

October Comp 2018

Thank you for asking me to judge this month's comp, it is one of my favourite areas in photography, I am so pleased to see that this comp has been fully embraced by the TCC. The standard of the entries from a technical point of view, has improved immensely since my last stint as judge.

The images on the whole have got to grips with the fundamentals of exposure, depth of field and sharpness, allowing the members to express their ideas much better... so great job.

As for the sub brief of minimalism, I would like to say what a fabulous effort was made by one and all. Some were able to hit the mark, others not so much. Take heart though, thank you for submitting and putting yourself out there. It is always a difficult thing to do, to invite criticism, but it is necessary, as a way to grow and learn from what others see in our work. Minimalism is one of the hardest disciplines in photography to crack, so don't feel bad if this time your work didn't quite work as well as you had hoped. Experienced pros struggle with this genre, so don't feel any disappointment. When I was at the club I occasionally received a score of 3, and am proud of it. As the observations that came from that three allowed me to move to a better place with my next image.

One area that is a struggle seems to be on getting strong compositions, not too worry, this is a life times work so please keep practicing and sharing your work through these competition. Practice make perfect!!!

Where all of you were all great was in pairing down your images to a single subject and trying to get that idea to the viewer. This was a very powerful effort shown by the club and it was very pleasing to judge.

I look forward to following your progress as you continue your photographic journeys.

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**Tidewater Camera Club
Competition Score Sheet**

Month/Year: October 2018

Theme: "Less is More"

Section	Title	Comp	Impact	Tech	Total		Placement
a	1 A Bike	4	4	5	13	The images works very well. It's simplicity of subject and composition has created an image that instantly connects, with great visual clarity. The subtlety of colours only enhances the image. Well done.	
a	2 all_alone	3	2	2	7	Nice attempt. However, it is not enough to show something on its own in an image. Your job is to connect with the viewer not have them turn away because you were not able to engage them. The Cow needs to be larger and we really needed to see its eyes clearly to connect with it in some way. The panoramic feel is only adding to the cow being lost in the field, that coupled with the lack of sharpness (use a tripod when photographing objects at a distance) throughout the image only intensifies the feeling of being unsatisfied.	
a	3 antiquity_uncovered	4	2	4	10	While it meets the "less is more" brief, it misses on the minimalist sub brief, mainly because the composition is not working. The tight crop to the edges of the goblet mean that is it creating an uneasy tension to the viewer. They know somethings wrong but are not sure why. The area around the goblet needs to be extended to let it breathe. If the photographer had pulled back and created more space around the subject and off to the left, then the patterned marks in the sand would have lead you back to the goblet. Creating something pleasing and well composed.	

b	4	bicycle_ride	4	3	4	11	Nicely worked out image. What allows it to work as is, is the bridges in the upper part of the frame. Giving the viewer the idea of the cyclist moving out of frame and then coming back via the other bridges. The cyclist moving out of the frame is something you may want to reconsider for next time, maybe have him more to the right, so he moves through the frame rather than out of the frame. Time of day maybe something to consider as there is a light highlight in the water which after a while becomes a distraction, just being picky!	
a	5	boardwalk_blossum	5	5	4.5	14.5	beautifully simple, well composed and exquisitely executed... TCC this is the way to find minimalism in your images... bravo.	
a	6	boardwalk_runner	3	3	3	9	point of focus is the issue of this image, that and how unsuccessful the composition is. The eye is drawn to the the bright coloured shoes, yet they are out of focus and not shown completely. Why? It leaves the viewer confused. More of a grab shot than a well constructed image.	
c	7	cleared_for_take_off	2	2	4	8	This certainly meets the "less is more" brief, unfortunately as is, it misses on the minimalist sub brief. Mainly because of the lack of composition from the result of too tight a crop to the plane, this leaves the image flat. For this to work well the plane needs to have more sky showing don't be afraid of space. The vertical positioning of the plane I am not sure works that well, but that is a creative choice.	
a	8	corners	2	2	1	5	this is an image I am struggling with. The light is not giving any contrast to the subject. The subject itself becomes weak as a result. Not sure the photographer understood the brief, due to the execution of this image. It really needed a contrasting object somewhere in the frame, could have been some as simple a graffiti on one corner, nothing too big but something. If you are struggling with a subject don't be afraid to share and discuss your image with another club member you trust to get some feedback.	

