

Landscape competition - "on/from the beach"

This is a landscape competition titled "on/from the beach", so to my mind it should be a photo taken on or from the beach of the surrounding landscape, near or far, either landscape or portrait orientation or square format. I heard some one say once that where there is an interface, there is a photograph, and thats what I think about the potential for this subject where land meets sea, meets air.

I enjoyed judging these photographs and I think the experience will help me to be more critical of my own efforts. So thank you for this opportunity.

1.0 Squall from Coral Beach, Skye

This is a wide angle photograph with a foreground of sand, seaweed, rocks and grass. The squall makes the sea slightly choppy dotted with white crests. The sea is bracketed in the distance, with cliffs on the right and an island on the left. The overcast sky has a blue grey tone with some light relief to the RHS. The larger rocks in the foreground have a natural leading line towards the cliffs. It has the ingredients of a good landscape, which is an interesting foreground and a level horizon positioned following the rule of thirds. It maintains its interest through sharp detail, which is best seen when enlarged. It has a variety of natural colours and is bound by a white border. It has a wide aspect ratio, and there is much to see, however it hasn't got a focal point, so I found my eyes wandering around a bit from left to right to try and find one and not quite knowing where to settle. Perhaps some cropping off of the left would encourage the viewer to look to the right where they could settle on the cliffs, grass and sky, which hold the most interest. Good high quality photograph.

2,0 Too rough for paddling.

Good title given the subject matter. I'd rather be on the beach than in the water. The sea looks and is very rough.

The foreground is predominantly the waves crashing on the beach. The main focal point is the pier and cargo handling equipment. It's an atmospheric combination of land, sea and air. It's got lots of movement about it going from left to the right, culminating in a crashing wave on the right of the picture. The spindrift reinforces the windswept nature of the day. I think that the foremost wave lessens the impact of the others and could be cropped off. I also viewed this in black and white and found it more dramatic given the inevitable low contrast nature of the weather. Good well observed photograph.

3.0 Beachwalk

This is a quite punchy photo with good placement of the subject matter. There is rocky foreground, which anchors it, and then helps to naturally draw your eye to the contents. Compositionally the couple on the left provide a vertical stop. There are some reflections in the wet sand. Its a shame that the couple are not enjoying the view instead of their phone. One dog is sniffing seaweed and the other gazing out to sea, a little more of which to the right would have helped the viewer reconcile their curiosity. The inclusion of the sky is not obligatory and the seaweed strewn rocks are a good backdrop. The light is falling on the scene from behind the photographer. A good effort.

4.0 Silvery Sea at Lindisfarne

A high range of light and dark has been captured between the land, sea and sky, You can see a shaft from the sky of what could be rain or muted sun beams about 2/3 of the way in from the left As you would expect the horizon is perfectly level and straight. The effect of the sun on the water gives the photo its life and its title - Silvery Sea at Lindisfarne, so you can tell where it is as well. The branches to the right give a sense of scale which otherwise you might not really see. I would have liked to have been able to see a bit more of the branches on the left as it would've balanced the foreground quite well. Good atmospheric photograph.

5.0 Beach huts at Saltburn

The beach huts are on the right of the picture. On the left we have what looks like a public shelter and somewhere renting out surfboards. Above the embankment is an urban scene of houses and hotels etc. I am guessing this photograph was taken from the high vantage point of the pier, so with a standard lens all these things are captured. Yes the beach huts are a part of the picture but now I'm going to say something which I hate judges saying about my photos. If the photo is about the huts then that's what I really expect to see. In fact this is where most of the interest lies. There are the colourful huts, people walking towards them with surfboards. There are reflections of the hut colours in the wet sand. Perhaps there was not time to go onto the beach or they have the necessarily long lens to really get to grips with this subject from the pier. If so, then cropping might have rendered the RHS of the photo in more detail. It was a nice photo opportunity that captured the moment and I enjoyed looking at it.

