



Comments report for Advanced EDI Colour - Open

Open NP by Pamela Milliken - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: Captures a beautiful, serene coastal twilight mood that successfully evokes a strong sense of calm and tranquility. The strength of this image lies in its excellent management of soft light and the crisp, sharp details in the foreground textures. To improve the composition, consider adjusting your shooting angle slightly to the right to prevent the tall grasses from creating an unbalanced weight on one side of the frame. 11

Foggy morning by Greg Haysom - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: Beautifully captures a quiet autumn morning, where the heavy mist creates a strong sense of mood and separation. The warm orange leaves provide a wonderful colour contrast against the cool, pale trunks and white fog, though the heavy concentration of tree limbs on the right side leaves the composition feeling slightly unbalanced. A slight shift in your shooting position to the left would help balance the heavy tree trunks on the right and allow the row of trees to guide the eye more centrally through the frame. 12

Ouch by Neville Bartlett - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: Here we see a high-energy interaction between three cockatoos on a dead branch. The brilliant pink and orange under-wing feathers offer a striking contrast against the pale, neutral background. The action is sharply frozen with excellent detail captured in the feathers of the birds. The exposure is well-managed on the birds themselves, though the overcast sky is quite bright, resulting in a somewhat flat, high-key background that minimizes environmental context. To improve the overall balance, consider cropping a portion of the empty space from the left and top of the frame to give the dramatic action and diagonal lines more prominence. 13

Worn Out Safety Sign by Glenn Rose - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This image presents a compelling graphic concept centred on decay and the passage of time. The composition is direct and well-balanced, utilizing a tight frame that places the sign centrally against the brickwork background. Consider utilizing a slightly tighter crop or adjusting your position to perfectly square the camera body with the wall, which would eliminate the minor distortion at the edges and emphasize the strict geometric design. 13

Naked Ladies by David Willis - **Second Place**



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: A beautiful close-up floral study that celebrates the delicate texture and vibrant colours of Belladonna lilies. The addition of fine water droplets adds a fresh, tactile element that enhances the overall visual appeal. The square crop nicely contains the cluster of blooms, and the solid black background creates excellent contrast, making the pink and purple hues pop. The exposure skillfully handles the iridescent, pearlescent quality of the petals, keeping the delicate highlights intact while maintaining deep, clean shadows. Consider using focus stacking in post-processing to extend the sharpness through to the rear blossoms, ensuring the entire cluster remains in crisp focus. 14

Barely A Snack by Mark Slater - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This image captures a compelling storytelling moment in wildlife photography, showcasing a striated heron with a very tiny fish at the tip of its beak. The low-angle perspective helps immerse the viewer into the heron's natural environment. However, the dark, tangled roots in the upper background create a busy texture that competes slightly for attention with the subject's beautifully patterned feathers. excellent timing and precise focus that crisply captures the minute detail of the tiny fish held in the heron's beak. Consider using a selective adjustment tool in post-processing to slightly lower the exposure or reduce the clarity of the tangled background roots, which will help the beautifully sharp bird stand out even more. 13

Campdrafting Cutting by Sharon Alston - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This image captures an exciting, high-energy moment in action sports photography, showcasing the intense focus of both the rider and horse as they work to cut the steer. The flying dust and the low, charging posture of the animals successfully convey speed and drama. The neutral, textured ground provides a clean background that keeps the focus entirely on the action, though the large expanse of empty dirt at the top makes the overall composition feel a bit loose. A fast shutter speed has successfully frozen the fast-moving subjects, keeping the details in the horse's coat and the rider's expression nice and sharp. The exposure handles the bright daylight well, though the deep shadows on the underside of the horse and steer have lost a small amount of fine texture. Consider a tighter crop from the top and right sides to eliminate excess empty space and focus the viewer's attention more closely on the dramatic chase. 12

Bummer by Glenda Black - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: The core story of this image is the intense, split-second drama of a rodeo rider being thrown from a powerful bull. Introducing the digital pixelated fragmentation introduces a second, conflicting concept: it shifts the narrative away from real-world photojournalism and turns it into a digital art piece or conceptual illustration. Visually, the digital shattering effect creates an immediate point of high contrast and chaotic texture right in the centre of the frame. While it successfully emphasizes the point of impact, it breaks the aesthetic continuity of the image. While the digital fragmentation effect shows creative experimentation, it ultimately distracts from the raw human drama and incredible timing of the original photograph. I recommend removing the digital effect and allowing the genuine, high-stakes physics of the fall to tell the story on its own. 11

