

Scoresheet for September 2023 Monthly Competition Leon

Category	Firstname	Lastname	Club Star Rating	Title	score	award	comment
AS	Andrew	van den Berg	3S	MX Star	9	Silver	Panning is not the easiest technique to master. When panning it is always advisable to keep a point of interest in proper focus. In this image there is no real sharp focus in any part of it which is a bit of a pity. Extreme tight crop at the top is also not ideal. All in all it's a fairly good attempt but with more practice hopefully you can master it
AS	Liesl	Couperthwaite	4S	2nd leg of triathlon	9	Silver	With sports photography it is often stated that the quality of the image is not as important as the storytelling. Here the story telling is good but sadly some the technical aspects in this image are lacking. The light is hitting the subject from completely the wrong angle, throwing the left hand side into shadow. The fact that the athlete is wearing black also doesn't help that situation, causing even more shadow. The crop at the top is extremely close and the face of the athlete is almost completely hidden. There is nice movement visible in the image
AS	Doug	Couperthwaite	4S	The Final Stretch 4834	9	Silver	Another strong story. The white tape at the bottom and the fence upright on the left-hand side are both distractions and it is a pity you couldn't have excluded them. Maybe having removed them you could have entered the image into the Open category. At 1/250th of a second the shutter speed was just too slow to produce crisp detail in the face making the whole image a little bit soft.
AS	Leon	Heyes	5SD	Trepidation	9	Silver	The story of the image is great - surrounded by all that frantic water - however, nothing appears quite tack sharp - there is a softness to the face and a halo around the head - and a very slight blur to the water...
N	Maxi	Holder	5SB	Looking Back Over My Shoulder	10	Gold	The stare of this bird and the way it is standing glaring over it's shoulder are both very engaging. It appears this image might be a crop of a much larger image because the focus is not as sharp as it should be. The composition could have been better with less space on the left and more space on the right - if that was possible. This would have made that stare even more relevant.
N	Leon	Heyes	5SD	Feasting Fly 2	13	Merit	Beautiful colour and sharpness, a really well photographed and executed macro shot.
N	Rob	Hart	5SP	6618-Bristly robber fly	12	Gold	I'm fully aware that this sort of macro shot is really difficult to achieve. There are so many elements in macro photography that play against the photographer. One of the problems is depth of field and for this reason focusing is absolutely critical. In this image the focusing is borderline. Most times the use of extra light is a necessity. Here it is evident that an external flash was used, which was probably the only way you would get light on to your subject. That flash has been quite effectively used with not too many hot spots. Try defusing your light even more to create more even coverage.

SENIOR WINNER

N	Rob	Hart	5SP	Feast for spider crab	12	Gold	Another adequate capture of a very difficult subject. The spider is adequately sharp but the fly is slightly soft. As mentioned previously, the depth of field in macro photography is a huge problem. The fly could have been lit a bit more and overall the colour saturation is a little bit high.
N	Rob	Hart	5SP	Glowing oranges	13	Merit	Capturing a macro subject side-on like you have done here is probably the better way to do things. This way most of the fly is in focus because it's body is within the focal plane. Just be careful of post-processing - there is some haloming and there is digital noise in the background
OP	Marisan	Victor	1S	Colourfull spoonful	9	Silver	Nice reciprocated shapes the strong lines joining the two. The drips at the bottom are a real bonus. Colours are strong without being oversaturated but be careful of digital noise on the background
OP	Noxolo	Kheswa	1S	Let there be light	9	Silver	Good strong abstract feeling to this image. The fact that the lamp is leaning sideways also adds to that feeling. Leaving the image without a border is a good idea because the top half just seems to disappear into nowhere and that's great. With a little bit of work and creative editing and converting it to mono it could be a very interesting alternate idea. Cloning out some of the bugs in the light would ave been a good idea.
OP	Noxolo	Kheswa	1S	Light the way	10	Gold	The mono conversion here is a great idea. The whole image becomes very graphic. The bright areas in the light fixture are a bit too bright and with some toning down one sees more detail and the image speaks stronger. Nice idea.
OP	Marisan	Victor	1S	Misdirection	10	Gold	A really whacky and fun image. The image is nice and sharp and the colours are powerful without oversaturation. The image was obviously taken in a bit of a hurry because the composition is not as great as it could have been. The cut off fingers on the left and the cut off ear on the right a both not great ideas but the image is still fun and tells a great story.
OP	wynand	lens	1S	Perfect Purple	7	Silver	Any beautiful flower photography always catches my attention. It was also the case with this image. I'm having a closer look unfortunately there are some issues. The extreme shallow depth of field in this image has't worked. There is very little that is in focus anywhere, except possibly for the white tip on the flower on the left. The truncating of the top petal is also not a good idea. Thus said, it might be a nice image as an all-over print on a piece of fabric. Nice strong colours but there is noise in the background
OP	Dylan	Evans	1S	Shell in the cracks	9	Silver	Nice strong juxtaposition between the rounded shell shape and the horizontal lines right next to it. Placing the shell on the thirds was a plan that really works. Maybe the shell is bit small in the frame and cropping it much closer would emphasize the shell and tell a stronger story...but then maybe you wanted to show the shell in its natural environment.

