

PTCC-2016
PICTORIAL #2 - LIGHT
GROUP A

60 images from 20 members

01 - 'Specials'.jpg

I like the vibrancy of the color in this image—bright reds are always seductive. The composition also works—with the tomatoes filling the frame very well. I worry about the bright hot spots on some of the tomatoes, perhaps a white diffuser would have helped reduce the glare and kept the side light.

02 - Airliner flies over dragon faceoff at Tokyo Gate Bridge.jpeg

The dramatic nighttime light works very well as do the curvilinear lines that are repeated on the bridge and with the airplane overhead. I wonder if this image would be made stronger by removing some of the small white lights along the bottom. I would probably do this because my eye moves from bright area to bright area and this takes away from the core subjects a little. I also wonder if the important subject is just the bridge, which might be stronger without the airplane lights and some of the other lights.

03 - Apartment Door - Los Luceros, NM.jpg

This is a nice door and makes me think of New Mexico. Sometimes shadow lines help an image and sometimes they don't. I think they work best when they have a strong graphic element but in this image they just look "busy". The tree to the left adds a strong and interesting element and you might consider re-framing so the tree and door become equal subjects. You can do this by moving the door out of the center of the frame so the tree is on the left and the door is on the right and returning when the light is softer.

04 - Big Sur Coastline.jpeg

You captured great light and clouds with nice sidelight on the rocky

coast and Bixby Bridge. This is a very nice image but is very familiar to those of use who live here. This would be perfect to send to a calendar company or stock agency but I can't help wanting fresh images.

05 - Brewing Storm.jpeg

A wonderful image of rain clouds in the distance and sun rays over the ocean. You were in the right place at the right time and captured this scene very well and the dramatic lighting adds immeasurably. Here are some of my thoughts—you may have done this, but when you have a great scene such as this, take a lot of different perspectives. See how the horizon line splits the image? Try moving it up and down. Often when there are great cloud formations such as this it is a good idea to include more sky and less foreground. I don't think the waves in the lower 1/3 add a lot to the image and if the bottom were just below the rocks and there was more sky I think it would be stronger. Often the sky is the image! I'm sure I would have shot this the same way as you did and hope that I would have then experimented a little.

06 - Carmelite Monastery.jpg

Hmmm. I like the window light and the various compositional elements. I'm not sure what is missing for me—perhaps it is the arrangement of the two chairs, which seem to want to convey some message that is eluding me. I wonder if the chair on the right were placed where the chair on the left currently is and the smaller chair removed, if this would be stronger. Then there would be 3 compositional elements and the image would not be as balanced as it is now with two on the top and two on the bottom. I think a single chair conveys a stronger metaphorical message also. I hope you tried different arrangements or will do that the next time you have an rich environment such as this.

07 - Carousel Magic.jpg

I like the light on the white horse and the two horse heads. When I have a shot like this I ask myself what is working in this scene and what is not and then start in PS or LR. If this were mine I probably would darken most of the background, allowing the vertical elements to remain but much more subdued. Then I would try to pull out the darker horse head a little so it becomes a second subject. I would also remove some of the glare from the lighter horse so the white tone is more even. Ansel's finished

photographs do not look anything like the original negative and he did not have PS! So treat your photos as an artist palette and feel free to be creative with them...

08 - Cascade of Jellies.jpg

I always enjoy these jellyfish photographs, they seem so other-worldly and the lighting is always interesting. But this image is not exciting to me, perhaps because there is no central subject or movement conveyed. I find that I look around the scene from one jellyfish to another but want something more.

09 - CHAPEL AT AIR FORCE ACADEMY.jpg

This is a very nice photograph of the academy chapel that incorporates good light and strong colors. I like the symmetry and wonder if you stood to one side intentionally.

10 - evening sun gives haulout singers a golden glow.jpg

Very nice—I like the pyramid that is formed by the tallest one in the center, this makes for a good composition. The side light is also very nice but with a little glare. I wonder if a polarizer would have helped. I am not sure how low the sun was, but it still seems a little bright.

