

## Group AAA Critiques...

1. Antarctica... I like this B&W image and the sky definitely is complementary. I would like to see the captured color image as I have a preference for the amazing blues of icebergs. But very creative interpretation...
2. Art Appreciation... I LOVE this image. Great use of desaturation, and the kids are sooo cute. Great leading lines of bench into the scene. The composition is all around very strong. Very nice image. If they're your kids, print this one. It will bring back great memories someday...
3. Aspen-Blur... Very nice lines. A little busy. I like the blending of the colors. Overall a very nice image.
4. Astronautus devourus... I like the lines in this image, but would have preferred the main subject not be so close to "bulls-eye" in the middle of the composition. I supposed for me what's lacking is that you have one really cool primary subject, but then nothing else of interest in the image. Not your fault, but I probably wouldn't have picked an image without other interesting subjects or sense of more depth. Nice exposure and sharp.
5. Backstreet Hawaii... Nice composition, but I would have probably shot it more from the front (not directly though) as you can't really read the signs on the left side of the image. I don't mind the sidewalk coming right from the lower right corner. I would have brightened up the image and popped the contrast as well. But a creative shot.
6. Blue Water Marina... I really like the positioning of the RED boat, which anchors this composition. A higher perspective may have created separation between some of the boats, which would have made things better compositionally. I like the sky's reflection as well. Nice shot.
7. Bottle Magic... I like the exposure and the composition in general. I would NOT have bull's eyed the takeoff point for the beam effect, and because the right side of the image is brighter, I probably would have found a way to get more contrast on the right side for the "beam effect". It is interesting though...
8. Carmel Valley Sunset... This is more of photorealistic shot as I've shot scenes similar to this and I prefer this sort of natural look (I understand that this is not

necessarily the theme of this competition though). I like the composition, BUT would have included a little more of the foreground hill on the lower left of the image as it looks like it's been cropped a little to tight for my liking as the background mountains are not sharp, nor do they have the vibrance of the foreground. Other than that I really like this shot.

9. Cheers 2... Very creative use of a great image of a great egret taking off from a wine glass. great contrast with the black background. I like the tipping of the glass as it leads to a stronger composition. Very nice image and great idea..
10. Christmas Memories 2. Nice collage of "ornaments"... A little busy for my eye, and if I had to choose between a sharp foreground accent item vs. a sharp background with soft appearing foreground, I would ALMOST ALWAYS CHOOSE the foreground to be sharper. But a cute idea... Maybe would have used a few less ornaments, and had the lights on on the tree as accents???
11. Emperor... Nice lens baby type effect of the penguin image. Someday I'd love to go to Antarctica and the Falklands/So. Georgia Islands to shoot these cool animals... I like the composition, but would have wanted detail in the faces of the birds that are sharp. Also, without the eyes with a little catchlight this is not as strong an image as it could be. I do like the soft focus effect to draw you in to the subjects though. Nice effort.
12. Glowing goodness (flower & ant)... I really like this image. Did I say purple was my favorite color??? Love the foreground sharp, and the yellow/red accent to the mostly cool blue/purple background. Very nice composition. I would consider printing this image.
13. Grass against vase. Interesting contrast of lit grass and the darker vase. Lower Left corner's a bit too dark for me with no detail. Nice textures, but not a composition that has great creative impact... But kudos for thinking outside the box using everyday objects in your yard to make an image.
14. Hang in There Cowboy... Nice action shot and in B&W!!! I'd have brightened the horse a bit to create more contrast. In addition, there's almost no detail in the head of the horse, and the cowboy's head is almost completely obscured by his pants/gear. I really like the internal framing and the cowboy jumping out of that frame and the selective dark (lower right) to light (upper left), indicating you've worked hard at creating an impactful image. The

biggest thing as I'd pick an image that shows the cowboy's head/face and has more detail in the horse. But well done for the post-processing in general.

