

Open Theme

Image Title	Judge Comments	Result
Proserpine Dam	<p>This image captures a beautiful balance between natural elements - tranquil water, silhouetted trees, and distant peaks under warm sky tones. The timing of the light gives it a poetic stillness.</p> <p>The dock creates a visual lead-in, guiding the viewer into the depth of the image.</p> <p>There is negative space in the foreground. The scene could be enhanced by a point of interest here, like a boat or people fishing from the small section of land at the bottom left of frame. Such an inclusion would strengthen the narrative.</p> <p>In the absence of a point of interest in the foreground the eye is drawn to the small section of land at bottom left. Cropping from the base to remove this would create a panorama and amplify the focus on key components.</p> <p>There is white spot in the water on the bottom right of the frame, possibly a small bird. As it is not clear what it is, it becomes a distraction and would best be removed for competition.</p> <p>Boosting vibrance slightly (especially in greens and blues) would heighten contrast without losing softness.</p>	Merit
Sunrise on the point	<p>This image suggests a narrative between the man-made viewing platform and nature. The warm sky contrasts with the muted colour of the water creating a soothing mood. Silhouettes anchor the frame nicely. The absence of foreground clutter strengthens the theme of peace and presence.</p> <p>The sun placement behind the structure adds intrigue, and the layering of vertical elements gives it dimension.</p>	Highly Commended

	<p>There appears to be a lack of definition and sharpness in features of the image. This could be due to capturing and/or downloading to a low resolution then overcropping. Check the settings on your camera/phone to confirm file size/image quality and when downloading for competition. The better-quality competition images are around the 1mb mark.</p> <p>The three horizontal lines on the top / right border of the frame draw the eye and could be removed.</p> <p>Consider strengthening the story by including someone on the platform facing the sunset to enhance the human-nature connection.</p> <p>This image communicates stillness and quiet appreciation beautifully. With small refinements it could shift from a lovely sunset to a memorable storytelling moment.</p>	
<p>Bridge to nowhere</p>	<p>This image has an environmental storytelling theme that invites the viewer to reflect on environmental fragility. The low reservoir levels and exposed lakebed speak subtly about drought or depletion.</p> <p>The image is visually calm, yet rich in texture, from the muddied water's edge to the layered shoreline. The bridge draws the eye creating a natural visual flow from foreground to the background.</p> <p>It is nicely composed, with the main point of interest (the bridge) proximal to a point in accordance with the rule of thirds. The approaching stormy sky takes up approximately a third of the image strengthening the composition.</p> <p>From a technical standpoint, the exposure is well-balanced, and the depth of field ensures clarity across the scene.</p> <p>To improve the image, you might experiment with a touch of vibrance to offset the subdued color palette and add a touch of contrast. You could also</p>	<p>Honour</p>

	try increasing the dehaze in the sky to enhance the moodiness of the approaching storm.	
Waterbucks	<p>The image captures a moment of coexistence between the two animals; each engaged in a distinctly different behaviour: one grazing oblivious to its surroundings whilst the other demonstrating vigilance to potential threats.</p> <p>The earthy palette reinforces the natural setting, and the visual contrast between the animals' warm tones and the cooler greens creates cohesion.</p> <p>Compositionally, the staggered placement adds depth.</p> <p>The background branches add texture, but the position of the vertical trunk competes with right waterbuck for the viewer's attention. Whilst this is a relatively minor distraction, it is worth mentioning for future reference if competing in higher level competitions.</p> <p>Focus and sharpness on the animals are commendable; the fur detail is nicely preserved.</p> <p>Depth of field isolates the subjects well and Lighting is soft and diffused, supporting a gentle, ambient mood.</p> <p>To improve the image, I would consider increasing the contrast and vibrance slightly to enhance the colour and separation of the elements. I'd also consider cropping from the base of the image to a point mid-way to the feet of the waterbuck on the right and on the left side of frame by an equivalent amount. This would strengthen the composition by removing some of the out of focus foreground and create the impression that the vigilant waterbuck on the right has more space to look into.</p>	Merit
Bathing	The image celebrates wildlife coexistence, anchored by the elephants in the foreground and subtly supported by zebras in the backdrop. It evokes a sense of community and resilience.	Highly Commended