11 - Fun Under the Pier.jpg

This is a very strong image—imaginative and with an excellent use of light. It seems that the woman is slightly out of focus, perhaps because she was moving and you slowed the shutter to 1/13 sec. to capture the dramatic movement of the water she is throwing upward. It also looks like you were on a boat, which probably was moving also. You might want to darken the lower right corner slightly and maybe the upper right also. Just a touch.

12 - Garrapata Seascape at Sunset - Big Sur, CA.jpg

This is a beautiful shot with perfect sunset lighting. I like the soft movement of the water created by the slow shutter speed. I think you would enjoy shooting with a stronger ND filter of 10 stops to get a longer exposure such as 30 seconds. If you change the aspect ratio from 2:3 to 5:7 or something similar, you could remove a little of the sky, which would allow

us to focus even more on the water. I think you should do a lot more images like this and explore the various possibilities. And stay dry!

13 - Grass ballet.jpeg

A very strong composition with the repeating diagonal lines. I also like the dramatic and effective contrast between the bright grasses and the dark background. If this were mine I probably would add a little canvas along the top and right side and make it black to extend the black border a little. As it is now, the edges look just a little tight or crowded. I also appreciate the creativity and willingness to experiment and see differently.

14 - HARBOR LIGHTS AT PORT MAGEE.jpg

This was taken at the perfect time—twilight. The warm tones of the lights contrast nicely against the cooler blue sky and the reflections, particularly of the foreground lights, add to the scene. I am trying to decide about the starbursts from the lights—do they add to the scene or detract? It would be a much quieter and more subtle scene without them, but they add a lot of splash. I think these must have been made with a starburst filter because they are so intense. Overall an excellent photograph and one that works well with the theme of light.

15 - hitting the wall.jpg

A very well done image of the wave crashing against a rock. I like the blue color in the water and the overall soft light. I also think that the shutter speed was perfect for capturing the action and feeling of a powerful wave. The rock and birds on the left provide a nice counter-point or second interesting subject. Very well done.

16 - Horse and Oak Tree in Carmel Valley.jpg

Wow, the great shots just keep coming! This is a very strong photograph of the three riders in CV with the sun at just the right angle. It takes some daring to shoot into the sun like this because back lighting can be so unpredictable. I also like the two distant riders being out of focus and the feeling of movement. The biggest concern is that the subjects are crowded a little into the lower right corner and the feet of the closest horse run out of the frame. I think that if the camera had been moved a little to the lower right, the composition would have been even stronger. When you have an excellent scene such as this, be sure to take multiple shots quickly

with slight variations in the composition.

17 - Late afternoon in Colle di Val d'Elsa, Tuscany.jpg

A very nice image of the stone walkway with receding arches. The light on the stone in the foreground takes my eye into the scene—back to the two walkers and bright building in the background. I appreciate that the vertical lines along the two sides are vertical and perfectly straight. I wonder if this scene would be stronger in a few seconds as the two people walking toward us came closer.

18 - late afternoon on a Beaufort southern porch_.jpeg

This is an excellent photograph in many ways. The brightest area is in the center, right where it should be and the warm side light is soft and warm. The borders or edges of the scene are dark and provide a nice frame for the central area of the image. I particularly like the tree as it holds my eye in the center of the frame, where it should be. This image has a subtle, genteel feeling about it, which embodies late summer afternoons in the south. Very well seen and taken.

19 - Lights On The River Seine.jpg

There are several compositional elements in the photograph that all blend and work together to make the image strong. The reflection of the trees in the river provide strong leading lines and a sense of mystery. These work well with the buildings, lights, the bridge and even the bright light in the upper right corner. The lighting is also excellent—the warmer tones contrast nicely with the fading blue of the sky. Overall an excellent image and I cannot think of a thing that I would change.

20 - Look what I found.jpg

There are many strong elements in this photograph. The backlit child makes a perfect subject that is well placed in the scene. I am concerned about the overall warm/red tonality of the scene. Perhaps the color temperature is a bit warm. One step that I often do is open an image like this in PS and go to Image>Auto Tone to see what PS suggests. There is an opacity slider under Edit (Fade Auto Tone), which allows you to select some or all of the change. Often PS does a better job than I do with tone. Then go to the next two adjustments—Auto Contrast and Auto Color. I do

these three steps with about 90% of my images, particularly the ones where the tonality is not perfect.

