



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 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 COMPETE?



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**

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

CRITICISM vs CLUB JUDGING

■ CRITICISM

- *Criticism is all about asking questions (Critical Thinking) when looking.*
 - What do I see? What is it about? What do I think?
- *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*









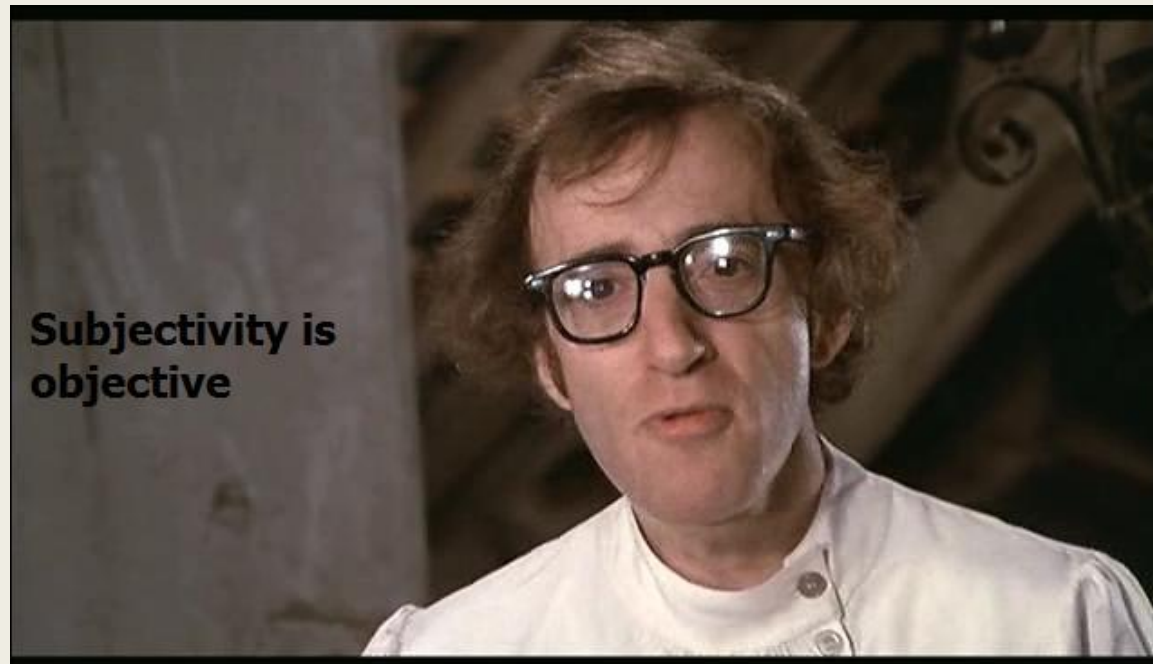






HOW JUDGES JUDGE

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

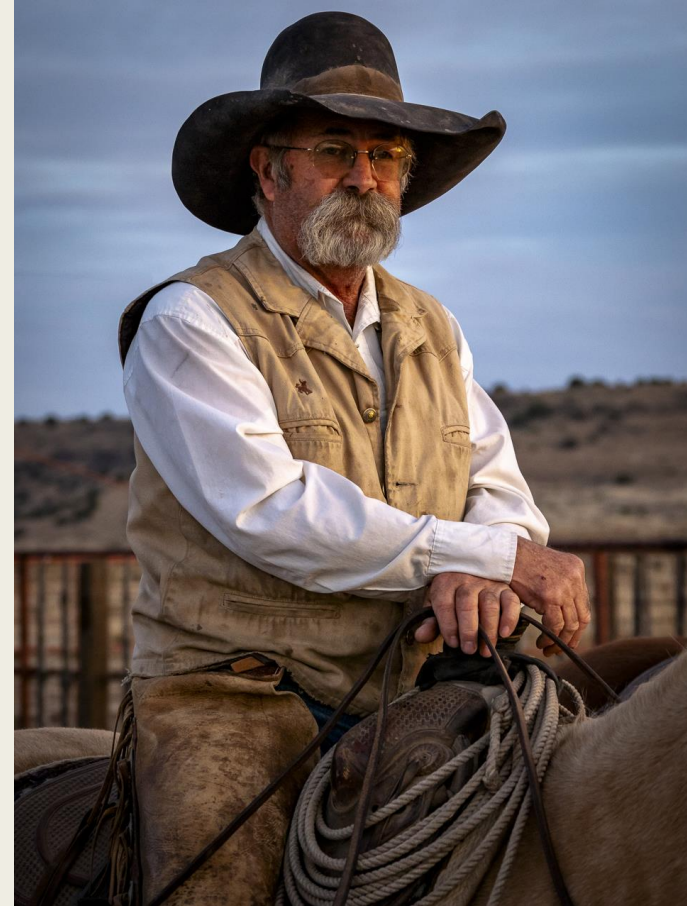
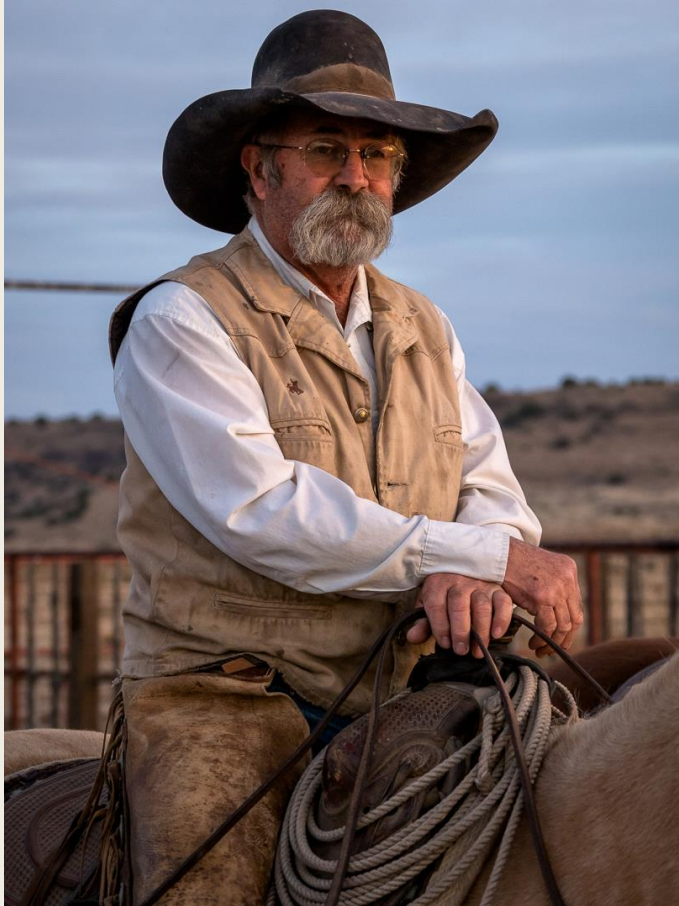


EXAMPLES



Shot March 2021
for a November
2022 Blue Hour
contest.

EXAMPLES



EXAMPLES



SOMETIMES YOU JUST CAN'T WIN

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



A RECENT EXAMPLE

“Nice black and white shot of a very fancily dressed lady with a crown. Something is going on in the background but can't tell what that is. It is almost completely black on the left side. Depending on what is going on a little more light might have added to the picture - or not. The picture is very sharp To my taste the picture needs to be brightened for the subject even if the back ground is kept dark. The white of the dress (maybe the dress wasn't actually white) but certainly the upper body and face need more light as that is the heart of the subject. Interesting photo fun to look at.”



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!**
 - *Emotion, Mood, Contrast, Color, Subject, Action, Humor, Exotic, Scale, Connection*
 - *Tells a Story*
- Why does it matter?
 - *Time*
 - *Numbers*



