

Analysis and Judgement of Amateur Photography. A quick reference guide for competitions and critique.

Technical:

Is it Sharp?

Camera sharp.

How is the Sharpening?

Has the image been enlarged and then sharpened?

Has Depth of Field been employed?

Too much or too little?

Use of Aperture? To control DoF?

Use of Shutter Speed?

Appropriate to the subject? (Fast object made to look fast...or a fast object frozen?)

Slow object made to look smooth - e.g. the sea...is it appropriate?)

Is it correctly exposed for the subject and intended outcome?

How does the Tonal Range look?

Shadows, highlights - are they appropriate to the image?

Was it intended or an accident? i.e. Is there control of the tones?

Appropriate to the lighting and /or the intended effect?

Colour - is it subtle or saturated, was it intended to be?

Choices:

Lens, Zoom length - appropriate to the subject?

Angle of view- height?

Point of view, obvious, or perhaps careless or carefully considered for the composition.

Perspective, distance from subject and lens length combination.

Horizon - where is the horizon...is it straight - is it meant to be?

Composition

Shapes/Elements - lines and geometries.

Are you led into and out of the image? Around the image?

Does the image conform to a recognised layout? E.g. The golden mean, a square, a panorama?

Are the "rules" ignored, broken or manipulated for a reason, to aid the purpose of the image... e.g, To create tension, interest or humour?

Texture/Balance

Segments/Sections

See separate document: **A rough guide to Composition for photographers**

Is it:

Documentary
Pictorial
Artistic
Sentimental,
Record
Natural History

Is there a narrative - a story

Lighting - the most important fundamental element

Direction, Soft or hard?
Shadows, soft hard, angle.

Source?
Shape of source? Square, round, long, ragged, point or overcast.
Low Light
No Light
Contrast Range etc

Difficulty*

Purposefulness
Effort (Organising, setting up)

Ease:

Could it have been taken by anyone who happened to be there?
*e.g.: Safaris and a beanbag on a Land Rover window sill almost set up the shot for you whereas catching the right moment and situation in a street photography shot could be much much more difficult.

Obviousness:

Is it the same as all the others in the genre - or does it excel?

Difference:

Does it experiment, attempt unknown outcomes - especially for the photographer concerned - does it depart from their comfort zone?

Is it creative, artistic - can it be judged in artistic terms with psychological and philosophical criteria and discourse?

Level

What is the photographer's level of knowledge and practice? Must be taken into account.

Images should not be judged on likes and dislikes or opinions.
Ideas about good and bad, right and wrong should be avoided.
Most evaluation should take the form of an inquiry about the image with possible remedial advice if an obvious remedy could be applied.
Critical analysis should always be constructive except where third party input has an effect on the image such as obvious workshop lighting which is below par and/or poorly constructed compositions in “set up” workshops with models etc.

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