



WHAT CONTEST JUDGES LOOK FOR

*Suggestions For Better Outcomes
in Club Competitions*

QUESTIONS FOR YOU



WHY DO YOU TAKE PICTURES?

1. To document an occasion or event.
2. Record a special subject/object.
3. To save a memory or moment.
4. It's a reason to travel or explore.
5. To market something/get paid.
6. To connect with others/the world.
7. To tell stories/communicate.
8. Creative expression.
9. Enter contests/gain recognition.

WHY COMPETE?



WHY COMPETE?

❖ Why I compete:

1. *It's fun!*
2. *I like the challenge*
3. *I need the push to go out and shoot*
4. *It's a good way to learn*
5. *Provides a way for others to see my work*



WHY SHOULD YOU LISTEN TO ME?

- ❖ I've given this a lot of thought based on having:
 - ❖ *been judged for more than 40 years*
 - ❖ *judged for many different clubs*
 - ❖ *completed the PSA Image Analysis course*
 - ❖ *observed contest judges at work*



I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE THINKING!

“IF YOU KNOW SO MUCH, WHY DON'T
YOU WIN ALL THE TIME?”

THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF “METADATA”

“OBJECTIVE”

“SUBJECTIVE”

SO, HOW DO YOU WIN A PHOTO CONTEST?

1. IDENTIFY A CONTEST AND UNDERSTAND WHAT IS EXPECTED.
2. MAKE A TECHNICALLY PERFECT PHOTOGRAPH OF AN INTERESTING SUBJECT IN GREAT LIGHT THAT MEETS THE CONTEST CRITERIA.
3. ENTER THE CONTEST
4. HOPE THAT YOUR MOTHER IS THE JUDGE!

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT!

THE OPINION OF A CONTEST JUDGE DOES NOT
DEFINE WHO YOU ARE AS A

**PERSON, A PHOTOGRAPHER,
OR AN ARTIST!!!**

YOU WIN SOME AND YOU LOSE SOME

CREATE REASONABLE GOALS!

FOR MYSELF, I HAVE THREE SIMPLE GOALS FOR CLUB CONTESTS:

1. ENTER EVERY CONTEST
2. DON'T BE THE FIRST NAMED IN RESULTS
3. FINISH YEAR IN THE TOP HALF OF GROUP

CRITICISM vs CLUB JUDGING

(A SHOW vs A COMPETITION)

■ CRITICISM

- *Criticism is all about asking questions (Critical Thinking) when looking.*
 - What do I see? What is it about? What do I think? How do I feel?
- *It follows then, that “criticism” is a way to better understand and appreciate photographs.*
- *Criticism “**slows down**” viewing time (like using a tripod).*
- *While the results of the exercise may be negative (you don’t like the picture), it ultimately leads to informed and rational reactions to images.*

CRITICISM vs CLUB JUDGING

■ JUDGING

- It's a ***BIG JOB***.
- *There are often time constraints.*
- *The pool of judges is extremely heterogeneous.*
- *A given judge may not understand the specific context.*
- *A given judge may not be qualified for the specific task.*
- *Judges are required to **RANK ORDER** entries!*

HOW JUDGES JUDGE

- Club Contests
 - *Solo Judge*
 - *Public and Non-Public*
 - Public Judging is Structured and Generally Done Quickly
 - Private Judging May Allow for a More Studied Evaluation
 - *Projected, Prints, or Both*
 - *May Provide Feedback as Well as Placement of Entries*