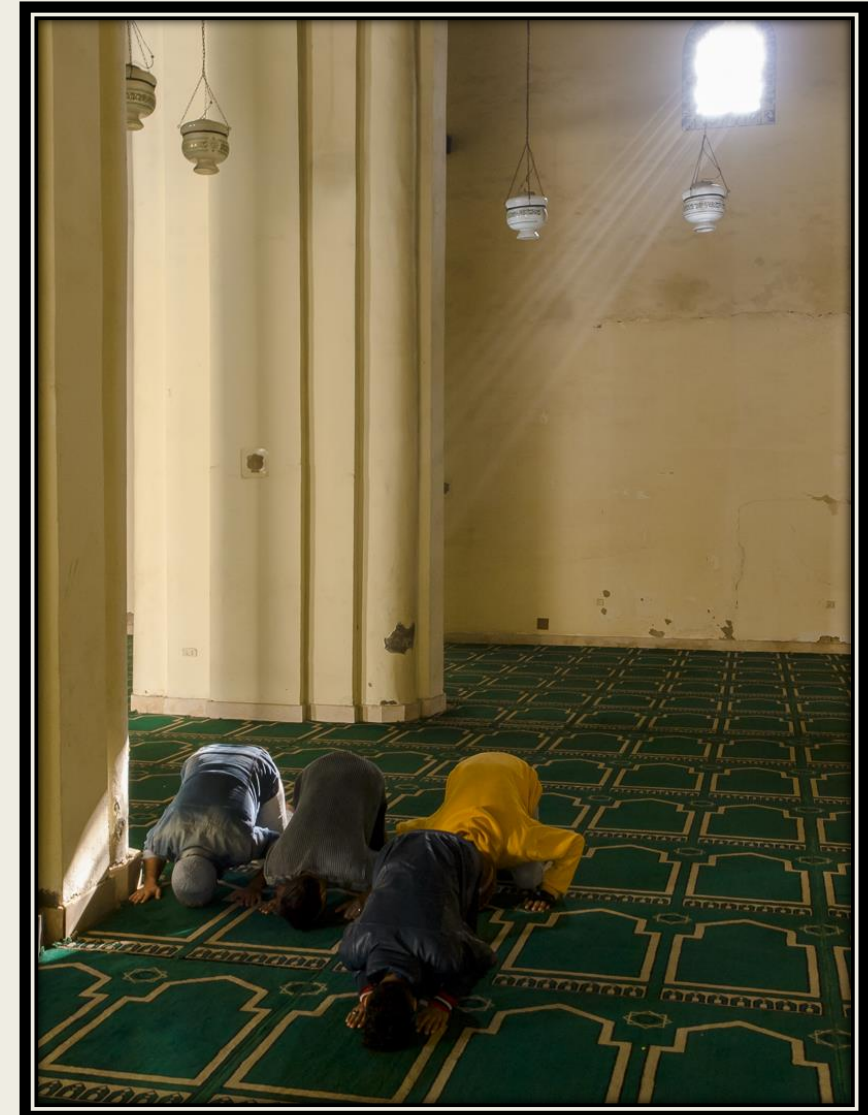
IMPACT

EMOTION



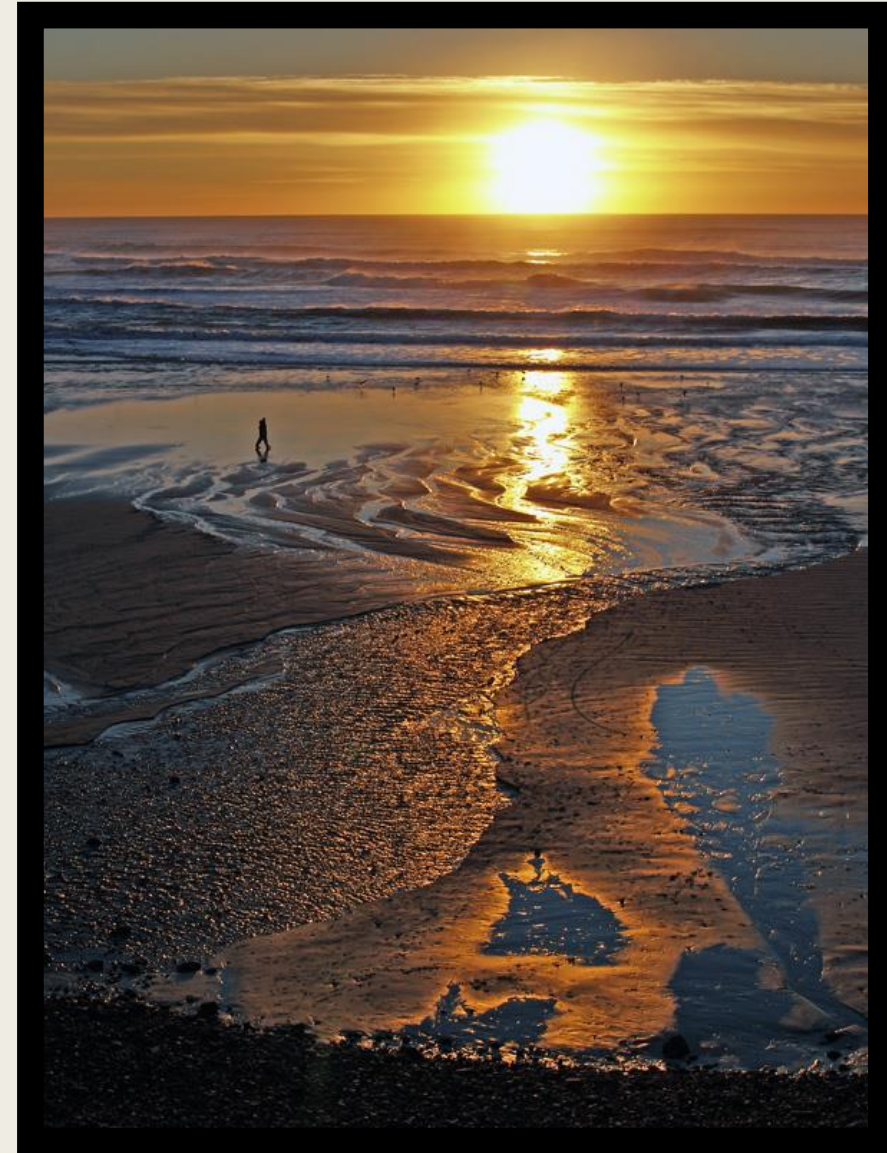
IMPACT