6.0 Bamburgh Castle from the Beach

This was taken in the early morning sun and a golden light has been cast upon the scene. There is a lead in line from the opening in the sand dune towards the castle which is presented on a bed of grass. The photo captures the whole of the castle. I like the combination of blues and golden yellows, with the subtle shades of green. I usually dislike seeing footprints in the sand, but on this occasion being so many they add interest. The log on the left is a bit of a distraction. It leads my eye to the edge and out of the picture. It is probably too large to clone out at the editing stage. It is best to avoid such things at the time the picture is framed in the viewfinder by changing your vantage point if possible. It is still however a well composed and balanced picture.

7.0 Help Has Arrived

A good photo should tell a story, and this one does of a fishing vessel being towed in from offshore by an RNLI rescue vessel. This was certainly a boat that needed rescuing being so close to the rocks. Obviously you can't arrange these things, so a good photographic opportunity wasn't missed. As a result this photograph gets the viewers attention pretty quickly and they can understand what its about.

Good composition and the subject matter is intriguing because it tells a story but leaves you guessing why and what happened next? Well done.

8.0 Sandy Raff Paff

This one is a picture of Raff Paff on the beach with a a big wet nose and sandy beard. The background is a rock covered with barnacles and some sea water. Its hard to photograph a dark subject in a bright location such as a beach, however Raff Paff is correctly exposed on the RHS but not so well on the LHS. One solution would have been to try and get the whole of the face exposed to the light. Most head shot animal photographs benefit from generous space around the subject, which helps the photograph breathe, and in this case would have included more of the surroundings. In the context of this competition this is on the very boundaries of landscape photography.

9.0 DSCNN3825 (Coquet Island)

This is a thoughtful and pleasing composition of a receding tide leaving wind ruffled sandy pools in the foreground wending their way from the bottom LHS corner towards the surf and Coquet Island is in the distance. The scene is capped by fluffy white clouds. The horizon is level and in a pleasing place about a third of the way from the top. The photograph has not been given a title, which is a shame. Hint: When entering a competition (at least in the WDCC) if you don't know how to rename your photograph, either ask a member how, or write the title down and the competition secretary will rename it for you - wont you Mike?)

I can see what I think are footprints at the bottom in the foreground which are a bit distracting. The rest of the beach looks pristine. When you take pictures on the beach is it easy to advance too far into the potential scene. If you have the computing software you can clone these out.

The photograph on my screen is a little on the soft side, which does not detract too much from this restful picture.

10 Stakes Lindesfarne (3rd)

Good foreground interest which dominates the picture with 4 prominent and nicely positioned stakes and in the distance 2 more which carry on the foreground theme. The foreground stakes might be the remains of a jetty and those on the farthest shore are navigational aids. The three stakes on the left provide a lead into the focal point in the distance and the one on the right provides balance and added interest with the cleft at its top. The stakes theme threads over an untroubled blue sea. On top that you have an interesting blue sky. The horizon is central which works for me. The stakes break the horizon enough to be comfortable. The elements of rocks, sea and sky are nicely proportioned and shaped. The exposure overall is quite good however the exposure of the sky would have been improved with the use of a graduated ND filter which would have darkened the right hand side slightly and accentuated the different shades of white and blue in the sky. An alternative would have been to crop in from the left and right thereby losing some of the RHS brightness.

The distance is a little out of focus, but this adds to perspective the image. Our eyes do not see the distance objects in sharp focus when drawn to the foreground. I enjoyed looking at this, so well done

11.0 Beach Reflections

In the beach reflections I can see two people at the top, two people at the bottom and one person in the middle. I can see sky, clouds, grass and sand. I am intrigued to know where this was shot and what it was that gave these reflections. It kept me guessing and I think it is a successful mystery picture, but spoiled to some extent by a dirty mirror and some obvious post production jiggery pokery (spot removal?). I think the composition could have been improved by "a less is more" approach. However this is a well observed novel picture which I enjoyed studying.

