**Gladstone Camera Club – March 2022**

Scapes (2022 PSQ interclub definition)

**\*Scapes**

An image featuring an expansive view without any humans dominating the scene. Urban, Rural, Sea, Sky Scapes, and traditional Landscapes are all included in this category.

**Overall comment:**

I fear some members might not be wildly impressed with some of my comments in this section due to my focus on the interpretation of the set subject. One of the most important issues any serious competitor must get their head around is the importance of satisfying the definition, whatever that might be. Before even considering an image for a set subject it is absolutely paramount that your image clearly complies with whatever that set subject is.

There are some great images here which would do well in an Open competition. However, if they do not clearly comply with the “Scapes” definition they cannot hope to succeed. That’s the unfortunate reality of Set Subject competitions. They are designed to see how well you can meet the brief rather than being just another Open competition.

In this competition the emphasis and primary focus must be on the “Scape” aspect, whatever that Scape might be, and unfortunately in some of these images that was not the case – they are simply not scapes.

Bob Thomas

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| Image | Title | Comment | Award |
|  | Cruising on the beach | This is a clear, sharp and well exposed image and the tyre tracks act as leading lines which take us into the horizon and beyond. Photographically it has been well handled and the overall tonality is good. It is a pleasing image for a number of reasons. However it is let down in terms of the set subject definition. In a scape competition the essential pre-requisite is that the scape must be the primary focus, rather than any human elements. Those human aspects can be present but must be incidental rather than dominant (unless it is a city scape). Unfortunately in this image, the landscape takes a back seat to the vehicle which dominates the image. Although it is a really nice image, in a set subject you must step back and ask yourself the question, what is the main focal point? Does it meet the set subject definition? Worth re-entering in a more suitable competition at a later date. |  |
|  | How peaceful | This is indeed a peaceful environment, with any number of photographic subjects to choose from. The colours are good and the image is sharp with the foreground foliage providing depth and framing. I would have liked more width to the framing to produce more of a panoramic perspective. The definition of “scapes” is to produce an expansive field of view rather than the narrower one seen here. The other issue of course is the fact that you have submitted the image in reverse, made obvious by the writing on the boat. Reversing images is a sound technique sometimes, especially as we tend to view images from left to right. However, doing so when writing is involved can be a bit of a trap! |  |
|  | Boulder Beach | A really striking scene with good use of foreground and background to convey depth. The inclusion of a fisherman in a hi-viz jacket is great as it provides a sense of scale, and the slow shutter gives the water a nicely blurred effect while keeping the beach and rocks sharp. There is a lot more colour and detail to be brought out here, and I found that a couple of mouse clicks increasing saturation and playing with the de-haze and exposure settings produced a much more compelling and vibrant image overall. Give it a try and see what you think. | Merit |

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|  | Kayaking the Gorge | Certainly a useful way to capture this scene, the kayak has allowed you to position yourself in between the two cliff faces. The gorge is impressive but also slightly difficult photographically due to the bright light and contrasty location. I think you could bring out a little more detail in the shadows with a little post processing, and that would improve the image, especially on the left hand side where some of the detail is hidden in shadow. It would be good to see those distant Kayaks a little closer to you, not so close as to become predominant, but close enough to provide a little more interest and colour. | Merit |
|  | Nature’s colour palette | There are some interesting colours here, and the rocks and water provide interesting shapes, textures and movement. As with a couple of other entries, this one does struggle to keep its head above water in terms of the set subject definition. It’s crucial to assess your images against that definition before you even consider the image quality. The set subject asks you to present “an image featuring an expansive view” of the location, and unfortunately this is a rather constricted view of a small part of that landscape. Photographically, it’s great, but the key priority must always be the set subject definition. |  |
|  | Uphill Trek | The monochrome treatment here works well, particularly as there was probably very little colour in the first place apart from the sky. The sweeping landscape takes our eyes into the distance where we find some very clearly detailed tiny figures which provide a sense of scale. The lighting has been well handled as it gives enough differentiation to prevent the sand becoming too monotonous. The texture in the clouds finishes off the composition very nicely. | Honour |
|  | Beyond 5 star camping | A very nice shot of our part of the universe, and it’s been really well handled. The sky and landscape are both nicely exposed and the panoramic composition helps convey the vastness of the scene. The image is crisp and the orange tent almost acts as a beacon to light the scene. On the one hand that tent really adds so much to the overall composition, but on the other hand it veers dangerously close to rendering the entry invalid given its prominence as a dominant human element. I think the landscape aspect wins in this case, but you do need to be very careful when you have competing elements vying for our attention when entering set subjects. | Honour |