MOOD



IMPACT

CONTRAST



IMPACT

COLOR





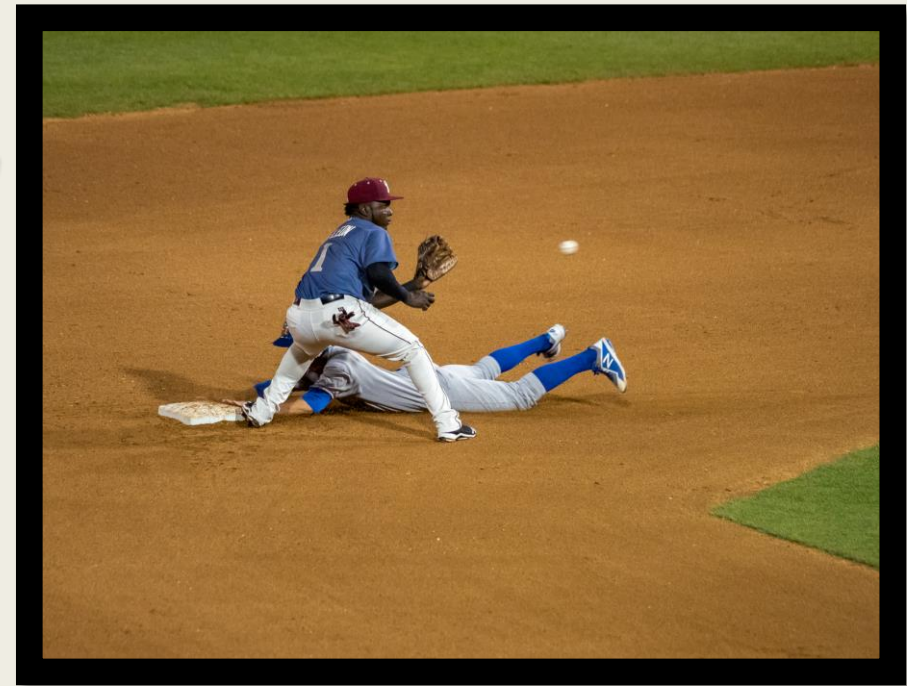
IMPACT

SUBJECT