Snowy Creek Delight by Win van Oosterwijck - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This landscape captures a lush, inviting bushland scene cantered around a flowing creek. It successfully evokes a sense of peace, freshness, and the quiet beauty of a natural watercourse tucked away in the forest. The gentle curve of the creek provides a natural leading line that helps draw the viewer's eye through the frame from the foreground toward the background bend. To improve the overall impact and create a stronger sense of depth, consider taking a slightly lower or more central shooting angle next time to give the water a larger presence and help separate it from the thick surrounding banks. 11

Through The Gorge by Patsy Cleverly - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This landscape presents an intimate view inside a rugged gorge, contrasting massive, weathered boulders against a glassy body of water. The mirror-like reflection tells a nice story of stillness and age within a hidden natural environment. The natural canyon walls on either side frame a central pathway that coaxes the eye deeper into the background. However, the placement of massive boulders on the left side compared to the narrower rock face on the right leaves the composition feeling slightly off-balance. The exposure handles the bright midday sky and the dark crevices fairly well, though a strong clarity or structure adjustment in post-processing has given the fine branches of the background trees a somewhat harsh, brittle appearance. To improve the image, consider backing off slightly on global clarity or contrast adjustments in post-processing to keep the background trees and bright sky looking softer and more natural. 12

Brown Falcon by Wendy Slater - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This portrait captures a beautiful, dignified study of a brown falcon perched on a weathered fence post. Looking back over its shoulder, the bird's alert posture presents an engaging look at local wildlife, giving the viewer a clear sense of its focused nature. A beautifully soft, out-of-focus background ensures there are no competing distractions. However, the horizontal fence wire cutting straight through the lower third introduces a rigid line that slightly interrupts the otherwise smooth flow of the scene. Consider using a digital healing brush in PP to remove the thin horizontal fence wire, which will create an entirely seamless wildlife study. 13

Apricot Daisy by Pauline Todd - Merit



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: A beautiful close-up macro portrait of an African daisy that celebrates its vibrant colors and radial patterns. The image relies on the simple, striking beauty of nature to instantly draw the viewer's eye into the intricate details of the flower's centre. The composition is highly balanced and direct, cantering the daisy perfectly against a completely dark, non-distracting background. This high contrast allows the warm apricot petals and the subtle purple ring near the core to pop beautifully. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the radial symmetry without casting harsh shadows. The composition is highly balanced and direct, cantering the daisy perfectly against a completely dark, non-distracting background. Consider a slightly off-center composition or a diagonal shooting angle to add a dynamic sense of movement to the natural symmetry. 14

Rainbow Path by Wendy Stanford - Merit



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This image presents a wonderfully striking narrative, capturing the famous rainbow path leading to Seyðisfjarðarkirkja (the blue church in Iceland). The contrast between the joyful, vibrant colors of the path and the moody, dramatic mountain backdrop creates a compelling story about community, welcome, and journey. The composition works beautifully by using the rainbow-painted bricks as a powerful leading line. To elevate the scene even further, consider using a cloning tool in post-processing to remove the small red safety railing on the right, which will cleanly simplify the middle ground. 14

Wanaka tree by Gary Fielder - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This landscape showcases the iconic tree at Lake Wanaka, celebrating a beautifully tranquil and timeless scene. The image effectively conveys a serene, peaceful story by isolating the lone tree against the vast backdrop of cool mountains and calm water. The composition uses a great sense of layers?the warm, golden trees on the left shore create a nice frame, while the small island on the right adds a pleasant counterweight to the scene. Consider backing off the global saturation and vibrance sliders in post-processing. Softening those tones will restore the natural graduations in the sky and allow the genuine, peaceful mood of the landscape to shine through. 13

First Snow At Diamantina Hut by Yvonne Schnelle - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: A classic view of an old alpine mountain hut surrounded by snow gums and a light dusting of fresh snow. It captures a sense of wilderness history and rugged endurance, inviting the viewer to imagine the harsh conditions of the high country. However, the flat, uniform lighting across the scene prevents the hut from truly breaking away from its background, which contributes to a lower overall visual impact and a somewhat flat, desaturated color palette. To increase its visual impact, consider using targeted post-processing (PP) adjustments - such as localised dodging and burning (selectively lightening and darkening areas) - to boost the contrast on the hut and make it pop dramatically against the muted forest backdrop. 11

