



WHAT CONTEST JUDGES LOOK FOR

*Suggestions For Better Outcomes
in Club Competitions*



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*



TWO QUESTIONS?

1. WHO DO YOU TAKE PICTURES FOR?
2. WHY DO YOU TAKE PICTURES?



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. *Provides a way for others to see my work*
5. *It's a good way to learn*



WHY SHOULD YOU COMPETE?



SPEAKING SPECIFICALLY ABOUT CONTESTS

**WHAT QUESTION
WOULD YOU MOST
LIKE AN ANSWER TO?**

HOW DO I 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.

FAILURE



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THE REAL REWARD



CRITICISM vs CLUB JUDGING

■ CRITICISM

- *Criticism is all about asking questions, “Critical Thinking”.*
 - 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 slows photographing).*
- *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!*
- *A judge is merely providing an opinion.*

THE FIRST SUGGESTION

■ 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.*
 - Both clubs have mechanisms for this.
- *Keep your entries as SIMPLE as possible.*

AN EXAMPLE



ANOTHER EXAMPLE



AN EXAMPLE



ANOTHER

“Nice composition. I would have preferred eye contact.” (Judge’s comment)



VERY RECENTLY



"I would like to see more background for a better environmental portrait. A very crisp image." Judge's comment.

SUGGESTION NUMBER TWO

■ 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*



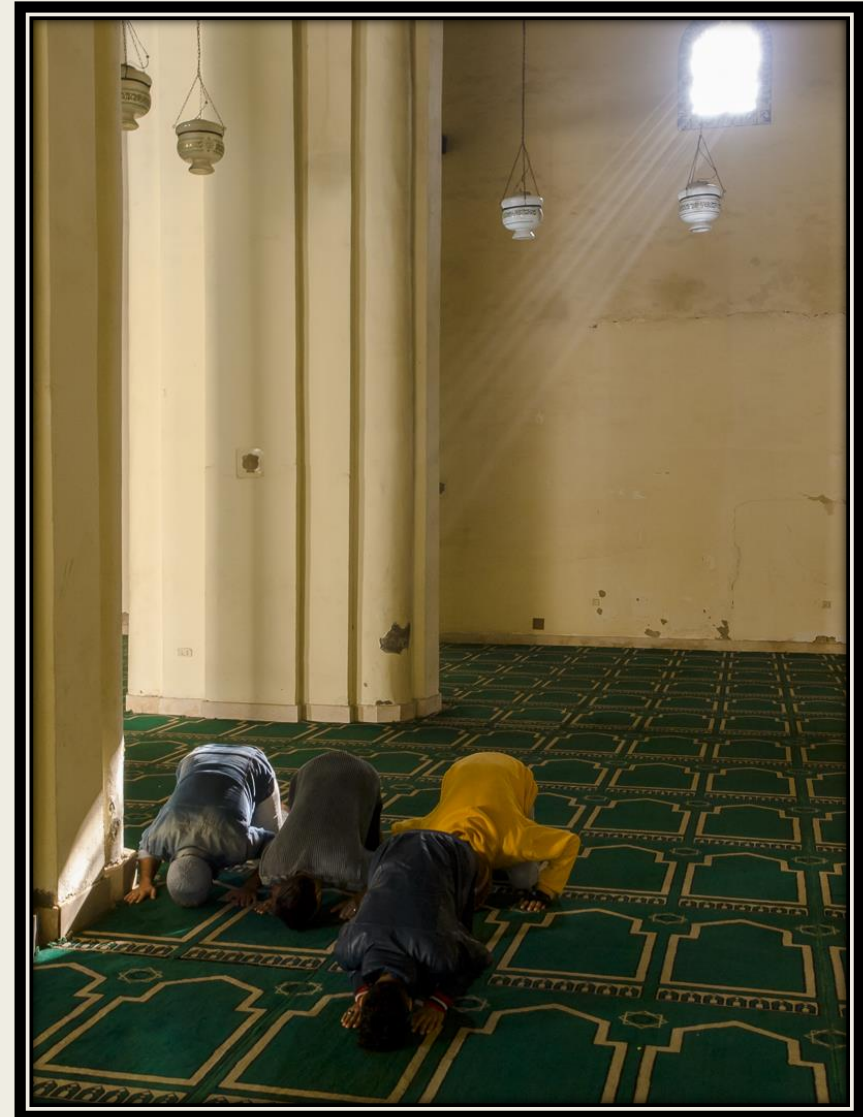
IMPACT

EMOTION

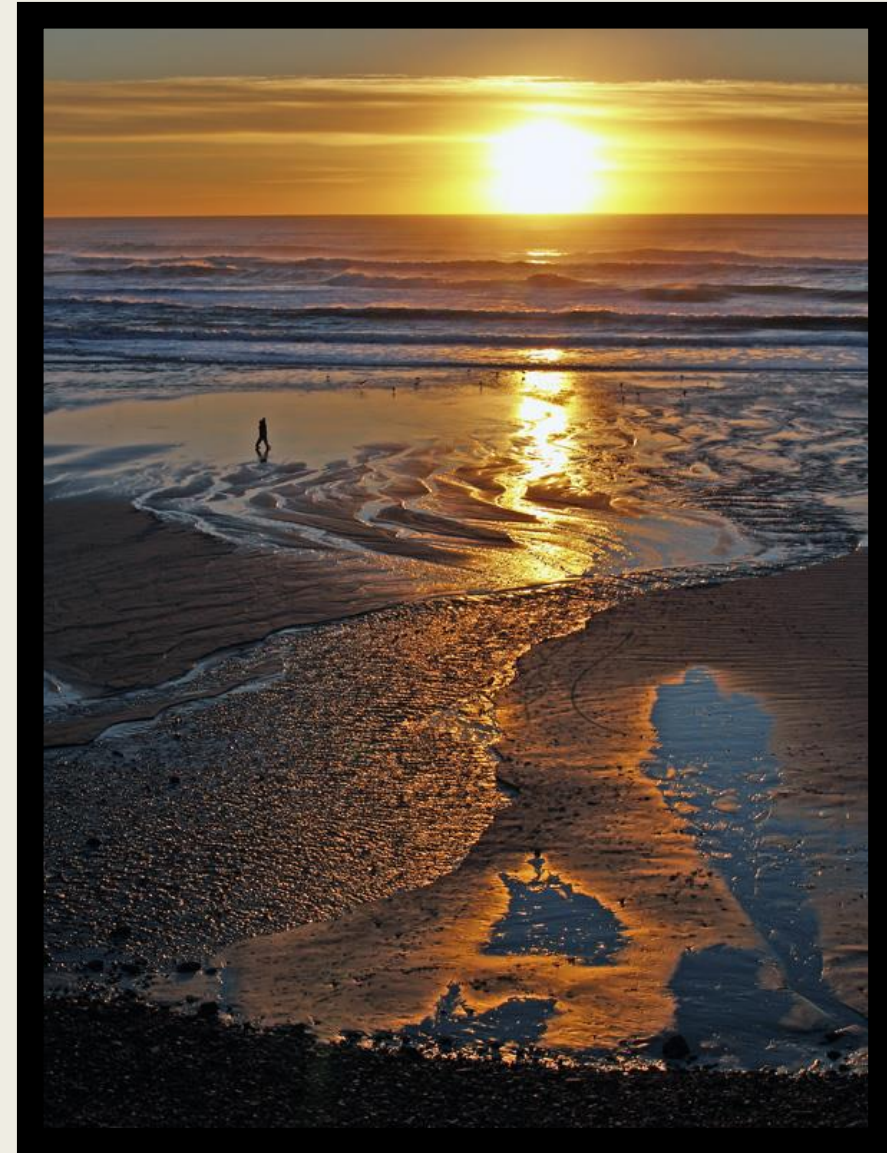


IMPACT

MOOD



IMPACT *CONTRAST*



IMPACT

COLOR