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|  | Canoe Point | Another very pleasant long exposure, well exposed with an interesting foreground as a lead-in to the main event. The textures in the rocks make a particularly nice contrast to the sea and sky. One of the problem with including foliage is that fact that foliage moves during a long exposure whereas rocks don’t. That movement inevitably presents itself as an out of focus distraction. You can possibly eliminate that by taking the treeline separately and combining the images, but that would involve a degree of complexity you may not want to try. It’s not a big deal here, but if you can find ways to minimise that movement it helps the overall composition | Merit |
|  | Rolling In | Nice texture in the clouds and the thin strip of water divides sky from land quite well. I would have liked to see that boat a little further to the left where it would have been more prominent, and something more in the foreground would have helped to provide a focal point. You will find that with a little more post processing there is more detail to be brought out in the sky which gives the image a considerable lift. | Acceptance |
|  | Cloudy night in Brisbane | The clouds have given this image a lift by providing an interesting canvas on which to showcase the city in this Cityscape. The projection of the clouds draws the viewer into the scene and has been well managed, dominating the cityscape and commanding our attention. The broad field of view allows the viewer to appreciate the scope of the scape! The overall tonality has been well handled. | Merit |
|  | Power Station | The reflections and the time of day bring interest to the scene and bring warmth to the image, which has been well captured. However, the main drawback lies in the choice of subject, which is unfortunately less than riveting as presented. If the smokestacks had been emitting clouds of smoke or steam it might have been more engaging, but neither the buildings nor power structures have much to keep our attention. You clearly have the photographic skills to capture a proficient image; you just need to find a more interesting subject to photograph or else find a time when the subject is more vibrant or more is happening to attract and keep our attention. | Acceptance |

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|  | QAL at Night | This is an interesting illustration of how the same subject can become more or less interesting depending upon the time of day. The earlier daytime power station image may well have been taken by an equally talented photographer, but even the best photographers need something to work with. In this example, the time of day introduces a massive number of lights and enhances the subject giving it much greater potential. Any mundane aspects are concealed by darkness, and the reflections in the water make the scene far more dramatic. The blaze of light turns a passive building into a vibrant and more interesting subject. Photography is often a matter of being not only in the right place but also at the right time. | Highly Commended |
|  | Roof Top View | This is an interesting structure and a great vantage point. The lighting is good and the image is sharp. However, as with some other images in the competition it struggles to fit the set subject. The landscape part of the image is definitely a secondary aspect of the image as a whole. When the viewer looks at this they are impressed by the building in the foreground, yet the remaining elements are almost totally lost in the darkness. As a portrait of the front structure this is a good image and well taken, but when competing in a set subject you always need to make adherence to the set topic your primary objective. |  |



**Gladstone Camera Club – March 2022**

**Open**

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| Image | Title | Comment | Award |
|  | Hey Mum... | A pleasing family shot here, with bonus points for catching the Koalas awake! The typical Koala pose is curled up into a ball with its eyes closed. The lighting here is tricky due to the backlit nature of the shot. A little cropping would get rid of some of that brightness and a little tweaking of your settings might change the balance between light and dark. Another easy processing option is a slight change to the white balance, which can produce a better colour palate. With such extremes of light and dark, exposure bracketing would perhaps have been the best option. Nevertheless, a good capture in trying circumstances. | Acceptance |
|  | Covid Effects | Covid has certainly enabled us to capture many more deserted scenes, and this is a good example. No doubt a normally bustling location, this shot capitalises on the lack of people and has produced a nice portrait of the location instead. There is just enough light in the sky to avoid it being an irrelevancy, and the overall scene is nice and crisp with excellent tonality. The only tiny change I would make is to clone out that small blue piece of sky coming through the veranda (middle right hand side). Not a huge issue, but once spots like that catch your attention they can become an eye magnet. | Merit |
|  | Mini Nectar Pool | Nice colours here and an extremely narrow depth of field. The focus is on the red centre and that’s where our eye is drawn. I think perhaps a little more depth of field might have worked better as there is plenty to see in the unsharp areas as well. Sometimes it is hard finding a balance between a nice bokeh and a deeper DOF, and I would always recommend taking multiple shots at different settings and comparing the results.. | Highly Commended |
|  | What | Extremely sharp and well caught, this is a lovely portrait of the bird. The large aperture has isolated his head to the exclusion of all else, which is no doubt what you were trying to achieve. This has pushed the cage well out of focus and we are left with a wonderfully exposed head, sharp eye and vibrant colours. Nice shot. | Honour |
|  | Collecting their daily meal | As a “Survivor” fan, I couldn’t help but picture this guy saying “I’ll go and count the votes”, but that’s probably just me. This is a great shot and very well caught. The main subject and those in the background have been caught with appropriately solemn expressions and a sense of purpose. Red, as always, is a very useful colour here and the lighting is just right. I wouldn’t change anything here as each of the components adds something to the final image resulting in a very pleasant end result. | Honour |

