PSA PPD Interclub Print Competition Judge's Guidelines

The PSA PPD Interclub Print Competition has five Categories: Small Monochrome, Large Monochrome, as defined by the PSA Monochrome guidelines, Small Color, Large Color and Creative Altered Reality (CAR). For ALL the Categories, the PSA Nature, Photojournalism and Photo Travel Rules **DO NOT** apply to the prints submitted.

Judging:

You will be part of a three Judge Panel.

The score is your evaluation of a print. You should take into consideration the technical quality of the image, which includes but is not limited to factors such as exposure, focus, appropriateness of post- processing, and how well the image is presented; the impact of the image, including, where relevant, its story-telling qualities; the composition, which refers broadly to how elements are arranged to suit the goal of the image. Finally, particularly for the prints that meet a high standard in each of the above areas, consider whether the image has something extra, something intangible that captures your eye and imagination. This general scoring rubric is sometimes referred to by the acronym "TICE" – for technical quality, impact, composition, and extra.

Below on this page are three versions of these elements used to describe prints.

- Elements of Photography
- Expanded Elements of Photography
- PPA 12 Elements of a Merit Image

None of these three lists are absolute but together can guide the judges as they evaluate prints.

Scoring:

is on a 27-point total system for the three judges. Each Judge will score from 1 – 9 points.

Multiple prints can be awarded the same scores. After the scoring has been completed, then the selection of the order of the ribbons should be made.

Overall, the scores we anticipate can be characterized as follows:

1 is for DQs. A comment as to why is required as to why
2-3 points: almost never used, these very low scores would be for extremely weak or inappropriate competition prints.
4-5 points: an image with several problems or a single serious flaw involving technical, compositional, or other issues that result in it not being a strong competition image.
6 points: a generally competent competition image where the technical and compositional aspects have been handled appropriately.
7 points; a very good to excellent competition quality image with only minor, if any, technical weaknesses; well composed and with strong visual impact. An image with this score often may receive an award.
8 points: an outstanding image of the highest technical quality, well processed, with strong composition and impact. Generally, such a score is associated with an award-winning photo.
9 points: a photo of superior quality, craftsmanship, and artistic impact. Any perceived weakness would be offset by outstanding redeeming qualities that elevate it. A photo earning this score has an impact that makes the image significant and memorable.

Larry Dunn, SPSA,

Director PSA PPD Interclub Print Competition

PPA's 12 Elements of a Merit Image

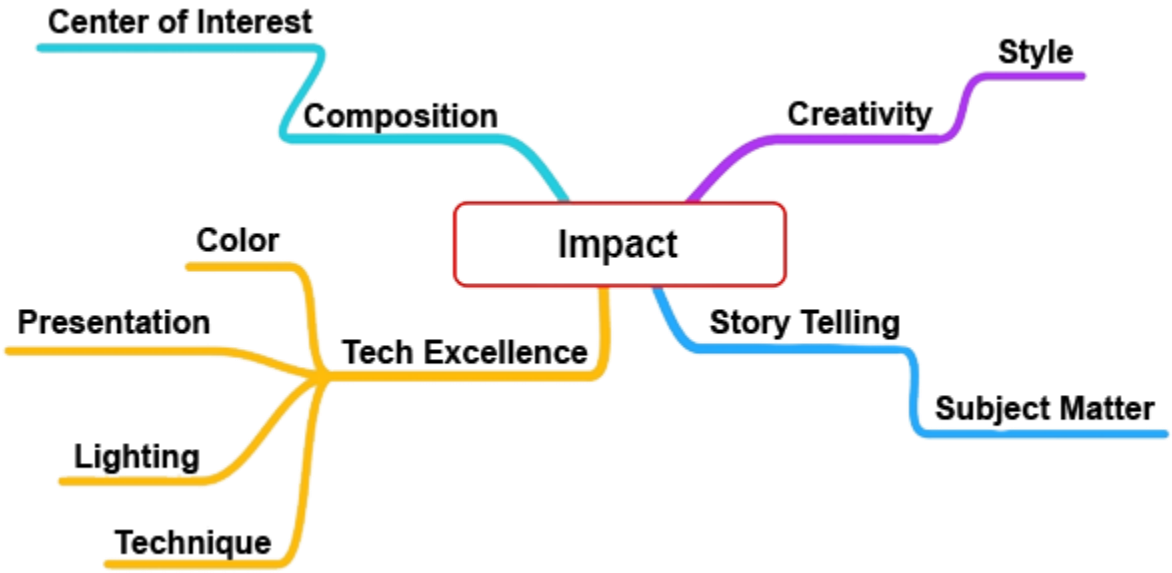
The PPA (Professional Photographers of America) publishes 12 elements of a merit image. These 12 elements are used by PPA judges to rate competition photographs. Bri Thatcher gave an excellent presentation to the NAPfS membership on these 12 elements and the benefits of the PPA on September 19, 2019. You can see the complete recap of her presentation here, including the links to the PPA websites and some interesting facts on the way that PPA judges operate.