15. Ice Cave. Very nice composition and border patrol in general (I would have cropped the very bottom of the image just a little). I like the complementary colors as well (not too vibrant or saturated). Very mysterious as to what's behind the icicles. Nice image.
16. Justice is Blind... I really like this image (more or less monochromatic). The composition speaks for itself with great anchoring foreground element, and all the parallel lines... Very nice. Could have had just a tiny bit more detail on the shadow side of the chair. Very nice.
17. Lost in Space. I like the placement of the jellyfish in the composition as well as it being generally sharp. Not sure monochromatic appearance works for me as there isn't enough contrast, depth or texture in the remainder of the image to hold me. You could completely crop the lower 1/4 of the image, making it more of a pano, and I think it would have a little more impact. Just my thoughts.
18. Metamorphose. I like the concept... Don't really get the slug exiting from the peeled banana. My first thought was, why didn't you just create a speckled aging peel and then blackened over ripened peel to complete the aging of the banana... But I just have a disconnect on the slug. Compositionally, things are well placed, but would not have the stems of the top bananas be leaving the frame (border patrol). But this image is certainly thought provoking.
19. Mission Ranch Pano... I really love panos, and this one is well done. The fence definitely ties things together and defines the flow from one part of the pano to the next. Great border patrol with the entire fence within the confines of the image, not allowing the viewer to stray away. One thing I will say, which applies to this image, is that when panos get big from a width to height aspect ratio discrepancy, they get hard to view unless printed very large or on a big monitor. This does detract from the image, but without a more interesting sky or foreground in front of the fence, I don't see how you could have done it any other way. Nice job.
20. Monolith San Carlos Beach... Nice HDR image. Love the placement of the monolith and it's shadow. Compositionally, it flows very well. From an exposure standpoint, it is difficult to transition from the bright warm sunset

light to the darker blue sky, and oftentimes it seems the more you try to process/blend this the more frustrating it becomes to make a seamless transition.. This image is an example where you can get away with the horizon cutting straight down the middle of the image because of the very strong foreground element. Nice job...

21. Moon and Companion... Interesting image. I do like the placement and the composition. I would have liked to see detail in the moon/s. Otherwise a good effort.
22. Moss\_Landing\_Nets\_and Rope... Very nice composition macro. Very sharp, complimentary colors, and good borders. Very strong printable image.
23. Moss\_Landing\_Ropes\_and\_Cleat... Sharp macro, but not as interesting as the last image. Why??? Black background is too much (consider a crop from top and left side, and if possible leaving more image to the right with more rope leading out/into the cleat). Also, the wire/string at the bottom of the image is a little distracting. Otherwise, nice exposure and sharp...
24. Moss\_Landing\_Wave... I love wave images. This is a strong image and very nice composition. I might have left a little more room on top of the wave, unless there was a distracting background element, and possibly brighten the image a little (looks like an early AM shot), but really like the color, sharpness and saturation.
25. Oregon Back-Country Shack. As I said earlier, I love shooting old barns, and shacks work for me as well. I really like this composition (almost a vertical pano). I wouldn't have gone quite as tight to the left of the shack as the dirt is clipped and tends to be a distraction (not always obvious, but once you look at the image a little with this thought in mind, don't you feel it distracts a little???). Also, the out of focus grass coming up from the bottom of the frame distracts. So I would have content fill aware or cloned them out. I like the accent colors of red to the left and the greenish moss on the roof to the right on the shack. A very nice image. Great job.
26. Ravages of Winter Create Beauty... Very nice composition. I like the boldly cropped ice and snow to the left, but wish you would have had the complete ice to the left leaving some grass as a left border as it is a distraction and leads the eye away. The placement of the dead snags is great (I'm a big lover of strong

anchoring foregrounds in landscapes as it helps give a feeling of depth), and the separation of the layers from front to back are great. very nice image.

