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“Judging Photographs”

INTRODUCTION

“A critique is the commentary made upon an image during its evaluation.”

During the 1830’s the world changed with the introduction of photography, sixty years later in the 1890s photography also changed with the introduction of roll film, then after many years of development, in the 1990s digital imaging arrived, a change just as profound as in the preceding century. To analyze the results of these modifications and anchor photographic evaluation into a disciplined assessment, certain considerations are taken into account about the appraisal of pictures such as identifying what is art, aesthetics, philosophy and judging.

Photographic images are one of the most recent manifestations of the human race's attempt at self-expression through art. A photograph is not just a visual recording of an object, event, feeling or expression (or as a substitute for memory), it is also about meaning even in the most primitive photographic rendition of an event or experience. Photography is a potent communicative medium as demonstrated in its range of documentary forms, Realism and Expressionism, such as family snaps, pictorial, advertising and photojournalism images as well as in the highly skilled ultimate conception – art. Quality photography is art.

The philosophical and aesthetic ingredients discussed in this book are fundamental to understanding quality image evaluation at its most useful, vigorous and intense degree. They provide a comprehensive insight into judging and encourage those interested in judging to recognize and narrate their findings in an intelligent, articulate and objective manner.

<p><i>You cannot teach a man anything. You can only help him to discover it within himself.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Galileo Galilee (1564- 1642)</p>
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As photography judges are in a unique position to see many pictures, it is desirable for them to acquire the skills to:

- Describe the appearance of pictures in their wholeness;
- Interpret content (visual, mood, feeling, spiritual, emotion, intent and communication values);
- Evaluate the image's aesthetic content through useful analysis that may also offer suggestions for improvement;
- Theorize about the intent of an image;
- See trends as they unfold, for example, images that have been 'tweaked' to seek approval or for positive new styles;
- To direct novice photographers in the craft of photography;
- Make observations about the technical aspects of images;
- Inspire photographers by referring them to other photographic works from which they may learn;
- Enrich photography by drawing upon the range of current and historic imagery, from ancient rock art to advertising, from cinema to comics, from glass plates to pixels, to evaluate what they are viewing;
- Make decisions about competitions.

This book aims to be a resource for judges when evaluating images, providing guidance in the narration of their evaluation and a means to stimulate critique towards quality commentaries within the discipline of aesthetic judgment. The book can also be applied to other forms of fine arts.

<p><i>Life is short, art long, opportunity fleeting, experience treacherous, judgment difficult.</i></p> <p>Hippocrates (460 – 400 BC)</p>
--

Paul F. Robinson
AFIAP, AAPS, SSAPS, SSVAPS

Part 1: THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

The judgment of photographs becomes valid when it directly relates to criteria that the judge has assimilated and expresses in an articulate manner.

There are many judges of photography and from an international viewpoint their approach varies with the audience to which they are expressing their findings. Some judges are writing in national or international publications about images and some are evaluating images at local exhibitions, clubs, national and international competitions.

Variations occur amongst judges as they may see different things in pictures and photographers should understand this, listen to the different findings and accept the contribution these comments may or may not make to their photographic journey.

The criteria to which judges adhere, provides a solid foundation and commonality to the methods by which they make their findings.

Prior to investigating the specifics of judging photographs, some basic questions about photography and where it fits in the human psyche must be addressed.

Chapter 1: What is Art?

Art is a phenomenon that has existed throughout entire human history. The technological evolutions experienced by humanity have influenced life styles, views of life and types of art through each period, culture and community. Pictures commenced as rock art, mosaic, frescoes, painting then photography that includes audio visuals, film, installations and holograms. Each type continues to be practiced with similar underlying aesthetics but with different approaches to the final product.

The philosopher Thomas Munro (1897-1974) gives a good definition of this concept, 'Art is the ability of creating stimuli in order to create satisfactory and aesthetic experiences.' Art deals with beauty, and beauty is a relative concept. Even if it is ugly, painful and disgusting anything which sustains a consistent integrity within itself is aesthetically beautiful. Art is a product of human intelligence and it should find an aim other than the slavish imitation of nature. It is the idea of the image that really matters of which the resultant artifact is a phenomenon that humanizes life.

Chapter 2: What is Aesthetics?

Aesthetics is the discipline that determines the canons or rules of taste upon which critiques of the arts are based. Aesthetics relates to the perception of the beautiful, especially in traditional painting and sculpture, and now photography.

It is about having an understanding of the value of beauty. The task of aesthetics is to reside in the study of the various forms of art and of the spiritual content peculiar to each. Much of recent aesthetics has been similarly focused on artistic problems, and it could be said that it is now orthodox to consider aesthetics entirely through the study of art. Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804) concluded that only rational beings have aesthetic experience; and that every rational being needs aesthetic experience and is significantly incomplete without it.

There are two fundamental propositions regarding aesthetics, the first is that the aesthetic object is an object of sensory experience and enjoyed as such: it is heard, seen or imagined in sensory form. The second is that the aesthetic object is at the same time contemplated; its appearance is a matter of intrinsic interest and studied not merely as an object of sensory pleasure but also as the repository of significance and value.

The first proposition can be described as a content which is communicated in sensory form. The second describes the motive of our attempt to discriminate rationally between those objects that are worthy of contemplative attention and those that are not. The philosophy of aesthetics is related to sensory and emotional values and is a judgment of sentiment and task. It does not follow that one's ideas and feelings conform to aesthetics simply because one is uninformed. Aesthetics is largely dependent on cultural values.