IMPACT **SUBJECT**



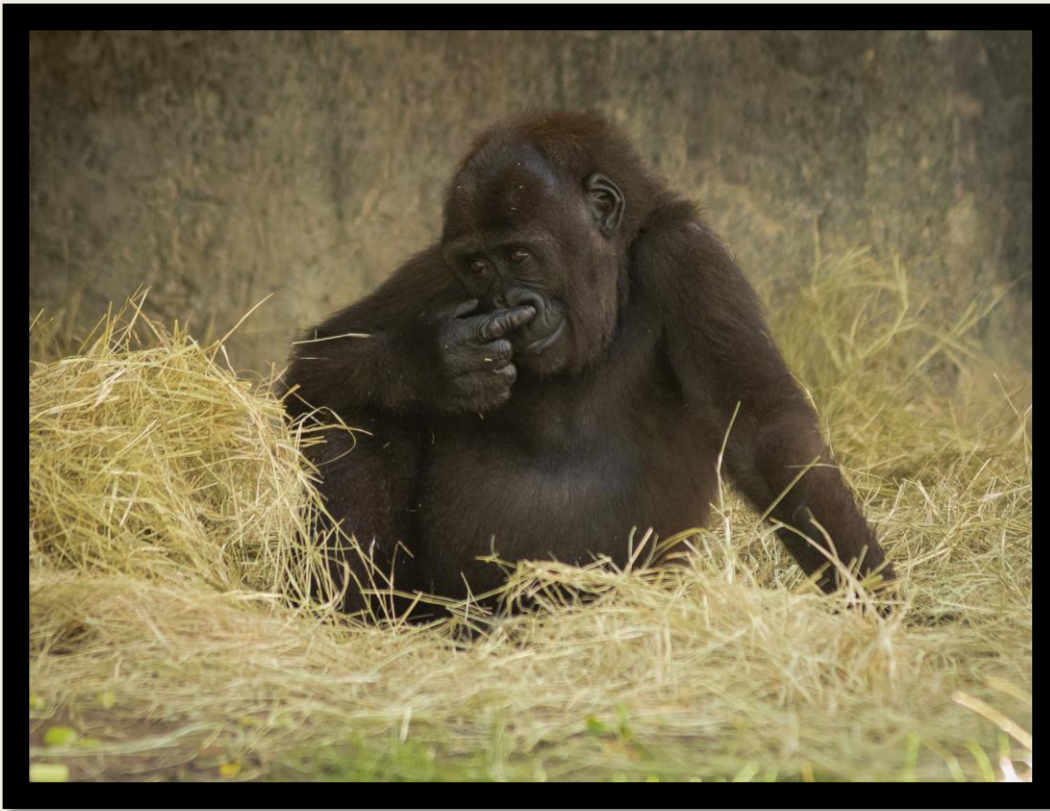


IMPACT *ACTION*



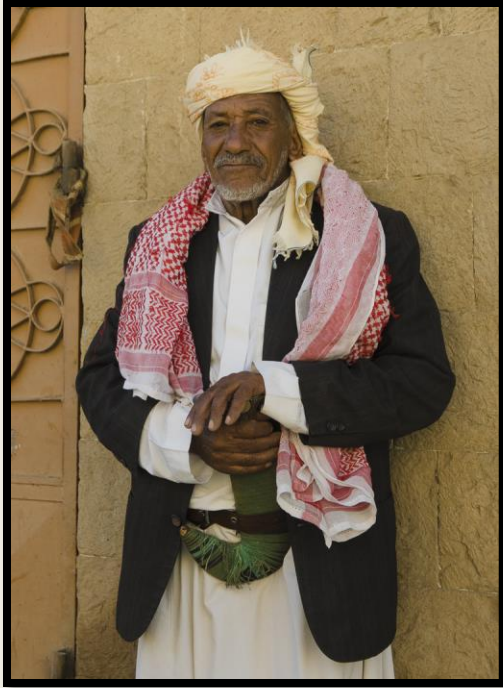
IMPACT

HUMOR



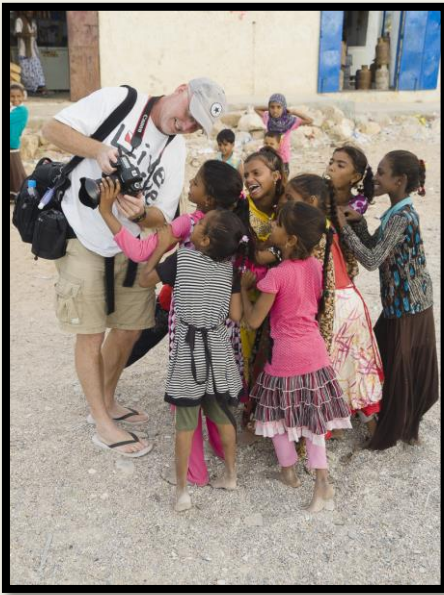
IMPACT

EXOTIC



IMPACT SCALE





IMPACT **CONNECTION**



SUGGESTION NUMBER THREE

- 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.*

HOW JUDGES JUDGE

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

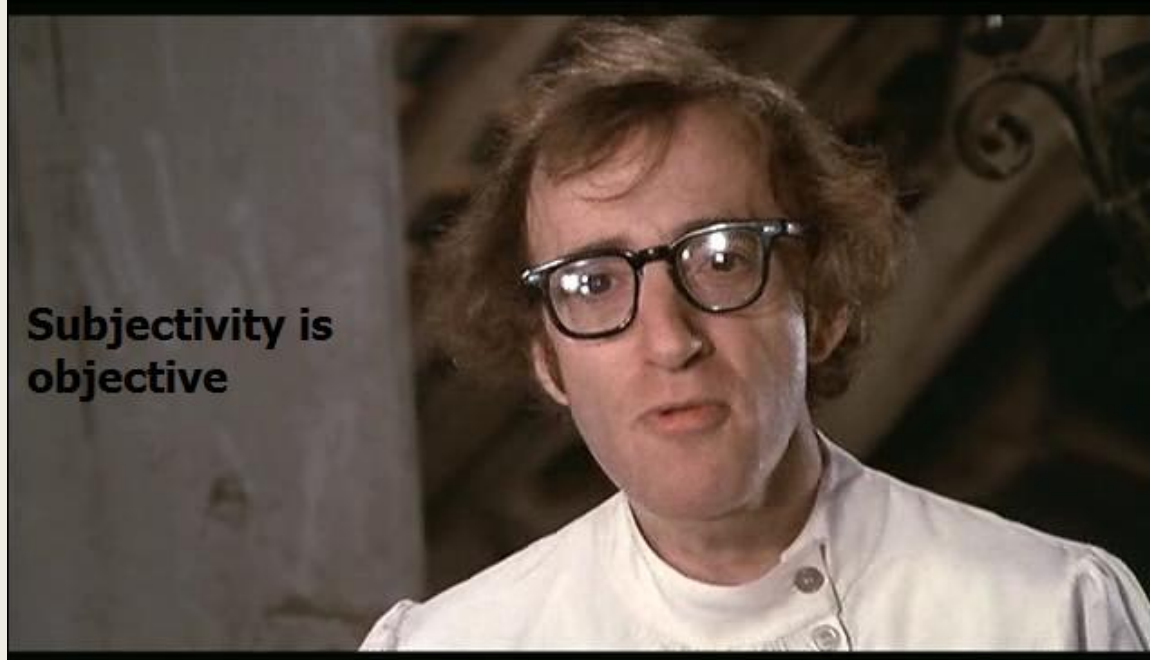


HOW JUDGES JUDGE

- 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

SUBJECTIVELY!!!