Misty Hollow by Geoff Bayes - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This image captures a compelling narrative of neglect and decay, showing an abandoned, graffiti-covered homestead under a heavily brooding storm sky. The contrast between the weathered building and the dark, threatening atmosphere successfully evokes a mood of isolation and impending storm. To lift this image to a higher tier, consider applying local post-processing adjustments to slightly boost the contrast on the house while cleaning up or cropping out the distracting fence elements along the bottom edge to simplify the foreground. 12

Locks over the Loch by Bill Thompson - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This image captures a collection of "love locks" fastened to a heavy chain, set against an expansive, rolling landscape and a distant loch. It successfully tells a story of human connection, memory, and romance juxtaposed with the timelessness of nature. The composition uses the dipping curve of the chain to frame the landscape beautifully. The distant road acts as a clever leading line, drawing the eye right down through the centre of the frame toward the water. However, the foreground chain cuts heavily across the entire image from edge to edge, creating a bit of a visual barrier that splits the composition. To give the scene a stronger sense of depth, consider altering your shooting angle slightly to the left or right next time; this would let the chain lead the viewer's eye dynamically into the background rather than cutting straight across the frame. 12

3 Little Maids by Garry Pearce - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This portrait presents a graceful celebration of cultural heritage, featuring three women in traditional white attire. The gentle, engaging expressions create an immediate connection with the viewer, though the presence of the smartphone in the centre slightly pulls the narrative out of an otherwise timeless setting. The three-person arrangement is well-proportioned and nicely fills the width of the frame. However, the background is quite busy with park structures, tree trunks, and distant pedestrians, which creates visual competition and distracts from the elegance of the primary subjects. To enhance the overall impact, try using a wider aperture in-camera to softly blur out the busy background elements, and gently remind your subjects to place modern items like phones out of sight to preserve the traditional theme. 11

Ember Bloom by Ishani Booms - First Place



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This image presents a highly creative and dynamic floral study. The composition is masterfully designed. The sharp, recognizable central lilies anchor the image, while the sweeping arcs of red and gold intentional camera movement (ICM) wrap around the subject like a wave of heat. The deep black background is an excellent aesthetic choice, providing an elegant, high-contrast canvas that allows the warm tones to pop dramatically without any competing distractions. The photographer has successfully maintained just enough critical sharpness and structural detail in the central petals and stamens to ground the image, while seamlessly blending the long-exposure motion blur. 15

Mt Edith Cavell by Donna Rohrich - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This grand landscape tells a beautiful story of a pristine, high-altitude alpine lake flanked by towering peaks and dense pine forests. By utilizing incredibly clear water, the image invites the viewer to look right through the surface, evoking a deep sense of stillness, exploration, and wilderness discovery. The composition is masterfully constructed using distinct visual layers. The crystal-clear, rocky lake provides an excellent foreground that leads the eye toward the vibrant turquoise water in the mid-ground, which then connects beautifully to the rugged mountains in the distance. To refine this very high-quality image even further, consider using a selective adjustment tool in post-processing to slightly lift the exposure and details in the deep shadows of the distant right-hand pine forest, which will balance the overall tonal weight of the frame. 13

Disco Dew by Chrissi Miles - Merit



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This macro photograph captures a vibrant, abstract world within droplets of dew clinging to a web. Each droplet acts as a tiny lens, refracting a colourful, patterned background. To refine this high-quality macro study even further, you could try adjusting your camera position slightly to isolate one or two larger droplets as a primary focal point, giving the busy grid of lines a more defined place for the eye to rest. 14

Art Of Flight 2026 by Michael Black - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This image beautifully captures the colour and excitement of a hot air balloon festival just as the sun is low on the horizon. It tells a joyful story of flight and preparation, instantly engaging the viewer with the grand scale of these colourful giants against a vast open field. The composition is anchored by the massive yellow balloon in the centre, which acts as a commanding focal point. The photographer has used the Rule of Thirds well by placing the horizon line in the lower third, allowing the sky and balloons to dominate the frame. While the distribution of balloons spreads nicely across the sky, the large tree and bunched-up balloons on the far-right side add considerable visual weight, leaving the left side of the field feeling slightly less balanced. 12