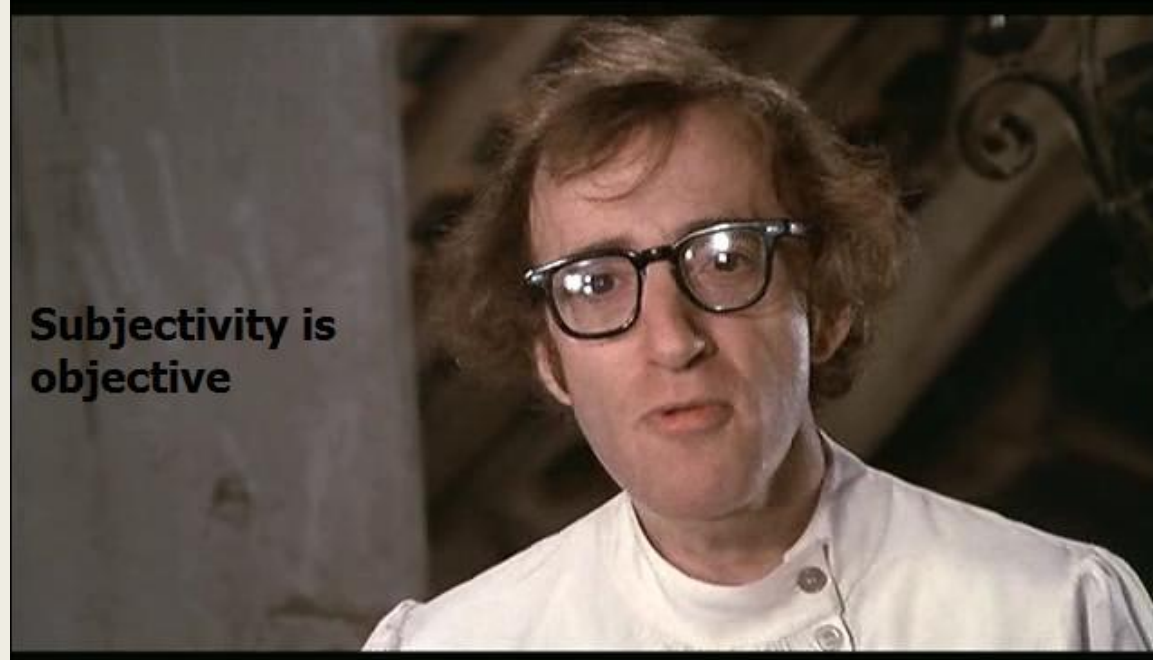
HOW JUDGES JUDGE

- Salon Style Judging
 - *Public*
 - *Generally Anonymous*
 - *Fast*
 - *No Feedback*



HOW JUDGES JUDGE

SUBJECTIVELY!!!





FIVE TIPS

1. Make more photographs:
THOUGHTSHOTS vs SNAPSHOTS
2. Look for contest shots
3. Save your best to a contest folder
4. Study winning images
5. Seek out feedback: do not let a contest judge be the first person to comment on your photos!

THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT POINT!

■ DO NOT GIVE A JUDGE SOMETHING TO DISLIKE!!!

- *Know and follow ALL contest rules.*
 - Nature and Photojournalism are very strict! (see <http://www.gulfstatesccc.org/new-page-1>)
- *Make a REAL effort to capture contest specific images.*
- *Eliminate OBVIOUS flaws in your submissions.*
 - Noise, Dust Spots, Horizon, Background Distractions, Edges, Focus, Sharpness, Print Quality, Mats & Matting
- *Ask someone knowledgeable for ADVICE before you submit an image.*
- *Keep your entries as SIMPLE as possible.*

EXAMPLES



EXAMPLES





PID Monochrome Competition

2022-2023

Round One, Group F

"Sailing Away"
Larry Petterborg
Plano Photography Club



Nancy Speaker, APSA, PPSA
PSA Interclub Director

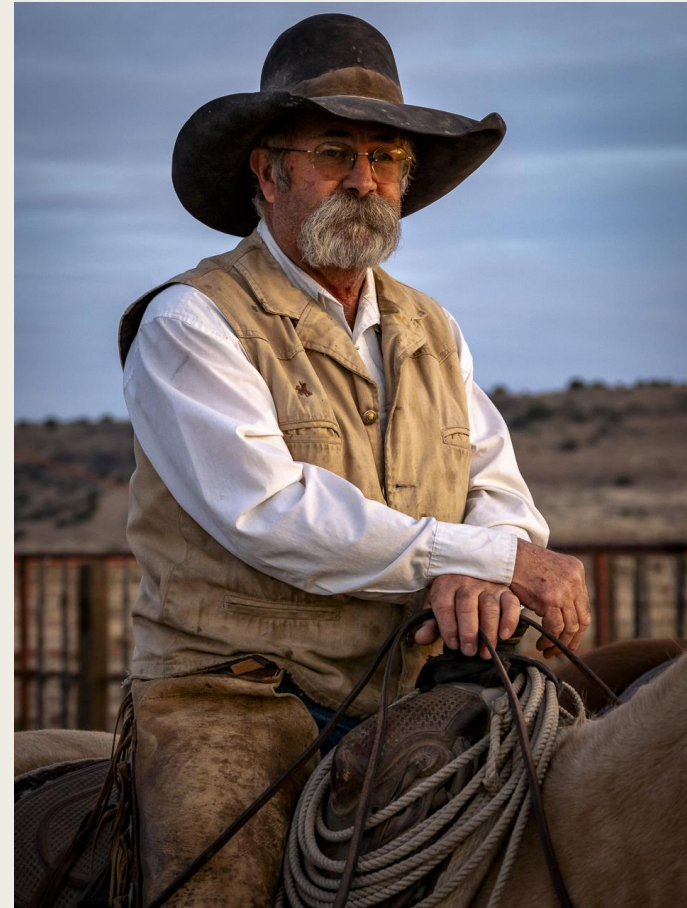
Christine Pence, QPSA
PID Monochrome Director

