

JUDGING PROCEDURE and SUGGESTIONS

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The following suggestions have been made by some of the best and most experienced judges in the club. They are not intended to eliminate the various perspectives or styles that come from having numerous judges during the club year. It is hoped that these comments will be helpful to both new and experienced judges.

THE PROCESS

There are three competition classes of images (B, A and Salon)
Digital images and traditional slides are shown together
Each entrant may enter one image (except in special competitions including the Larry Gray Creative Competition in prints & Color & Rookie only competition)
The number of entries and the number of acceptances is announced

ROUND ONE

Each image (both film slides and digital) in a section is shown and the judge makes a brief comment.
At the end of a comment, say NEXT to indicate you are ready for the next image

ELIMINATION ROUNDS

No further comments are made
The elimination of images begins by saying HOLD or PASS as each image is shown
Continue until you have the correct number of acceptances

SELECTING WINNERS

Choose 1st place, first
Then, choose 2nd place
Then, choose 3rd place
The other acceptances are Honorable Mentions

This helps the projectionists, and **avoids boxing yourself in** at the end with two slides left and you have to give one first place to one and an HM to the other.

COMMENT SUGGESTIONS

The best judges teach a lesson in photography each time they judge. They provide the entrant with the tools and motivation for improvement.

Speak clearly and distinctly. Remember it's hard for the projectionist to hear over the projector noise and some of our members have a hearing problem.

Use a variety of comments. This makes a mini-lesson in good photography.

Comments on story, creativity, or emotional impact can be very helpful.

Always try to make at least one positive comment about a picture. Suggestions for improvement are also helpful or how they could approach the image capture differently.

Avoid repeated comments like "this is interesting." Make a personal list of words other than "good", "nice", and "interesting".

Don't let personal preferences about subjects or styles influence your choices.

Don't describe the image.

Limit the time of your comments on each slide and try not to repeat yourself.

Was the best format (horizontal or vertical) selected?

The "Rules" are guidelines, not absolutes.

Color Slides

When judging Color Slides, look for the use of color, impact, composition, center of interest, lighting, framing, patterns, texture, sharpness of the image, general story, etc. Try to comment on as many of these as possible.

Check for distractions such as eye catchers along the edges, fuzzy masks, and cut off objects.

Check the background. Does it enhance or distract from the story of use of non complementary colors, out of focus objects or bright highlights.

Remember Color Slides should be perfect in all aspects as opposed to Nature and Photojournalism, where the story is the primary objective.

Nature

The story is the most important thing in a nature image.

Identifying the subject adds interest and helps the audience learn

Hybrid plants and domesticated animals do not qualify.

Avoid showing “the hand of man.”

Obvious zoo shots are not acceptable.

Composition is important.

Hot spots detract from the subject.

Prints

The pictorial quality, technical quality and presentation are important in a print.

Prints should be mounted on a mat that is not distracting (Black, gray, off white).

Prints should be attached to a mat securely and not show lumps or air pockets through the print (example: 3M adhesive).

It is good to put a small white line (1/16” or 1/8”) around the edge of a print to separate the print from the mat; a black line may work well on a high-key print.

Black and White prints should have good blacks and clean whites with texture that produce good contrast.

The paper surface should be appropriate for the print (a glossy surface is good for scenics, a mat surface is good for portraits).

The subject and composition of a print should have general interest and most people would find it interesting to put on a wall.

If the image quality is good, a bigger print is better.

Darkened corners of a print keep interest in the print.

Photo Travel

Photo Travel images have no geographic limitation.

Every picture taken while traveling is not a Photo Travel image.

The image must capture the feeling of a time and place, and portray a land, a people or a culture in its natural state.

Ideally it captures the essence of the place or describes one of its defining characteristics.

Landscapes, waterfalls, mountains or zoo shots that could be anywhere are not strong Photo Travel images. Others such as Half Dome and Niagara Falls are identifiable and distinct.

Less than ideal lighting shows what the place was like at a particular time.

Some pictorial distractions may reveal important aspects of a time and place or provide information about a people or culture. They are part of the story.

Good pictorial qualities add to the strength of an image.

Many of the best Photo Travel images include people, but they should not be obviously posed.

Photo Journalism

Photojournalism images should tell a compelling story.

The picture, not the caption, determines whether it qualifies as photojournalism.

The caption provides information about whom, when, or where.

The journalistic value of the photograph is more important than the pictorial quality.

Action, emotion, color, or timing is often key aspects of a good PJ picture.

Strong impact is important to get the viewer's attention.

PJ images should be appropriate to appear in the news media, including human interest and spot news.

Artificially produced situations and manipulations that alter the truth are not eligible.

The print should exhibit good technical quality (exposure, sharpness and composition).

Assigned/Theme Subjects

Judging depends not only on the photographic merit, but also on how well the image fits the assignment.

In Nature, Travel and Photojournalism Assigned Subject Competitions the standard rules for the section apply. Know the definition and give a liberal interpretation.

The pictorial quality of the image is important.

Creative interpretations are encouraged.

PICKING WINNERS

Judge by the standards of the section entered, regardless of the subject content. A flower entered in a Color Competition should be judged by pictorial, not Nature, standards.

Preference should not be given to either film or digital images.

Creative and Traditional images are of equal merit.

Vary the type and subject matter of the images selected.

Be careful not to pass an image on the second round that you gave all good comments to on the first round.

Be decisive. Don't give a reason for Passing an image.

Don't say, "Let's hold this for another round."

It is difficult to decide between pictures of different types. An excellent portrait should be selected over a good landscape and an excellent landscape should be selected over a good portrait.

The difficulty of taking the picture should not change your rating. The image speaks for itself.

Uniqueness and creativity add to the quality of an image if it meets the other standards of a good photograph.

Reference: stlcameraclub.com St. Louis Camera Club: Guidelines for Effective Judging