Cradle Mountain at sunrise by Jill Hancock - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This landscape showcases the iconic jagged peaks of Cradle Mountain captured during the golden hour of sunrise. The composition is beautifully layered from front to back. The rich, orange foreground foliage acts as a natural anchor, while the diagonal slope of the middle ridge guides the viewer's eye up toward the sunlit peaks. Placing Dove Lake in the lower left provides a nice tonal break, though the right side of the frame carries a lot of heavy, dark rock texture that slightly pulls the visual balance away from the softer gradients on the left. Consider a minor localized post-processing adjustment to gently lift the mid-tone contrast on the distant peak, which will make those iconic ridges stand out even more dramatically against the soft sky. 13

Galahs by William Cleverly - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This wildlife image captures a dynamic and lively moment as a flock of galahs interacts around the peak of a pine tree. The striking contrast between the birds' pink and gray feathers against the deep blue sky creates an engaging story of community and movement in the natural world. The composition is well structured, using the natural triangular shape of the tree to anchor the frame. A fast shutter speed was used to freeze the rapid movement of the wings without any motion blur. The exposure perfectly captures the warm, directional sunlight, bringing out rich textures in both the feathers and the pine needles, while keeping the background sky clean and noise-free. Would recommend a slight reduction in the global colour saturation in post-processing would help make the blue sky feel a bit more natural while keeping the focus entirely on the brilliant tones of the galahs. 13

Autumn Harvest by Vicki Cain - Merit



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This still-life image tells a warm and comforting story of an autumn harvest. The choice of walnuts, a rustic wooden bowl, textured fabrics, and dried autumn leaves creates a cohesive, inviting theme that evokes the cosy feeling of a changing season. The composition is carefully thought out, arranged in a pleasing triangular shape. The lighting is soft and directional, mimicking a classic window-light setup. However, the image has a heavy, low-contrast matte look across the mid-tones and shadows, which makes the deeper details feel slightly flat and muted rather than rich and deep. Consider using local post-processing adjustments to gently boost the shadow contrast and highlights on the main group of walnuts. This will give the textures more dimension and help the main bowl pop dramatically against the dark background. 14

As in a Dream by Deirdre Blunt - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: The image presents a romantic, dreamlike story by placing a vibrant pink rose against a neutral, minimalist background with a striking water reflection. I would suggest capturing the scene with a slightly greater depth of field (keeping more of the rose in sharp focus) or reducing the post-processing softening to preserve the natural, crisp textures of the petals and leaves. 12



Comments report for Photographer EDI Colour - Open

ng into the distance by Rhonda Hansen - **Second Place**



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: The concept behind this image is exceptionally strong and deeply evocative. The composition is excellent, utilizing an impeccable symmetric perspective that pulls the viewer straight down the centre line of the road. The interlocking, skeletal canopy of branches forms a natural arch, acting as a dramatic frame within a frame. The maker has used the heavy mist to create an outstanding sense of perspective?the crisp, dark textures of the foreground trees give way to increasingly soft, ghostly silhouettes that dissolve into the centre of the frame. Suggest slightly brightening the light at the end of the road ? increasing the sense of mystery. 14

Free Fall by Kay Bennetts - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: The image captures a dynamic and highly unusual wildlife moment that instantly commands attention. The background of this image features digital noise which could be removed in post. The birds themselves are not quite sharp ? some local sharpening could address this. Bringing down the midtones slightly on the two perched birds would deepen their profiles, matching the stronger contrast seen in the diving bird and unifying the trio. Quite a bit of digital noise in the background 11

I love Osaka Jellies by cindy garro - **First Place**



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a highly engaging, successful image that captures a magical moment of human connection with marine life. The balance between the deep blue negative space and the warm cluster of jellyfish works beautifully, and the technical handling of a tough exposure is commendable. Suggest cleaning up distracting highlights on the glass and darkening the surrounds to eliminate subtle distractions and locking the viewers' eyes inside the glowing porthole. 15

More fog than water by Harrison Garro - **Merit**



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a beautiful, evocative piece of landscape photography. It succeeds by using atmospheric weather conditions to transform a standard dry creek bed into a compelling, moody narrative. The compositional structure is highly effective at creating depth. Be careful of cutting of elements at the edge of the image. A little PP treatment to enhance the contrast and clarity of the foreground would boost the image to the next level. 13

Keeping Watch by Judy Hofmeyer - Accepted



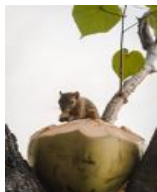
Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: The alert posture, wide eye, and upward gaze successfully communicate a clear narrative of vigilance. It presents a strong mood of tension and focus, immediately engaging the viewer with the animal's intent. The background features numerous distracting bright spots which are easily removed. Good composition and pose but the subject and its perch is overexposed 12