OP	Meleney	Naik	3S	64 Ford Mustang	10	Gold	Nice idea and nicely captured. I see this red Mustang heading straight for our Maritzburg salon as an entry. At a car show there are always lots of vehicles so creative depth of field and use of aperture is really important. The half cut off track in the background is not a great idea and by using depth of field creatively or changing your position you might have been able to avoid it. The whole image is presented a little bit light and some darkening of the background textures does add value
OP	Meleney	Naik	3S	Curves	11	Gold	Using creative lighting like you have done here is not an easy thing to do and I commend you for getting it pretty well good. On top of the tricky lighting the black background also draws in the light so it has to be particularly careful and you have done well in producing a decent image. Yes the story is about the curves but I would have liked to have seen another element in this image. Either the glass half filled with some liquid or a wine bottle cork or something a little bit interesting and curvy to complement the shape of the glass
OP	Andrew	van den Berg	3S	Harvester	13	Merit	You have succeeded very well in getting sharpness on the bee. Using 3.5 as you have done was a risky move but it has paid off. The inclusion of a lot of the flowers is a good idea because it tells the story of the harvesting. The one problem here is the brightness of the white flowers. In post-processing, reducing the brightness on those could easily have resulted in a higher score
OP	Meleney	Naik	3S	Splashing Out	13	Merit	You've done so well by capturing this image as you have. I do realise that you have turned the image upside down but it really works because it looks like an arm sticking out of the water with a hand holding the top fruit. Most aspects of this image are spot-on but I think the composition could have been a little bit better. The main focus is dead centre of the image and with cropping both sides slightly and making it into a portrait format image it does help to portray the length and the extent of that "arm". It is just a thought but one worth exploring
OP	Andrew	van den Berg	3S	Top Speed	11	Gold	Your panning technique is great. It is not an the easy thing to do. When photographing motorsport I have the same problem as what you appeared to have had. You want to get all the dust and muck behind the vehicle but you also need to get enough space in front of the vehicle to show its future passage. Here you have cut that front space a bit too short and it looks as though the car is going to hit a brick wall soon. With the sort of sport it is always best to keep the vehicle a little bit further away so that you've got enough space front and back. This means that you can crop it to panorama style at a later stage. You colour balance seems to be a little bit out
OP	Jake	Alletson	3S	Windmill and Two Turkeys	12	Gold	Good strong, clean, image. The colours have probably been bumped up a bit but they are not oversaturated and they are truly beautiful as they are. It is great to see the movement in the Windmill. Just a pity the turkeys were not a little bit more prominent. Great composition