Honorable Mention

EXAMPLES



EXAMPLES



EXAMPLES



SOMETIMES YOU JUST CAN'T WIN

“Nice composition. I would have
preferred eye contact.”



POINT NUMBER THREE!

■ THE MOST ORIGINAL AND IMPACTFUL IMAGES DO THE BEST.

- *If you can't do it better, do it DIFFERENTLY.*
- *Make it EASY on the judge.*
- *Use the TOOLS available to you.*
- *LEARN from your mistakes.*



A PRETTY PICTURE IS NOT ENOUGH





CREATING IMAGES WITH **IMPACT**

- What is **IMPACT**?
 - It is **SUBJECTIVE!**
 - *Make Photographs About Things Rather Than Of Things*
 - *Emotion, Mood, Contrast, Color, Subject, Action, Humor, Exotic, Scale, Connection*
 - *Tells a Story*
- Why does it matter?
 - *Time*
 - *Numbers*



EXAMPLE: CONTEST SUBJECT IS PORTAL(S)



ONE IS A DOCUMENT THE OTHER A STORY!

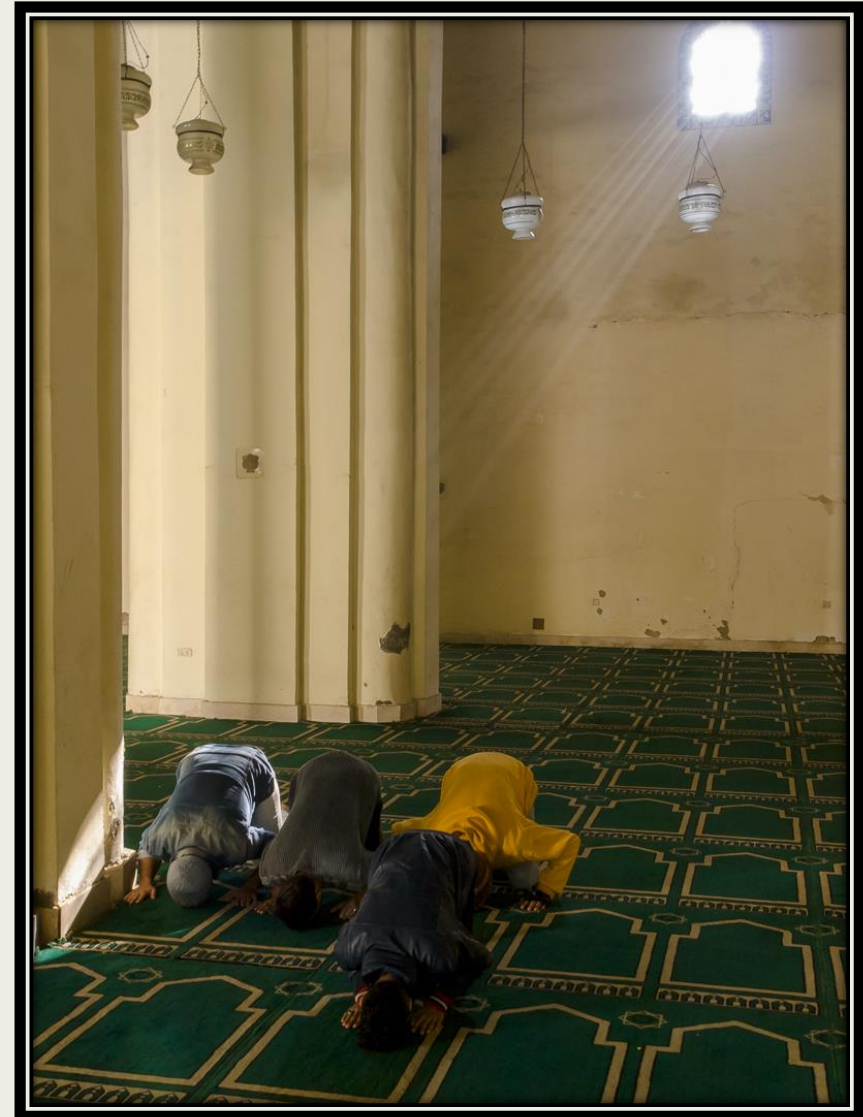