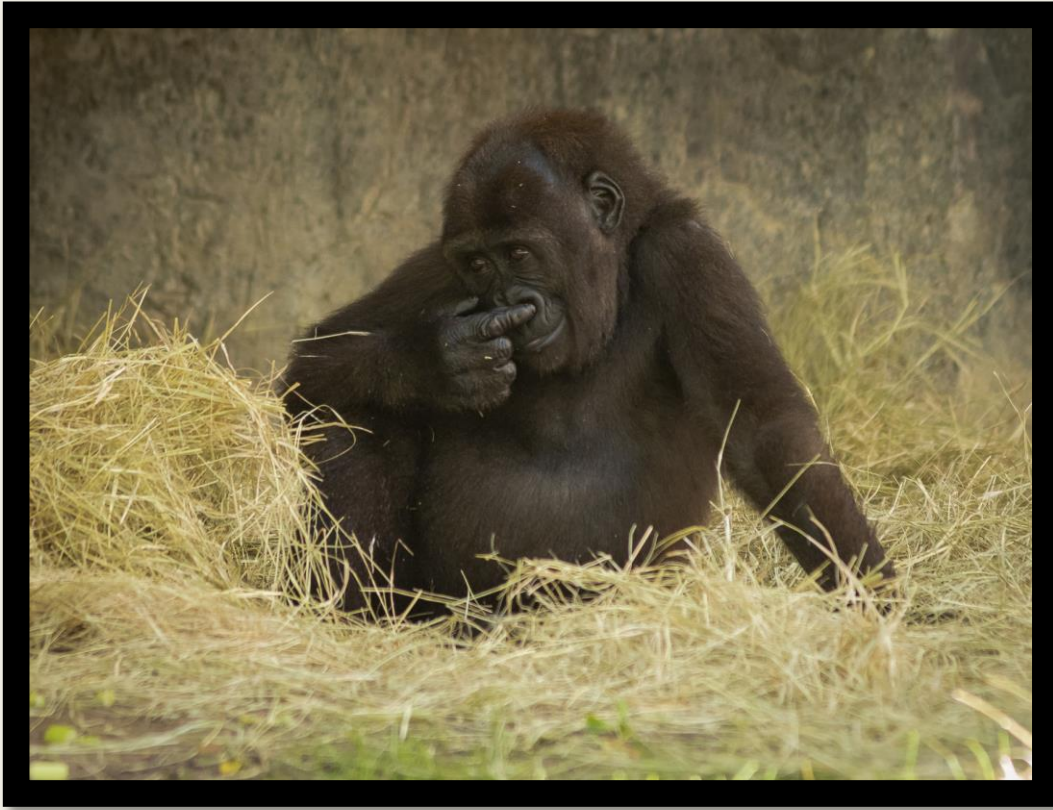


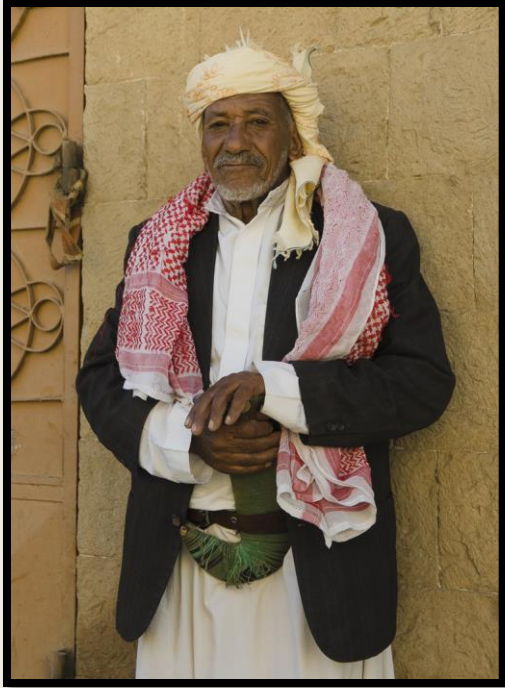
IMPACT **ACTION**