a	9	Crossing the Line	3	2	3	8	What we have here is a grab shot. As a street shot, it has mild interest. The action of crossing the line is not really show, so what we are left with is a rope and some legs and no interaction. As the rope is so crisp and the legs have mild movement, it generates an uncomfortable feeling to the image. For this comp a shot of just the rope alone would have been perfect.	
b	10	dove_at_the_window	3	3	4	10	This is one of a couple of images in this comp I assume are by the same photographer. Unfortunately this is the weaker of the two. The reason being the feather is lost within the construction of your complex background. I question the choice of feather, as there is not enough definition in the feather to make it pop, that coupled with its size within this image leaves the viewer asking why? Swaping the feather for a red ball or apple may have yielded a better result. Especially as clearly there was a lot of care went into trying to make this image. If you can go back and have another go. You are onto something here.	
b	11	dragon_fly_over_water	3	3	3	9	While this certainly fits both briefs, the composition lets the image down. Making a compelling image is the primary job of the photographer, sadly this is not working well. There is not enough contrast between the subjects colour and the background, resulting in a flat image. Minimalism is a lot about contrast, whether by use of colour, tone or texture. You were very close. It is a very hard disipline to master so please keep trying.	
a	12	dragonfly	3	3	2	8	This image fits both briefs, yet lack of strong depth of field and over sharpening to compensate, let this image down. F16 with that flat sky should have given a great sharp dragonfly on wire shot... All the hard work had been done, just lack of camera craft has let this down.	

a	13	escape	2	1	1	4	It is not enough to give something a title and expect it to reveal the image. In another competition of contemporary abstraction this may well do well. This is not such a comp and as such this image will always struggle within its parameters. Yes there is a point of reference within the image but unfortunately its abstract nature doesn't allow the viewer to gravitate to it. Can see the effort that has gone into this, but it seems wasted given the parameter of this comp.	
b	14	festival_time	2	2	3	7	I struggled with this image, it does fit less is more for yet the ferris wheel is colourful and nicely taken. The connection to the background is lost because it appears to be a burnt out sky on an overcast day. Not interesting at all. The background needed to be an extension of the vibrancy of the gondolas... simple enough to overlay in post. Its good to note here that good photographs are about the whole, not just the corners!	
b	15	Fog_In_Cape_Breton	2.5	2.5	2	7	here is another image that falls into a category of a not one thing or the another! Definitely fits less is more... so great there. Unfortunately not right for the minimalist. It appears not very compelling in its subject matter, so leaving the viewer somewhat flat. The monochromatic feel really works, however the horizon sloping, with today's tech able to fix, is unforgivable.	
a	16	forever_autumn	2	3	4	9	Not a great fan of studio shots on a black background. Most give the appearance of the subject floating in a sea of black. This is compounded here by the leaf being so small in the frame. While the leaf itself is well taken, there is no strong relationship between the leaf and the background leading to a very unsatisfying end result.	

a	17	gateway	3.5	5	4.5	13	There is always an exception to the rule and this is one of them. While the sky is bold and tormented somewhat, it is consistent throughout the frame, leading to a great juxtaposition with the church spires. The stark black and white feel works well here too. Love it.	
a	18	greener_pastures	3	3	3	9	The technicals of this shot are well done, its nice and sharp, has good colour and exposure. Yet fails to grab the imagination. The lone horse in the meadow staring back at the viewer is not enough to make the image work. It's posture does not say look at me and as such is unsatisfying. The background is very busy and uneven, leading to a messy collection of items in an image where they are all fighting for attention.	
a	19	Harbor of Refuge	2	2	4	8	From a less is more perspective, this certainly fits the bill. It is taken well enough, except the detail on the lighthouse is a little soft. But with the only leading line to the lighthouse cutting the image a third from the top it makes everything below almost irrelevant. Think the photographer was struggling with the minimalist component and it has resulted in a betwix and between. Not one thing or the other, giving us a flat image. Don't give up trying. There is enough here of note that you are on the path, you just need to experiment a bit more and you will get there.	