Still Life by Voret Castillo - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: Here the composition utilises a well-balanced arrangement of varied shapes, heights, and textures, creating a pleasing rhythm across the frame. The tall, dark bottle near the centre anchors the vertical space, while the smaller bottles provide symmetry. The placement of the warm, organic pear at the centre foreground offers an excellent contrast to the rigid, geometric glass forms. The lighting is highly directional creating deep shadows which in some cases hides or impinges on some objects in the image. This type of chiaroscuro lighting can create great mood it is important not to create too much dark and loss of detail. 11

Breakfast by Melanie Warnaar - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: The image captures a charming, narrative-driven wildlife moment that clearly communicates a slice-of-life story. The main technical issue is exposure management. The white background is completely blown out and featureless, which bleeds slightly into the fine edges of the branches and leaves, flattening the overall visual dynamic. Subject is slightly soft. 11

On the loose by Donna Muir - Merit



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: The image captures the raw, kinetic energy of a rodeo event. The photographer chose a low angle and a direct head-on perspective, which dramatically heightens the sense of impact and scale. The composition utilizes a beautifully shallow depth of field; the horse is isolated completely from the rodeo chutes and spectators in the background. Good technical execution. Freezing a fast-moving, head-on subject requires superior focus tracking, and the critical sharpness is locked right onto the horse's eyes, muscle definition, and blaze. Suggest a slight reduction in highlights and overall exposure. 13



Comments report for Advanced EDI Monochrome - Open

Sweetened Honeyeater by Michael Black - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: The image presents a romantic, dreamlike story by placing a vibrant pink rose against a neutral, minimalist background with a striking water reflection. I would suggest capturing the scene with a slightly greater depth of field (keeping more of the rose in sharp focus) or reducing the post-processing softening to preserve the natural, crisp textures of the petals and leaves. 13

Twilight Preening On The Pier by David Willis - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a striking, highly artistic wildlife study. The sharp loop of the pelican's neck creates a wonderful, circular leading line that immediately pulls the eye to the head and the inverted placement of the eye and bill. The photographer has utilized a beautifully shallow depth of field. The background has been completely melted into a soft, mottled bokeh pattern, which ensures that the complex shape of the bird remains entirely separated from its environment. Suggest a slight increase in contrast in PP. 13

Australian Alps by Win van Oosterwijck - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: A sweeping, evocative wilderness study that captures the immense, layered scale of the high country. Rather than focusing on sharp, alpine peaks, the image documents the endless ridges of eucalypt forest being blanketed by a heavy storm system. The narrative relies on themes of vastness, mood, and weather dynamics, beautifully utilizing atmospheric compression to convey the deep silence and isolating beauty of the Australian bush. From a composition perspective, the large tree on the right pushes too far into the frame and draws attention away from the subtle rain sheets and gorgeous layered hills in the background, making the right side feel heavy while the left side feels exposed. 12

Quiet Moments by Vicki Cain - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a highly refined still life image. The lighting is beautifully executed to highlight surfaces. The rough, granular texture of the earthenware vase is incredibly sharp, contrasting wonderfully against the smooth, papery feel of the sunflower petals and the coarse, fabric-like grain of the dark backdrop. It demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of minimalist aesthetics, exquisite lighting control, and an excellent command of texture. The sepia/cream tones on the illuminated sides of the vase and flower are soft and rich, retaining delicate details without bleeding into harsh whites. The shadow areas are deep and moody, though the central core of the sunflower leans close to a solid black mass, losing a small degree of structural definition in its seeds. 13

Green Dart Butterfly by Deirdre Blunt - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a highly sharp, technically disciplined macro photograph that captures outstanding structural detail. In B&W images we depend on differences in luminance levels to create visual impact. Here the subject almost disappears against the background because they are equally bright. In a colour image the added presence of colour would create separation between subject and background. B&W was perhaps not the best choice in this situation. 12

Sunset Cable Beach by Wendy Slater - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a pleasing, well-rendered panoramic study that captures an iconic coastal narrative. The silhouettes of the beachgoers add narrative interest, but they are scattered somewhat uniformly across the horizontal plane. This creates a fragmented composition for the eye rather than a singular, compelling visual anchor. The vast foreground sand flat is heavily suppressed into deep shadow. While it creates a solid base, it lacks internal texture or tonal gradation, resulting in a somewhat flat, heavy black block across the bottom of the image. 11