IMPACT

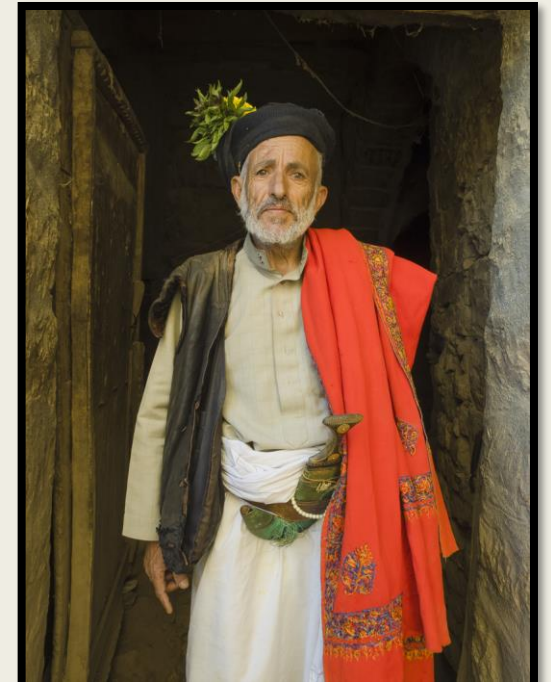
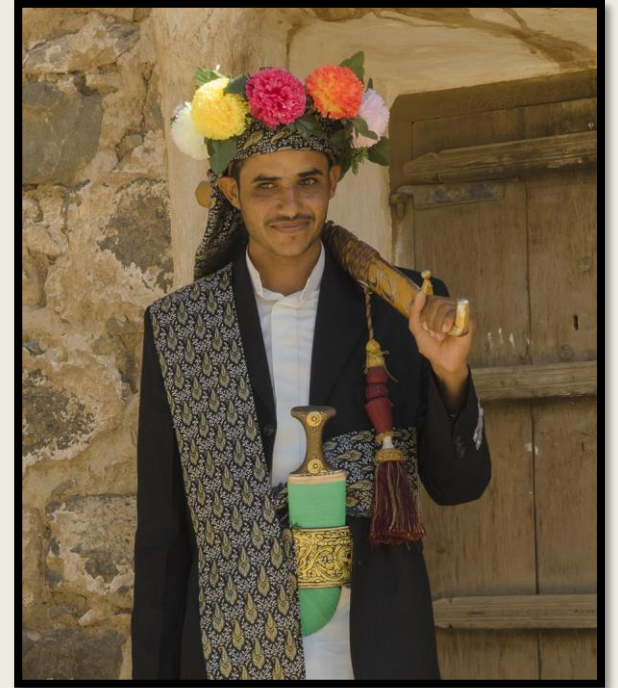
HUMOR