21 - low morning light over the dunes.jpg

Both the composition and lighting are very nice in this scene. The low angle of the sun brings out the ripples in the sand by creating shadows and the soft curves are always enticing. There is something about the overall tonality that is not working as well as it could. Perhaps this image needs more contrast or a slightly brighter exposure. Everything looks a little mid-tone and if this image were converted to black and white it would be hard to find true blacks and lighter tones. If this were mine, I would try Auto Tone Auto Contrast in PS to see if these steps make the image more dynamic.

22 - Lower Antelope Canyon, Arizona.jpg

A very strong photograph of the sandstone formations in Antelope Canyon. The curvilinear compositional elements are very strong and well seen. I appreciate the darker areas along the bottom of the image and lighter areas just where you want our eye to go. A beautiful and well taken image.

23 - Maddie blows dandelion seed umbrellas into the air.jpeg

This is a well done photograph! I like the shallow depth of field, which renders the background into an interesting pattern of light spots. These contrast nicely with the floating dandelion seeds. The right hand holding the flower is another well done detail. I could mention that the girl is cut off a little on the right, but in this image that does not seem so troublesome as it would in some others. Perhaps my only constructive suggestion would be to take a similar shot where she is blowing on the dandelion, which would bring in a little more action. I would like to take a photograph of my granddaughter that is as good as this one!

24 - Mirror Lake.jpg

This is a nice reflection of the granite boulder with soft light. The placement of the subject to the left side is also appropriate and well done. The boulder seems to be a little soft to me, not as tack sharp as it could be. This makes me wonder if you were using a tripod or hand-holding the camera? I also

see that the aperture was set to f/32, which may be a little overkill for this scene and cause some loss of clarity and a slower shutter speed. I think that if you shot this at f/14-16 and focused on the rock, it would be sharp and the background would also hold up very well.

25 - Mono Lake Tufas at Twilight.jpg

The twilight hues are wonderful for this scene at Mono Lake, this was the perfect time to be there. Maybe it's me, but I keep looking for a subject to catch my eye and hold my attention. With the tufas all being the same size and scattered around the scene, my eye keeps wandering but never stops. One thought would be to lower the camera, if possible, and make focus on the foreground tufas so there is more of a foreground, middle ground and background. Sometimes it helps to convert an image to black and white to see the composition and lighting more clearly. I think that if this were monochromatic you would see what I mean about my eye wandering but never stopping or focusing.

26 - Moonrise Lighthouse.jpg

This is a very nice photograph of the Point Pinos Lighthouse with the moon rising in the background. It was taken at the perfect time of day/night, probably the night before the full moon. Here's a suggestion—try moving the light on the top of the lighthouse out of the center of the frame—perhaps to the left so it is on one side of the scene and the moon is in the upper right, on the other side. This would create a more interesting dynamic between the two bright lights. As they are now, the lighthouse light is central and the moon is secondary, and a different composition would make them more equal as subjects.

27 - Morning Coffee at Joe's.jpg

A very nice shot of the coffee mug, chair and interesting background. The light is a little harsh, allowing for some bright highlights in several locations. If you draw an imaginary horizontal line across the center of the image you can see how many items follow this center line. I think this image would be stronger if the cup were more in the lower left and the chair more in the upper right. As they are now a horizontal line connects them and a diagonal line would add visual tension.

28 - Morning Light on Hoodoos.jpg

I have always liked the morning light on these hoodoos in Bryce. The side light is much more interesting and warm than light later in the day. I remember taking a very similar image and wondering what I could have done to have made it stronger. Perhaps zooming in a little tighter to remove some of the distracting background. The hoodoos are the subject and it seems that everything else detracts or pulls us away.

29 - morning surfer.jpg

Very nice. The repetition of the dark horizontal lines created by the surfboard and shoreline above work very well, as does the silhouette of the surfer walking into the water in a perfect location. The sweeping line of the wave on the left and the shoreline on the right make a very strong frame or boundary for the surfer—very well seen and composed.

