

GLADSTONE CAMERA CLUB

Still Life

Acceptances – Page 1.

'BALANCED' is unusual in its presentation ... Whether by accident or design the whole scene has been rotated 90% clockwise ... Even consulting the Title didn't enlighten me as to the intended concept, because that seems more Unbalanced than Balanced ... So, I viewed it anti-clockwise 90% instead ... Now we have a Squash Racket and Ball on the lawn, beside what could be a Tennis or Badminton court off to the right, and from that I could see what might be the intent ... Perhaps the owner has decided to balance a passion for Squash with some action in say a game of Tennis ... If that is on the right track, then to complete that thought, I feel having even a part view of some sort of action to support that train of thought would perhaps make it more complete. As to the composition of the Image, I felt the grass at the head of the racket was not necessary, as the blurred leading edge of the head was enough space in front of the ball.

'THE HOOK FAMILY' displays a degree of symmetry with this set of 5 white hooks against a red canvas like textured background ... If the key light in this set-up was lower, the texture in both would be more visible ... The idea seems a simple and effective concept, it just needed some basic refinements to go higher in the awards.

I like the ingredients chosen to create the Authors concept for the Image titled **'MUSIC'** ... They are all easily identifiable as being connected to the one theme of making good music and what you created is on the cusp of being a higher award, a few 'ifs' made the difference ... There appears to be two sources of light, an overhead one [which may simply be a reflector] intended to be a Fill Light to reveal better detail in the shadows and that's good thinking, and the Key Light which I feel would be better positioned off at 90% or more to the right of camera, instead of from foreground left of camera where the lighting is too close to the lighter tones ... The darker objects are on that opposite side and positioned there has a twofold purpose, one to help offset the effects of the Inverse Square of Light, and two, to offer a better sense of Perspective, Depth, Shape, and Texture of the subjects ... The crop is a bit too tight as I feel there needs to be more space at the top in particular ... The neutral tones of the Backdrop work well with the ingredients and I like the way you used it curving up and receding into the distance so that they weren't too close to the 'Ingredients' ... Try the suggestions and have another go in an OPEN category with it ... I like the concept, it's worth persisting with it.

'GLASS THIRD FULL' is nicely exposed on the subjects, but the lighting on the background is not as well balanced as on the subject ... A High Key study needs to be brightly but evenly lit on the background, but the right side is brighter than the left this time ... Also, two evenly sized subjects tend to be a divided interest scene, and is one of the reasons why you hear the saying: - 'It is better to have Odd Numbers of subjects than Even'.

I like the concept behind **'BRANDING IS DONE'**, the combination ties together and completes a good story ... A couple of aspects could be done differently ... Diagonals in a Composition add a good dynamic, but how it is used can influence the outcome ... The branding iron may be an unrecognisable item as presented, for people with little experience about Country Activity ... Maybe if laying it on top of the Box with the top end passing under the hat and disappearing into the background behind the hat, and the Branding end hanging in that vacant top right corner area of the box would be an alternative worth trying ... You may need to rearrange the Boots though - see what you think ... Also, the lighting in general is a bit dark/underexposed for me ... If that was intentional, fine [making Images to please yourself first is great, pleasing other viewers is then a bonus] ... For me though the outline of some parts of the POI has blended into the dark unlit areas ... If you like real low-key lighting, try subtle low levels of light on the background so the Subjects can be seen Outlined against that subtle soft light ... That sort of lighting has an awesome mood which really works, when done well.

'FIRE & ICE' plus **'TIME TO RELAX'** I've combined because they are similar Images and have similar lighting issues as **'BRANDING IS DONE'** ... That is, parts of their subject matter have also blended into the background ... Photographing Bottles and Glasses or anything round with shiny surfaces, requires a special method for lighting/revealing specific areas of the subjects ... With High-key Lighting, black card [relevant to the size of the subject] is positioned behind the subject according to the angle of reflectance, till a dark outline can be seen along the edges of the subject, from the camera position ... With Low-key lighting, the reverse is done by using White Surfaces to reveal the edges of Dark Objects ... The observant may have noticed the bottom left edge of the Bottle of Whisky it's revealed by light bouncing off the sheet of music ... That's the sort of result to aim for but probably more subtle, depends on the effect desired. Also, when positioning 'a partial sheet of music' near a corner edge, try to feather the light so that it is visible to complete the story, but not overpower the main POI the glass/shiny objects. I liked your concept and feel it is worth trying again with the suggested refinements ... Try it in an OPEN category.