- **Impact** – Viewing and image for the first time always evokes some kind of feeling. Sometimes they can make us sad, happy or angry. Sometimes they force us to look inward at ourselves. That's called an impact, and the more powerful the image, the more powerful the emotional response of the viewer.
- **Technical Excellence** – This is the print quality of the actual image itself as it's presented for viewing. There are a lot of aspects that speak to the qualities of the physical print. These can include: retouching, manipulation, sharpness, exposure, printing, mounting, and color correction.

- **Creativity** – Your point of view is exactly that – yours. And it's unlikely anyone else's. This element speaks directly to that perspective. It shows your imagination and how you used the medium to convey an idea, a message, or a thought to the viewer. This is how you differentiate yourself from others.
- **Style** – There are many, many ways to apply this element to your work. Maybe you use light in a specific way on a subject, or maybe you make a technical decision for the express purpose of underscoring desired impact. When subject matter and style come together in an appropriate manner, the effects on an image can be spectacular. But remember, when subject matter and style don't work together, the results can be, well, less-than-spectacular.
- **Composition** – When all the visual element of an image come together to express intent, that's when the magic of composition happens. Good composition captures a viewer's attention and directs it where you, the artist, want it to be. Depending on your intent, you can make something that pleases the view – or disturbs them.
- **Presentation** – How you showcase an image is just as important as how you compose it. Everything in the presentation should work to enhance your image and not distract from it. Keep this in mind when choosing mats, borders and everything in between.
- **Color Balance** – Proper color balance can bring a sense of harmony to an image. When the tones all work together to support an image, the emotional appeal is that much greater. But color balance doesn't have to be used to bring harmony to an image. You can use color balance to evoke any number of feelings from a viewer. The choice in how to take advantage is entirely up to you, but no matter what, be sure your choice enhances rather than distracts.
- **Center of Interest** – This is where an image's creator wants the viewer's attention focused. Sometimes there can be a primary and secondary center of interest. Sometimes everything in an image will work together to create that center of interest. A good way to measure this is to turn your photo upside-down; if your eye still goes to the center of interest, then it is probably correct.
- **Lighting** – The use and control of light has an effect on every aspect of an image. It informs dimensions and shape. It sets tone and mood, and, like every other technique, proper lighting can be used to enhance your image while improper lighting can distract from it.
- **Subject Matter** – Even though it lacks words, your image is still telling a story, and your subject matter is central to that. So make sure your subject matter is right for the story that you're trying to tell.
- **Technique** – How you choose to execute your image is a key. It's also a holistic decision. Technique informs everything in the creation of your image. From lighting and posing to printing and presentation, it all works to show off the techniques that you've mastered and applied to your craft.

- **Story Telling** – What does you image evoke in a viewer's imagination? What do you want your image to evoke in a view's imagination? Your image is a story, and the one it tells your viewer may be one you never knew you were telling.

Almost everyone agrees that the most important element is **Impact**; what impact does the image have on the judge? Other merit elements include: Technical Excellence, Creativity, Style, Composition, Presentation, Color Balance, Center of Interest, Lighting, Subject Matter, Technique, and Story Telling. The image's title can also be quite important to judges' reactions.



Elements of Photography

For the person who may feel they would not know what to say in analyzing a photograph, here is how it is easy. Simply memorize the elements and when confronted with an image, begin going over them in your mind one at a time and apply them to the image. Nearly every image will exhibit or not a majority of the elements. It is up to you how you use the elements; the important thing is to use them.

- **Impact**: Does the image evoke an emotion no matter how subtle?
- **Story or relevance to the monthly theme**: Does the image tell a story of some kind? If there is a theme for the competition, does the image address the theme?
- **Composition**: How are the subjects in the frame arranged?

