

# Manukau Photographic Society

Month: May 2026

Category: Set Digital – Landscape/Seascape/Skyscape

Judge: Gary McClintock

Please tick one box ✓

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**Newcomer Grade**

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Heartfall - Wow- I can see where the title comes from. This is a serious place. The image is well composed. The waterfall comes at a diagonal creating a series of triangles. The bridges also divide the space well in a vertical dimension. The exposure is good, maintaining detail in the water. The photographer has achieved good detail through the image. Most of all this image works for me because it makes the scale of this waterfall and the drop from the bridge real.

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Land Escape

✓

I was intrigued by this image and liked the subtle play on words in the title. As a tramper this does speak to escape. The choice of a square frame works to give a sense of peace. The image is well composed as a series of receding hills and mountains. The image is sharp and detail can be enjoyed. The exposure in a scene like this is challenging as you have bright whites and dark blacks. It is beyond the camera's ability to render both correctly exposed at the same time. In this image the whites have been over-exposed and in an attempt to address this the contrast has been reduced. The result almost seems like two different images and detail has been lost from the sky. If in doubt, under expose to keep details in the whites. Exposure blending is another option and there is information out there on it. I would like to have seen more of the water at the base to give the image more stability. I enjoyed the wildness of the image.

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Milky Murrays Bay

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The subtle blues and greys in this image really took my attention. This is a beautiful astro shot of the Milky Way over Rangitoto (I think). The composition of this is strong. The bottom third of the image balances the brighter sky. The dark base is needed for this balance. And this all balances around the outline of the island. In terms of technique the stars have not trailed suggesting a good exposure time. This has also smoothed out the sea. A hint of wave action remains but it does not steal attention from the sky. I did find the bright lights on land a distraction. If competition allows for their removal I would do so. I thought this image has a subtle beauty.

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The Lost World

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This image presents a sense of wilderness for me. A sense of getting out of the tent in the morning to a brisk day. This atmosphere is generated by the foggy clouds sitting above the water and the density of the bush. The photographer has captured good detail throughout the image. The line of yellow at the water edge strengthens the separation of land and water and gives a note of warmth and

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hope. The photographer has exposed well to retain detail in the cloud and the composition is strengthened by a slightly darker band along the top edge. The composition is thoughtful with just enough water balancing the top of the image and the recession of ridge lines drawing the eye through the image. I did struggle to settle on a focal point, eventually being drawn into the waterway on the right. I wondered if there was space to the right to close off this area with shore and bushline rather than finishing on the corner. I enjoyed this evocative image.

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### Open Grade

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	H	HC	M	A	NA
Bealey Spur, Arthur's Pass		✓			

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This is an amazing cloud display that has been well captured. Having the sky as the bulk of the image works well in terms of balance and showing the form of the clouds. The exposure holds detail in the clouds and the image has good sharpness throughout. While the dark base balances the lightness of the sky I think opening up the shadows in the hut would add to the image. The inclusion of the hut gives a tramping context to the image which adds a sense of story. The perspective gained by shooting up to the ridge line accentuates the sense of height and climb. This image has a real sense of space to it.

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	H	HC	M	A	NA
Daybreak		✓			

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This image gave a strong sense of warmth and hope for the day ahead. I enjoyed the thoughtful composition. The land does not leave the image right at the corners. The small slice of land at the bottom contains the water and gives the sense of it running into the sea. The sky comprises slightly more of the image than the water and land lending a good sense of balance. The island and boat fall nicely around the thirds. The sense of peacefulness is reinforced by the boat being at rest. The clouds are well exposed to hold detail and the subtle colour palette supports the sense of warmth and peace. This is an image to explore as it reveals subtle details like birds, reflections and the presence of life across the water.

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	H	HC	M	A	NA
Foggy Morning		✓			

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This image balanced simplicity with detail. The warm colour palette is limited in contrast to the filigree like detail in the trees. The recession of ridges and treelines go all the way through the image. The small dark base balances the larger, brighter area. This is an image that warrants study reveals detail throughout. There are areas of colour in the base that appear to have formed around a fence line. Check that you have chromatic aberrations managed. They detract from the monochromeness (if that is a word) of the image. Removing these to have the base essentially black would work, perhaps with it being reduced slightly. This image certainly evokes a sense of hope.

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	H	HC	M	A	NA
From Te Mata Peak		✓			

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This is an image of detail and grandeur. The photographer has taken advantage of a day when the light is soft enough to open up detail rather than cast harsh shadows and the clouds provide detail and interest in the sky. The colours are subtle but varied and add to this for me being a study of landform and land use. The image made me wonder at what geological process had shaped the landscape. Technically the panorama appears to have been stitched together well with no signs of joins apparent. The placement of the mast on the distant peak is central in the image and helps draw the viewer through the image. Although a bit picky, bright areas along the bottom and right hand edges drew my attention. They are small but once seen I kept returning to them. Reducing their presence would address this. I spent a great deal of time exploring this image which I assume would be a success for the photographer.