27. Reflection... Wow!!! What a powerful image... Can't you see the emotion in this gentleman's face at a military cemetery, where you get the thought many of his comrades are buried from the big war/s. I like the use of colors to accent his patriotism as well. A very strong composition and the slight issue of cropping of his right sleeve and his fingertips does not detract from this image much for me... Very well done.
28. Santa-Cruz\_Waterfall... Nicely composed, probably a little too tight to be ideal as I'd of gotten some green foliage in the upper left area above the falls, included more of the base and maybe a little more of the left of the falls, unless you wanted to make a vertical pano type crop. Exposure is good and the image is sharp. If this were my shot, I'd have done a motion blur as I think it would be a more impactful image with more wispy water (probably a 0.5 sec. exposure, but I'd have played with multiple exposure times). Overall a nice image though.
29. Shadow bottles. I like the composition and the concept. Border Patrol is great and the arm doesn't come right out of the corner of the image. But because of the lack of detail or vibrant color or a sense of great texture or depth, it lack impact for me. Also, I'm not sure what the stuff in front of the bottle represents (lighter wispy stuff). I think you could play with this idea and tweak it some and come up with a much stronger image as it's a pretty cool idea.
30. Spinning Glasses... Nice, mostly monochromatic image. I like the glasses (almost hiding in the composition). I also like the take off point for the streaks off center as you've done. I'd have liked very slightly more definition of the glasses as you almost miss them unless you're really looking for them. Interesting.
31. Staircase... Very cool image and patterns. There used to be an app for the iphone called iDroste that made images appear this way, which is cool. I like the contrast, sharpness and color pallet. I think if the image could have been placed more to the right and the center of the staircase lower, you wouldn't have the dead space in the lower right corner and you'd crop the left less as well as the top which has the wider Bluish zones (which I like) would be more prominent. Thus the viewer would be more likely to follow the image from the top down into the stairs. Just my thoughts. But I like the image.

32. Stars & Trails... Another cool motion blur of burning steel wool!!! Very nice transition from warm to cool. Great foreground detail as the sparks go over the rocks. Nice stars, night sky, and even the left side green (light painted???) add to the image. I really like it... Since this is all about manipulation, maybe drop a crescent moon in the upper left corner to provide balance??? I'd like to see this image printed as well. Very nice job.
33. Stoneflowers... I like the composition and the textures. The golden brown and green work together. Very good border patrol. I understand the title, but there's not enough for me to buy it (just me). But technically a good image.
34. Sunset Over Planet Monterey... I definitely buy the celestial feel. Nice "lens flares" and the feel of the sun either coming or going. Not enough detail visible to really know what's under the flares. But get the intent. Worthy effort.
35. Talking Heads... What can I say??? Nice composition and contrast between objects and the background. A feel good image... The objects could be a little brighter.
36. Tern Take-off... I like the effect you guys are using with the primary object jumping, or in this case, flying out of the frame... Compositionally, I like the placement of the bird. Nice use of the vignette peripherally. Nice sharp and perfectly exposed bird/primary object. Nice job.
37. We Were There... Nice title for these self portrait images. I like the composition and framing of the photographers and passerby. Not thrilled with the smudgy dull look of the mirror (especially down low). But an interesting image and good idea.
38. Winter-Worn Trees... In general, I really like this sort of image. That being said, this image offers no real depth, and the repetition of the parallel trunks without any real texture or color, makes me less interested. There's nothing leading the viewers eyes to stay in the image rather than just passing through. I'd love to see this image with some sort of creative (neon colorful background or selectively colorizing some individual trunks. I think it would improve this image, especially for this sort of creative competition...

### **Group AAA Winners**

**Honorable Mentions.**

32.	Stars & Trails.	Kal Khatib
12.	Glowing Goodness.	Julie Chen
36.	Tern Take-off.	Julie Chen
25.	Oregon Back-Country	Shelly Nemeth
16.	Justice is Blind	Julie Chen
6	Blue Water Marina	Chris Axe

**3rd Place.**

9	Cheers	John Drum
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**2nd Place.**

2.	Art Appreciation.	Frank Penner
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**1st Place.**

27.	Reflection.	John Drum
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