Junior
winner

OP	Liesl	Couperthwaite	4S	Berry Girl	9	Silver	A really nice idea and it reminds me of a flower fairy at the bottom of the garden. It is not easy to distinguish whether this was a multiple exposure in camera or whether it was two layers in post-processing. I would prefer not to see the leaves across her face but if it was a double exposure then that is unavoidable. If it was two layers in post-processing that face area could have been cleaned up a little bit and I think it would have worked a little bit better. Thus said it is still an interesting image
OP	Liesl	Couperthwaite	4S	Ghostly feelings	10	Gold	Those ghostly feelings really do come across well. The silhouette subjects up against the beautiful sky is really captivating. I think the cross should be the main subject in this image and the way it is now presented the cross gets a little bit lost. I would suggest cropping the bushes on the right away completely leaving the cross on the thirds. The one hanging bit on the left-hand side which does not have an anchor point at the top could worry some people but I feel it adds to the story.
OP	Doug	Couperthwaite	4S	Reaching for the Sky 4883	9	Silver	There is some really whacky foliage here and I would have also been tempted to photograph it. To me I think you have lost an opportunity to capture the interesting detail in this subject. With the title of "Reaching for the Sky" the subject seems to be falling over and heading south! I have tried to turn this image and converting it to black and white but I don't find any better option than what you currently have. I just feel that is the wrong interpretation of the theme/subject
OP	Heidi	Taylor	5S1	Conducting fire breaks	12	Gold	The story that you are portraying has come across as 2 seperate stories. The fire is obviously intense and needs supervision and the ladies just seem to be chilling without doing much. I'm not too sure if it's a social gathering for ladies in uniform or whether it is a matter of urgency to protect the neighbouring vegetation. The only person who seems to be doing anything is partially obscured from view. The story in the image would have worked far better if the ladies were actually busy doing something but it is still in adequately captured image.
OP	Stephen	Pryke	5SB	Australian Pelican near Canberra	9	Silver	This is a beautiful bird and you've captured it in a beautiful setting. The reflection of course is a huge bonus. There's little-to-no digital noise in the background which could have been a problem at ISO 800. What is a little bit of a problem are the whites. Down the sides of the bird the whites are bright but acceptable but across the back they are completely blown out. A slightly closer crop would have been beneficial
OP	Maxi	Holder	5SB	Five Thousand Loaves And Counting	11	Gold	This image really has old world charm. The elements are simple but come across well. I like the soft shapes on the handle?? juxtaposed against all the square shapes. The colours are beautiful and all the degraded paintwork adds to the charm of the image
OP	Stephen	Pryke	5SB	Rainbow over the Sea	10	Gold	Beautiful rainbow but I'm missing the pot of gold!! Jokes aside... this is not an easy subject but you have coped really well. I would have just like to have seen something a bit stronger as a focal point at the end of the rainbow

