

Greater New Braunfels Photography Club (GNBPC) Score Sheet for February 2026

Judge: Pamela Liu

Assignment Theme Photos - " *Silhouettes and Shadows* " Scoring System: 3-9 pts

Image Title	Score	Comments
Assignment-Art Deco in Blue-James Moseley	6	<p>This image effectively engages with the theme by utilizing a high-contrast shadow that mirrors the subject's form, adding a sense of mystery and depth to the frame. Technically, the intense blue saturation creates a striking monochromatic palette, though the harsh lighting results in some distracting blown-out highlights on the figurine's face. The composition is well-balanced through the use of the Rule of Thirds, positioning the physical subject and its shadow to lead the eye across the textured background.</p> <p>To improve the composition, pulling the figurine slightly further from the background or adjusting the light source could sharpen the shadow's edges, creating a more defined "double" that enhances the overall graphic impact.</p>
Assignment-Artist at Work-Sharlana Dillard	6	<p>The image creatively embraces the theme by using a shadow as the protagonist, effectively turning the act of creation into a ghostly, abstract narrative. Technically, the high-key yellow background provides excellent contrast for the silhouette, though the overall image would benefit from increased sharpness and a reduction in the distracting artifacts found along the bottom edge.</p> <p>To improve the composition, a tighter crop on the lower right side could center the shadow's action more effectively and remove the extraneous box in the bottom, allowing the viewer to focus entirely on the interaction between the shadow and the blue paint.</p>
Assignment-Behind Bars-Jackies Wise	6	<p>This image captures the "silhouettes or shadows" theme beautifully by using dramatic barred shadows to create a sense of confinement and narrative tension. Technically, the high-contrast lighting is excellent, though the deep blacks on the subject's left side swallow a bit too much texture, making it difficult to distinguish the figure's form from the background.</p> <p>To improve the composition, adding a subtle rim light or boosting the shadows slightly in post-processing would help define the subject's silhouette and separate it more effectively from the dark environment.</p>

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Assignment-Capturing the Sunset-Sandy Gilbert	9	<p>This image is an excellent example of using backlighting to match the theme, as the strong evening light perfectly reduces the patio furniture and distant figure into sharp, distinct silhouettes. Technically, the exposure is handled well to preserve the vibrant oranges and soft blues of the sky, though the large umbrella creates a heavy dark mass that slightly overpowers the more delicate patterns of the chairs.</p> <p>To improve the composition, a lower camera angle or a slight repositioning could help separate the overlapping silhouettes on the left, ensuring the person and table don't blend into a single ambiguous shape.</p>
Assignment-Dawn_s Early Light-Barbara Beversdorf	7.5	<p>This image captures the "silhouettes or shadows" theme effectively by reducing the boat and its rigging into a dark, sharp silhouette against the shimmering, reflective water. Technically, the exposure handles the golden hour highlights well, though the boat lacks a bit of the crisp definition that a faster shutter speed or more precise focus might have provided. To improve the composition, centering the boat less and applying the Rule of Thirds—perhaps by placing the vessel in the lower-right quadrant—would create more visual tension and a stronger sense of movement across the vast expanse of the water.</p>
Assignment-Early Morning-Thomas Soutter	8	<p>This image is a great example of the "silhouettes or shadows" theme, utilizing long, dramatic shadows that stretch across the foreground to lead the viewer's eye directly toward the light source. Technically, the photographer successfully captured a sharp sunlight through the tree branches, though the high dynamic range has left the upper sky somewhat washed out and the tree trunks slightly overexposed.</p> <p>To improve the composition, a lower camera angle or a wider lens could further emphasize the scale of those shadows, while using a polarizing filter might help deepen the blue of the sky and reduce glare on the driveway.</p>

