



01-Beached and Bleached.jpg

Elke Ikeda

Generally, I love the beauty of well weathered driftwood for the natural light grey color it takes on. The warm tone you used defeats an asset of driftwood as a subject. There is almost a triangle composition, but it's not strong enough to hold the image together. So, I think you would have been more impactful with a natural wood tone and a stronger composition. The intent would be to help the viewer imagine the history of those pieces or, perhaps, share your love of the color, texture and composition.

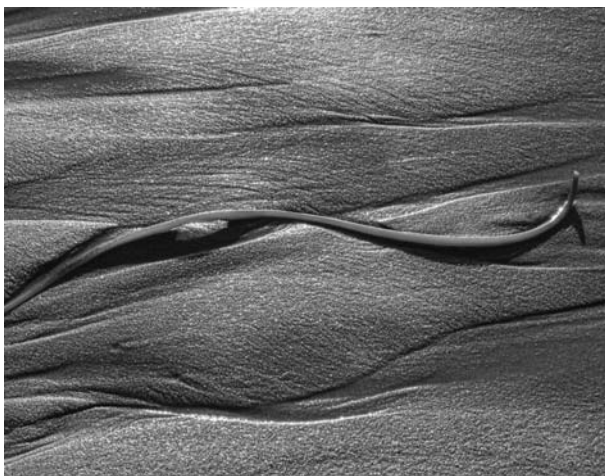
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02-Bridalveil Fall Illuminated by a Full Moon.jpg

Patricia McKean

The subject is so spectacular that I've see too many versions of this...even night shots are too many now. It's worth trying because there is so much joy in the experience. I think this could have worked better with a lot of dodging and burning to increase the contrast. I want to feel the night.



03-Bullwhip Kelp (Nereocystis) on Wet Sand.jpg

Janet Azevedo

Kelp on sand is universally loved subject so it's hard to do something that isn't trite. You've created an image I don't feel I've seen, and I am moved by its excellent composition and texture. It makes me want to stop and be more present with natural beauty that's mostly walked past by humans doing without being.



**04-Bushman Grass (Stipagrostis sabulicola)
Blowing in the Namib Desert.jpg**

Janet Azevedo

I can see your intent and it's a good exploration of line and texture. It would work better for me if the contrast was stronger because it would have made the texture and lines more pronounced. It would also work better for me if you cropped out the third texture at the top because it detracts from the most interesting combination which is the soft grass against the strong ripples of sand. I think a version of this from above on a smaller cluster of grass would also bring out the beauty even more.



05-California Sea Lion Portrait Zalophus californianus.jpg

Ken Jones

I was moved by this portrait. I felt the kinship with the species right away. It was like watching a sleeping grandchild. I loved the tight cropping and the black and white choice. I particularly like the hand under the face and wish I could see more of the hand and wrist...but I suppose you couldn't wake her to get that. I also think this could have a bit more.



06-Echeveria Circular Succulent.jpg

Carol Fuessenich

It's a great subject, but the assignment was to avoid any man-made objects in the image and there are some in this one. This circular composition is the result of being planted in a circular pot. And because the human arranged circular composition is such a strong feature, it doesn't quite work for this competition. I like the contrast and I think it could benefit from a bit more contrast. I also think the surrounding texture subtracts from the beauty of the subject. You might try the subject again in a tighter point of view and more natural ecosystem.

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07-Endangered Native Stand of Monterey Pines in Del Monte Forest.jpg

Patricia McKean

I love the subject. I think it's the kind of mood that drew me to live here. You captured the mood with your tones. It would have worked better for me if you paid more attention to composition and that probably means using a triangle shape to hold it together. You have a triangle, sort of, but it has too much in and around it to do its job. I've spent lots of hours trying to get a good shot like this and just couldn't get enough access to the right spot. I've come to be ok with just going in and trying for the reward of the experience itself. I always get an emotional boost being among these trees and using all my senses to blend in. You don't have to come away with a great image. What might get it to a better level, in my judgement, is a tighter crop, same aspect, in the lower right corner. Eliminate the small black shapes on the edges. There would be only one black shape to draw your eye. Then take the black deeper and the whites a touch whiter. ***



