

Central Photographic Association Beauty in the Details

The CPA panel, entitled 'Beauty in the Details', is on the theme of Belfast Architecture.

There are many quotations about details: Mies van der Rohe told us that *"God is in the details"*, Jim Jarmusch that *"the beauty of life is in small details"* and Leonardo da Vinci that *"details make perfection, and perfection is not a detail"*. Our members have chosen to portray the architecture of Belfast, not by taking a wider view, but by focusing on those small details.

01 - Titanic by Vittorio Silvestri

The image was taken on a club trip to the Titanic Quarter. Vittorio was working solely with a 17-40mm lens, and this was captured at 17mm close-up to the ironwork of the Titanic sign. It was framed so that the "I" and the "C" were just visible, which Vittorio believed was enough to imply the full word. The colours of the evening lights on the building were an added bonus and also unmistakably showed the Titanic Building.

02 - 89 North Street by Brian Carey

This building on the junction of North Street and Royal Avenue was built in the Art Deco style. Situated opposite the imposing Bank of Ireland building, it survived two air raids during World War II and several bomb blasts during the Troubles. Time has not been kind to it; weeds grow in the mortar, the clock tells the time correctly just twice a day, and the splendid retail shops on the ground floor are long gone. The image was taken with a 70-200mm lens at 95mm to capture the upper floor showing the typical heavy geometric Art Deco influences. Brian used black and white to capture the nostalgia of its bygone splendour.

03 - The Albert Memorial Clock by Colin Paul

This iconic Belfast landmark was completed in 1869, 113 feet tall with a mix of French and Italian Gothic styles. Being built on marshy ground on wooden piles, it has developed a clearly visible lean with the top of the tower 4 foot off perpendicular. Much of its fantastic ornamentation is at the top and can really only be revealed with a long lens. The symmetry of the shot appealed to Colin and is often very hard to achieve.

04 – The Strand by Michael Mulholland

While Belfast is better known for its Victorian and Edwardian Architecture, the Strand Cinema is a striking representation of the Art Deco influence in the city. Built in 1935, its curved walls were influenced by the nearby Harland & Wolf shipyard. In choosing a kerb-level composition and focusing on the prominent front corner with its likeness to a ship's bow, Michael hoped to demonstrate the shipbuilding influence in the design.

05 - Corporation Street Car Park by Stephen Emerson

Anyone crossing the M3 eastward can't fail to notice the prominent bright blue multi-angled facade of the building on the left. The panel project inspired Stephen to investigate the multi-storey public car park. From under the M3 bridge you can position yourself to create an image where the shape of the bridge runs parallel to the building outline and the bold blue façade, framed by contrasting grey vertical stripes, ties in nicely with the blue sky. The shadow of the bridge conceals a less attractive environment.

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06 - Bittles Bar by Colin Paul

Built in 1861, the curious flat-iron shape is a well known landmark in Belfast city centre. In 1879 the Jaffe Fountain was placed in front of the bar to honour Belfast's first Lord Mayor, Otto Jaffe. The two landmarks with Victorian architecture in the foreground, both with pronounced curves, are echoed in the modern buildings in the distance. Colin appreciated the contrast of the brightly coloured ornamentation of the yellow bandstand in the foreground against the red brick.

07 - The Computer Science Building, Queen's University Belfast by Ossie Bruce

Ossie was drawn by the way the sunlight was interacting with the multicoloured glass panels on the exterior of the building, and by the reflections of its environment. He attempted to emphasise the aesthetic of the building by getting in close and in effect used the building as his "tripod support". The photograph was taken at the wide end of a 17-40 mm lens at f14.

08 - The Mac by Stephen Emerson

The panel project motivated Stephen to take several solo tours around Belfast city centre, and focusing specifically on architecture allowed him to notice details he had previously missed in familiar buildings. While trying to position himself to capture an image of "The Mac", Belfast Cathedral Quarter's theatre/exhibition hub, Stephen was drawn to the contrast of the bright cloudy sky reflected in the windows of the matt black frontage. The vertical and horizontal lines, highlighted by slight shadow, provide some depth to the image.

09 - Reflections of Tomb Street Royal Mail sorting office by Helen Honeyman

Tomb Street is named after the 19th century Tomb family rather than a graveyard and the sorting office was originally sited in this part of Belfast due to its proximity to where the mail boats would dock. The present building dates from the sixties and was one of the first glass, steel and concrete buildings in Belfast. It is a difficult building to photograph from this side given the narrowness of Tomb Street but it was necessary in order to get the reflections at that time of day. For Helen it demonstrates that there is interest and beauty to be captured in even the most mundane and non-iconic buildings of Belfast.

10 – The Great Light by Vittorio Silvestri

Our final image in the panel was taken during the same club outing as the first Titanic image, but earlier in the evening. Again Vittorio used a 17mm lens as close to the light as he could get. Fortuitously the blinds were up on the windows which is not always the case. The colour of the light against the blue hour sky provides real impact, and Vittorio concentrated on only a section of the light.

In arriving at our final panel, first all members were invited to suggest possible themes. With 12 suggestions received, the ten Club Officers and Committee members were asked to vote for their top three themes. Belfast Architecture was our winner, and 11 members submitted a total of 55 images for consideration for the NIPA Panel Project. An evening was set aside for the membership to review the entry, and it quickly became clear that the images with the most impact were those which focussed on the details, and so the direction of our panel was set. The members selected the final ten images and arranged them into the order you have seen tonight. CPA would like to thank all our members for playing their part in this project, and we hope you have enjoyed seeing the images as much as we enjoyed taking and selecting them.