The Twelve Elements of a Competition Print

Impact
- What you see first
- What creates your first impression – It could be a strong feeling
- What commands you to look – What holds your eye?
- The impact could be any of the elements listed below

Creativity
- Using your imagination
- Being very original or a fresh approach on the subject matter
- Creative cropping
- Creative use of subject matter
- Invention, design, feeling and imagination lifts the photography into a realm of art

Style
- Individuality: That character of the photograph that set one work apart form the rest
- The way of seeing or approaching a subject

Composition
- Good placement of the subject matter
- Harmonious proportions
- Using ***Dynamic Symmetry*** to place the most important objects in design
- Good rhythm is created by repetition, whether it's color, spaces, moods, or divisions of the photograph

Print Presentation
- Does the presentation enhance the photograph
- Good cropping can add to the composition
- Good color for the matting or mount can help
- Daring to be different
- Using something dynamic or being very traditional
- Initial impression can be obtained by using creative mounting

Color Balance
- A good technique for the photograph. A good selection of colors for the subject matter or objects.
- Using a very interpretive color (Maybe not normal at all)
- Creative use of color – example: complementary colors, dark against light, strong against weak

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Center of Interest
- Dominance of objects or subject matter
- A group of subjects or arrangement of objects so one center of interest prevails
- Subject matter holds the eye with no distractions
- Strength and definition give the center of interest. Secondary points that are very important to the photograph, but you must always be able to come back to the center of interest.

Lighting
- Good Dynamic lighting appropriate to the subject matter
- Strong mood can be created by lighting
- Lighting is the art of reproducing the characteristics of the subjects or objects

Subject Matter
- An outstanding interpretation for the subject matter
- Good camera angle for the subject matter is helpful
- Selection of a photogenic model of object is important
- Contrast here can be very creative in selection; example: old and young, warm and cool. Hard and soft. All of these will complement your work

Technical Excellence
- Good strong contrast. Proper exposure and Print density.
- Using middle tones
- Good color balance
- Backgrounds in key with subject matter
- Proper surface presentation. High Gloss? Other appropriate finish.
- Pay attention to the whole presentation. Edges of mount board darkened when appropriate. No retouching or artwork should be visible.

Technique
- Different technique for the subject matter
- Technique is the foundation of photography, but a knowledge of the art principles are very necessary
- Using creative and abstract can help
- Design brings abstract ideas into concrete form

Story Telling
- A good strong statement
- A complete story within the photograph
- First glance has a complete meaning
- Strong mood with the photograph, builds an emotional response challenging your imagination.

12 Elements of a Merit Print

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.
2. **Creativity** is the external expression of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message or thought.
3. **Style** is defined in a number of ways as it applies to a creative image. 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.
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.
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.
6. **Center of Interest** is the point or points on the image where the 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, when the entire scene collectively serves as the center of interest.
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 it should enhance an image.
8. **Subject Matter** should always be appropriate to the story being told in an 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.
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.
11. **Technique** is the approach used to create the image. Printing, lighting, posing, film choice, paper selection and more are part of the technique applied to an image.
12. *Story Telling* refers to the image's ability 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.