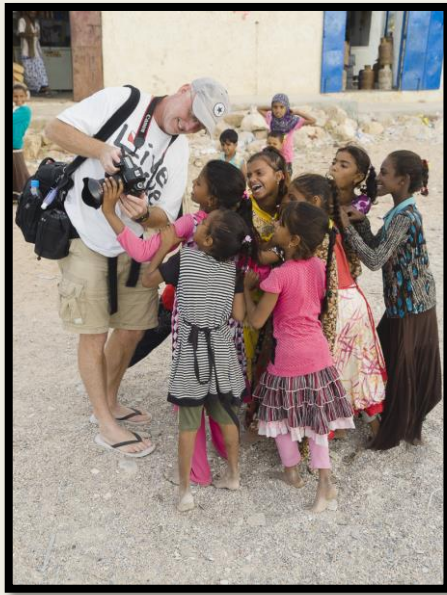
IMPACT

EXOTIC



IMPACT SCALE





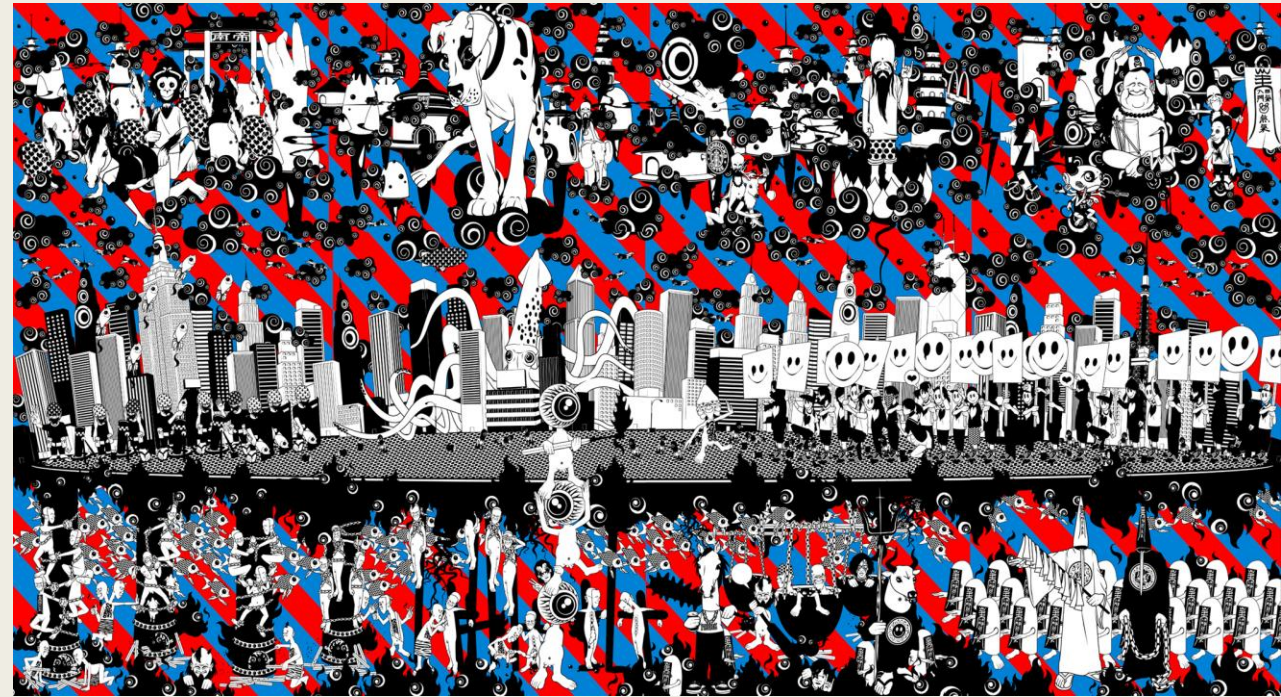
IMPACT CONNECTION



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



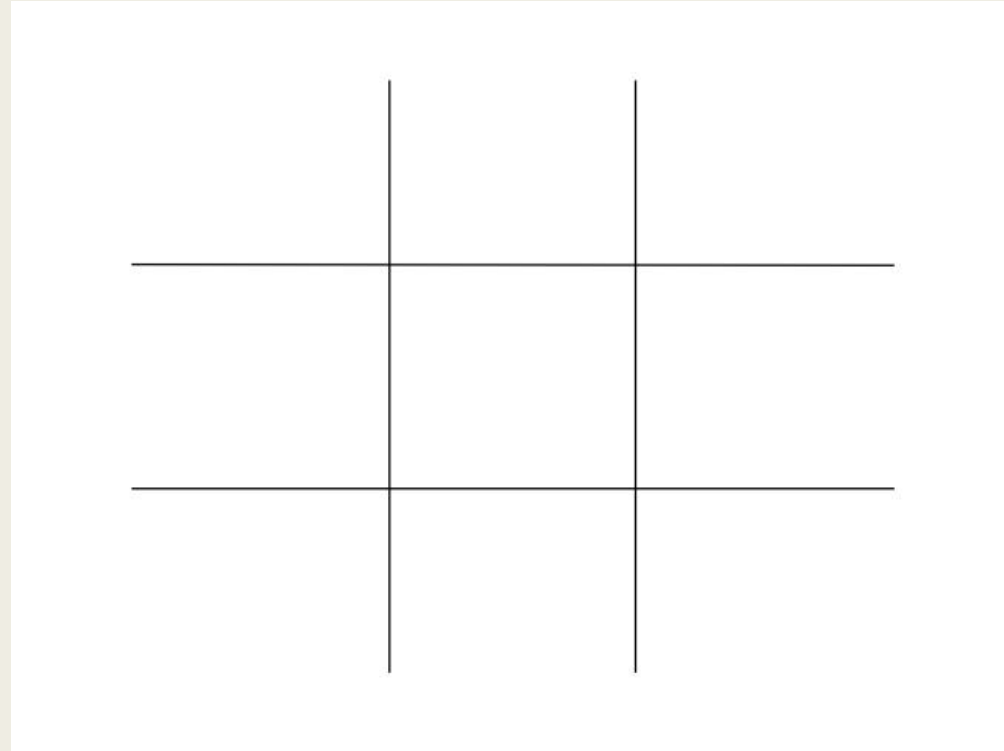
TOOLS NOT RULES!

(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



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

TRIANGLES AND DIAGONALS



EXAMPLES

FRAMES



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 your Subject
4. Avoid/Eliminate Distractions
5. Follows the Contest Rules/Guidelines
- 6. *TURN IT IN AND LET IT GO!!!!!!***

HAVE FUN!