

Feedback for Gladstone Camera Club

2018 March Mono: Portrait

I have been a bit harsh with my marking this month. One of my recommendations when you enter competitions is to carefully research what the criteria is for the category you are entering, even if none has been provided by your club. Your Club Monthly Competition is an opportunity for you to hone your skills in preparation for when you enter State, National or International Photography Competitions. Hence – the definition of ‘portrait’ is as follows. *“A **portrait** is a painting, photograph, sculpture, or other artistic representation of a person, in which the face and its expression is predominant. The intent is to display the likeness, personality, and even the mood of the person.”* (Wikipedia)

Title	Feedback	Score
Cooling Off	You have gone to some trouble to provide me with something different, so well done for that. Your image is saying to me “swimmer” rather than “portrait” though. To be interpreted as a portrait, a square crop of your subject, removing her right arm and body behind her head would work more effectively.	
Eliza	Eliza has a lovely warm welcoming smile, and you have caught her at an exactly right moment so that her expression is genuine. The soft side lighting, the bokeh background and movement in her hair make it technically good as well as expressive. Well done.	Merit
Musical	Although your subject is attractive, nicely framed and has good detail, her smile is not genuine, and that has detracted from your portrait of her. Those eyes have not been engaged in creating that smile. Portraits are hard to take, as the subject is sometimes uncomfortable staring down a lens (or too ‘trained’ to ‘smile’ for the camera). Only patience and taking lots of images while you are <u>talking</u> to them will get you that ‘natural’ expression.	
Ocean Pose	Lovely background and pleasant pose, but again, that is an unconvincing smile. To meet the criteria for portrait, a heavy crop would help.	
A Hard Life	That face shrieks ‘long, hard life’ doesn’t it? Beautifully lit and I appreciate the post production white vignette. She appears like someone you have seen in your travels rather than a family member, so her expression is rather disengaged. Perhaps language was a barrier as well as time? The image would be improved if she had some expression.	Merit
I’d be Cranky too	Another amazing face and costume and technically well done. She certainly appears grumpy, but I doubt it was because of her neck rings. When you bring back photos from overseas, there are things in them that viewers interpret despite your good intentions. One thing I have learned is to show some cultural sensitivity to the person you are	

	<p>photographing. Interact with them. Even without language, this is possible. And be understanding of how the camera makes a spectacle of them to others in their environment. I'm not assuming you have not paid this lady for her image, but perhaps she is feeling exploited? Tired of the attention? Hot? Thirsty? Whatever it was – her expression says 'very out of sorts'. This is not a criticism, it's an offer of information that may help you with future photos.</p> <p>Did you offer her a copy of the image? I took two prints back to a tribal lady I shot in Vietnam, and she said despite being photographed by hundreds of people – no one had ever given her a picture before. It was a good thing to do.</p>	
Meditation	<p>WOW! Wonderful expression. Your monk appears to be chanting or fully engaged in what they are doing, oblivious to your attention. Technically could be improved by some added brightness, and by increasing the looking room on the right hand side. As your image has no detail in the background (which is also good), it should be relatively easy to do this in postproduction if there is no room for a recrop on your original image.</p>	Highly Commended
The Look	<p>What a cheeky face. Delightful expression, good capture of the fleeting moment. Sadly, your treatment has let you down. It is underexposed and there is a lot more detail available in the image. Please look at its histogram which shows how much excess black there is, or have a member show you what happens if you open the image in Photoshop RAW or Lightroom and click on "auto" in the tone section. There is a lot more there, but it is hidden in the black.</p>	
Master of the Pier	<p>Sadly, while this is a fine shot of an Osprey, it does not satisfy the criteria of 'person'.</p>	
Miss Shayna	<p>Enchanting image, she looks lovely. The unusual angle gives additional interest to her face and hair, but the foreshortened arms and hands have become distracting. If it were my image, I would crop just below the bud of the rose in her left hand to help keep the viewer's attention higher in the image.</p>	Merit
Portrait Tia-Clair Toomey	<p>This image is breath taking and audacious. I highly commend your style and execution, but unfortunately, it has not reached the criteria for 'portrait' as the face occupies such a tiny proportion of the image. There is a category called 'Environmental Portrait' where the person is portrayed in a background which tells you a story about them, but this is not one of those either, otherwise this would be an honour.</p>	Highly Commended
VH90321 (BW)	<p>Handsome wholesome young man, and well captured. His expression is warm and convincing, and your technique is good with every part of the image being sharp and well lit. If forced to make a suggestion for improvement, I'd ask for something in the background – it is a bit stark.</p>	

VH94369 (BW)	She's good, she's very, very good. Her superb Mona Lisa smile and tilt of her head when combined with her relaxed stance shows confidence, warmth and attention. Beyond her expression of personality, your image is also technically flawless, with great bokeh, lighting and focal length. Well done you.	Honour
Windy	It's funny. I like a laugh. But less of a portrait and more of a great family shot for everyone to enjoy. I have no problem with her being shown in profile, it is more about her face being such a tiny part of your image. If it were mine, I would try a crop just below her left elbow, keep the top where it is, and placing her face onto the right side thirds line to allow her some looking room.	

Thanks for asking me to provide feedback. Would you do me the same courtesy? Tell me about your reaction to my image assessment.

- 1) One (or more) good aspect?
- 2) One (or more) thing that jarred or could be improved?
- 3) Were my assessments consistent within this group of images or within this subject?

Thanks

Fran McFadzen