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Assignment-End of the Trail-Edward Zukowski	9	<p>This image is a very creative and excellent example of silhouettes, using a massive, textured moon to cast the foreground figures and trees into stark, dramatic relief. Technically, the exposure is expertly handled to capture the intricate craters and warm glow of the lunar surface while maintaining deep, clean blacks in the silhouetted elements.</p> <p>To improve the composition, shifting the horizon line slightly downward could provide more "breathing room" for the figures, ensuring their distinct shapes aren't crowded by the bottom frame and further emphasizing their smallness against the vast celestial backdrop.</p>
Assignment-Happy Valentines-Craig Pellerin	9	<p>This image is a very creative and excellent example of the shadow theme, using the soft, elongated silhouette of a wine bottle to tell a story of quiet contemplation. Technically, the vibrant red backlighting is expertly managed to provide a dramatic glow that defines the sharp edges of the wine glass while allowing the bottle's shadow to remain mysterious and diffused. The composition is balanced and elegant, utilizing the verticality of the glass and the shadow to create a rhythmic flow across the frame. Regarding the title "Happy Valentines," the solitary glass creates a strikingly lonely narrative that contrasts with traditional romantic imagery, perhaps suggesting a "self-love" or reflective theme. To improve the piece, you could introduce a subtle secondary shadow of a second glass or a rose to more clearly bridge the gap between the solitary atmosphere and the romantic holiday title. However, this image is great enough for the theme and tells a strong story.</p>

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Assignment-Hide N Seek-Suzanne Daunt	8	<p>This image is a strong example of the "silhouettes or shadows" theme, capturing a child in mid-sprint as a dark, dynamic form against a bright background. Technically, the exposure is well-handled to maintain a solid black silhouette while preserving detail in the sunlit courtyard behind the figure. The composition uses the surrounding pillars to frame the subject effectively, and the child's posture adds a sense of kinetic energy and playfulness to the scene. Regarding your observation on the "lonely Valentine" aspect, this image pivots from that melancholy to a sense of freedom and anonymity, though the isolation of the single figure still carries a quiet, introspective weight. To improve the shot, timing the capture a fraction of a second later would have prevented the child's head from overlapping with the dark background building, providing a cleaner outline and better separation for the silhouette.</p>
Assignment-I can almost touch the sky-Christiane Menelas	9	<p>This image is a great example of using backlighting to fit the theme, perfectly rendering the mother and child as crisp, emotive silhouettes against the soft glow of the setting sun. Technically, the exposure is well-balanced to maintain the warm colors of the sky while ensuring the figures remain solid black, though a slightly faster shutter speed could have further sharpened the movement of the hair. The composition is strong, using a vertical orientation that emphasizes the "reaching" motion toward the sky and places the primary action in the center for maximum impact. To improve the shot, a slightly lower camera angle could have separated the silhouettes more clearly from the dark horizon line, making the child's outstretched arms pop even more against the bright clouds.</p>

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Assignment-Quiet Elegance-Paricia Jones	7	This image effectively captures the "silhouettes or shadows" theme by rendering the bonsai tree as a dark, intricate form against the structured, horizontal backlighting of the window blinds. Technically, the black-and-white conversion emphasizes the textures of the needles and the reflection on the foreground surface, though the highlights on the blinds are slightly overexposed, causing some loss of detail in the background. To improve the composition, centering the tree slightly more or using a tighter crop could eliminate the distracting vertical wall edges, allowing the viewer to focus entirely on the "quiet elegance" of the plant's silhouette.
Assignment-Shadow Leaf-Barry Armer	8	This image beautifully embraces the "silhouettes or shadows" theme by presenting a delicate wire leaf alongside its larger, more dramatic shadow. Technically, the monochrome palette and soft lighting successfully emphasize the intricate geometric patterns of both the physical object and its projection. To improve the composition, shifting the glass bottle slightly further to the left would provide more breathing room for the shadow to expand, preventing the top of the leaf's shadow from feeling cut off by the upper frame.
Assignment-Shadows-Cindy Korzekwa	7.5	This image effectively interprets the "silhouettes or shadows" theme by using a person's shadow as a surrogate for the photographer themselves, creating a sense of presence in a vast, natural space. Technically, the soft focus and diffused light create a dreamlike quality, though the lack of a sharp subject or focal point makes the image feel somewhat unfinished. To improve the composition, finding a more textured surface for the shadow to fall upon or including a small physical object in the foreground would add much-needed depth and a clearer anchor for the viewer's eye.