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Here be Dragons

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There be rain in them there hills! This is a high contrast capture of an impressive collection of clouds. There may well be dragons among the clouds, certainly something significant. The exposure has been handled to show gradation in tones across the clouds. The whites are blocked in places and the transitions between tones are obvious. The choice to process for this grittiness does add drama however it does not sustain close viewing. The base of land and trees is left dark and it's relatively small size balances the larger sky.

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Ihumatao Sunset

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This image presents an exercise in perspective for me. The image appears quite simple but is cleverly composed. The foreground grasses appear large and draw the viewer in while the large trees in the mid ground contrast the close and large grasses and the far and small trees in the distance. The image has sharpness throughout from very close to through to the distance making me think that focus stacking has been used. The contrast of the busy grass and empty sky also works well. The image is carefully framed with no distractions on the edges and the tree given space. The image has warmth from the evening light. The blue and golds work well together. I enjoyed the careful construction of this image and found that the more I studied it the more compelling it became.

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Into the West

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I could imagine myself standing high above the sea and enjoying this sunset. The image highlights texture with contrasts between the soft cloud, gentle sea and the strappy grass. My eye was drawn along the reflected sun to the grass and held there. The dark base of the image is relatively large and it held my attention. The sea and sky have a darkness about them as well. I think lightening the grass area would help the viewer move around the image more. The area I wanted to enjoy most was the beautiful cloud. I suggest trying some cropping options that remove the grass. This would simplify the image and remove the tension. I enjoyed the warmth of the image

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	H	HC	M	A	NA
Mangakotukutuku Falls			✓		
<p>Waterfalls seem to have universal appeal and the softness and structure of this little falls was appealing. The photographer has used a long shutter speed to bulk up the falls and give a sense of movement. The exposure is gentle with the whites not over exposed. The photographer has divided the frame in a 2:1 ratio to show the falls and mossy rocks. The wood is at a slight diagonal and breaks the strong vertical of the falls. Spectral highlights on wet wood are very difficult to eliminate. It looks as if the photographer may have used a polarizing filter to lessen their brightness and saturate the colours. I asked myself if the image felt too cluttered with the wood or if it detracted from the falls. I decided I liked that it contributed to the story of this river and it's rise and falls.</p>					

	H	HC	M	A	NA
Manukau Harbour			✓		
<p>The abstractness of this image appeals to me. The colour palette is restful and warm. The photographer has divided the image well to support the restfulness of the image with the horizon placed on the top third. The image is not sharply focussed resulting in a softness which gives it a painterly or drawn feel. I did wonder if ICM had been used but the hill line in the background suggests not. There is a cropping artefact on the right hand edge that could be easily remedied. This image grew on me. I can see it working well as a small print that will challenge viewers to work out what they are looking at.</p>					

	H	HC	M	A	NA
Mt Taranaki, Sunset			/		
<p>The beauty of Taranaki Maunga is on show in this image. The light is soft and has helped the photographer to draw out detail in the bush around the lake. The colours are subtle and the warm light on the gum tree works well in front of the mountain. The image is sharp and well exposed. The emptiness of the sky allows the land, bush and reflection to shine. It also seems to increase the presence of the mountain for me. The band that stretches across the image works well. The placement of the mountain of centre works well as does the framing to ensure the amount of land at the edges is significant. A panorama crop that reduces the sky at the top would leverage the symmetry of the reflection in the image. I enjoyed the restfulness of this image.</p>					

	H	HC	M	A	NA
Piha Stream			✓		
<p>This is striking image of a well known landmark. The sun stars give the image a novel twist and the monochrome treatment simplifies the image and likely makes it easier to incorporate the over exposure that has occurred with the sun stars. Given how bright they are, this is pretty much unavoidable. The photographer's inclusion of the two people adds story to the image and a sense of scale. The left side of the image does not contribute strongly to the image. Try crops on either side of the rock to the left of the people to simplify the image and give even greater presence to the stars.</p>					

	H	HC	M	A	NA
Shifting Sands				✓	
<p>This image gives a sense of space and sparseness. The panorama format works well to reinforce this and ensure the image is about the sand, the sky and one small person. The inclusion of the person walking away adds a sense of scale and also contributes to a story of walking into the dunes. The presence of the footprints in the foreground further reinforces the story. The image is soft and lacking sharpness. The title alludes to this being about the wind blown sands moving. Given the bright light available I think sharpness in the image would be easily achieved and would improve the image. I enjoyed the composition of this image. The division between sand and sky highlights the former and the placement of the person balances the hills on the left.</p>					

	H	HC	M	A	NA
Skyscape				✓	
<p>This is an amazing sky and the photographer's presentation has made it the centre of attention. The colours in this sky are impressive. The image is very much about the sky. Whatever can be done to reduce the presence of the housing area would give greater presence to the sky. The lights draw attention. The choice to use a very different frame does make me ask if it works. The dense blackness of the frame competes and overpowers the image for me. A lighter colour toned to the sky could work. There are black marks in the sky. They may be birds. Look at removing them.</p>					