IMPACT

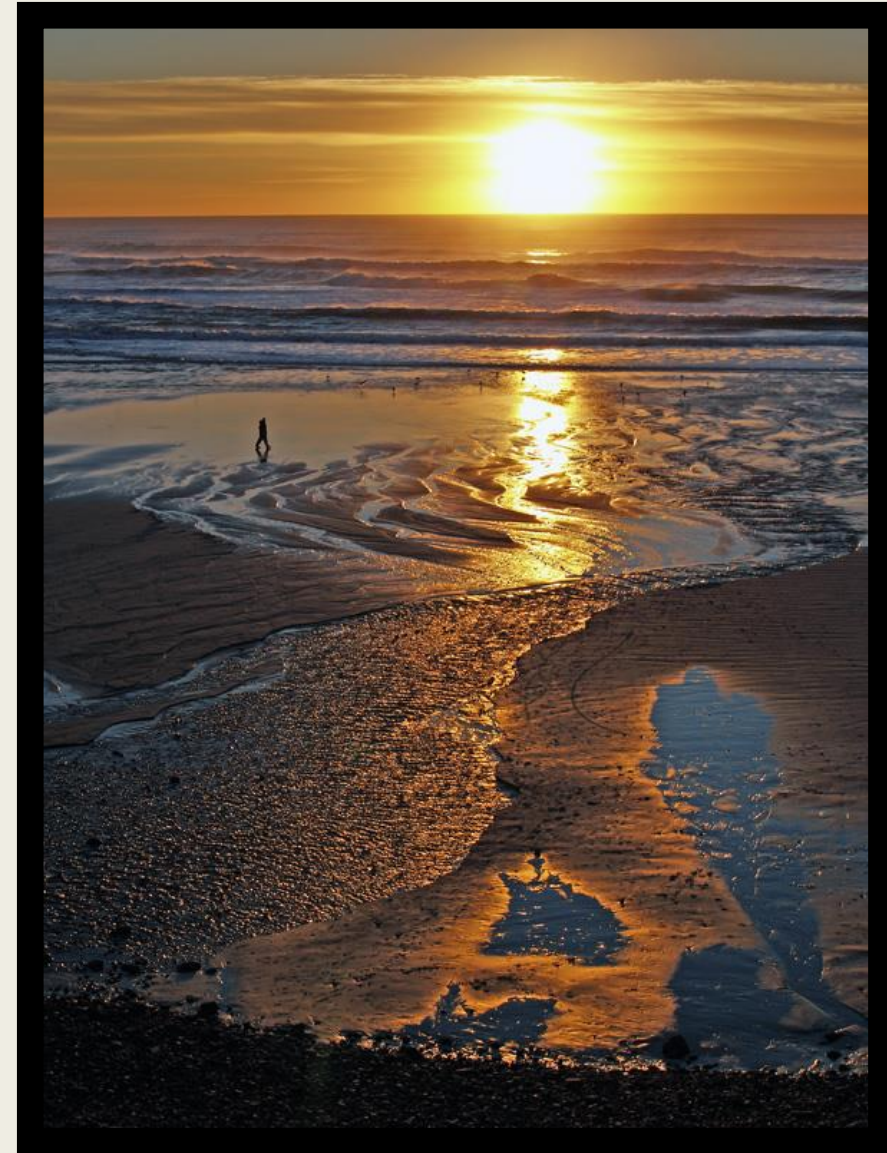
EMOTION



IMPACT MOOD

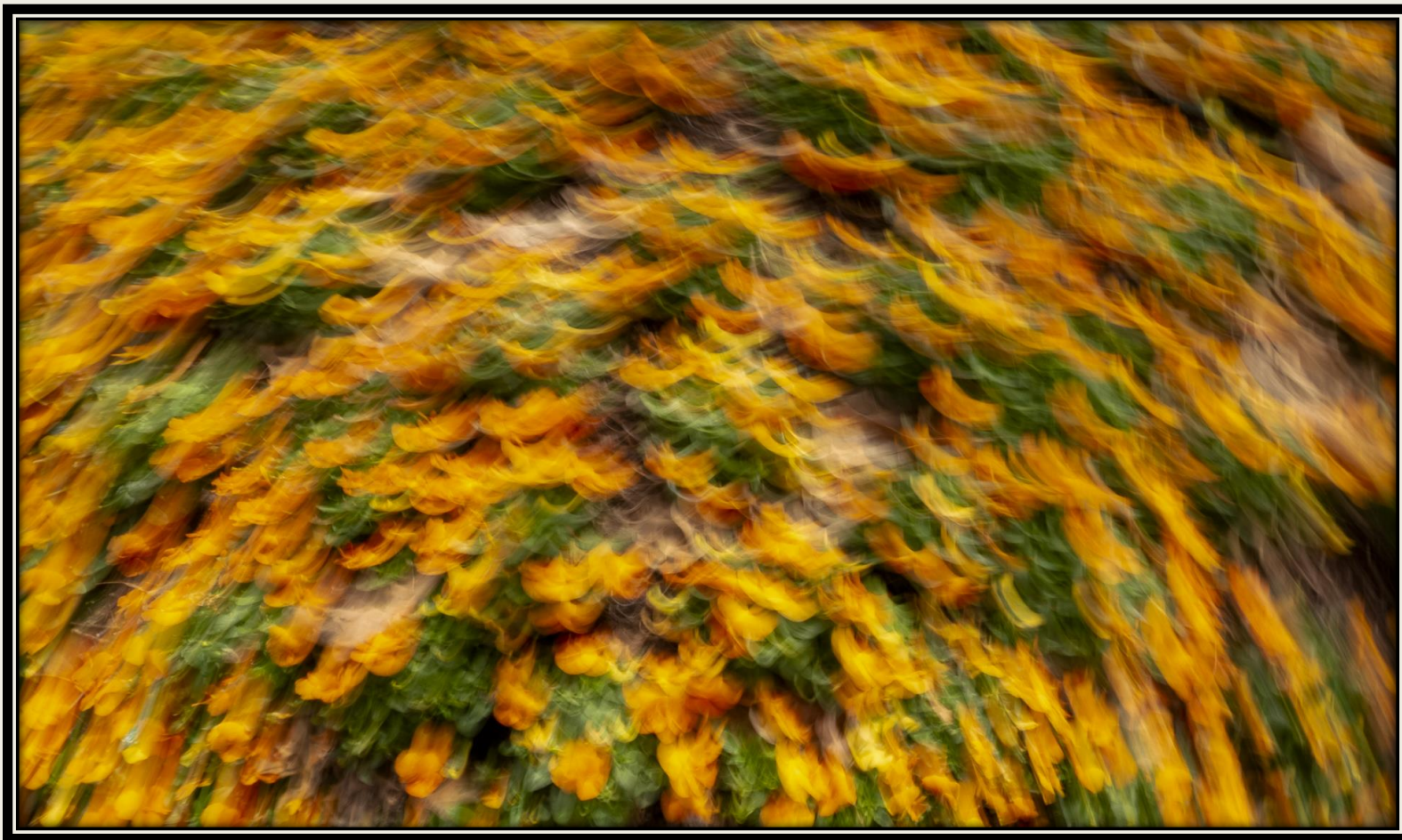


IMPACT *CONTRAST*



IMPACT

COLOR







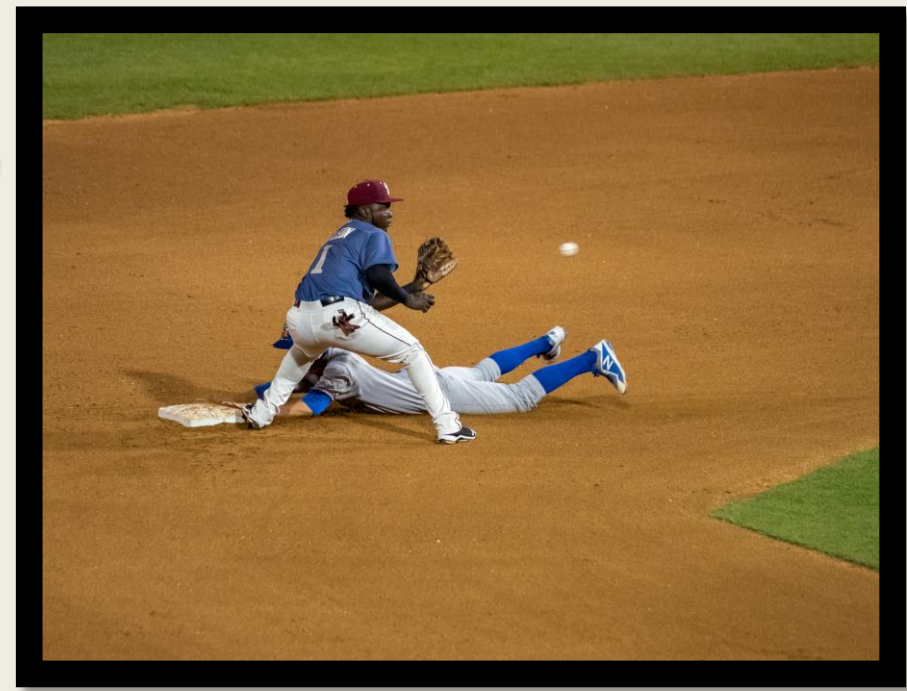
IMPACT **SUBJECT**







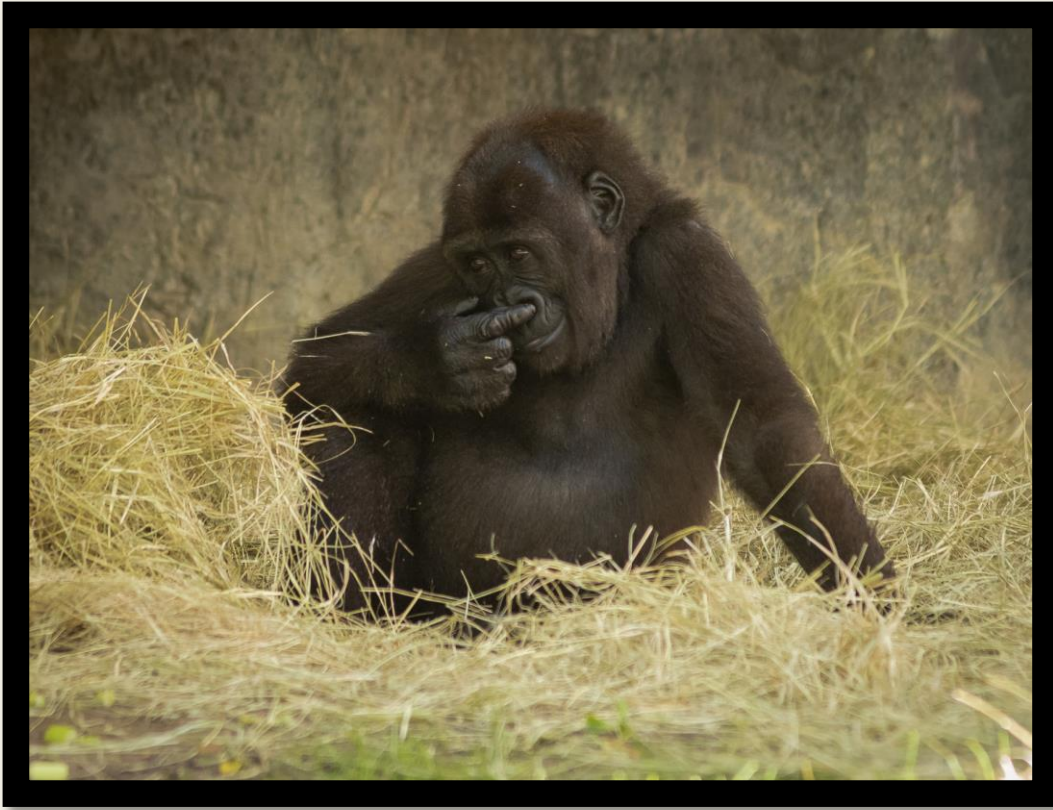