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Assignment-Sidewalk Shadows-Becky Love	6	This image effectively explores the "silhouettes or shadows" theme by capturing the intricate, dappled shadow of a shrub alongside the geometric lines of a railing. Technically, the high-noon sun creates sharp, high-contrast patterns on the concrete, though the bright brick wall in the background competes for attention and slightly washes out the top of the plant. To improve the composition, a tighter crop focusing on the intersection of the railing's shadow and the organic leaf patterns would create a more compelling abstract study and eliminate the distracting architectural elements at the top.
Assignment-Stage Lighting Shadows -Shelby Caesar	6	This image effectively engages the "silhouettes or shadows" theme by using dramatic stage lighting to project a towering, recognizable shadow of the double bass and musician onto the background siding. Technically, the warm tones on the instrument provide a nice contrast to the cooler shadows, though the diagonal tilt of the horizon line and high ISO noise detract slightly from the professional quality of the capture. To improve the composition, leveling the camera and stepping back to include the full headstock of the bass's shadow would create a more balanced and intentional narrative frame.

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Assignment-Standing in the Sun-David Love	6	This image effectively explores the "silhouettes or shadows" theme by capturing the elongated, interlocking shadows of two figures against a geometric paved surface. Technically, the high-angle perspective utilizes the natural sunlight to create sharp, well-defined shapes, though the overall exposure feels slightly flat and could benefit from increased contrast to make the shadows pop.
Assignment-Survival-Ralph Nordenhold	5	While this image captures the rugged textures and mossy details of the tree trunk with excellent focus and a somber, natural mood, it largely misses the mark on the "silhouettes or shadows" theme. Technically, the even, diffused lighting provides great clarity for a nature study, but it fails to produce the dramatic contrast or elongated shapes required to make a shadow the primary subject. To improve and better align with the assignment, waiting for a "golden hour" light source would allow the tree to cast a long, rhythmic shadow across the rocky terrain, creating the necessary thematic depth. A great image will be waiting after the re-taking.

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Image Title	Score	Comments
Color- Juvenile Male Pyrrhuloxia- Barbara Beversdorf	8	<p>This is a refined and technically accomplished portrait of a Pyrrhuloxia. The image demonstrates excellent optical discipline: feather detail is rendered with exceptional clarity, from the crisp crest filaments to the fine texturing along the wing coverts and tail. Focus is precise on the eye, which anchors the composition and conveys alertness and vitality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Exposure: The exposure is judiciously controlled, preserving subtle tonal gradations in the warm gray plumage without sacrificing highlight detail on the beak or crest. Color fidelity is particularly strong—the restrained reds in the wing and tail are neither oversaturated nor muted, lending the subject a natural authority. The background is beautifully diffused, offering smooth tonal separation that isolates the bird without appearing artificial or heavy-handed.● Composition: The slight profile angle and the bird’s elevated perch create a sense of quiet dignity and balance. The negative space is thoughtfully managed, allowing the subject to breathe within the frame while guiding the viewer’s eye along the bird’s posture and tail line. <p>Overall, this image reflects a high level of technical mastery paired with aesthetic restraint. It is not merely sharp for its own sake; the clarity serves the subject, resulting in a portrait that is both scientifically valuable and visually elegant.</p>

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Image Title	Score	Comments
Color-A Towering Conflict-Sandy Gilbert	8	<p>This image compellingly captures a moment of tension and choreography as the giraffes cross paths, their elongated forms intersecting in a dynamic, almost sculptural gesture. The overlapping necks and legs create a strong visual dialogue, suggesting movement, hierarchy, and latent conflict rather than a passive wildlife encounter. The lifted dust beneath their hooves subtly reinforces the sense of motion and physical presence.</p> <p>Technically, the image is sound: focus is well held across both animals, and the patterned hides are rendered with admirable clarity against the softer, layered background of acacia trees. The natural light is evenly managed, preserving texture without harsh contrast.</p> <p>From a compositional standpoint, the narrative would benefit from a tighter frame. Cropping some of the foreground ground and reducing the amount of open sky would concentrate attention on the interaction itself, strengthening the visual tension and eliminating peripheral distractions. A more compressed vertical frame would emphasize the crossing gesture and heighten the immediacy of the encounter.</p> <p>Overall, this is a strong, story-driven wildlife image; a more decisive crop would elevate it from descriptive to distinctly expressive.</p>
Color- Autumn_s Signature- Sharlana Dillard	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Composition & Color: The "pop" of the yellow aspen against the dark, moody evergreens is visually arresting. The vertical framing perfectly complements the height of the trees.● Exposure: You're spot on—the highlights in the yellow leaves are clipping, which loses the intricate detail of the foliage. Decreasing the exposure by a fraction of a stop would help retain those golden textures.● Sharpness & Motion: There is visible motion blur in the leaves. To crisp this up, increasing your shutter speed (e.g., to 1/500 or faster) would freeze the "quaking" movement typical of these trees, especially in light breezes.