OP	Stephen	Pryke	5SB	Reflection of the Rhino	10	Gold	One you can really feel the freshness and crispness in the air in this image. In any landscape, ideally one should have strong foreground, mid-ground and background elements. This is evident in this image, but I'm not so sure that it works terribly well. The foreground elements is very far removed from the rest, which leaves a very large expanse of water. Be careful of oversaturation - this image is borderline. Those blues could be toned down.
OP	Leon	Heyes	5SD	Fishermen Cottages	12	Gold	Beautiful mono image - the textures and tones make this a image to linger on... I do find the cottage in the forefront a little central, and would love to see a bit more space on the left...
OP	Vicki	Street	5SS	Free Falling	12	Gold	Such endearing subject matter. This little mouse is absolutely beautiful. I could imagine that this was not an easy shoot. The big dried seed pods are very dominant in the image and they tend to swamp the main subject. The fact that there are also all truncated makes the image feel a bit incomplete. I would suggest a more creative crop that will highlight the mouse and not the seed pods
PA	Marisan	Victor	1S	The door to NeverNever Land	9	Silver	An interesting concept and I do get the story. I acknowledge the fact that there has been manipulation applied but I don't feel that it is made the image into an art image. Yes there is something to see here but as a photo art image it doesn't make the grade.
PA	Jake	Alletson	3S	Evolution From Tree Fern to Dinosaur Egg	9	Silver	Another interesting idea and I like the thought process. This sort of combined image is acceptable but I just feel you have tried to cram in too much information into the image. For that reason I don't think it has worked well. Maybe a maximum of three individual elements would have been a better idea.
PO	Jan	Lens	3S	July Fashion	9	Silver	Definitely avante garde, and that story comes across. Having the model facing the sun and the hat creating the deep shadows that it has, has eliminated all detail within that shadow. The obvious tassels that obscure her face doesn't help your cause either. Maybe some fill in light on her face would have helped to see more detail.... but then the tassels might have created shadows.
PO	Vicki	Street	5SS	African Princess	13	Merit	A beautiful portrait with some nice strong straight lines as well as obvious soft feminine lines. The muted tones do suit the portrait. I just had a bit of a problem with the composition. I feel the model is a bit too close to the right hand side and her stare appears to be at a big brick wall. I think more space on the right would have been beneficial to the portrait.
PO	Vicki	Street	5SS	Gerbrant Van Mooikloof	13	Merit	Because of the use of smoke in this portrait the mono conversion is probably the right thing to have done. This image is beautifully contrived and executed. The use of the smoke has nicely separated the horse from the background. I know it is part of the "horsy gear" but the bright white stripe across the forehead above the eye is very distracting and could have been toned down

SC	Dylan	Evans	1S	Rainbow Umbrellas	10	Gold	Very unusual image and one I would not normally put into the Scapes category. After having a long hard look at it I decided that maybe it could be a Scape. You have an interesting conversation which shows a little bit of the surrounding buildings as well, which is nice. I guess with the light shining through those umbrellas the colours are pretty vibrant but as presented they are a little bit dull. In this instance pumping up the saturation does add value
SC	Noxolo	Kheswa	1S	SpirituARTily	10	Gold	This is a beautiful silhouette and it's very thought-provoking. The way this image has been presented means that we can't see the bottom of the image. As it appears there's an awful lot of black space there. I would suggest cropping most of that away and putting a medium grey stroke border around the whole image. That pesky power line or telephone line also helps to spoil your image. In the Scapes section that could have been removed. Good try for a 1 star worker.
SC	Dylan	Evans	1S	Think yourself free	13	Merit	A very thought-provoking image. The story is very strong but I feel it is an open-ended story where one can interpreted the way one wishes. I see it as thinking yourself free and getting on the bicycle and riding away into the distance...away from all your troubles. GREAT story...well done. Placing the face on the thirds is a very good idea and shows good technique. Having at least one person in the image would have even added more to the story.... preferably somebody walking down the pavement past that arched door.
SC	Mags	Vosloo	3S	A Winters Tale	10	Gold	Always good to see you picture of the amphitheater. There are two concerns I have about this image. The first one is the choice of the foreground. I'm sure you could have found a better spot of vegetation or grass.... something better than the burnt grass that we see here. (I know the image is called A Winter's Tale). The other concern is the light. It is very flat possibly because this image was taken at 11:40 in the morning and there is little or no molding visible in the image
SC	Mags	Vosloo	3S	Majestic Mountain	9	Silver	The same applies in this image as the previous one in respect of the light being very flat. This image also could have had the potential for greatness but the light has let you down. I think darkening this image slightly would have helped it
SC	Jan	Lens	3S	Sun rise in a cave	11	Gold	Good strong silhouette technique. The colours are strong and the framing of the figure in the image is also great. I suggest putting a tiny stroke border around the edge and also cropping it differently so that the figure is not dead centre. To do that some of the rocks framing the top might have to be cropped away. It would have been better if the figure was standing more to the left in the image