30 - Oban Lighthouse, Isle of Mull, Scotland (1).jpg

The soft, misty light in this scene is very nice and makes it much more interesting than it would be with harsher light. And the side light from the left, lighting up the lighthouse and cliffs in the background works very well. You might want to think carefully about splitting the horizon—when images have an equal part sky and foreground the visual impact is diminished. I would probably opt for adding more sky and less water because the visual structure of the water is not as soft and ethereal as the sky, lighthouse and cliff. You could do this now by changing to a panoramic format and removing some of the foreground, but be sure to think about this when you are composing.

31 - Oregon Cove.jpeg

A very strong shot of the Oregon coast with good light and an excellent composition. The tall rock on the left is well-balanced by the tree on the right and the three sea stacks in the back pull my eye into the scene. I wonder if a 2-3 stop ND filter might have helped by darkening the sky a little. Sometimes these filters help but just as often the scene looks good or better without them. Having said that, I use the ND filter in Bridge and LR all the time to even out exposures.

32 - Pfeiffer Beach .jpg

This is a strong image of the well-known arch at Pfeiffer Beach. It's nice that the exposure on the rocks was maintained, often these go dark as the camera's meter exposes for the bright sun shining through the arch. One suggestion you might try next time is lowering the tripod and moving very close to some of the foreground rocks. When the foreground is emphasized more it adds another dimension to the photograph.

33 - Piercing Sunbeams.jpg

The sunbeams coming in from the top make this image much stronger by adding a second subject. I find that my eye moves easily between the sunbeams and the anemone. This image might be even stronger if the anemone was a little more to the left so the rock with the red becomes another important subject. I think that the sun shining through diffuses the colors a little and this is one image where I might use a touch of green and red saturation to add more depth to the colors. Be sure to use a polarizer when shooting into the water, that will keep the colors more saturated. You might also use the Adjustment Brush Tool to darken the white lower left so the brightness does not compete with the more important subject matter.

34 - Point Pinos Lighthouse, Pacific Grove, With Full Moon As Background Light Source.jpg

This is a very strong image of the lighthouse with the moon perfectly placed in the background. I like the warm low light in the tower that does not overpower the soft moonlight. Very well done—there is nothing I can recommend to make it better.

35 - Railing Shadow On Orange Steps.jpg

A very elegant, understated image that is very well done. I probably would have walked by this stairway without seeing the most interesting shadows. The diagonal line is perfectly placed as is the spacing between the shadows and railings. Excellent. The red color also makes the image even more compelling.

36 - RAINDR~1.JPG

I don't know how I can be expected to pick winners in this competition

when I keep seeing one great photograph after another. Everything about this image works well and works together to make a very strong photograph. The water drop adds interest but everything else about the image is well-placed, in sharp focus and interesting. The soft light and tonality also work very well.

37 - Reflection.jpg

This is another beautiful, elegant and understated image. The composition, lighting, reflection, subject—everything works perfectly. I have nothing to offer except praise.

38 - Rifle Falls.jpg

The slow exposure and resulting soft water flow make this image. I also like the composition but I am not so sure about the branches in the upper left hand corner. I don't think they are adding to the scene and if something is not adding, it is detracting. Perhaps I would like them better if they were in sharp focus. One thing you might try with a scene like this is stack focusing, where you take several shots at different focal lengths—foreground, middle ground and background and then blend them together in PS. It is always a little distracting to me when part of the image is sharp (the water) and part is soft (the foreground). Or, try focusing on the closest foreground, narrow the aperture a lot and use a cable release to stop any camera movement. This scene is too nice to not photograph it perfectly.

39 - ROMANCE AT POST RANCH.jpg

Very nice. The warm tones work very well as does the silhouette of the hand holding the glass. The placement of the sun might make it a little overpowering, perhaps it could have been tucked a little more behind the glass. It is so bright that I have a difficult time seeing the rest of the image.

40 - Saint Andrew's Church, Sunset.jpg

The rich, warm tones of the stone are very compelling. And the dark, cloudy sky makes a perfect backdrop. This is the type of light that we look for and you certainly took advantage of it in this scene. The composition is also excellent—the smaller gravestones provide a perfect counterpoint to the tall tower and triangular shaped roof of the church. I also like the areas of red in the lower left and on the rooftop along the right. Another excellent image. Watch the dust spots on the image sensor and be sure to remove

these from the photos—I see 5-6 of them.

