

1) Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling images evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense emotion.

High 1 2 3 4 5 not so much

Reality Check: When you show someone your image, what is their immediate reaction? Do they instinctively take a breath - inhale quickly? This is a good sign your image has made an impact.

2) Creativity is the original, fresh, and external expression of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message or thought

Does your image display something in a very creative way?

High 1 2 3 4 5 not so much

Reality Check: Have you ever seen an image similar to yours? Why is yours different and better than the similar one?

3) Style is defined in a number of ways. It might be defined by a specific genre or simply be recognizable as the characteristics of how a specific artist applies light to a subject. It can impact an image in a positive manner when the subject matter and the style are appropriate for each other, or it can have a negative effect when they are at odds.

Does your image show a sense of YOUR style? Describe your style.

High 1 2 3 4 5 not so much

Reality Check: What have you done in taking this image or in post processing it that makes it uniquely YOUR image? Do you use a certain angle a lot of the time so people start to recognise certain images as being yours? This uniqueness is your style.

4) Composition is important to the design of an image, bringing all of the visual elements together in concert to express the purpose of the image. Proper composition *holds the viewer in the image* and prompts the viewer to look where the creator intends. Effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the image maker.

Does your image have leading lines that help the viewer come into your image? Is there enough contrast, pattern, white space, repetition, tension to keep them looking once they are there?

High 1 2 3 4 5 not so much

Reality Check: Have you used any rules of composition in this image (Rule of Thirds, Golden Triangle, etc.). Which one and why did you use this particular one?

5) Print Presentation affects an image by giving it a finished look. The mats and borders used should support and enhance the image, not distract from it.

High 1 2 3 4 5 not so much

6) Center of Interest is the point or points on the image where the image maker wants the viewer to stop as they view the image. There can be primary and secondary centers of interest. Occasionally there will be no specific center of interest and the entire scene collectively serves as the center of interest.

High 1 2 3 4 5 not so much

Reality Check: There is a clear and obvious centre of interest with no distracting elements; or, the viewer can tell me in a second what the point of interest is. If they can't then I must score myself lower.

7) Lighting (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 lighting should enhance an image.

Have I used unique, or unusual lighting angles? Is the image taken at a time when the sun is NOT directly overhead - flat light?

High 1 2 3 4 5 not so much

Reality Check: The light is a key component of this image. If the light were different would the image be better or worse? (If this image had been shot at sunset it would be a better image) If better, score yourself lower for use of lighting.

8) Subject Matter should always be appropriate to the story being told in an image.

High 1 2 3 4 5 not so much

Reality Check: Is your subject realistic for the story it is telling? Is the symbolism evident? Is there continuity between the logic of the elements you've used in your image?

9) Color Balance supplies harmony to an image. An image in which the tones work together effectively supporting the image, can enhance its emotional appeal. Color balance is not always harmonious and can be used to evoke diverse feelings for effect.

High 1 2 3 4 5 not so much

Reality Check: The tones and colors I have used in my image are coherent with the type of emotion I want to convey. Dark, shadowy, purples, blues, deep reds etc evoke a different emotion than whites, pastels and semi saturate tones. Is your use of colour consistent with your story?

10) Technical Excellence is the print quality of the image itself as it is presented for viewing. Sharpness, exposure, printing, mounting, and correct color all speak to the qualities of the physical print.

High 1 2 3 4 5 not so much

Reality Check: My extreme reality check for this is viewing your image at 100% in Photoshop or other image editor. Is your subject sharp at 100% - then it's sharp. Is there visible noise in the shadows? If yes your exposure is off. Are there "blown out highlights", if yes your exposure is off. Check your histogram for clipping. If your images are of people, are the skin tones pleasing and natural?

11) Technique is the approach used to create the image. Printing, lighting, posing, paper selection and other elements are part of the technique applied to an image.

High 1 2 3 4 5 not so much

Reality Check: Is everything you have done to create and make this image technically perfect?

12) Storytelling refers to the ability of the image to evoke imagination. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect his own message or read her own story in an image.

High 1 2 3 4 5 not so much

Reality Check: WHAT is the story your image tells. This need not be complicated but perhaps as simple as one sentence. For my image Zero Hour the story is ...Something is going to happen in 2 minutes. The simpler the better.

Source: PPA <http://www.ppa.com/competitions/international/12elements.php>