b	20	heron_at_sunrise	3.5	3.5	3	10	So close to great... good silhouette, nice flat coloured background, yet the processing is poor. The ghosting around the main subject indicates over processing. Boosting the levels would have added punch to the background and made the silhouettes stronger. Can't be sure but this looks like part of an image that has been cropped too much to create this. Yet as far as the concept of the theme this is a good effort.	
b	21	high_in_the_sky	3	3	4	10	This could be great... as is – nice silhouette, nice flat coloured background, punctuated with that great cloud. Again the processing is poor. There are dust spots throughout, which are an easy fix in post these days. The image idea is strong but the composition is letting it down. Try cropping it closer to the plane, leaving it in the lower right. Boost the levels of the shadow which will push the blue and make the plane more of a silhouette... great find just a little more care to get to the final image.	
b	22	Hollands_Kite	2	2	3	7	A simple image shot with good sharpness, exposure and colour helps this effort. But it suffers from a weak composition. The angle of the main kite is not flattering, making a strange shape that leaves the viewer a little puzzled as to why this angle was used. The streamers are almost straight out, suspect with enough care and time I am sure the streamers could have yielded a better shape.	
b	23	independence	2	2	4	8	So much promise... patience is the name of the game here... waiting for a better more expressive moment. The boardwalk is great as is the colour, exposure and sharpness. The child's posture and position make for a weak composition that lets this down. Great potential, take more time and care.	

a	24	Lake_reed	2	2	2	6	So so close, fundamentals are letting this down. This needs to be razor sharp and is sadly not. Tripod is king here, and if used would have yielded a great shot. More care, less haste.	
a	25	Lake_shallows	2	2	2	6	When you shoot objects the eye responds better to an odd number of things to look at. So one, three or five objects are the optimums. Two objects and the brain starts being uneasy. Not sure about the science but here we have two reeds and it is not really working. Their position in the middle bottom is also not a strong choice, and because the reeds are very wispy it leaves them lost somewhat. The boulders in the water would work better if the main subject was a lot stronger, a red beach ball or something equally contrasting in colour to the water/boulder background. So well done for seeing the background just a little more work and there could have been something great here.	
a	26	Last_Poppy	2	2	3	7	Another image that is showing that the photographer is struggling with the minimalist brief and execution. The poppy is not shot in a very interesting way and as such looks lost in black void. An object floating on a black background does not a minimalist photograph make! To be fair it is a difficult thing to grasp and execute, but please keep trying, it will be worth the effort.	

b	27	less not more	2	2	4	8	Apt title... while this is clearly less is more, the photographer seems to stop when they found this beetle, took the shot then walked away. As presented is very flat in subject and processing. There is no relationship to the background as there needs to be for the minimalist brief. If the toy could have been shown disregarded in a sea of grass... this may have created something more interesting. Learn to work a scene, not one shot then go!	
a	28	long_laces	2	2	2	6	Great find, love the angle and the story, yet sadly it doesn't appear to be that crisp. The knee on the left I find distracting, as I do the whole leg. A slightly tighter crop may have yielded a better result. Do like the distress of the surroundings as a juxtaposition to the school uniform. A bit more care and this could have been super!	
a	29	marsh_grass	3	3.5	3.5	10	Love the high key and cool reflection, well found with fair execution. the processing of the sharpening is a little over done, as is the highlights being blown as on closer inspection the image starts to breakdown in places. Great idea, a bit more care and this would have been a winner!	
b	30	mirro_reflection	4	4	3.5	11.5	This is weaker than the later frog image within the context of this comp's theme. The subject is nice and sharp, well exposed and its positioning in the frame is pleasing enough, but its not that engaging. I feel there needs to be something else in the frame, attracting the frog's attention, creating a story. There is also a very ugly shadow in the lower left of frame, this should be eliminated. More care and a little bit more thought and this could be really interesting.	

			1.5	1.5	1.5	4.5	Because of the poor exposure and camera craft in this image, it is unclear what the intention of the photographer was/is here. A little bit of post production may have given the viewer a bit more of a clue. But a bullseye shot of the Washington Memorial isn't enough for either part of the comp briefs.	
b	31	monument_at_noon						
			2.5	3.5	3.5	9.5	Nice find. Good exposure and the mushrooms are nicely crisp. Certainly fits the less is more brief, yet there is something not quite working for the minimalist brief. The intrusion of the grass elements in the top and bottom of the frame that are making the different I think, Try taking them out and see if this improves the image. There is inconsistent focus on the background that is very distracting, almost like a lensbaby or similar was used and that is also effecting this working well in the minimalist brief.	
b	32	mushrooms						
			4	4	4	12	A simple image shot well, creating an image that fits both briefs well. Nice composition, good exposure and colour makes this a very pleasing effort. Well done.	
b	33	No_lifeguard_on_duty						
			2	2	4	8	I really struggled with this image, the designer in me loves it, yet the photographer is having a harder time. Two thirds of this image is taken up with a graphical shape that looks like it was done in post. It is therefore difficult to judge its merits for this comp based on what is presented. The flowers are well taken and are nice and sharp, with good overall exposure with a great high key light background around them and that's about all I can say.	
a	34	on_the_decline						