41 - Season Lost_.jpg

I like the composition of the side-lit crab nets and take it that the light source is a strong light on the pier. I wonder a little about the white balance—see how the colors are muted? Perhaps this is due to the color temperature of the light source. Is this a digital or analog photograph—it looks more like a transparency to me. I think I like the idea of this photograph more than the way it turned out. One suggestion would be to use a wide angle lens and move in very close—12” - 15” from the nearest basket to make the foreground more dramatic and powerful.

42 - Shadows of the Past - Ed "Doc" Ricketts Lab.jpg

The horizontal banding from the light coming through the blinds is very effective and make this a much stronger image that it would have been otherwise. I also like the perspective—the angle it was taken from. If this were mine I would darken the darks and maybe lighten the lights to add contrast and drama. Not all black and whites have to have a lot of black, but it often helps a lot.

43 - Shimmering Aspen.jpg

Very nice. This side lighting or sometimes back lighting is needed to make aspen leaves really come to life and you did a nice job with the canopy. I wonder if a little neutral density on the top portion would bring out the foreground a little more—you might try this in LR or Bridge. I find aspens such as this difficult to photograph—it's difficult to make them look different from the many photos we have seen. I like this clump of trees and wonder if you moved in a little tighter if there would then be more layering or distinction between this clump and the trees in the background. Right now they are more or less treated equally. When you have a great scene like this, with this nice light, be sure to “work” the scene by trying different perspectives while talking to yourself about what you like and what is not working.

44 - shooting star in white.jpg

A very nice photograph of the shooting star and black background. I am not sure what the light source is from the left front (I believe), but perhaps a white diffuser would have diminished it and made it a little softer.

It's not that the lighting is terrible, it's not, but to make the lighting perfect and seductive is very tricky. I often underexpose images such as this about a 1/2 stop and you might try that also.

45 - Spadix Shadow In Calla Lily, Zantedeschia Aethiopica.jpeg

The lighting on these calla lilies is perfect and I know it is difficult to do. It is soft enough to show the veins in the flowers and just up to the edge of being perfectly white. The composition with three flowers and the angle of shooting up from the bottom is very well done. And you turned the wind off! If this were mine, I would probably darken the green areas in the lower left and slightly in the upper left. I like seeing the additional calla lilies, but the upper left ones are a touch bright. The I would darken the random spots along the right. You don't want any of these details to detract from the great composition and exposure.

46 - Sun Filled Dandelion.jpg

Yet another excellent photograph—well composed and with perfect light. The warm tones from the low angle of the sun also enhance it. You might consider darkening the areas around the flower about 1/2 stop so they recede a little more. I am not sure this would make this photograph stronger, but it is something I would try with the Adjustment Brush Tool.

47 - Sun Rays Through The Fog- Pt Lobos.jpg

This is a wonderful image of the sun behind the cypress tree in Point Lobos. I like the light areas on the ground where the sun shines through and the tangled tree branches are also very interesting. This is an excellent use of light and a scene that many of us might not see or just walk by.

48 - sunbeams through the clouds.jpg

The sunbeams add a lot to this wonderful scene of the mountain range. When you look at this image you can see that the water in the foreground is not adding very much to the scene to the impact of the photograph. This often happens when the horizon line is more or less centered. I think this could either be cropped to a panoramic with a "mention" of the water or taken differently so there is much more sky and much less water. Clouds, especially expansive clouds, will always trump water. Sorry, I've been watching too much TV.

49 - Sunburst Crown Chakra.jpg

I like the idea of the Buddha with a sunburst and the sun works very well in this image. I think that a better light source for the front would have been a gold reflector instead of a flash. Or you could put a warming plastic cover over the flash to hold down the light. You have to be careful when using a flash because the light is so powerful and harsh.

50 - Sunflower Light With two Strobes.jpg

Very clever and effective to use one of the flashes to cast a shadow. You also have nice control over the lights with no glare or hot spots on the vase. I like this image a lot but keep looking at the blue vase. The rest of the scene is understated with warm tones, then there is this cool (color cool) vase. You might try selecting it in PS and changing the color so it disappears a little more, which would bring out the main subject—the sunflowers.