12.0 Blyth Pier (2nd)

This is a lovely composition. I like it because it is simple and balanced, with the lighthouse on the pier on one side and the the wind turbine on other These have been made to stand out against a sepia tone sky. The heavy vignetting at the edges draw you in. I am sure the photographer has pre-visualised this shot and been aware of the post processing tools necessary to make this stark and interesting photograph work so well. I cant find any thing else to say, except please tell us how you did it.

13.0 Beach, Boat, Barra (HC)

The next one is called Beach, Boat, Barra, from which we can conclude it is a beach with a boat on it and it has been taken on the Outer Hebrides island of Barra. You can see it is disused because the stern has rotted away which adds much to its interest. The fading paint colours are muted and combine well with the colour tones of the surroundings. It is sharp and the overall exposure is good and the danger that al but the deepest shadow areas would have been too dark has been avoided. There are lead in lines with the ropes to the bow and stern. However I am not sure why the boat has been cropped so tightly as this would have given the lead in ropes more rein. Good picture that makes me want to visit Barra on a photographic expedition.

14.0 From Ross Beach towards the Holy Island

There are some nice elements to this photograph. We have a seagull on the wing and another on the shoreline. In the distance is Lindisfarne Castle. There are wave crests, wet sands and an overcast sky. The lack of prominent features on this coastline makes this a challenge for the photographer, however this is a beach I would like to visit.

15.0 Bamburgh Castle. (HC)

This photograph certainly packs a punch. I think it has been taken with a relatively small aperture because of the starbursts on the lights. There is no discernible graininess associated with a high ISO, so it is probably a long exposure taken with the camera mounted on a tripod. It was taken at dusk with enough twilight left to illuminate the sand dunes. There are three dominant colours, blue, sandstone yellow and green, which work well together. I think the strong blue sky and foreground might have been emphasised in post production on the computer, and there is no harm in that, however to my taste the blue is bit overpowering after the initial impact. White van man has made his appearance, and I would have cloned him out, because once you have spotted him you just keep returning. An excellent photograph.

16.0 P1110947 (Boats on Beach)

We have a wide angle on three boats on the beach, sand, sparse vegetation, people, a calm sea and cirrus clouds (I think) above a straight horizon. It is well exposed with the exception of the older wooden boat, which whilst possibly the most interesting, is underexposed. The sand in the foreground is negative space and I see an instant improvement in composition if about a third of the picture is cropped off the bottom. I also see an improvement if the dark shadow of the dune on the RHS is cropped off too, as it is an distraction at the edge of the picture. To my mind having the horizon in the middle lends an air of tranquility and balance to the scene. I am sorry I have decimated your photograph and you are free to disagree with my suggestions. The same suggestions I made earlier about an untitled entry apply here too. So all in all good elements that could possibly have been improved at the time the photograph was shot or at the editing stage.

17.0 Someone Loved me Once

This picture is a story of a boat for sale and has been taken from the beach. If anyone here is interested in buying it there is a mobile phone number to call. The For Sale is attached to where the fore-sail would be. The photograph has a strong diagonal line line dividing the scene from corner to corner. I am sure the photographer saw this and has preserved it in the chosen aspect ratio. There is a nice juxtaposition of the red and blue is against the green foliage background. These are primary colours that work well together. Everything is in focus, and there are lead in lines a-plenty.

18.0 Bridge To Bass Rock (1)

Near Dunbar, this is often referred to as the bridge to no-where, but at low tide it spans a small stream. It provides an iconic photo opportunity, which has been taken to full advantage by our photographer. It is a long exposure picture which shows the bridge, railings and causeway and a rock on the horizon (its not Bass Rock). The sky is overcast and the tide sufficiently high to just cover the causeway. The milky quality of the sea and sky contrast against the sharp features of Bass Rock and steel structures. It has a thin black border which nicely complements the black and white monochrome treatment. A lead in is provided by the causeway, to the bridge. The horizon placement approximates to the golden rule principle of thirds. There is some corner vignetting, which may have been a function of a wide angle lens or deliberately introduced to help draw you into the picture, in either case it helps. Altogether a well composed, and thoughtful photograph using classic techniques.