b	35	orchids	2	3	3	8	Nicely taken image of some orchids, and that is where the photographer stopped. There little regard for the background here, in quite in focus and not quite out of focus either. With the slots in the top and bottom right pulling for attention somewhat, remember that the background of your image is sometimes just as important as your subject. In the minimalist world it is more important.. Easy to remove. Yet a better solution would have been the use of a backdrop of a coloured paper, a contrasting colour to the yellow from the colour wheel, in this case it would be purple. The exposure is flat so watch for that too.	
a	36	out of order	2	1.5	2	5.5	Forgive me for not getting the subject from the title. The claw in mid air on a boardwalk as its presented is not effective or stimulating to the viewer... It's not even in focus!there is no humour either that I can ascertain so I am left feeling very flat.Your job as a photographer is to stimulate the interest of the viewer, sadly not a great effort.	
a	37	Oxfor	4.5	5	5	14.5	One of the best in the comp for hitting both briefs very well. Classical minimalist shot with great even graphical elements generated by the building and its surrounding. Great point of focus in the D. Just great work!	
b	38	petals	3.5	3.5	4	11	This is great, simple to the point, unlike a black background, the stark white make the image really clean and fresh. One comment is moving the rose to the right a bit and creating more white on the left and concentrating on that one curled leaf. Very nice indeed!	

a	39	photo_op	2	2	2	6	Grabbed "Photo op" I'm afraid, although it is taken fairly well, the sand in the foreground should have had a graduated ND filter on it to stop it burning out. The composition is not really inspiring and the image suffers because of this. Good colour but another sloping horizon!
b	40	Posing	3	2	4	9	This is better than the previous frog image within the context of this comp's theme. The subject is nice and sharp, well exposed and its positioning in the frame is pleasing enough, but again its not that engaging to be honest. I feel there needs to be something else in the frame, attracting the frog's attention, creating a story. A little bit more thought and this could be wonderful.
a	41	red_orb	3	3	4	10	Sorry for repeating myself but large black backgrounds need to very carefully used, to make sure your subject doesn't look like its just floating. Unless that is the effect you are looking for and in this context I suspect it is the latter here, as the background cloth can just about be seen. Although a creative choice I am not sure it really enhances the image here. Almost 50% of the image is black and is not really contributing to the subject at all, which is a real shame as the orb and its stand are really well taken. Leaving it on the stark white might have been a better solution

b	42	rising_against_the_wind	2	2	4	8	so much is right and so much not in the same image must be a record. Looks like an early image of mine, where by the photographer has taken great care to get the shot, make it work for the theme and yet missed the composition completely. Composition is a skill that comes from practice and more practice. The kite really needs to be in the opposite corner on the right, and it's line really needs to be visible through the rest of the frame to work well.	
a	43	sandman	3	3	3	9	another image that is showing that the photographer is struggling with the minimalist brief and execution. Although it fits the main brief of less is more very well. It is a very competent, tight looking image. The subject is strong as is the definition in the sand and its patterns. Although there seems to be something amiss in the lower right of the image, maybe too much cloning – It seems very blurred compared to the rest of the image. Something you will need to address at a later date.	
b	44	simply_made	4	4.5	4.5	13	A simple image with shot with subtle lighting, that belies the care that went into taking this image. It is very well executed and certainly takes minimalist to the extreme. Would like to see a bit more contrast in the bowl to pull it away from the background somewhat, as everything is white on white. Or just excentuating the shadow on the bowl to pull it out a little more. Just a thought, maybe adding a shock of colour as the background to pull you to the cereal, would have made it bold and modern.	