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|  | Frans Josef Glacier | This shot would produce great memories for the photographer, and illustrates very nicely the grandeur that glaciers present to those lucky enough to see them. The blue of the ice has to be seen to be believed, and the clouds and rock formations provide a fabulous canvas and background for the photographer. You could lighten the left-hand foreground slightly, but apart from that this is a classic glacial shot. | Honour |
|  | The school room | Wherever we travel in the world, children are still children and schools serve the same purpose. This shot illustrates how variable that experience can be, and how relatively privileged our own kids are. Clearly worlds apart this nonetheless is a great travel portrait, letting us into a parallel but different educational system. The image is sharp, colourful, informative, tells a story and educates the viewer – all in one press of the shutter. | Merit |
|  | Watching You | If you suffer from Bovinophobia, look away now. This is one scary bovine! So much more interesting than your standard “cow in a paddock” shot, this one brings character and a certain terror to the unsuspecting viewer. Nicely isolated and yet with a clearly visible eye and focussed look, this is a really good variation on a common theme. Sharp, well processed, what more could you ask for except a good strong fence between you and the beast. | Honour |
|  | Look at me | Another good Koala shot with an awake Koala. I think the pose is good, but more processing could bring out a bit more light and detail in his face. Depending upon your software of choice, you should have tools to selectively target the face and other darker areas and lighten them up a bit. I’d also experiment with your white balance as I found that a minor adjustment to the white balance produced a much more pleasing colour palate. | Highly Commended |
|  | Zodiacal Light | This captures the heaven and earth option really nicely. The foreground compliments the sky, and little touches like the lights on the horizon add to the overall scene. I’d probably clone out the small rock in the bottom left corner, but that’s being picky. I’d also try to eliminate the purple fringing on the treeline at the right hand side. It would be nice to have some other feature in the image, just to add variety, as these shots can become a little clichéd despite the obvious skill involved in making them. The idea is to try and present this sort of shot in an unusual and creative way to make it stand out from similar scenes. | Highly Commended |

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|  | Rain Play | What child doesn’t like to play in the rain, and this one is no exception. The bright colours and the close focus capture a moment in time although it isn’t completely sharp, possibly due to the large aperture. I would have liked to have seen more to explain the underlying story. We should see more of what’s happening around the child so as to provide context and to explain the child’s expression. Many images profit from an engaging story, but here we are left pondering exactly what that story might be. | Acceptance |
|  | Water Hen | A very nice image of a water bird, caught very well and with great clarity. The separation from the background focuses our eyes on the bird rather than the environment, and everything we’re supposed to be looking at is pin sharp (to use an over-worked expression). I do like the way the beak stands out and the eye is really sharp as well. The background colours have a complimentary palate, completing what is a nice capture. The only change I might consider is cropping a little from the left and top, but only a small amount. | Honour |
|  | Come Closer | An interesting abstract created simply by using an extremely shallow depth of field. It looks a little like a swarm of insects, but its main attraction photographically is the creativity shown by the photographer. There are so many traditional flower images, many of them just like the one before, so it’s always great to see someone trying something new. One of the most useful abilities is the ability to see beyond the “same old, same old” and that’s certainly the case here. Nice colours, good composition and well executed. | Merit |
|  | Ezrien | Those of us with attractive children or grandchildren have a head start over the rest of us. This is an attractive little boy who makes an excellent subject. The lighting is great as is the composition. I’d ditch the two yellow objects at the bottom – easily done at the time but also afterwards by post processing. They tend to distract from the main picture and don’t really add anything. | Merit |
|  | Peacock Display | Really nice composition as it removes the environment completely and allows us to enjoy the peacock without distraction. I would have used a smaller aperture so as to get everything in focus. The right hand eyes are not as sharp as those on the left. Notwithstanding that aspect it remains a striking image. | Merit |

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|  | Pretty in Pink | A very nice variation on the “flowers in a vase” idea. This one presents more as a painting, and the compatible background supports the overall colour palate, reflecting the colours and making a homogenous and pleasing end product. Still life can sometimes be a little bland, but this takes a step away from the standard approach and works very well. I might try and tone down the white reflection at the base of the vase, but it’s not a major issue. | Merit |
|  | Protea Flower | There are a number of flower entries in this competition, and each one brings individuality to the table in very pleasing ways. This one is another successful variation, with attention to detail, interesting points of focus and colours which attract our eyes. I might have included a fraction more on the left, or cropped a fraction from the right. Normally we don’t tend to present images centrally, but in this case it might have been a good way to approach the framing. Nice image. | Merit |
|  | Valentine | All the attention here is on the flower rather than anything else. The vase and background have been diminished so that our eyes gravitate to the rose. It certainly achieves the objective, although I wonder if rotating the flower towards us and keeping the glass in focus might also have worked. The vase itself has interesting textures and might have added to the overall image if it was sharp as well. | Highly commended |