IMPACT *ACTION*





IMPACT

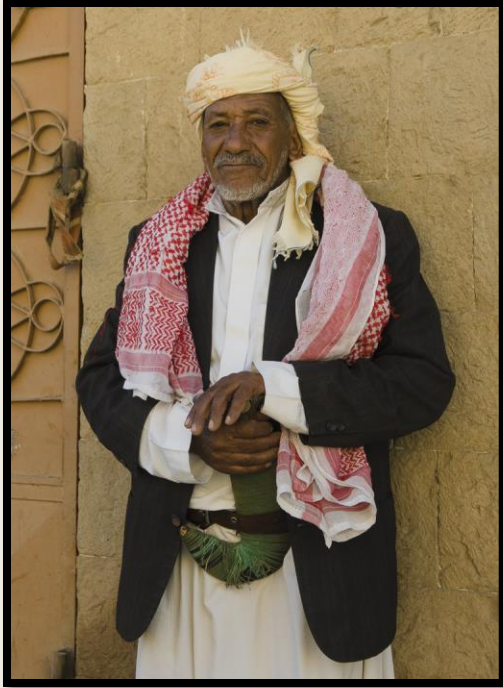
HUMOR





IMPACT

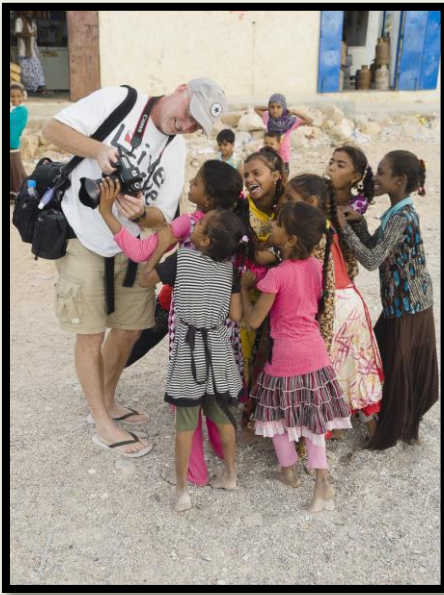
EXOTIC



IMPACT SCALE







IMPACT **CONNECTION**

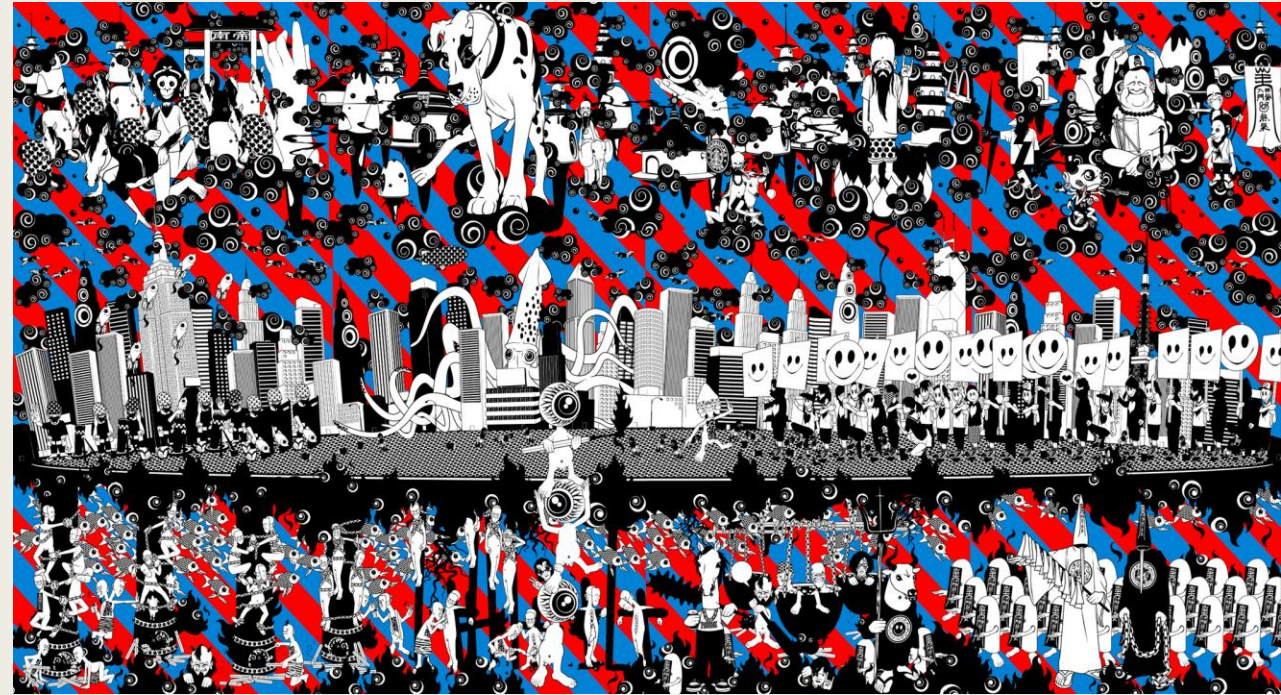




POINT NUMBER FOUR!