a	45	six_mph	3	3	4	10	Well taken image, good colour, exposure and depth of field. The speed bouy and the water have a relationship, so good there. Yet it feels a little lacking. So as far as less is more, excellent. As for the Minimalist brief... not quite there. Great images make the viewer stop and want to see what the photographer saw, this is a little unsatisfying in that regard. All photographers go through this as they expand their repetoir and gain a better visual skill set. Please keep going I see great potential.	
a	46	solitary_man	4	5	4.5	13.5	what a lovely summery shot. Vivid colour blocks punctuated by great angles and finally the old man happily getting on with his life with no notice of him image being taken. So natural so good. Not classically minimalist but close enough in my book. Well done great find!	
b	47	symphony_village_eagle	3	3	2	8	This is a very tricky one. As a minimalist exercise in where to place objects on a flat relatable background, then this works. As a less is more entry, this also works. Where is starts to fall over is where the elements work together or not so much here. This is why composition even on something as simple as this is key to getting this type of image to work. The Eagle is not sharp enough in detail and has a burnt out tail leaving the image unsatisfying. A more dynamic and slightly larger eagle would make this.	

b	48	Tiny_Flowers	3	3	3	9	This is a great less is more image. Nice light, pleasing subject great colour. Depth of field works fairly well, but the background is busy and a tad distracting. Nice job! Watch for the highlights in the flower petals, on my monitor they are a touch blown out. Unfortunately it doesn't work as a minimalist image in my humble opinion. The whole of the flower would need to be tack sharp and a more even toned background would be needed to just begin to go in that direction. As is well done.
b	49	Tire_Tracks	2.5	2	4.5	9	The technicals of this shot are well done, its nice and sharp, has great colour and exposure. Yet fails to grab the imagination at all. The tire track are more interesting in the bottom left corner but since that is such a small part of the image, can't say it is the subject. Which leads to what is the subject? At the moment this is an historical record of a stretch of sand taken well! If the tracks really are the subject then your camera angles have to change to reflect & show this.
a	50	too_early	4	4.5	3	11.5	Here is an image that needed to be worked a little more by the photographer. As presented it is a competent well taken image, and yet it could so easily have been more. The footsteps in the sand are not well defined at any stage, leading it more of a grab shot than a well formed, conceived idea. The angle to the umbrella shows too much of the landfall pushing it out of what might be considered minimalist. Lowering you angle would have eliminated that and allowed you to make the footprints more prominent making the image stronger. Possibly a black and white conversion may have assisted here allowing for the contrast to be a bit more accentuated without losing the early morning mist feel.

b	51	tranquil_momento	4	3.5	4	11.5	this is the stronger of the two feather shots. The relationship is tighter between the background and the feather. The feather isn't as lost as the previous effort. Would love to see a lot more texture in the feather, mayb more contrast just on it. Watch for the areas of highlights on the feather too, as in this case it lessen the power of the feather and just looks like poor exposure skills!	
a	52	transmarina	3.5	3.5	3.5	10.5	A studio shot that should be jumping out at the viewer, and yet is doesn't. Final processing if any lets this down somewhat. I am not a great fan of the stark black backgrounds and yet it could have worked brilliantly here with a bit more care and attention. Not really a minimalist image though, more a product shot. A look at how graphic design works in photography may help you develop this idea more. Nice effort.	
a	53	under power	3	3	4	10	Love the vibrant colour here but after a few seconds that is all that dominates. Yes there is a boat on its own in an ocean but to what end... again the relationship of subject and background while strong does not give the viewer a compelling image. The camera craft is strong and this saves the image somewhat, but not enough. Do think you are on the right path and need to explore minimalism more, I think you are close.	
a	54	wanting_the_shot	3	2.5	4	9.5	So many images have been successful in their isolation of their subjects and this is one of them. Yet isolation is not enough to produce a compelling image. The lack of any composition and story as to why the subject is there, leaves the viewer flat and somewhat disinterested very quickly. Try harder to engage your audience... think you are close, keep going!	

b	55	wren	4	3.5	5	12.5	<p>A well seen and thoughtful composition – hitting both briefs very well. Great clarity and sharpness throughout enhancing the minimalist perspective. Do think that there is a stronger minimalist image available from this image... see attached. Be open to possibilities and who knows what your next image may be. Lovely effort!</p>	
b	56	zen_on_the_beach	2	2	3.5	7.5	<p>Zen in the title but not really in the image. Yes it is somewhat tranquil but is seriously over blown, on my screen, on the main subject. The depth of field is such as to only have part of the stone sharp, this is a major distraction in this kind of image. The lighting is such that most of the main subject is in dark shadow. Not sure the photographer has achieved what the brief was hoping to illicit. Although less is more is clear here, the compelling image is missing as is the minimalist perspective.</p>	