

I filter out many images based on several factors.

- 1) Lighting – Is the light flat and dull versus more dynamic lighting that influences or enhances the image.
- 2) Framing or better yet cropping. Did the maker make the best use of cropping?
- 3) Is the image in focus? Are the eyes in focus? Is the foreground out of focus to the point of distraction?
- 4) Subject Focus - **What do you want the viewer of your image to see?** If you know what you want the viewer to see, is it the most important part of the image? To me this is an especially important concept.
- 5) Static images - which is a more difficult and harder concept to explain. What I mean are images that are missing movement, and I do not mean literal movement, I mean missing implied movement. Whether it is via light and dark areas in the frame or diagonals, triangles, curves, and shapes; implied movements are objects where light and dark interact within the frame and shapes keep your eye engaged. Some would call this the **composition** of the image.

In the Advanced grouping I expected the images to be technically correct, so now it comes down to fewer obvious factors.

- 1) Subtleties - in particular, color or the color palette, lighting, and tonality range.
- 2) Completion of the Image - Did the maker truly get the maximum potential out of the image? Did they tone down or eliminate unwanted hot spots, clone out distractions, check for convergence and look at the edge of the image? *With the advent of digital cameras and Photoshop applications the photographer is now responsible for every pixel in the image.*
- 3) Storytelling - Yes, I hate that moniker "story" as it is vague but seems to be an easy excuse for when I do not know what to say. An image shown should resonate within me. It is a hard concept to explain, as each image projects a different story line or none at all. I guess what I mean is, is there an implied tension or conflict? Is there wonderment or irony in the image? Should I care or feel a connection with the person or subject? Did I find something interesting in the photograph? Is there a deeper thought process? Which dovetails into the last concept...
- 4) Conceptualization and execution of the image. Maybe there is a better term for the explanation for storytelling, but this is where everything works as a whole. It does not matter if the maker designed or pre-visualized. Many times, with experience, the maker subconsciously can recognize conceptualization and implement the idea. Maybe in reality this was for me the deciding factor.

A final notice:

Working with high level clubs and their pool of talented and knowledgeable photographers has made judging images not as simple as it was decades ago. The transition from slide to digital to Photoshop has opened a new artistic world for us. I have come to notice that my judging tastes have changed in the last several years. This has come about from talking to other accomplished photographers and looking at and understanding the thought process behind contemporary images. I have been tracking what has been accepted into regional, national, and international competitions that I have entered. This has made me more aware of changes in photography and increased my odds of being accepted into these exhibitions. While some of the very contemporary images, altered and/or collage images I just do not get or understand; I have grown to have more acceptance of them. Images that years ago I might not have appreciated, I am now more receptive to because of the subtleties in Photoshop style applications in conjunction with the combination of conceptualization and narrative within the image. Photography is not as traditional as it was years ago nor am I. The traditional "Rules of Photography" I am willing to be flexible on.

**Feel free to share the above with your membership via word of mouth, e-mail, or newsletter article. I hope it helps the novice photographers in their quest to improve. As with all judges, your next judge may refute all my concepts and interpretations.**