	H	HC	M	A	NA
Te Arai, August				✓	
<p>The range of textures in this image makes it interesting, particularly the areas above and below the high tidemark. Obviously a busy beach. Using the foreground trees to frame the image adds further interest. This is a busy image that had me thinking about the area. I can see smoke in the distance that makes me think it is an area in the process of development. This image has been taken on a bright day and there are areas of bright white in the clouds and water. They do draw attention, particularly the water which pulls the eye through to the hills in the distance. There is also detail in the foreground with grass and steps. I thought a great deal about this image and concluded that although there was a lot of detail I could not settle on story or focal point.</p>					

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**Set Image of the Night** Ihumatao Sunset

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## Manukau Photographic Society

Month: May 2026

Category: Open Digital

Judge: Gary McClintock

Please tick one box ✓

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### Newcomer Grade

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The Quiet Watcher ✓

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The simplicity of this composition works well. The photographer has captured this Kingfisher with its gaze into the distance. There is a contemplative sense which the title leverages well. The exposure is good and allows the viewer to enjoy the beauty of these birds. Isolating the bird and branch against the sky increases the sense of isolation and quiet. The diagonal placement of the branch and the intersection points with the frame make a strong composition. The light in the eyes adds life. I enjoyed this peaceful and balanced image.

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Washed Up ✓

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I think our gulls are beautiful birds and the time they spend washing to me is time well spent. This image captures a moment during a wash. The photographer captured detail like the water drops with a fast shutter speed. The focus is on the eye and head area which is needed in this type of image. The fast shutter speed may have been at the expense of depth of field as the

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side of the bird is soft and unfocussed. I would like to have seen this area sharper but appreciate that it was probably moving. The title alludes to this bird being a bit past its use by date. And the photographer has achieved that look. The image is cropped very close possibly to emphasise this is a portrait more than a nature shot. I found this to be an intriguing image.

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Open Grade

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	H	HC	M	A	NA
Kia ora		✓			

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This is a fun image and it really made me smile. I do not know enough to say with confidence if these are alpacas or llamas so I'll stick with animals. The photographer has done well and maintained focus throughout all of the animals which would require a relatively small aperture. The inclusion of the brown is stronger than having all white animals and leveraging the power of odd numbers is also working here. For me the key to that success also sits with having good separation of the heads and the way two of the animals are entering from opposite sides of the frame. The quirky engagement with the photographer is great, particularly the closest animal. I would love to see the third one looking as well but that might be a lot to ask. After studying this for a while I wondered, given the title, if this could now be a political commentary on immigration.

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	H	HC	M	A	NA
Surfers		✓			

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This image has strong artistry and also a sense of interaction and relationship between the three surfers. I am unsure if this image includes pre-capture ICM or is all post processing. It doesn't really matter as the result is impressive. As I studied the image I was surprised at how many colours were present and the sense of fun they injected. The reflections are critical to this image as they ground each surfer. Without the reflections they would float in space and the sense of movement would be lost. The background tone works well and gives a sense of sand and beach. The slight difference in the space between the surfers also strengthens the image by adding to the sense of relationship and not making the arrangement too regular. There is a strong story of fun and enjoyment in this image which I enjoyed sharing.

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	H	HC	M	A	NA
The Train Driver		✓			

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This looks like a man who knows how to enjoy life and he has seen plenty of it. The photographer has set up this portrait well and really engaged the subject. The direct gaze presents a confidence. It may have been an informal opportunity, and if so the opportunity has been well taken. The image presents the textures and details of life really well. The photographer's aperture selection is excellent as we see detail in the driver and his clothing and cap which also show resilience. The background has been rendered soft and does not distract. Turning the driver's head to be at an angle to his body works well as does filling the lower portion of the frame with his body. I liked the contrast monochrome treatment. My eye was drawn to areas where the hair and beard are thicker. The detail in the whites seemed to have been lost. A slight decrease in exposure could assist here. I have no trouble seeing this guy up front in a train enjoying every minute.

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Tree Topography

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✓

Nature produces amazing patterns and if we take time to look we can enjoy and capture them. The photographer's title led me to explore this image as I would a topographic map. I can see peaks and valleys and contour lines running along ridges. The dark area on the right became a lake. A challenge with images like this is maintaining sharpness to the edges of the frame. In this case focus is falling off, particularly in the bottom areas of the image. given the subject is not going anywhere ensure you take time to check and ensure focus. If necessary look at focus stacking. You would only need a couple of images here. Another option would be to look at a different crop to remove these areas. The exposure is good generally. Two brighter pieces of wood in the bottom left drew my attention unhelpfully. I enjoyed the detail in this image.

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**Open Image of the Night - Surfers**

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