Church Of The Good Shepard by Gary Fielder - **Second Place**



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a beautifully realised landscape image. It succeeds on its masterful handling of natural textures, classic composition, and highly emotive, low-key lighting. The lower third is filled with rugged granite boulders and wild tussock grasses. This layered, tactile foreground successfully anchors the church in its native environment, guiding the viewer's eye upward along the light gravel path. Placing the church slightly off-centre to the right allows the left side of the frame to open up beautifully, offering a glimpse of the lake and the distant, low-lying storm clouds. This diagonal tension between the heavy stone structure and the vast open horizon is highly effective. 14

Basking by Mark Slater - **Accepted**



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: While the aerial perspective and composition of this image are excellent, the image is currently trapped in a very flat, compressed middle-gray tonal band. Because the mudflat and the crocodiles share highly similar tonal values, the animals don't "pop" from their environment as cleanly as they could. Adjusting this in post-processing would instantly transform the image from a flat record into a high-impact graphic print. 12

Tofano di Mezzo by Jill Hancock - **Merit**



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a heroic mountain landscape image that pays homage to the grand tradition of wilderness photography. It explores the themes of geological scale, endurance, and the silent majesty of the alpine environment. By capturing the massive, towering limestone block of the Dolomites enveloped in a soft crown of cloud, the image juxtaposes the permanent, brutal strength of the rock with the fleeting, delicate nature of the weather. The inclusion of tiny, almost imperceptible human silhouettes on the path in the middle-right adds a superb sense of scale, emphasizing the vastness of the natural world. 14

The Bridge by Geoff Bayes - **Merit**



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is an exceptional, landscape photograph. The combination of a strong composition, a flawless reflection, and immaculate technical control makes this a highly effective image. The bridge enters high on the right-hand side and sweeps elegantly down and across the frame, creating a powerful diagonal line that guides the viewer's eye deep into the background. The glassy, calm water on the left provides a stunning mirror image of the steel trusses and the dramatic cloudscape, perfectly balancing the composition and filling the negative space with incredible visual interest. The white, puffy cumulus clouds retain rich internal textures without a hint of highlight clipping, while the deep shadows beneath the bridge and within the rocky bank remain detailed and open. 14

Dark Heart by Greg Haysom - **Accepted**



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a beautiful botanical study. It features strong atmospheric mood, elegant composition, and the gorgeous, tactile quality of the velvety petals. Critical focus is positioned on the mid-ground petals forming the central ring around the core. The tiny water droplets on these specific folds are beautifully crisp. However, the absolute innermost centre of the bud—the very "dark heart"—recedes rapidly into shadow and falls slightly out of the sharpest focal plane. 12

Campdraft by Sharon Alston - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: The image captures a compelling slice of rural Australian culture, focusing on the preparation for in a campdraft event. Rather than opting for a high-speed action shot of a rider chasing cattle, the photographer has chosen a more intimate, narrative-driven moment: a stockman in a wide-brimmed hat adjusting his gear or rope while mounted on his horse. This quiet moment of focus before the action begins tells a strong story of preparation, partnership, and the quiet discipline of country life. The looping rope held by the stockman creates a wonderful, circular leading line that frames his hands and connects him visually to the horse's head. The rider is positioned high in the frame, giving him a commanding presence. The background is appropriately simplified, keeping the focus entirely on the main subjects. However, the lower-right corner is somewhat cluttered with the metal rails of the yards and another person bending down, which slightly distracts from the clean lines of the horse's head and chest. 13

Chrysler by Garry Pearce - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: Aesthetically, this image relies on powerful, multi-axial symmetry to command the viewer's attention. The panoramic horizontal format perfectly houses the wide, structural layout. The curving chrome exhaust pipes act as dynamic leading lines, bending in toward the centre to frame the angular, geometric differential housing before flaring back out. This structure is mirrored flawlessly, creating a completely balanced top-and-bottom reflection that feels incredibly satisfying. The strong directional light highlights the cylindrical volumes of the polished metal, giving the entire composition a heavy, three-dimensional, tactile presence. Great B&W conversion. 13