51 - Sunrise at Mesquite Flat Dunes.jpg

This is a very strong photograph of the sand dunes in Death Valley. The soft, warm sidelight works very well. If this were mine I probably would add a little contrast—darkening the darks and lightening the lights as it looks a little mid-tone to me the way it is. If you like sand dunes, I highly recommend the much shorter trip to Nipomo Dunes. I think the dunes are better and more accessible with fewer footprints in them.

52 - Sunrise reflecting off of the Walt Disney Concert Hall.jpg

This is a wonderful building to photograph and you took this at the perfect time of day. So I keep looking at this and wondering about the structure along the bottom of the frame. How are these windows adding to the image? They do provide some context, but I wonder if the the image would be stronger without them or if they were selected and turned a dark color—black/gray. Maybe if this area was just darkened so it did not pull my eye away from the abstract architecture.

53 - Sunset at Carmel Beach - Carmel, CA.jpg

This is a very well done sunset image of Carmel Beach. The sky is wonderful and reflects very well in the water. I think I know right where this was taken. So here is a suggestion—buy some kneepads and place the

camera about 15" off the ground so that the rock formations in the foreground are even more prominent and clearly in the foreground instead of a middle ground. One thing you can try is taking the camera off the tripod and taking a couple of proof shots while hand holding it. Just move up and down quickly to find the best location and then set up the tripod and take that shot. I realize that as you get lower you lose some of the reflection in the water, but maybe there is a middle ground.

54 - Sunset at the Pier.jpg

The graphic elements in this image work very well—the tall vertical pier pilings, with the lights and vertical people walking. And the warm color of the sunset also adds a nice element to the scene. There is not a lot of depth of field in this image, so an aperture setting of f/8 to f/11 might make it a little sharper.

55 - The Path to the Beach - Pebble Beach, CA.jpg

I like the composition with the boardwalk taking us back into the scene and the strong light coming under the dark clouds. Here's a couple of thoughts. I am not sure if you use a wider aperture to make the background soft or not, but I think you should be very careful and deliberate with out of focus backgrounds. And we all tend to walk around with our tripods extended and take shots as we see the scene when standing. I think that lower (or higher) angles make the scene more unusual and compelling. So take one or two shots with the legs extended, then take a couple more with the legs lowered so you are much closer to the ground.

56 - The Tomatoes of Charles Sumner Greene.jpg

Hmmm, I'm conflicted about this. On the one hand I like the selective lighting that makes the subject of the tomatoes brighter while the rest of the scene is darker, but then I wonder if soft and even lighting would make a better image. I am going to assume you did this consciously and intentionally and I think it is a very interesting way to incorporate and use the existing light. I do like the V-shape or triangular shape of the lit area.

57 - Towers of The Virgin, Zion National Park.jpg

This is amazing light on the towers in Zion. At first I thought this image was over-saturated, but the more I look the more I believe that the colors are natural or very close. The fall colors in the trees below complement the

yellows and reds in the cliff bands and the cloudy sky provides a nice context or setting. This is a beautiful photograph and a perfect example of being in the right place at the right time. .

58 - under the wharf.jpg

This is a very strong image of the wharf pilings with a setting sun. The warm tones work well with the darker, silhouetted pilings and make a strong, graphic composition.

59 - Wine glass .jpg

Very well done. I like the offset composition and the way the glass floats in the scene. The red wine and pattern in the crystal add very strong and well considered graphic elements. And the lighting is extremely well done—just the right amount and well placed. A very strong image.

60 - Winter at the Beach.jpg

A very nice photograph of two young girls playing on the beach with beautiful side light. I particularly like the light on the face of the girl on the left. The composition is also very well considered, with the girls placed in the left side of the scene and the interaction between them adds a lot. I hope you took a lot of images with them in different configurations.

Winning Images:

1st Place: "Lights On The River Seine"

2nd Place: "Spadix Shadow in Calla Lillies"

3rd Place: "Reflection"

HM: "Fun Under The Pier"

HM: "Railing Shadow on Orange Steps"

HM: "Brewing Storm"

HM: "Raindrop"