19.0 Its Not Me

A boat with a mans name which makes a change. It has been dragged up the beach by a tractor judging by the track marks. It has a winch and marker flags, so I imagine its a lobster or crab creel

hauling vessel. It is colourful, which is what I guess caught the photographers eye. There are strong diagonal lines from the top RHS corner which lead you in. The exposure is good considering it was a bright day and everything is in focus. The attractive sky has some wisps of cloud and possibly an vapour trail from an aircraft. An onshore wind unfurls the black marker flags in the stern. There is a similar boat behind it which confuses the outline of our boat a little. The loop of the grab pole, just peeks above the horizon. I think that you have to treat things above, below, or on an horizon with care. Please forgive me for being picky but my rule is that if you are going to break a horizon, do it "good and proper", or not at all. If I hadn't been able to adjust anything like this at the time I took the photograph, I might have cloned the pole out later. Don't tell anyone I said that. A picture is worth a thousand words and I think this one tells its story well. Thank you.

20.0 P4290010 (Rocky Bay)

This one is not got a title (please heed my earlier comments) however it's got all the right ingredients for a good landscape. It is certainly not **from** the beach and neither is it **on** the beach. It is rather **of** and **above** the beach, so to be fair to the other competitors I have to say it doesn't fit the competition criteria.

It's a very rocky beach. Should you wish to go onto the rocks below you would have to undertake a very steep descent. The stonewall in the foreground was probably put there to stop livestock from falling onto the rocks, so that gives a very strong indication of how dangerous it is going beyond the wall. The exposure is good and there is good foreground with an interesting hump on the wall. A good foreground helps the viewer see the depth and scale of the scene. The horizon is level, well positioned in the frame and the sky has a softness, but is still discernible from the sea. The scene has balance and this helps the viewer linger in the middle ground. Well done.

21.0 Stag Beach Bamburgh

The rocks are seaweed strewn and waves are crashing on the shore. The sky is cloudy and I can see some people on the rocks and some squiggly lines in the sand, possibly footprints. The horizon is level and the sky is reflected in the wet sand. To my eye a little less foreground would achieve a slightly improvement with less negative space. There is unfortunately an uncomfortable processing artefact that I can see on the boundary between the rocks and the sky and sand, which is a thin white line hugging the rocks. I get sometimes this effect when I process my photographs in light room and I have to pull back on the offending slider. Please take a closer look but don't be disheartened because it can usually be remedied. Overall the photo conveys the serenity of a peaceful scene on the beach and is a pleasure to look at.

22.0 Whipped up by the wind

The waves have been whipped up good and proper here. I like this simple yet effective photograph. You feel as you need to step back, because otherwise you will get soaked.

So here we have the sea sparkling in the background and waves crashing in the foreground. You have spray on your face and lips and you I can taste the salt. The focal point is obviously not in the foreground which is slightly out of focus, but the fine spray particles in front of the dark water are in focus and then it goes slightly out of focus again for the horizon. That's all so effective that I can even hear the crashing sound as well. I hope you dried the camera afterwards. Well captured.

23.0 Lindisfarne Castle

We have the imposing view of Lindisfarne Castle behind the boat in the foreground which is pointing towards the castle. The placement of both in the frame is good and achieves balance. The sky is cloudless, but that couldn't be avoided because that was what the day was like. It is well exposed and focused from near to far. There are some nice reflections in the water. I think the tall grass is slightly distracting being at the bottom edge of the picture. A little bit more of it, even slightly out of focus, might have helped to give accentuate the sense of depth. I don't know. A polaroid filter might have darkened the sky. Again I don't know. All I am suggesting is that if you can, it does no harm to experiment. Nice simple and effective composition.

