

SUCCESSFUL MEMORABLE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES

A photograph is a visual communication, a means by which one person, the photographer, transmit's a message to a second person, the viewer.

As participants in a Camera / Photographic club what motivates one to take pictures and compete?

Enjoyment: When one pushes the shutter on the camera they press the emotional button.

Improve photographic technique: Listen to Judges constructive comments and learn from others.

Want others to enjoy their image: To experience the emotion and feeling one has created.

Recognition: Rewards - Merits & Credits.

Ego: Want viewers to remember their photographs.

Successful competition requires creative and expressive ideas and most importantly thought before releasing the shutter. Technical ability, though important, is only one fifth of the process needed to create an outstanding photograph. It does not require one to be armed to the teeth with technology. In fact it can be an obstacle to creative seeing. The chance of a outstanding image can evaporate when one becomes overly obsessed with brands of cameras and their controls. Don't use the camera as a photocopier. Use it as a tool to relay your image concept to the viewer.

FIVE BASIC ELEMENTS THAT MAKE A SUCCESSFUL MEMORABLE PHOTOGRAPH

1. TECHNICAL QUALITY

Craftsmanship is obviously important and requires a fair knowledge of:

Camera and lenses.

Exposure to fit the subject, Lighting, Depth of Field, Sharp or blurred, Tonal Range etc.

Photo Imaging Software, eg Photoshop.

Printing and Mounting.

These are only tools and on their own do not make a successful photograph.

2. SUBJECT MATTER

In most cases the viewer does not have the same emotional ties to the subject as the photographer. Look for something that will stimulate the interest of the others. Look for something that is uncommon to the viewer. Use originality, imagination, human interest, beauty ugliness etc.

Even for a Set Subject look for something out of the norm in that category.

3. COMPOSITION

Composition consists of **Image Layout, Design, Placement, Balance and Harmony.**

Think out how to place objects in the frame in a pleasing manner and at the same time emphasise your intended subject. Do your best to compose in camera. Critical composition choices at the time of capture have a big impact on the final image. Choices of viewpoint, position, horizontal or vertical framing, perspective focus point, and depth of field are all critical and in most cases can not be modified in your photo imaging soft ware. Each image deserves it's own composition design and the following are only helpful general guides.

EXAMPLES OF COMPOSITION GUIDE LINES

RULE OF THIRDS

The object is to stop the Subject and areas of interest (eg Horizon) from bisecting the image. This ratio has been used by artists for centuries and helps to create a pleasing, balanced composition.



RULE OF ODDS

An odd number of subjects in an image works better and in most cases and is more interesting to the viewer. The exception to this rule is where there is an interaction between the subjects.

RULE OF SPACE

In most cases a prominent subject should be off centre and a moving subject should have room in front rather than behind. If a subject is looking out of the image leave space in the direction of the eyes.



COUNTER BALANCE

An object used as a counter balance to the main subject and placed some where near edge of the frame stops the viewers eye from going out of the image. eg the yellow window frame top right hand corner of the above example.

LEADING LINES

Leading Lines are used to pull the viewers eyes into the image, towards the subject or through the scene.

There are many different types of lines, straight, diagonal, curvy, spiral, zigzac etc.



TRIANGLE



The Triangle is one of the strongest forms of composition and used by Master Artists for centuries.

HORIZONTAL OR VERTICAL - ROTATION - BREAKING A PATTERN - LEFT TO RIGHT

KEEP IT SIMPLE When in doubt leave it out. A photograph often says more by what it has left out, rather than what has been included.

4. IMPACT / MOOD / IMAGINATION / EMOTIVE CONTENT

This is the extra **WHAM** the **WOW** the **ZING** that grabs attention and has a immediate influence on the viewer.

Invoke an emotion that appeals instantly to the viewers senses. Aim to excite, stun, shock, disturb, or amuse the viewer.

SOME EXAMPLES:	STRONG COLOURS	STRONG BLACK AND WHIES IN MONO
	HIGH KEY	LOW KEY
	HIGH CONTRAST	ACTION - THE DECISIVE MOMENT
	EXCITEMENT	PLEASURE
	SATISFACTION	HUMOUR
	DISTURBANCE	CREATIVITY - DEAR TO BE DIFFERENT

Does the photograph encourage the viewer to react?

5. AVOIDANCE OF DISTRACTING ELEMENTS

A photograph comprises just two elements, a subject and a background. Avoid any distractions that compete and draw attention away from the main subject. Watch out for bright colours or high lights in the background. Beware of that nasty white witch attracts the viewers eye. Thanks Photoshop for the Clone Tool. The background should compliment the subject and add to the overall picture. Often the photographer sees what they want to see and miss the obvious.

Stuffed up backgrounds ruin more images than any other thing.

CONCLUSION

Two quotes to think about

Ernst Hass - If I have any word of advice to give, it is that a photographer should learn to work with the minimum amount of equipment. The more you are able to forget your equipment, the more time you have to concentrate on the subject and the composition. The camera should become an extension of your eye, nothing else.

Max Dupain - I've always believed a great photographer should concentrate more on depth of feeling and less on depth of field.

Finally don't just press the camera button. Think also Subject Matter, Composition, Impact, Inclusions, and then press the emotion button. Don't be a photocopier. Make your image extraordinary.