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Color- Dragon_s Tail- Thomas Soutter	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Storytelling: The narrative is currently weak because the image lacks a clear subject or "hero" to anchor the viewer's interest. While the title "Dragon's Tail" suggests a mythical or powerful movement, the composition feels more like a casual snapshot of a ship's wake rather than an intentional story.● Composition: The inclusion of the ship's railing in the lower-left corner creates a literal barrier between the viewer and the water. Instead of adding context, it feels like an accidental intrusion that breaks the immersion of the "dragon" metaphor.● Perspective: To improve the story, a top-down (birds-eye) perspective without the railing would emphasize the abstract patterns of the churned water, making it feel more like a creature and less like a view from a deck.
Color-Dry Creek-Ralph Nordenhold	6	<p>While the warm, dappled sunlight filtering through the canopy creates a pleasant and natural atmosphere, the overall storytelling of the image is quite weak. The composition lacks a clear focal point or a "hero" element to guide the viewer's eye through the dense landscape of rocks and trees. The small black cat near the bottom center is easily missed, failing to provide the narrative anchor or emotional connection needed to elevate the scene. Without a more intentional arrangement of these elements, the photo feels more like a casual documentation of a dry creek bed than a compelling story. To strengthen the narrative, a tighter crop or a different perspective focusing on the interaction between the cat and its environment would be much more effective.</p> <p>I would try cropping the image to make the cat a more prominent part of the story.</p>

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Color-Focus-Craig Pellerin	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Subject Focus: The focus is exceptionally sharp on the primary musician, which immediately establishes a clear "hero" for the story.● Lighting & Separation: The warm glow on the subject's hair creates a beautiful separation from the dark, moody background, adding a professional polish to the lighting.● Narrative Context: By utilizing a shallow depth of field, the blurred team players in the background provide essential context while keeping the viewer's attention strictly on the intensity of the performance.● Leading Lines: The horizontal bars of the vibraphone create powerful leading lines that draw the eye directly toward the musician's hands and the mallets.● Dynamic Composition: These geometric lines, combined with the diagonal angles of the mallets, frame the action and emphasize the precise, rhythmic nature of the storytelling. <p>Excellent Work!!</p>
Color-Frozen Lakes-Cindy Korzekwa	6	<p>The overall composition of the image is visually interesting, but the horizon line is tilted, which creates a sense of imbalance that distracts the viewer. Adjusting the level to straighten the shoreline would immediately provide a more stable and professional feel to the landscape. Beyond this technical fix, the image would benefit from a more distinct focal point to help anchor the viewer's eye within the winter scene.</p>
Color-Hold On Tight-Shelby Caesar	7	<p>The image "Hold On Tight" by Shelby Caesar is an exceptional capture that masterfully balances high-energy action with technical precision. The sharp focus on the two performers perfectly conveys the intensity of their physical connection, making the storytelling both visceral and immediate. Additionally, the vibrant blue lighting and dynamic composition create a magical, gravity-defying atmosphere that elevates the entire narrative.</p>
Color-Looking Festive-Patricia Jones	6	<p>The vibrant red of the cardinal in "Looking Festive" creates a beautiful contrast against the muted, tangled brush. To sharpen the image, you should use a faster shutter speed to eliminate the slight motion blur caused by the bird's movement or camera shake. Crucially, ensuring the focus is locked exactly on the bird's eye would bring the subject to life and significantly increase the overall impact of the portrait.</p>