08-Garden Rain.jpg

Andrea Madsen

I like the texture, I like the composition, I like the tone. It excites my sense of taste, smell, and touch as well as sight. What might get it a 5 is a tighter crop, same aspect, in the lower right corner. Eliminate the small black shapes on the edges. There would be only one black shape to draw your eye. Then take the black deeper and the whites a touch whiter. ****



09-Great Egret (Aldea alba).jpg

John Drum

I love the subject and I know it's not an easy shot to get particularly placing it in that excellent background. It would work better for me to bring the white up a couple of levels and maybe the black to a deeper black. If you're like me, the moment was better than the image because you would have heard the wings and seen an angelic creature. I think you are a couple of clicks in post processing from making the image register as equally angelic. ***



10-Harbor Seal Sandblasts Friend.jpg

Clarissa Conn

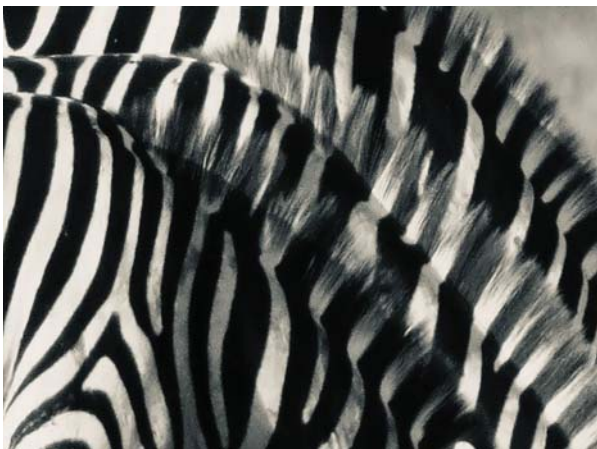
Good capture. You are close to what I think would be much better image. Try cropping out all the competition for my attention and making this about seal in the lower right. Then take up the contrast a click or two maybe.



11-Long Billed Curlew (Numenius americanus).jpg

John Drum

Good work. I love the cross over leg gesture most of all. It looks like a chorus line move. The texture is great because of the sharpness and the beautiful design the sharpness brings out. Generally, I like darker backgrounds to feature the bird more, but in this case the specific environment is critical to this bird's life, so I think you were wise to leave this visible.



12-Mane Idea.jpg

Sandie McCafferty

I think this was a good idea, and it would work better with a lot more sharpness. I think I'd also try an even more horizontal aspect and leave out the background in the upper right. You lose the mane back there, but you would eliminate a distraction to the eye that would more than compensate for the loss.



13-Maryland Sunset.jpg

Andrea Madsen

I've never seen a sunset I didn't want to photograph. The problem is the images are rarely as good as the experience. The sharpness is there, and I like the blacks and whites but I'm not seeing a unique composition that pulls me in. Perhaps the tree on the left with quiet solitude against those clouds or the tree on right by itself would have been better.

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14-Northern Elephant Seal (*M. angustirostris*), Male, San Simeon, CA.jpg -

Frank Penner

The subject is dramatic. I like that you got its eye. I'm looking at the creature, but I'd need a better angle to get feeling of intimacy. Maybe if it looked like it was approaching me instead of frightening of me it would have worked better.

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16-Papaver rhoeas.jpg

Nicole Asselborn

Good composition and tone. The only other thing I can think of to make this image sing is to catch it with an inquisitive cocked head gesture which they do, I think, to hear insects moving in the tree. It would give this some additional personality.



17-Point Lobos Salt Pits.jpg

Elke Ikeda

There are too many great subjects in the frame, and they compete. I can't see the composition and the intent. Ed Weston was quoted by his son, Cole, as saying "With a large camera at Weston Beach, all you have to do is point the camera anywhere and you'll get a good image." I'd add "but if you don't have a view camera, you will have to find a great composition and strong contrast." My experience of losing myself in the moments at Weston Beach have always been more valuable than any image I brought back. I appreciate what Weston and many others have done with this subject and I have utterly failed to live up to their example. It's a real challenge to get a great image. **



18-Regal Bird an Osprey.jpg

Jerry Loomis

Yes, good subject and great gesture. I love the feet and the turned head and the ruffled feathers. In this case additional sharpness could add to the power, but it's hard to get authentic sharpness at this distance.



