

Judges Comments



First.

This little picture really intrigued me. The delicate balance between light and darkness, the presentation, vignette and viewpoint all drew me in. While the crudeness of the pinhole lens creates a literal disturbance and distortion it also seems to capture a simple truth - the essence of something. A thought or intimate moment reflecting the relationship between Cullen and her subject. A person present and deeply involved in a consuming and considered process. This photograph feels like an insight into a psyche. It speaks to me of an internal dialogue – perhaps even a struggle? It causes me to reconsider the recent disorder and to recall a time when the world seemed to stop. When many of us connected to a more natural rhythm and discovered a stillness. A disruption or awakening? Perhaps the restoring of order? A time which presented us with opportunities to find moments amongst the confusion for quiet reflection.



Second.

A desolate clinical room. A deserted institutional space. Symbolic in the absence of people. Disruption can feel empty! The sense of isolation heightened here because of the stark contrast between what we see and what we know we should expect to find. Good editing of visual information is also knowing what not to include in the frame. Kit Dean has used strong compositional elements to make a dull, lifeless subject interesting and mysterious. A row of uninhabited chairs creates cinematic suspense. A doorway lacking life adding further tension. The monochromatic image appears somehow timeless and yet telling of a significant historical event. Testimony to the void we've felt. A record for future people perhaps? Encapsulating the unnaturalness of modernity. A bland yet beautiful reality - both disastrous and hopeful.



Third.

Carly Jade Anderson's image is a familiar scene of the new normal. The power of good documentary photography is such that it can record the human condition. By choosing to photograph this everyday view Anderson asks us to question it. She causes us to reassess where we have come and notice the absurdity in our daily lives - when even the simplest of tasks are disrupted and odd. The body language of the subjects telling a story of people inconvenienced and impatient. Taken in the style of pioneering street photographers and referencing the traditions of photojournalism this feels gritty and authentic.

I'd like to extend my warmest regards to everyone involved in this exhibition of photography. There were many excellent entries making it a tough choice. So much so in fact, I felt unable to choose just one. I have picked out works that, for me, relate to the topic of disruption whether literally or more abstractly. The selected works also demonstrated strong technical ability and understanding of the medium. There are many other beautiful works in this exhibition which have also stuck in my mind and deserve a mention including; the series of Cyanotypes, the pylons, colourful canvas prints and the beautiful image of water parting. I'd love to have been with you tonight to celebrate and I appreciate the opportunity to judge this competition. Thank you to Yvonne and Helensville Art Centre and I look forward to further collaborations in future.

Jago