- **Interest area**: What, if anything, in the image is of interest to you or not, or is missing?
- **Creativity**: Does the image convey a different point of view, use aperture or shutter speed in an unusual way, show something you have not seen before or something familiar done in a creative way?
- **Color**: How do you see the color being used in the image or not being used?
- **Light**: How has the light been used in the image? Light should enhance an image, not detract from it.
- **Technical**: Focus, depth of field, exposure (ISO, aperture, shutter speed), camera handling, white balance, noise – technically done well or not? Is the image clean without spots or other issues?

The Elements Expanded

Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling prints evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder, horror or any other emotion. There can be impact in any of these emotions. Impact may also be found in any or all of the elements of a fine photograph. Photographers may be impacted by a fine composition or something finely focused.

Just because you do not feel any of the above responses to an image does not mean that is has no impact. This just means it may not have any impact for you. Impact is only one of the elements of a fine photograph; so do not put too much weight on the impact element. The quality or lack thereof, of all elements should figure into image impact.

Bias may be one reason, and the worst of all reasons, to think an image has no impact. If you do not like cats, recognize this fact and do not think that a picture of a cat has no impact just because it is an image of a cat. Your perceived lack of impact may be true; it does not have impact in your mind. This may be your problem and not the maker's. There must be other reasons; look into it a bit deeper. Once you get past a bias, the true impact may reveal itself.

An important fact about impact is that it is just one of the elements of a fine photograph. You might not want to put too much emphasis on impact positively or negatively.

Technical excellence is the image quality as it is presented for viewing. Retouching, dirty sensor spot removal, proper removal or inclusion of distracting elements, proper or improper use of a vignette, removal of a distracting background, sharpness, exposure, depth of field, presentation, and correct color are some items that speak to

the qualities of the image. Technical excellence encompasses all the things you have learned about photography that have to do with visual excellence of the image presentation. It may not be emotional in any way and the viewer must understand the concepts as well as the methods for creating a technically excellent image.

Composition is important to the design of an image, bringing all of the visual elements together in concert. Proper composition holds the viewer in the image and prompts the viewer to create a meaning from the image. Effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the image maker, or your perception. You will not know what the maker's intent was, so you must create the meaning for yourself before you can discuss composition. All prints have some form of composition whether it is good or bad. Rules are meant to be broken and your perception of composition may very well see beyond them.

Interest Area is the point, or points, on the image where the viewers want to stop as they view the image. These are called fixation points. There can be primary and many secondary interest areas. There may be no mandate that an image must have a single center of interest. Occasionally, there will be no specific center of interest at all when the entire scene collectively serves as the center of interest. Interest areas serve to keep the viewer's mind from wandering and create pleasant fixation points.

Creativity is the original, fresh, and external expression of the imagination of the maker and the viewer. It may be a new or creative way you feel the maker has presented a tried and true subject or an imaginative presentation of a very new subject. In either case the creativity will manifest itself in your mind as something a bit different.

Color harmony supplies structure to an image. An image where tones work together, effectively supporting the image, can enhance its emotional appeal. Color harmony is not always comfortable and may supply a very unstructured image and may be used to evoke diverse feelings for effect. Color may very well be used to enhance composition by balancing the image much like a scale. Dark colors may appear heavy and bright colors conversely may appear light. This apparent distribution of color balance may not have much to do with color manipulation in a computer, but more to do with the visual equilibrium of the color parts within the frame.

You may consider black and white. Tonality may take the place of color and serve the image in a similar way. Color tonality is also a part of color harmony.

Light - The use and control of light refers to how dimension, shape and roundness are defined in an image. Whether the light applied to an image is manmade or natural,

proper use of it should enhance an image in every way including, but not limited to, color, highlight and shadow, exposure, distractions, and as mentioned, dimension or the impression of the depth.

Presentation affects an image by giving it a finished look. The stroke around the image used, should support and enhance the image, not distract from it. Making sure there is not any Sensor Dust showing on the image.

Story - Storytelling refers to the image's ability to evoke imagination in the viewer. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect his own message or read her own story in an image. Therefore, there may be an argument that the viewer, as well as the maker, has a responsibility in the process. The maker has a profound responsibility to present an image that correctly fulfills as many elements as possible. The viewer may need to create a meaning for the image if it is not obvious. A vivid imagination may be one of the most powerful tools in reading a photograph. It is not necessarily the maker's responsibility to present you with something you recognize.