the image.

Not Accepted



Yipee

Amanda

I enjoyed this image and the sheer exuberance of the child in the centre who I can easily imagine calling out 'Yipee'. She is airborne and having fun. The other two subjects I am not convinced by as I feel they look like they are participating under duress. Or certainly without exuberance. I appreciate the movement in the leaves that you have captured with your chosen shutter speed. Compositionally the threesome works for me and the focus is certainly on your noise making central subject.

HC

C Grade

Car Horn

Mary

This car horn has the potential to create noise. To me what is missing with this subject choice is noise in action, noise actually happening. I also find the top down angle that you have chosen to take the image in doesn't allow me to get 'inside' the horn, where the noise is going to emanate from. I would suggest that monochrome could have been a choice to consider to concentrate attention on the subject further.

Accepted



Noisy Past

AP

To me, indicating noise in the title but not in the action or subject, doesn't really meet the brief for your set subject. That said, I can appreciate this as a subject that did indeed have a noisy past. Compositionally (and intentional or not) I thought that the third boat is a well positioned target for the canon. I found the light flat in this image which doesn't allow the textures in the canon to be explored.

Accepted



Trumpets

Mary

Trumpets at Rest' perhaps. These trumpets are not making noise and to me the image is not visually portraying a sense of sound again, more simply the potential for sound. I would have loved to have seen a trumpet player, cheeks extended, movement in the fingers.... That said, the positioning of the 3 instruments is pleasing to my eye as is their varied size and orientations. I also think you have handled bright shiny objects well, with highlights obvious but not blown out.

Accepted

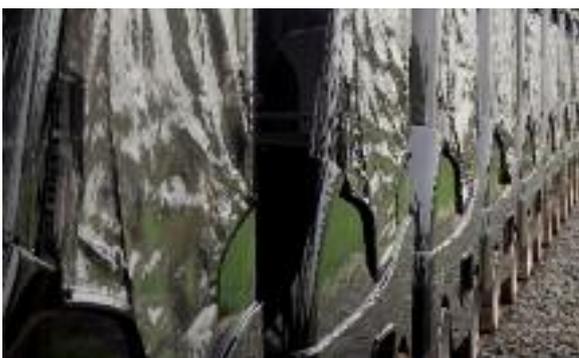


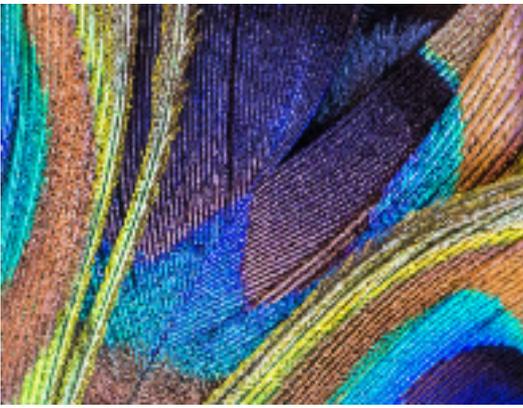
Rolling Along

Tina

Lots of wheels and a title that implies movement (and thus sound) but you have not provided me with evidence of that movement in this image. I find the lead in line a pleasing diagonal and the contrast of the shiny metal, smooth wheels and the stone works really well. The visual shape contrasts are also effective the triangle of stones counterpointed by the round wheels. Overall I see some really enjoyable features in this pattern image, though as stated I do not get a strong sense of sound or noise.

Merit





**Open
A Grade**

Mr Peacock

CMR

Very close, very detailed and very sharp; I found this image gave me an unexpected view of the textures and colours in these feathers which really are quite stunningly beautiful. The gentle curves and lines allow me to wend my way through the photo. I had to ask myself whether it needs a singular point of focus; the split in the feathers top right that leads us to a different textural element does break the overwhelming (but positive) onslaught of colour and allowed my eye to rest a moment.

HC



Gentle Giants

Sue

I found this image conveyed a very real and benign sense of these trees as sentinels. Their structure is well conveyed and the post production treatment which has gone part way to silhouette but retained detail has enhanced the mood of the image for me, leaving an almost dystopian hue to the landscape. Inclusion of the other trees has allowed me to understand the scale of these giants. Obviously I don't know what is to either side of the subjects, but I do instinctively feel I would have preferred to see all of their branches, rather than have them cropped.