19-Rising Mist at Yosemite Falls.jpg

Denice Loria Woyski

I like everything about this! Just when I think I've seen enough Yosemite images, someone shows me something I haven't seen before. I like the Asian ink painting aspect, tone and composition. It helps that the falls and stream are so full. It would be great printed on mulberry paper. The atmosphere is perfectly volumized.



**20-Rock Formations at Joshua Tree National Park.
jpg**

Nicole Asselborn

I like what you were going for here. It would have worked better for me if you concentrated on rock formation on the left three quarters of the image and cropped out the formation on the right. And, then I think it needs the texture of the stone to show. And, finally, the sky might be darker to help give the rocks in the foreground more pop.

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**21-Sea Nettle (Chrysaora sp.) Swimming at the
Monterey Bay Aquarium.jpg**

Frank Penner

I like this a lot. The tone and contrast are perfect for me, and I love the composition. I often see this shot in color and it's therefore about color. This is about the animal and its shape, and it looks like a fine art ballet extension.



22-Sea Otter with Urchin Enhydra lutris.jpg

Ken Jones

Great anticipation to get this image. I think it would look even a little better in a square format without as much rock on the left and maybe a little more contrast.



23-Snowy Egret.jpg

Jerry Loomis

One of my favorite subjects and the gesture is particularly good with the drop of water on its beak and the circle of ripple in the water. The face and eye are nice and sharp and there's a good tuft of feather sticking up in the breeze on the shoulder. I think, for me, the water could be darker and the body brighter to bring the subject out even more.



24-Sunrise on Del Monte Beach.jpg

Carol Fuessenich

I don't see a composition here and black and white desperately needs a strong composition usually made with black and white shapes. Without more contrast, the shapes aren't distinct enough to do the job. Texture contrast could be a feature with the sharp foam and intentional movement water, but the contrast isn't enough here.

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25-The Point.jpg

Sandie McCafferty

I see what you were going for but it's not quite there. It would have worked for me if you came in tight on the waterfall and the spill from the waterfall so there wasn't so much visual competition from rock at the bottom and ocean at the top.

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26-Yosemite Dogwood.jpg

Denice Loria Woyski

Excellent composition, contrast, tone, line, shape, and I like the slight glow. The only think that keeps it from a “5” is that it’s so often done this way. There’s a reason for that...it’s lovely. But, I’m looking for a fresh angle.

Winning Images:

Honorable Mentions:

Sea Otter with Urchin

Enhydra lutris.

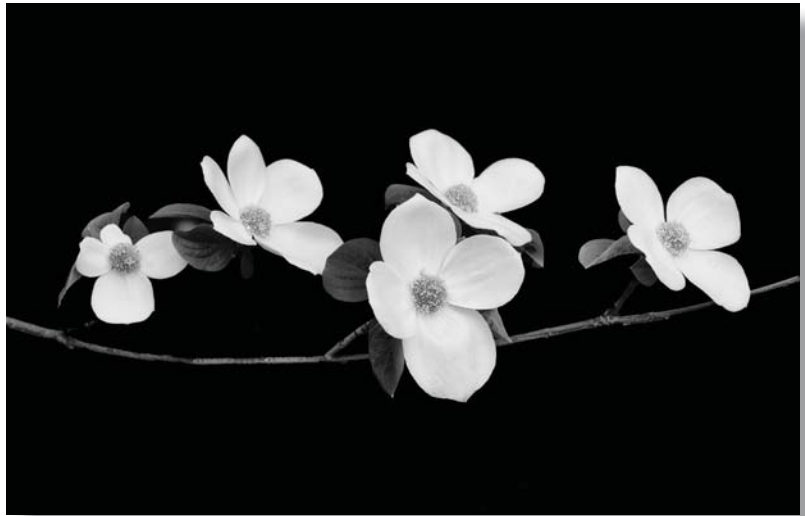
Ken Jones



Snowy Egret

Jerry Loomis

Yosemite Dogwood
Denice Loria Woyski



Third Place

Long Billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*)
John Drum



2nd Place:



Garden Rain
Andrea Madsen

First Place:

Rising Mist
Denice Loria Woyski

