



If you have ever looked at the selected images from a particular photo competition and wondered “why the heck...?” then now is the time to understand the criteria for judging assessments.

Firstly, it is inevitable that each individual judge brings something of their personal taste to their assessment of an image. That is why any serious exhibition will have a panel of assessors.

Secondly, good judges are able to override their personal taste and still evaluate an image according to technical criteria.

Thirdly, you have to understand that certain exhibitions have a distinct bias towards a certain style. Different countries and different exhibitions have a different bias. Some will look for new, exciting, way-out or even depressing images. Other exhibitions will be very traditional in their selection.

Finally, if you are a member of a camera club, then you will have experience of club judging. The problem with club judging is it does tend to favour traditional, well executed images, rather than encourage the new, young and different.

In any assessment of your own work you may disagree. But, take the comments you have been given and see if there is anything you can take away that really does apply to your work.

There are a number of different scoring methods, the three most common are scores from 6 to 15, 10 to 20 or points out of 100. The international method is scoring from 100 and in each of the categories below a theoretical 10 points is applied for each criteria.

When you submit images to us for assessment we use the same criteria, though we are now strict on exact allocation of 10 points per category.



1 - IMPACT.

Absolutely crucial and a high impact image will always garner more points. Impact is the immediate sense you get upon viewing an image for the first time – a high impact image will evoke and intense emotion.

2 - CREATIVITY AND STYLE

The expression of imagination through the image. The image will clearly show a defined style of the photographer, the scene or genre.

3 - COMPOSITION

A good structure and design within the image. Proper composition keeps the viewer within the image and guides the eye to where the author intends.

4 - IMAGE OR PRINT PRESENTATION

In the case of prints this is making sure the mats and borders support or enhance the image, not be distracting. For digital images I would strongly caution against applying any kind of border unless really required.

5 - CENTRE OF INTEREST

The key subject within the image and that the image points to the key subject. Some images may have no key subject – it is the image as a whole that is important.



6 - LIGHTING

That the photographer has understood how light has affected dimension and shape to an image. The light whether natural or artificial has been used well.

7 - COLOUR BALANCE

That the colours within an image are balanced against each other – or work together to create a dynamic image.

8 - TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE

That the image sharpness, exposure, correct colour, range of tones are at an appropriate quality for the image.

9 - PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUE

The way the photographer has approached the whole capture and presentation of the image, including lighting, posing, exposure, post-processing and more.

10 - STORY TELLING or SUBJECT MATTER

The image should evoke imagination, lead a viewer into a situation or tell a story in a single frame. The story may not be beautiful – think of documentary photography.