

IMAGE CRITIQUE

by Bill Gozansky

Let me share some thoughts on Bruno's dew-covered lizard from both an artistic and a technical perspective.

MORNING DEW

Photographer: Bruno W. | Central American Whiptail | Braulio-Carrillo National Park, Costa Rica | Nikon Z9 with Nikon Z 100-400mm 4.5-5.6 VR S Lens | 400mm | 1/640 sec | f/7.1 | ISO 1600



Artistic: From an artistic standpoint, the magic of this image is in the morning dew. What would have been a fairly straightforward portrait of a Central American whiptail is made far more interesting by the fact that Bruno was able to capture this wonderful lizard still ensconced in these beautiful spherical droplets of water. We can imagine it wouldn't take much for the lizard to brush off these fragile droplets (or for them to evaporate), so we have a very well-timed image here and evidently a very cooperative subject.

Adding to the image's appeal is a well-composed subject with the lizard's head landing near the left third of the frame in line with the Rule of Thirds. We also have a slight "look-back" into the frame by the whiptail and some really nice eye contact with the viewer.

The background is a beautiful green tone, quite complementary to the scene, and very pure with no distracting elements.

One thing we can surmise from Bruno's equipment and technical settings is that he used his telephoto zoom lens (at 400mm) to capture this macro-style image of the lizard. The use of a telephoto lens for this close-up work is often a good strategy as you get a larger working distance between you and your subject, and thus, you are less likely to disturb it or scare it away—which no doubt was very important in this case as any unwanted movement by the lizard might have shaken off the dew.



Technical: From a technical perspective, focus looks great (see 100% Crop) with sharp detail on the eye and enough depth of field and detail on the dewdrops to be effective. The exposure looks solid, maintaining the highlights in the water droplets, which appear to be the brightest part of the image. I find the post-processing quite realistic, maintaining very natural-looking color tones throughout.

In Summary: Bruno has a very technically-solid portrait of a Central American whiptail that is taken to the next level by the magical morning dew. Keep an eye out for these situations when you are in the field. They often require getting up early so you can catch these critters (think lizards, dragonflies, flowers, fungi, etc.) emerging in the morning dew, but when you find them, your results will sparkle!