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Color-Morning Has Broken-Suzanne Daunt	8.5	The technical execution of this portrait is superb, featuring exceptional sharpness and fine detail in the bird's feathers and the weathered texture of the branch. The focus is perfectly placed on the eye , creating a compelling and lifelike connection with the subject. Additionally, the soft, blurred background provides excellent separation, allowing the vibrant orange of the beak and the warm tones of the plumage to truly stand out.
Color-Neon Owls-James Moseley	8	The composition of "Neon Owls" is highly engaging, utilizing a stark black background to make the vibrant, glowing subjects truly pop with a sense of fantasy. The focus is handled expertly, ensuring that the intricate line work and glowing textures of the owl lanterns remain sharp and well-defined across the frame. This balance of vivid color and precise detail creates a captivating visual that feels both whimsical and technically polished.
Color-On the Streets of Beijing-Becky Love	6	The image "On the Streets of Beijing" captures a candid moment, but the overall execution suffers from a significant lack of sharpness and clarity. The primary subjects appear blurred , likely due to a slow shutter speed or camera shake while walking, which prevents the viewer from fully engaging with the scene. Increasing the focus on the subjects and using a faster shutter speed would help stabilize the frame and better define the architectural details in the background.
Color-Red or Blue-Edward Zukowski	8	The creative use of lighting in this image produces a striking visual duality that is both mentally and visually stimulating. I especially appreciate the clear reflections of both red and blue within the glass bottle, which serve to ground the abstract shadows in reality. The sharp focus on the central bottle captures the intricate glass details perfectly, acting as a solid anchor for the softer, ethereal shapes in the background. The way the blue and red shadows diverge creates a powerful sense of balance and symmetry that elevates the overall composition. It is a highly creative work that masterfully plays with color theory and the refractive properties of glass.

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Color-Reflections at Mendenhall Glacier-Christiane Menelas	8	The symmetry in this composition is breathtaking, as the mirror-like water perfectly replicates the jagged peaks and the icy blue of the glacier. The vast scale of the Alaskan landscape is captured with impressive clarity, allowing the viewer to appreciate the textures of both the dark rock faces and the distant snow-covered summits. While the natural colors are beautifully rendered, the heavy, overcast sky adds a dramatic, moody atmosphere that complements the coldness of the ice. The central placement of the glacier acts as a strong focal point, guiding the eye deep into the valley through the reflection. Overall, it is a masterfully balanced landscape that emphasizes the quiet power of the natural world.
Color-The Wurstfest 5 Mile Run-David Love	6	This image captures a great story of athletic determination as the runner approaches the starting or finishing line under the event banner. The composition provides clear context for the event, placing the viewer right in the midst of the race-day atmosphere. However, the image is a little bit blurred , likely due to subject motion or a slower shutter speed, which softens the details of the runner's expression and clothing. To improve the impact, a faster shutter speed would have frozen the action, resulting in a crisper, more professional-looking capture. Despite this technical limitation, the narrative of the "Wurstfest" run remains clear and engaging for the audience.
Color-Whispers of Spring-Jackies Wise	8	The macro photography techniques displayed in "Whispers of Spring" are truly excellent, capturing the delicate beauty of the grape hyacinth with professional precision. The sharpness is remarkable , particularly in how it renders the individual water droplets, making them appear like tiny, glistening jewels clinging to the petals. By using a dark, unobtrusive background, you've created a high-contrast environment that allows the vibrant blues and purples to appear luminous. The depth of field is expertly managed, ensuring the central blossoms are in crisp focus while providing a soft fall-off that adds a sense of three-dimensional volume. Overall, the meticulous attention to detail and lighting results in a captivating and technically flawless floral portrait.



Pamela Liu

Master of Electrical Engineering, Univ of Southern California

Photography Distinctions

PSC Fellow of PSC

PSA PPSA

FIAP EFIAP

Current Positions:

CEO, PSC International Exhibit

PSA PTD Training Convener

PSA Judging Service Judge

Past Engineering positions:

CEO, Metis BioMedicals Inc. Cincinnati, Ohio

CEO, OfficeFree Inc. Santa Clara, CA

Advisory Engineer, Siemens Communication Inc, Santa Clara, CA

Sr. Engineer, Cadence Design Systems, San Jose, CA

Instructor, Dept of Electrical Engineering, Univ of California, Santa Cruz, CA.

Awards (To name a few)

2022 PSA Gold Medal, PID, Hong Kong International Exhibit

2022 Gold Medal, PID. Turkey International Exhibit

2021 PSA Gold Medal, Photo Travel, Sri Lanka International Exhibit

2021 PSA Gold Medal, PID, Serbia and Montenegro International Exhibit

2021 PSA Gold Medal, PID. China International Exhibit

2020 PSA Gold Medal, Photo Travel, Taiwan Circuit Exhibit

2020 FIAP Gold Medal, PID. Photographic Society of China International Exhibit

2019 PSA Gold Medal, ND, Yuanlin International Exhibit

2019 Canon Gold Medal, Professional Session, Canon International Surfing
Photography Contest