'DOLL' appears to be lit by one light and I like the position of the light [the Key Light refers to the main light source for any Portrait] in relation to the camera and model ... The exposure for the Key Lighting on that part of the Doll is quite good ... Something to be aware of when using the Key Light in this position for a portrait, is to turn the head towards the Key Light so that you at least have a 'Rembrandt' lighting effect on the face ... Having made your first exposure, take the exercise one step further by adding a Reflector to bring back some detail in the shadow areas facing the camera, and see if that appeals more to you ... It would for me, and using both suggestions would have had a better chance of receiving a higher Award.

When planning to photograph anything it is good practice to firstly, think about what sort of lighting you want to create/use and that includes the How, Why, and Where ... For 'KEYS' the 'Why' in this instance is to make an Image with a POI that is obvious to the viewer in a Competition Photo ... The 'How' would be to have one light [Fill Light] to light the overall scene, and at least one other to be a Spot Light [Key Light] for tiny objects about 2 to 3 stops brighter to identify the POI ... The 'Where' would be to position them in relation to the Camera and POI so that there is a sense of Shape & Texture at least on the main POI ... In this instance though it is a good general study of a set of keys, with lighting that shows shape and texture, and that's really good for say a record of identity say for Insurance purposes ... For the Significant type of Image that has a chance at an Award in Competition though, more thought is required.

MERITS.

Positioning the Lighting for the 'APPLE CAKE' concept would take some careful observation because of the reflective surface of the setting ... As can be seen by the highlights on the apple, multiple light sources have been used in the capture of this study ... As captured the exposure has been well handled, there is a slight variation in ratio balance from the position of most of the lights and that contributed to a nice sense of Shape, Detail and Separation from the background ... The highlight from bottom left on the Apple is from the Light that has cast a shadow from the 'Cup' on the apple that is too strong IMHO ... I feel it was intended to be the key Light ... Positioned a little further to the left, slightly closer, higher and perhaps broader [perhaps a tiny Soft Box], could make the shadows less intrusive and add a stronger sense of Shape ... In post processing this sort of category usually has no restrictions relating to editing [unless the club does] and Content Aware Fill which is now available in Adobe CC could be used to remove those 'Highlights' on the Apple, except perhaps from the candle. This is still quite a nice study, persistence, practice, refining, more practice are good habits that go hand in hand with achieving a successful outcome.

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Perhaps the Author was into making some Marmalade and decided to also Create 'PRESERVATION' for this category as well, as you do/can of course ... The Key Lighting is coming from a nice position on the left, and a Fill to the right of camera is a little too close/bright ... If an edit has been applied, I feel a different interpretation would make a more striking result ... Contact me if you'd like some suggestions on that ... The bottom right corner suggests this is composed close to the edge ... Moving the ingredients further back onto the table and moving the table further from the background wall would enable more of the reflection to be included and less of the white wall along the top [which could be cropped as well] ... Check this Image with a Horizontal Flip to see whether that left to right narrative of the 'story' appeals more to you also. Nice effort.

Honours – Page

'NUMBER 45' looks similar to a Wood Plane my dad had, not as fancy looking as this though ... Nice use of lighting has been used to provide a good detailed sense of Depth, Shape and Texture, while a Graduated Vignette has been applied to the background to concentrate the viewers' attention on the POI [tastes for vignettes are a personal touch, I'd be more inclined towards something more subtle ... Normally I would suggest aiming the camera more to the left to include all of the shaving there ... However positioning the plane so the top hand piece is positioned under that part of the wall pattern to perhaps represent steam coming from the chimney of a Steam Engine in reverse, is an interesting and entertaining touch ... Leaving that space on the left to intimate a subliminal sense of space to move into, would then be good planning, if that was the concept ... Overall then I say well done and congratulations.

The final Image tonight is a fragile Egg - composed as a POI teetering on the tips of a pair of Forks - and has been titled 'DON'T FALL' ... Whether by good fortune or design [and I think good design] the composition of the various elements in this scene, appears to be a very carefully planned Concept to me ... The POI and its support are carefully balanced on an edge of a soft base that has enabled creases to be formed that act as a leading diagonal line to the POI ... That dynamic of a diagonal is then echoed more substantially in the background to connect with the design of a carefully positioned curved crease along the top border ... They all contribute nicely to fill most of the framed real estate with detail ... On my screen it appears to need a bit more punch with selective subtle adjustments of Texture, Clarity and perhaps Dehaze performed on the Egg ... Follow that up with a Global Levels adjustment and then selective sharpening only on the Egg before saving. Overall well done and congratulations also.