Red Tailed by William Cleverly - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is an elegant wildlife portrait. It succeeds by avoiding the bright-colour clichés of bird photography, instead utilising superb technical execution and clean, minimalist aesthetics to let the texture and character of the cockatoo take centre stage. The cockatoo's eye is visible but sits in deep shadow. A very subtle, localized dodge on the eye and the immediate skin around it would introduce a tiny catchlight drawing the viewer's gaze even more strongly to the bird's expression. The thin, bare branch extending toward the bottom-right corner is a natural part of the perch, but it draws the eye away from the main diagonal structure. Cloning out just the tiny, offshoot twigs at the very bottom edge would streamline the graphic simplicity of the composition. Suggest a slight amount of sharpening on the bird. 12

Rough Seas by Wendy Stanford - Merit



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a very good image. It perfectly captures the raw power of nature versus human engineering, focusing on a tugboat battling through heavy chop. The explosive spray detonating across the bow provides an immediate, visceral sense of motion, cold air, and environmental hostility. It successfully tells a story of duty and resilience in an unforgiving climate. B&W conversion has been well managed creating a moody atmosphere. 14

Country Church by Patsy Cleverly - Accepted



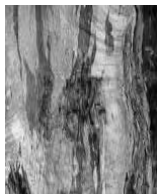
Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a highly detailed documentary landscape that captures an authentic sense of place and historical character. Its strong point lies in the excellent preservation of textures across the architectural and botanical elements. The image presents a classic rural documentary study, capturing a simple wooden country church flanked by aged trees under an expansive sky. It explores themes of pioneering history, isolation, and spiritual endurance within the rural landscape. the sky has been darkened to a degree that introduces a slight grittiness, creating an unnatural edge contrast rather than a smooth tonal transition. 13

Layers Of Cloud And Mountains by Yvonne Schnelle - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: While the image has a beautiful, poetic composition, it currently relies very heavily on a narrow band of midtones, which limits its three-dimensional punch. While the image features distinct layers, in PP a lot could be done to create more visual interest. For example, the front layer could be adjusted to lower the black point, the light rays could be emphasized and made more dramatic and combined with other small adjustments would create drama and avoid the overall grey tone. 12

River Warrior by Neville Bartlett - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: By focusing closely on the weathered trunk of what appears to be an ancient river red gum, the image uncovers a rich, textured landscape of bark that resembles a battle-scarred figure or protective armour. This is a study of texture, shape, and form. The composition utilises the natural, rounded contour of the tree trunk, which recedes on the right to give the frame a sense of volume and three-dimensional depth. The patterns of peeling bark, vertical stains, and deep-seated burls create a complex tapestry. The directional lighting carves out the micro texture of the trunk, casting delicate shadows that emphasize every ridge, bump, and hollowed-out scar. 11

Sydney Harbour by Pauline Todd - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a technically precise architectural landscape. The superb handling of vertical perspective and edge-to-edge sharpness makes it an excellent representation of the Sydney waterfront. The composition sets up a pleasing horizontal rhythm: the dark water at the base, the textured tree line sweeping up into the geometric towers, and the vast open sky above. The twist of the Crown Sydney tower on the right serves as a dominant, elegant visual anchor. However, the completely clear, cloudless sky offers very little texture or drama. This vast, flat negative space occupies nearly half the frame, which slightly dilutes the graphic impact of the intricate city details below. 12

The Strength She Raised by Ishani Booms - First Place



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is an extraordinary work of art that stands as a testament to the heights that portrait photography can achieve. It perfectly balances emotional weight, graphic elegance, and pristine technical discipline. The lighting is beautifully controlled, utilising a precise rim and short lighting setup that carves out the distinctive facial contours, lips, eyelashes, and unique hair textures of each subject. The monochrome conversion is excellent; it features a rich, expansive tonal scale that ranges from the luminous whites of the satin and lace to the velvety, deep blacks of the negative space, all while preserving delicate midtone skin textures. Wonderful image ? great narrative. 15

Cross the bridge by Glenn Rose - Merit



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is an exceptional, minimalist photograph that stands as a textbook example of high-end architectural abstraction. The precision of the camera alignment, the flawless tonal rendering, and the powerful graphic composition combine to create a deeply satisfying, high-impact visual experience. Suggest a slight increase in contrast. 14

Rugged Mountains by Donna Rohrich - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a good landscape photograph that transforms a natural vista into a compelling, dramatic piece of fine art. The panoramic framing works perfectly to capture the sweeping scope of the range. Some lack of fine detail in the dark foreground. Very good range of B&W conversion resulting in a dramatic visual narrative. 13