	<p>The central positioning and massing of elephants create a compelling visual anchor, and the earthy palette strengthens the context.</p> <p>Sharp focus on the elephants showcases fine details and texture. Exposure is well balanced - highlights and shadows support dimensionality. Depth of field is generally effective.</p> <p>Background visual tension such as cluttered terrain and competing lines slightly distracts the viewer. Simplifying or selectively blurring that area could enhance visual flow and emotional clarity.</p> <p>To improve the image, you might like to consider a tighter crop or slightly altered perspective to enhance intimacy and remove peripheral distractions.</p> <p>As it is, the greens of the grass in the foreground and the elephant to the right (largely submerged) draw the viewer's eye to these areas away from the primary point of interest. These could be cropped out to strengthen the story.</p>	
Lavender Bee	<p>The image explores a classic theme: the interplay between pollinators and flora. The bee's position on the lavender offers a soft narrative of purpose and natural connection.</p> <p>The purple tones of the lavender against the warmer hues of the bee provide a gentle contrast and the light is well handled.</p> <p>It's nicely balanced with the bee positioned proximal to lines according to the rule of thirds. The bee and flower dominate the visual weight while the bokeh in the background provides separation ensuring emphasis on the subject and storytelling clarity.</p> <p>The plant at the bottom right of frame is quite bright and draws the viewer's eye. To improve the image, I would consider removing this (as this is an</p>	Merit

	<p>open definition, not a Nature one) or using a different shooting angle at the time of capture.</p>	
Sail into Sunset	<p>There is an interesting combination of elements in this image including the graceful tall ship sailing towards industrial silhouettes with the setting sun beyond. It creates an intriguing interaction between nature, leisure, and infrastructure.</p> <p>The contrast between the old-style boat and the new (in the background) is also evident adding to the story.</p> <p>Placement of the tall ship centrally, whilst creating a sense of symmetry, leaves considerable negative space on either side.</p> <p>The three key elements (the tall ship, the shipping terminal and the setting sun) all overlap in the centre of the image competing for the viewer's attention.</p> <p>The golden hour glow is nicely captured. The dynamic range has been well handled, and details are retained in highlights and shadows alike, which can be tricky in sunset scenes. You might consider increasing the shadow slider in Lightroom or equivalent to bring out more detail in the tall ship.</p> <p>To improve the image ideally it would have been nice to capture the tall ship earlier when it was midway between the bottom left corner of the frame and its current location. This would have created separation between the elements and the composition would have been stronger. The tall ship would be located proximal to the lines according to the rule of thirds and it would have more space to travel in the direction of the setting sun. As the image stands, you could consider making a strong crop on the left and a lesser one from the base of the frame. This would create the impression that the tall ship has more room to move into the frame.</p>	Highly Commended

<p>Through the Bend</p>	<p>This image captures the action-sports genre nicely. Capturing a rally car at full throttle mid-turn with a thick dust cloud in its wake instantly communicates energy, precision, and adrenaline.</p> <p>There's a clear narrative of movement and control within chaos, ideal for motorsport storytelling.</p> <p>The vivid contrast between the blue/yellow livery and the earthy track pops without feeling oversaturated.</p> <p>The car is well-placed off-centre, giving the eye space to chase the dust trail and appreciate the motion.</p> <p>The diagonal path of the car creates natural movement through the frame, pulling viewers along.</p> <p>The neutral and mostly uncluttered background supports the subject without distraction.</p> <p>The crispness of the car, in a fast-moving scenario, is commendable. The shutter speed has been well-selected to allow a slight blur in the wheels to indicate motion and at the same time capturing dirt and particles that have been thrown up by them.</p> <p>The exposure is well balanced despite challenging light with no blown-out areas.</p> <p>To improve the image, you might consider using a wider aperture to enhance the separation between the large bin and bush behind the car.</p> <p>Dropping the camera lower and angling it upwards could make the car feel more dominant and increase drama.</p> <p>Adjusting the clarity, contrast &/or texture of the dust cloud during post-processing could amplify the motional energy boosting the drama.</p>	<p>Merit</p>
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