- IN ADDITION TO IMPACT, WINNING IMAGES HAVE:
- Technical Perfection (or as close as you can get).
- A composition that supports the photographer's intention.
 - *Composition is merely the arrangement of elements within the frame.*

PAINTING vs PHOTOGRAPHY



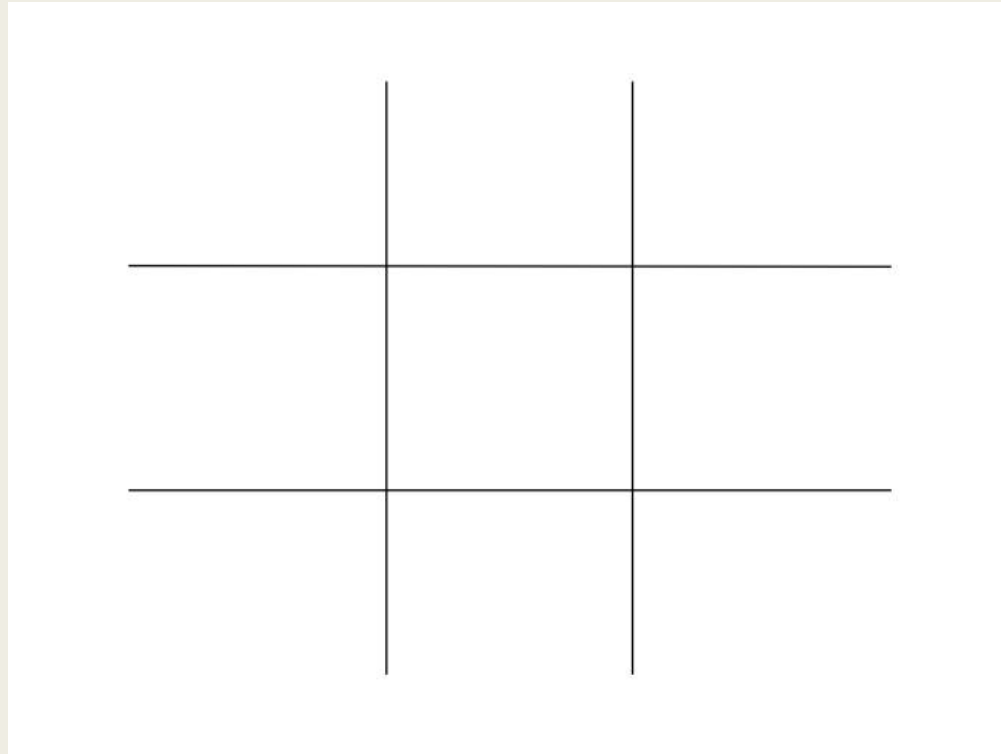
TOOLS NOT RULES!

(USE COMPOSITION TO YOUR ADVANTAGE)

- What are the so-called COMPOSITIONAL RULES of Photography?
 - *The Rule (**Tool**) of Thirds*
 - *Leading Lines*
 - *Fill the Frame*
 - *Read Left to Right*
 - *Use Odd Numbers of Things*
 - *Leave Space for Subject*
 - *Create Depth*
 - *Triangles and Diagonals*
 - *Frames*
 - *Differential Focus and Depth of Focus*

EXAMPLES

THE TOOL OF THIRDS



EXAMPLES

THE TOOL OF THIRDS



Background

Mid

Foreground

A landscape photograph of a lake at sunset. The sky is filled with orange and pink clouds, with the sun low on the horizon. The water is calm, reflecting the sky. In the foreground, there are tall, dry reeds. On the right side, there is a small island with some trees. On the left side, there is a white rectangular box with the text "EXAMPLES HORIZONS" in bold black letters. A thick black L-shaped graphic element is positioned on the left side of the image, partially overlapping the white box and the lake.

EXAMPLES HORIZONS

EXAMPLES

LEADING LINES



EXAMPLES

FILL THE FRAME





EXAMPLES

READ RIGHT TO LEFT



EXAMPLES

USE ODD NUMBERS OF THINGS



EXAMPLES

LEAVE A SPACE FOR SUBJECT





EXAMPLES

CREATE DEPTH





EXAMPLES

FOCUS



POINT NUMBER FIVE!

LEARN TO LET
-GO. THAT IS-
THE KEY TO
HAPPINESS.

WWW.LIVELIFEHAPPY.COM

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

IF YOU WANT TO COMPETE MORE SUCCESSFULLY

1. Capture an Interesting Subject
2. Take Advantage of the Best Light for your Subject
3. Use Compositional Tools to Enhance The Impact of Your Image
4. Avoid/Eliminate Distractions
5. Follows the Contest Rules/Guidelines
- 6. *TURN IT IN AND LET IT GO!!!!!!***

HAVE FUN!