Merit



NMCC**

Carl

Riveting. This image pulled me in and didn't let go for quite a while. The chosen DOF works well to concentrate the viewer on the face and the hint of an eye. I found the way the light catches just part of the subject's left eye very intriguing. Is he menacing? Yes, somewhat. I felt that monochrome goes without saying for this subject. The only suggestion I would make is that you consider cropping some of the black on the left hand side and/or look at a square crop. This may have been tried and discarded, in which case your choice to include the negative space to isolate the subject works well too. **Honours and 'Pick of the Bunch'**



Big Eyes

Robbo

To me, this image clearly conveyed the amazing beauty of colours and the amazingly intricate eye structure of the fly. The joy of a macro look at the world and the beauty of small creatures viewed via macro is always really pleasing and intriguing to me. I found the wing being cut off (bottom right) a bit disconcerting but appreciate that you couldn't offer an image this close to your subject without making a compromise somewhere.

HC



Clowns

All of the compositional and technical elements that the photographer has chosen to use in this image work cohesively for me. The diagonal leading line, the DOF that effectively removes much of the clutter of the background but still lets a little of that seep through to add fun fair prize expectations and excitement and the bright, vibrant colours all complement the top layer funfair storyline. The choice to put yourself (and me as the viewer) on the level of the clowns brings a childish element into the image which reiterates that excitement. I wondered over the highlights on the glossy paint, and concluded that I would have left them there too as they tell us about the brightness of the scene. These clowns are quite a contradiction, aren't they? I can't help but smile at them, but the wide open mouths are at the same time so greedy, so grasping and so expressionless. This, to me, is the second layer story line of this image. The only suggestion I would offer would be to try the lead clown closer to the left hand frame for two reasons; to shift him a little more off centre stage and by doing that to sneak more of clown #3 into the frame. This may give more balance to the composition. Regardless of that suggestion.....

Cushla

Honours



B Grade

Watching Simba

I found this image conveyed an effective feeling of busy ness, colourful crowds and a happening event. There is almost complete separation of the balloon from the background perhaps you would consider cloning out the top of the tree on the left hand side that intersects the balloon to give total separation. A clear sense of time is conveyed to me by the mists in the sky, the long shadows and the clarity and vividness of the colours of the crowds on the ground.

Brie

HC



Peace

A sweet portrait with a lovely smile and an engaged subject which evoked a smile in response from me. Her relaxed attitude in front of a camera came across strongly to me and I feel that this little girl was enjoying herself. Her gaze is direct and engaging. Technically the focus appears spot on and there is plenty of detail everywhere in the subject with a careful DOF blurring the background to isolate her. My one suggestion would be to consider post production to emphasise her eyes by whitening the whites and perhaps also lifting the light in her iris to give more distinction between iris and pupil.

Amanda

Honours



Tall Ships

At the moment this tall ship is in danger of sailing off the edge of the world. The subject is interesting and is worthy of a straight horizon. I am going to pass this image to give the photographer the opportunity to straighten the horizon and re enter the image at a later date.

Liz

Not Accepted

C Grade

Pumpkin

MH

I commend the excellent use of shallow depth of field to isolate Pumpkin's ear, eye and nose. I pondered for a while over the lighting which is clearly behind your subject and therefore not lighting the cat's face. I concluded that this worked in your favour, accentuating the glow of colour in Pumpkin's coat and creating some really attractive bokeh that for me added another pleasing element to this animal portrait.

Honours



Dunedin Vista

Mary

I appreciate the sinuous lead in line of the river that drew my eye through this landscape vista. There is however a weird artefact on the hill to the left that detracts from the scene. Because of this I am going to pass this image so that you can remove it and re enter at a later date. **Not Accepted**



Busy Bee

Tina

There is great macro clarity in this image. In my opinion, several factors work to enhance the photograph further the limited colour pallet, the shallow depth of field and the diagonal placement of the bee to give a line the leads my eye to the clear point of focus. Well done.

Honours



Image of the Month is: NMCC