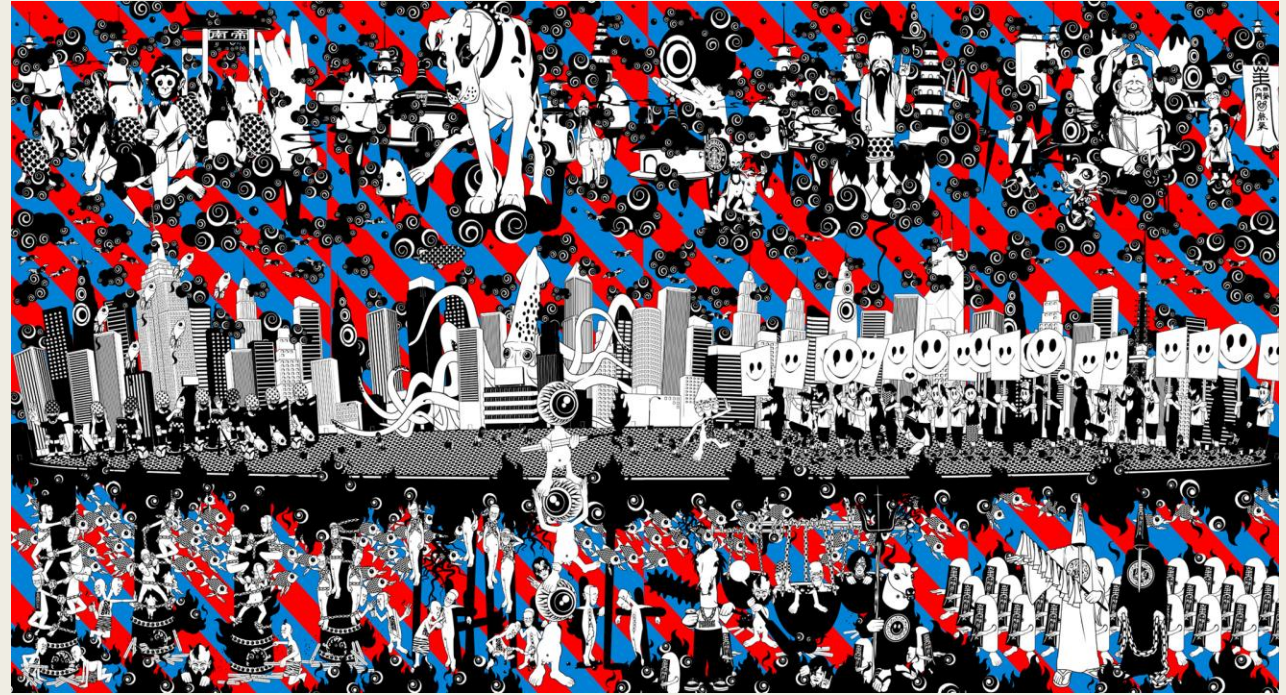


SUGGESTION NUMBER FOUR

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

WWW.LIVELIFEHAPPY.COM

PAINTING vs PHOTOGRAPHY



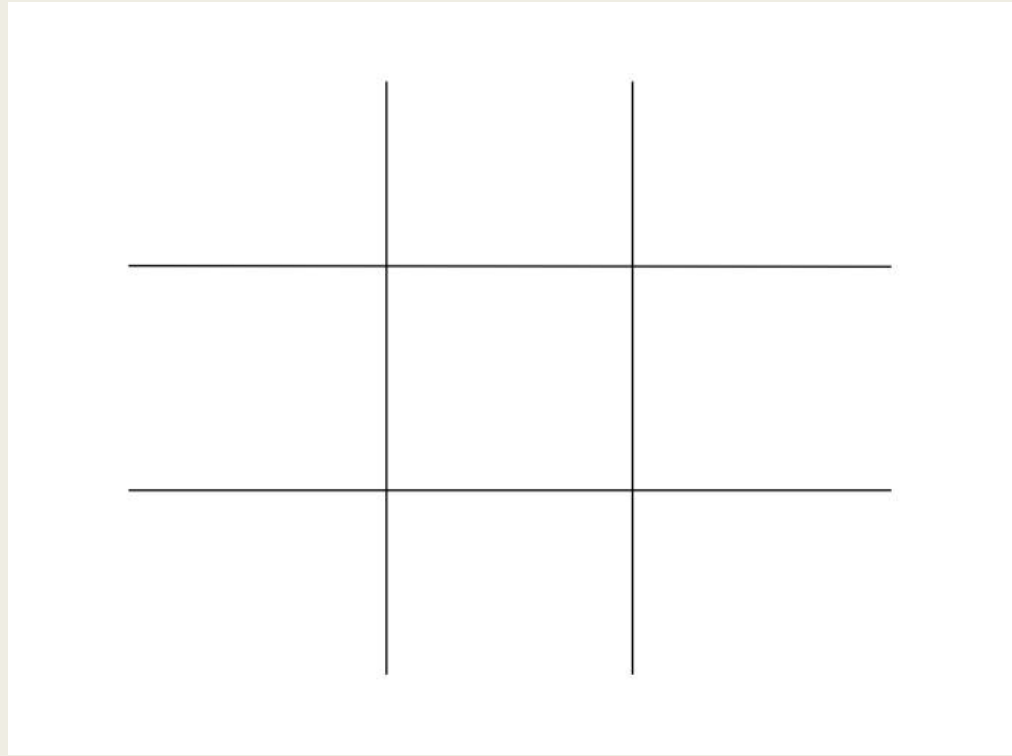
TOOLS NOT RULES!