24.0 Summer at Seaburn (HC)

I like this one. I keep on looking at it and finding more. There are quite a few things working for it. Warm colour tones. Peoples reflections in the wet sand. A flag flying showing that there is a breeze. A safety flag not flying, showing that the beach is relatively sheltered. Kids in motion playing. Waves advancing on the beach with a curve inviting your eyes into the body of the scene. Perhaps its the sort of picture anyone could take, and perhaps only a few recognise its worth at the time the shutter is clicked. Well seen, and thank you for showing us this great day at the sea side.

25.0 Spittal Beach.

This has been taken when the ancient rocks have been exposed. Sometimes they are covered with sand, however the beach is at its most interesting when the sand is washed away and you can see the rocks and the sand waves.

What was it that drew the photographer to this view? Was it the rocks pointing into the distance? Perhaps it was the reflections of the rocks in the calm water. To me it is the sand which is the best feature of this photograph and I am impressed that there were no footmarks in it. The sky is cloudless and therefore not interesting, so I would have been tempted to crop it quite severely. Just a thought, more of the shallow water sand ripples may have been exposed if a polarising filter had been used. Moving to the left slightly may have opened up a patch of water in front of the rocky finger on the right, thereby joining the two pools. It would just be more visually comfortable. I think this is was challenging scene with good strong elements that are nevertheless hard to draw together in one picture. I think they would have been better captured individually. Its still a good picture however and congratulations on undertaking it.

26.0 Sandcastle Feature.

Lets get this out of the way. The horizon is not level.+

The photograph is sharp and well exposed for a shot straight into the sun. The sandcastle is a strong feature, and in the foreground and makes a good anchor for the photograph. Also the darkness of the bottom helps to ground it. I think the photograph would have been enhanced by cropping off the top of the picture. Once you have registered the setting sun, and the straw coloured band above the horizon, the rest of the sky is bland and holds no further interest. Overall its a it's a good, well observed concept. It says to me, playtime has ended for the day, so congratulations for seeing its potential and showing us.

27.0 A Crowded Beach

Irony intended, because it's not crowded at all. There are a few people on the beach in the distance. What was putting them off? It could've have been the cold weather, the time of day or remoteness - which? I don't know. The spindrift means it is windy, so its probably the weather. The sea and rocks in the foreground, give a sense of perspective. The horizon looks level and the proportions of the land sea and air are roughly equal. The lance of rock is substantial enough to justify its inclusion, without completely cutting off the sea to the right, and water, flows around its end.

I point this out because I think that sometimes photographers in their compositions do not let nature take its course and crop things in - so that they don't look right as a consequence. This one doesn't, Nice atmospheric picture.

28.0 Embleton Bay (HC)

We know it is Embleton bay as we can see the silhouette of Dunstanburgh Castle in the background. Excellent composition and placement of the various elements in this refreshing photograph. The fresh green grass in the foreground sits well against the yellow sand. The sea shore is rimmed by the white surf and the sky is capped by a blanket of blue grey clouds. I find

the guy walking through the scene a little bit distracting and I think I would've cloned him out, but that's just me. Composed in the viewfinder I think, it is well observed, evenly exposed and consequently a great photograph.

29.0 Far Skerr to Cheswick Bay

I love the beach and the geology of the rocks. I need to go there because it looks so interesting. You've got loads of things here. Pink flowers on the headland, cracks in the inclined limestone pavement that goes all the way into the water. There are more features below the translucent sea, white surf pounding against the beach and exposed strata of rocks. It is evenly exposed and the composition is good. It is slightly soft all over, but more so in the distance, which is never a problem, but it would have been nice to have some sharper detail. It was taken on a sunny day, looks warm and inviting and the photographer has done due justice to this beautiful scene.

Highly Commended

13.0 Beach, Boat, Barra

15.0 Bamburgh Castle

24.0 Summer at Seaburn

28.0 Embleton Bay

Winers

3rd - 10.0 Stakes Lindesfarne

2nd -12.0 Blyth Pier

1st - 18.0 Bridge To Bass Rock