SC	Mags	Vosloo	3S	Sun Splash	6	Bronze	You chose an extremely difficult subject. That would have been nice if you could have pulled it off but sadly this hasn't worked. Photographing directly into the sun brings with it, huge problems. Inevitably the sun is going to be blown out and that is a no-no. Sadly that is what has happened here and no matter what I did, I could not correct that over bright sun. Nice idea, try it again, But with a much lower exposure
SC	Jan	Lens	3S	valley upon valley	8	Silver	I could just imagine the peace and tranquility. That is part of the story that does come across well. Again, as in the previous image, that sun is far too bright. Sadly there is nothing you can do to correct it. The contrast in the image is also very high which makes the dark areas very black but by lifting shadows you could correct this in post-processing. I was not there at the time so I cannot say for sure but the whole image appears to be leaning to the left. Even if this is how you saw it, maybe correcting it slightly would appease the eyes of the viewer.
SC	Doug	Couperthwaite	4S	Tropical Island 4361	11	Gold	A good depiction of this scene. Although the light is bright you managed to cope with the highlights and shadows very well. James Bond island is a huge assault on my senses. That is something very difficult to convey in an image. It would have been really nice to see some boats or swimmers in the water to try and gain some sort of perspective of size.
SC	Heidi	Taylor	5S1	One tree sunset	13	Merit	A really impressive African scene. What is really impressive is that your sun is not over bright. Most things about this image work well except possibly one. The bottom of the image disappears into darkness and it's almost impossible to tell the edge of the image. It would have been great to have a stroke border around this image even if it is only around the bottom dark bit. It could do with some defining. Those clouds are real magic.
SC	Heidi	Taylor	5S1	Protea tree	11	Gold	Another lone tree in a desolate environment. The tree is a very strong element and works well but I just wonder whether the colour version of this might be more impactful....especially if it's anything like the previous image.
W	wynand	lens	1S	Autumn Bee	9	Silver	One can't deny that the photography of the bee is impressive. The colours are complementary and work well together. I'm very aware that with macro photography depth of field is all important. Here with the use of f 2.8, most of the flower elements are out of focus. That would not normally be too much of a problem but the very big strong centre flower element right in the middle is just a bit overpowering. Try a smaller aperture next time but you will have to use a tripod because the shutter speed will be longer.
W	wynand	lens	1S	Weaver on Yellow	10	Gold	Nice, pleasing, negative space image. Some would argue that the bird is too small in the frame but I feel it helps to show off its habitat. The bokeh is beautiful but be careful of your focusing - it is borderline acceptable.

W	Jake	Alletson	35	Weavers Bed Time	9	Silver	Another interesting tree within a African landscape. This sort of silhouette is very difficult to get right. As one can see here the bottom half of the tree is hidden amongst the vegetation at the bottom of the image. If the author could have got lower down to get the trunk of the tree more silhouetted up against the sky it would have created a better result. Here we basically just see the crown of the tree without any trunk and that makes the tree look a little bit abnormal.
W	Derek	Brittain	35	Brown Hooded Kingfisher	9	Silver	Beautiful birds and you've done a fairly good job in capturing it well. The problems that do exist are things that could have been corrected in post-processing. The image overall is a bit bright and it could have been toned down. Currently the eye area is dark and toning it down would make it even worse but that can also be corrected in post-processing.
W	Derek	Brittain	35	Open wide	8	Silver	Hippos are notoriously difficult to photograph well because when they are wet they shine. This can be seen on the left-hand side of the open mouth. There are two things I'd like to mention here. The water appears to be running downhill to the left and you can see this from the water level on the actual hippos body. This is easily corrected in post-processing. The other is, of course all the grass in front of the hippo. It would have been better if you could have avoided that
W	Derek	Brittain	35	Photobombed	10	Gold	I love the interaction between these two. Although the bird is out of focus it is still clear enough to be able to see what was going on. The pig is perfectly sharp and the story conveyed is really good. Obviously here it's a matter of who's the boss?