



THE ANNUAL COMPETITION

16X20 PRINT, ALBUM AND FILMMAKING

10 STEPS TO AN AWARD WINNING ENTRY

Step 1: **Strong first impression / Impact**

The first thing the judges are looking for is impact and a strong first impression.

The moment an image is presented to the judges, it has to inspire a strong emotion to be rewarded well. If the image is forgettable then it will most likely not be rewarded well.

If the images slap the judges in their face and they will never forget it, then chances are you well on your way to a good score.

Step 2: **Point of difference / Originality / Creativity**

Your every day work may be consistent and sealable but may not be conducive of doing well in competition. What will win the hearts of your clients may not necessarily win the hearts of the judges. Originality with great execution is highly rewarded. Perhaps an entry has been created well but its impact is lessened because it has been seen before and arguably created more effectively. Make the judges ask themselves, "Why didn't I think of that?"

Step 3: **In camera Artistry / Degree of difficulty / Focus / Exposure**

This step celebrates the craft the photographer executed "in camera" from elementary things as desired focus to correct exposure to the difficulty of achieving the desired result "in camera."

Step 4: **Post production / Detail in highlights and shadows / Color Balance / Retouching**

At first glance and a prolonged view, the quality of your entry must be refined. Poor post production is usually the first negative thing judges notice including lack of detail in highlights and shadows, flat black tones, over sharpening, unreal HDR, poor color, poor skin retouching etc. "Invisible Photoshop" is usually the best approach. As in, evidence of what you have done in post production is not apparent.

Step 5: **Emotion / Story / Communication**

Remember that every element in your image should help convey the desired message and story of the subject matter to the viewer of your image. Is the story apparent or does it have just enough mystery to inspire the judges to draw their own unique conclusion.

Photography is art right? Art is defined as a form of communication. So the more effective you communicate your message to the viewer, your art is more understood and therefore rewarded.

Step 6: **Print Quality / Presentation**

The print quality, paper choice, finishing and presentation of your entry must compliment and support the in camera technique and the post production done to your entry.

Step 7: **Lighting**

Lighting creates mood, drama, texture, depth, dimension, shape and helps

communicate a desired message to the viewer. Is the brightest light visible on the desired point of interest? Is there evidence of a direction of light and catch lights? Does it flatter the subject? Poor lighting will adversely affect your score.

Step 8: **Posing / Placements of Elements / Design**

You wouldn't see a Michelangelo painting or sculpture with a subject that is poorly posed. Photography is no different. Effective posing is either flattering and/or it helps communicate the message of the artist to the viewer. If posing is not applicable to your entry then where you place your subject matter within the frame is the key to effective communication.

Step 9: **Composition / Cropping / Point of Interest**

How you compose and crop your image can elevate your entry from ordinary to extraordinary. How you bring the viewer's attention to the desired area of the image is paramount. Remember, the brightest part of the image should be the artist's desired point of interest.

Step 10: **Great Example of the Category / Style / Finesse / Refinement**

Is your entry the quintessential representation of the category it's submitted into? Are you bold enough to try to redefine a genre? Your entry should reek class and be refined, finessed and polished in every way with the above steps in mind.

EARLY BIRD: 12.10.18 | **DEADLINE:** 1.02.19 | **EXTENDED:** 1.24.19

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