Trainspotting by Bill Thompson - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This image presents the viewer with multiple layered themes. The image captures the transient nature of modern travel, juxtaposing the frantic, blurred motion of daily commuters in the foreground against the static, grand scale of the vessels and architecture outside. There is a contrast between the tack-sharp grid of the window panes and the soft, ghostly blur of the commuters passing by. This motion blur is effective, giving the human figures an anonymous, atmospheric quality. The image has a strong lean which I found somewhat jarring and suggest rotating to restore the vertical elements. Also suggest PP to increase contrast. 12

The Juice Maker by Chrissi Miles - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: The image captures a compelling documentary street scene that successfully communicates a clear narrative of daily labour and traditional entrepreneurship. The composition operates on a strong environmental portraiture layout. The frame is densely packed with textures?from the weathered, panelled wooden doors in the background to the bundles of raw sugarcane stalks standing vertically. The placement of the two men creates an effective framing mechanism around the central mechanical press, guiding the viewer's eye through the workflow of the scene. Good B&W conversion. 13

Silver Fern by Pamela Milliken - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a competent monochrome study of natural patterns that displays great contrast and crisp detail. However, the overall impact is compromised by a busy composition where multiple organic elements compete for the viewer's attention. The fern itself is somewhat over exposed ? suggest reducing highlights here in PP to unsure these areas retain their organic detail and texture. 12

Ghost Owl by Glenda Black - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: The image features the juxtaposition of two subjects. The first, a well rendered image of a barn owl, set in front of a mystical rendering of the same bird in flight. A creative approach which tries to evoke the idea of an alter ego or perhaps a spirit animal. Blending two images requires a great deal of PP skills to be convincing. In this case the overall effect appears somewhat disjointed and not quite a cohesive whole. Suggest experimenting with different blending modes (Overlay or Luminosity) to achieve a more coherent and mysterious effect. Well done for creativity. 13



Comments report for Photographer EDI Monochrome - Open

Shy Goose by Donna Muir - Approval by cindy garro - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This image uses a humorous title to engage the viewer. While the animal's posture is unique, the aesthetic choices and flat lighting hold it back from having a stronger visual impact. Mono conversion has produced quite a 'flat' image which could be rectified in PP by adjusting white and black values. 11

Keeping an eye out by Melanie Warnaar - Merit



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: The image features a strong storytelling element and commendable technical handling of difficult black plumage. The observed behaviour adds an artistic layer beyond simple nature documentation. In post-processing, applying a subtle vignette or gently lowering the exposure and contrast of the background foliage would decrease its visual distraction. A slight touch of selective burning and dodging?specifically brightening the pale cheek patch and the eye of the left bird?would draw the viewer's gaze instantly to the focal point of the narrative. 13

Who's looking at you by Rhonda Hansen - Second Place



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is a strong, highly engaging image that succeeds primarily on its character and instant visual appeal. The choice to shoot at eye level and use a shallow depth of field perfectly serves the humorous concept. The black and white conversion is a bit flat. Boosting the local contrast slightly around the eyes and snout would make the whites of the eyes pop and give the scales on the face more definition. The dark, out-of-focus mass in the upper left takes up a significant portion of the frame without adding narrative value. A slightly tighter crop from the left and top would emphasize the main subject even more dramatically. 14

Tangled Vines by Voret Castillo - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: An interesting rural environment but the image suffers from composition and tonal challenges that hinder its impact. The chaotic nature of the vines makes it difficult for the viewer's eye to navigate the frame. Photographing this scene in better light (morning or evening) and simplifying the composition would be more effective in communicating this narrative. Watch mono tones in conversion. 11

Shy Goose by Donna Muir - First Place



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This is an exceptional piece of work that demonstrates complete mastery of wildlife portraiture. The image successfully moves beyond a simple nature documentary shot to deliver a high-impact, artistic study of texture and emotion. The technical execution is flawless, and the aesthetic choices beautifully support the core concept. 15

Autumn Textures by Kay Bennetts - Accepted



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This image documents a natural urban texture. The composition is somewhat cluttered. Shooting with more directional light (such as early morning or late afternoon) would introduce shadows, and depth and textures of the leaves. The conversion to mono has resulted in quite a 'flat' image. Adjusting the tones to deepen the blacks slightly while introducing crisper whites would give the image more punch and dimensional separation. 10

Food or Friend by Harrison Garro - Merit



Judges Comment: Theo Van der Meulen: This image strongly communicates the connection between the dog's eye and the small insect. A very tight crop ? a bit more space around the subject would create a more compelling narrative. The bright high contrast background is a bit distracting. 13
