Judging Photographs
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Purpose

- What is the intended use of the picture?
    - Decoration
    - Greeting card
    - Fine art
    - Documentary
    - Contest (type? venue?)

Subject Matter

- Is the picture aesthetically pleasant to look at? Does it tell a story?
- Can you clearly identify the message in the picture?
- Does the picture evoke an emotion?
- Do the light, angle, exposure, tones, and composition enhance the story?

Center of Interest

- What are your eyes drawn to when you look at the picture?
- Do you see a main subject? Do you see multiple subjects that compete with each other?
- Do technical aspects (lighting, exposure, focus) add to or detract from the subject?

Composition

- Do the subject and supporting elements fill the frame?
- Does the composition lead you to the subject? Does the arrangement of the key elements enhance the image? Did the photographer break the rules creatively to add impact to the image?
- Is the background controlled to bring attention to the subject and eliminate distracting background elements? Elements should contribute to the subject.
- Did the photographer use depth of field, focal length, lighting, angle, and perspective to enhance the composition?

Technical Aspects

- Is the sharpest object the main subject?
- Does the image have the appropriate contrast and tonal range?
- Is the picture exposed correctly to set the appropriate mood and show the necessary details?
- Are the colors correct and do they fit the style or mood?
- Is the light too harsh, too soft, or too flat?
- Could a fill flash or a reflector correct lighting issues?
- Does the light support the presentation and story?
- Is the white balance corrected for the light?

Creativity

- Does the picture show details that are often missed or surprise the viewer?
- Are the elements in the picture arranged in a way that will make a strong statement or make it interesting and/or attractive?
- Is the picture interesting? Does it show some new ideas?

Summary

Evaluate the picture to see that it is technically good and has some of the following characteristics. Usually, the picture needs to have at least three of them to get a high score:

- Clear subject and center of interest
- Tells a story
- Special lighting
- Strong graphics
- Element of surprise
- Emotive
- Strong composition
- Unique and creative presentation

Criteria	Agree	Disagree
Creativity and Appeal		
Clearly identified subject		
Interesting subject / story		
Creative technique		
Artistic expression		
Unique way of seeing		
Use of color, texture, pattern, detail, timing to make a strong presentation		
Composition		
Strong center of interest		
Foreground/background support subject		
Good composition/placement of subject		
Strong perspective		
Use of rule of thirds, negative space, leading lines, curves, or diagonals to make a strong presentation		
Creative placement of horizon		
Image leveled properly		
Clean borders		
Best camera position (portrait/landscape)		
Technical Quality		
Sharp focus where needed		
Proper exposure		
Proper light/used correctly		
Appropriate use of flash		
Good color/tone quality		
Creative use of lighting		
Clean presentation		

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