(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

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



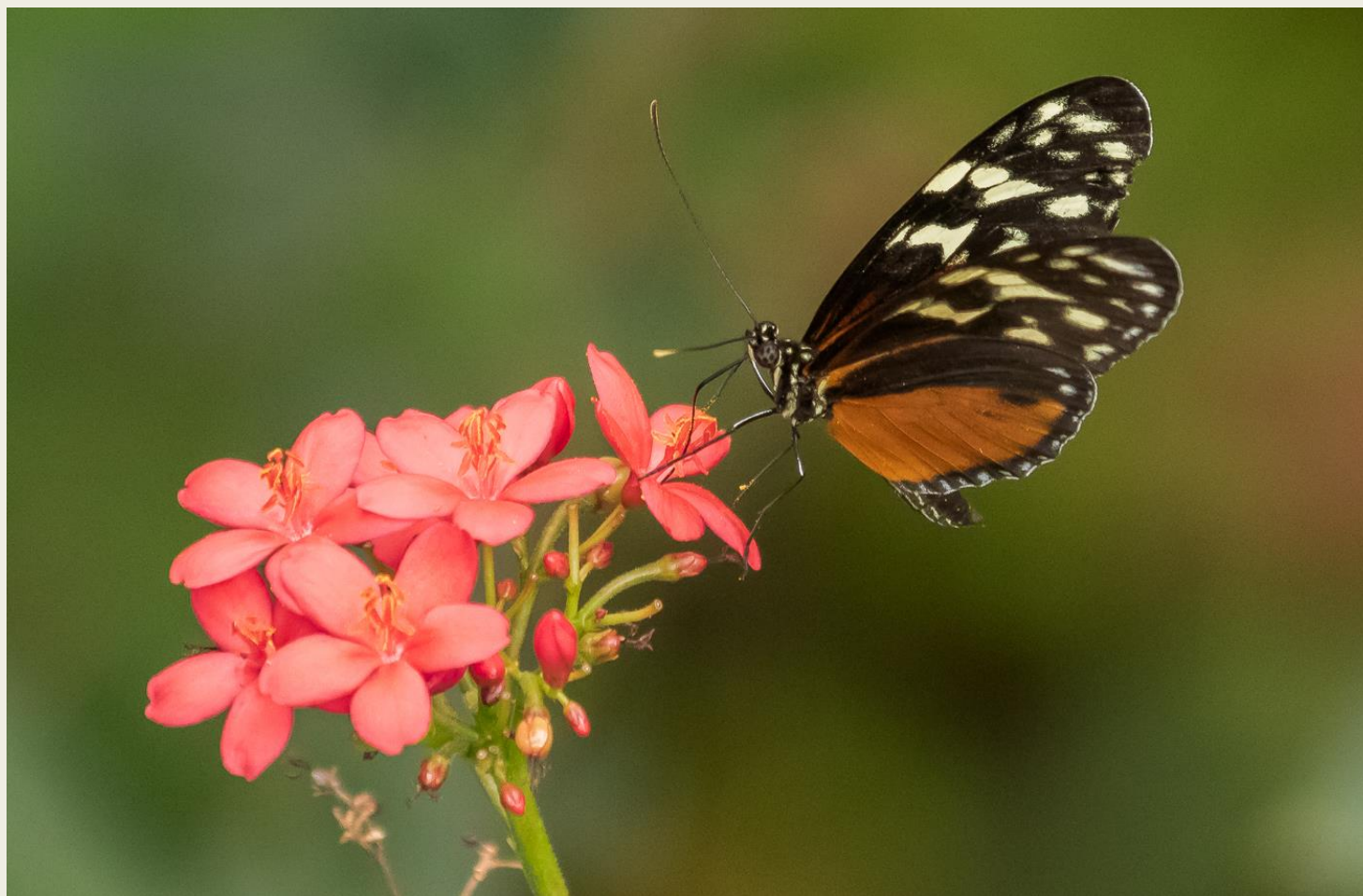
EXAMPLES

FRAMES

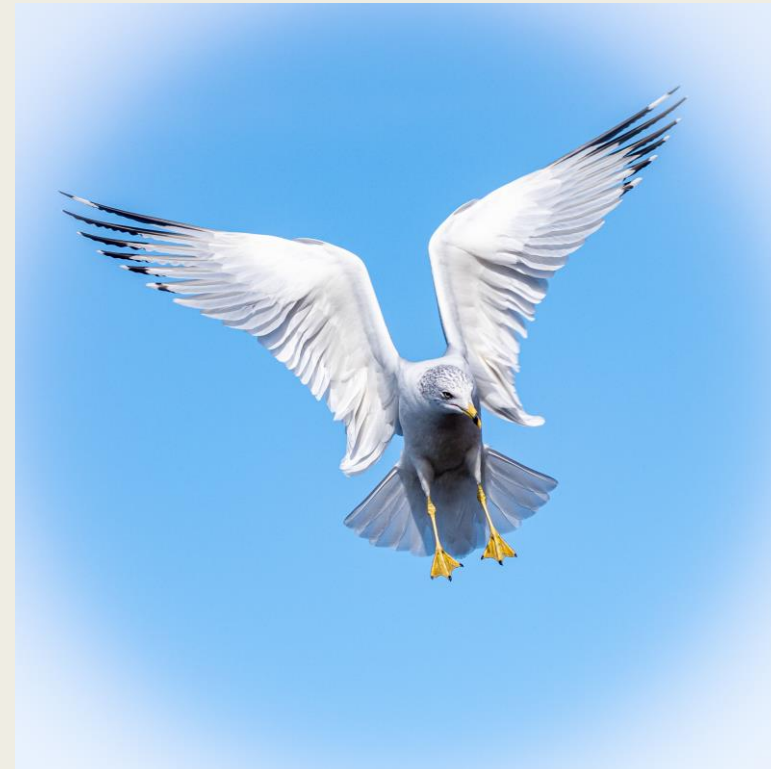


EXAMPLES

FOCUS



EXAMPLES VIGNETTING



EXAMPLES

HORIZON

Gerry Winogrand



FIVE TIPS

1. Make more photographs
2. Look for contest shots
3. Save your best to a contest folder
4. Study winning images
5. Seek out feedback

THE TAKE HOME MESSAGE

*IF YOU WANT TO COMPETE MORE SUCCESSFULLY,
I SUGGEST THAT YOU:*

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. Follow Contest Rules/Guidelines
- 6. TURN IT IN AND LET IT GO!!!!!!**

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT OF THIS PRESENTATION IS...

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

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

HAVE FUN!