

GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL PHOTOGRAPH

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Viewing a photograph, as an art form, is a very subjective. Every individual differs in opinion and interests. Therefore, I will not try to impose my ideas of what makes a “good picture.” Instead, I will try to convey what frequently makes a successful image, based on what I have compiled and learned from the Masters.

However, an Evaluator of pictures must be very objective when he/she critiques pictures. A picture must be evaluated on its own merit(s). One must put aside one’s own likes and dislikes and evaluate accordingly.

Some Basics:

1. ***IMPACT*** – An instant emotional response creates a burst of excitement upon seeing an image. This emotional experience may override photographic deficiencies or it may give way to more thoughtful contemplation.

2. ***COMPOSITION*** – The way the photographer chooses to present his or her image. It is the arrangement of the elements of design. The component parts of design include shapes, line, space, texture, pattern, gesture, color, tones and light.

There are certain “***guidelines***” for effectiveness, but may be broken or altered any time.

- a. Position of subject: > Centered, is frequently a static presentation
> Off center, usually allows the viewer’s eye to move around the frame, creating a sense of interest. (The “Rule of Thirds is an effective tool.)
- b. Lines: > Diagonal lines (implies motion or excitement)
> Horizontal lines (implies passivity or static effect)
> Vertical lines (implies strength but can be static)
- c. Shapes: > Circle or Oval (implies restful, calm and serenity)
> Rectangular (implies a static display)
> Triangular (forceful or dynamic action)

3. ***TECHNIQUE*** – This is the use of light, exposure (fast or slow shutter speeds), aperture (depth of field), camera pointing angle, developing or printing methods, panning, multiple exposure, various techniques, etc, etc...

4. ***INTEREST*** – It is the photographer’s responsibility to present the viewer with an interesting subject or somehow allow the viewer to experience what he or she wants to portray. Without it, the viewer is lost, confused or even bored.

5. ***CONCLUSION***– A successful photograph is ***SIMPLICITY***. Tell only one story in one picture. Do not include anything more than is absolutely necessary. Any element that does not support the idea detracts from the idea. Keep in mind the letters “***S. I. S.***” (Select, Isolate, Simplify) and “***K.I.S.***” (Keep It Simple.)

CRITIQUE GUIDELINES:

When we critique our pictures we must ask ourselves the following questions:

- > Does it have impact? That WOW look?
- > Is the composition arranged in a pleasing manner?
- > Does the picture tell one story?
- > Does the background interfere or merge in any way with the main subject?
- > Is the photograph technically correct?
- > Can this photograph be improved in any way?

EVALUATION POINT STRUCTURE

A widely point score system utilizes the numbers 1 to 9, with 9 as the highest level.

3	points	Poor
4	“	Fair
5	“	Average
6	“	Good
7	“	Very Good
8	“	Excellent
9	“	Exhibition quality – close to perfect – WOW!

INTEREST - 3 Points

- 1 pt. Subject Interest
- 1 pt. Impact – Emotional Interest
- 1 pt. Color Harmony

COMPOSITION - 3 Points

- 1 pt. How well the frame is filled
- 1 pt. Absence of distractions
- 1 pt. Proper lens used

TECHNIQUE - 3 Points

- 1 pt. Focus – soft or sharp as required
- 1 pt. Depth of Field
- 1 pt. Proper exposure – Lighting and Color saturation