The philosopher Denis Dutton (1944 - 2010) identified seven universal signatures in human aesthetics:

1. Expertise or virtuosity: Technical artistic skills are recognized and admired
2. Non-utilitarian pleasure: People enjoy art for art's sake and do not demand that it keep them warm or feed them
3. Style: Artistic objects and performances satisfy rules of composition that place them as a recognizable type
4. Criticism: People judge, appreciate and interpret works of art
5. Imitation: Works of art simulate experiences of the world

6. Special focus: Art is set aside from ordinary life and made a dramatic focus of experience
7. Imagination: Artists and their audiences entertain hypothetical worlds in the theater of the imagination.

No reasoned argument can conclude that objects are aesthetically valuable or not. Objects are aesthetically valuable if –

- They possess a special aesthetic property or show a special aesthetic form.
- They have the capacity to convey meaning or to teach general truths.
- They have the capacity to produce pleasure in those who experience them.
- They have the capacity to convey values or beliefs central to the cultures or traditions where they originate or are important to the artist who made them.
- They have the capacity to influence social or political change.
- They have the capacity to produce certain emotions we value, at least when the emotion is brought about by art rather than by life.
- They have the capacity to produce special non-emotional experiences, such as the feeling of autonomy or the will and suspension of disbelief.

I've always believed a great photographer should concentrate more on depth of feeling and less on depth of field. Max Dupain (1911 - 1992)

The imagination equips us to perceive reality when it is not fully materialized. Mary Caroline Richards (1916 -1999)

The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated. William James (1842 - 1910)

Chapter 3: What is Philosophy?

Aesthetics has its own area of philosophy which is the discipline concerned with the study of beauty and taste. Philosophy is also about questions of ethics (how we should live), metaphysics (what sorts of things exist and what are their essential natures), epistemology (what counts as genuine knowledge) and logic (what are the correct principles of reasoning).

Philosophy is not a science, because it does not investigate the causes of phenomena. It is a conceptual investigation, the underlying concern of which is to identify rather than to explain. It is the study of truths about reality and the search for wisdom.

Judging photographs is principally based upon Aesthetics and because photography is practiced by individuals who ultimately share their images with an audience of at least one other person; Ethics also becomes a consideration.

Life does not require us to make good; it asks only that we give our best at each level of experience.
Harold W. Ruopp (1899 - 1961)

Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle.
Michelangelo (1475 - 1564)

If you shoot what you like, you'll like what you shoot.
John Sexton (1953 -)

I much prefer to listen to a compulsive photographer – someone who is addicted to picture-taking .
Dr. John F. Williams (c.1932 -)

Chapter 4: What is Judging?

The discipline of judging concerns the positive commentary and assessment of proper photographic craft and aesthetic qualities in an image. It provides a result as well as teaching where the judgment helps photographers gain insight into their work. It is not about fault finding or personal likes or dislikes.

Our ideas, feelings and judgments are called “aesthetic” precisely because of their direct relation to sensory enjoyment. Whatever the ultimate value of aesthetic experience, we pursue it in the first instance for enjoyment’s sake because aesthetic experience includes, as its central instance, a certain kind of pleasure.

Good judgment requires a rich background, disciplined insight and the capacity to discriminate and to unify. A judge (or critic) will understand a multitude of forms and will not praise work simply for technical skill or camera craft to the exclusion of all else. This wide knowledge will allow for discrimination and for determining the intent of the artist.

In a logical judgment our thinking controls our imagination in order to show us truth (left brain approach); in an aesthetic judgment our imagination controls our thinking in order to show us beauty (right brain approach). Judgments of beauty are sensory, emotional, cultural and intellectual all at once.

Judging is appraising an existing situation by objectively examining its positive and negative sides and expressing this in written or spoken form. To the novice photographer the critique is the primary source for development where the right may, but not always, be achieved through detecting and acknowledging the wrong.

Providing a critique and accepting some criticisms are the behaviors of a civilized human being; nevertheless, it is essential that a critique is made *respectfully*, within *good-manners* and that it be received with *tolerance*.

In this regard, self-criticism is also essential where self-development is possible through self-criticism. Generally it is encouraged in the training of artists that they talk about their work with others, *first positively and then negatively*, with respectful and objective narration. Criticism improves care and the ability to observe, think and explain thoughts; it provides a clearer understanding of the subject, develops experience for further improvements and helps people in developing a constructive, critical, mature and tolerant character.

Chapter 5: What is the Craft of Photography?

Craft is the skillful operation of equipment (camera and post-production) as well as clarity of observation made during the exposure of the picture. It also includes the achievement of ideas gained during the process along with pre-visualized results. Further, the basics of composition, lighting, colour, tone and presentation are to be observed.

Using the camera and its accessories, concerns its manipulation together with careful observation and imagination to achieve a satisfactory result in the picture. In carrying out these tasks, meticulous attention to detail, interpretation and timing the capture of the image is required to achieve quality pictures.

Problems that often creep into camera craft and thereby reduce the quality of the resulting images includes things that cause distractions away from the primary point of interest, for example:

- glare from sunlight reflecting off shiny surfaces such as water;
- lens flare caused by sunlight direct into the lens;
- lack of sharpness; sometimes caused by auto-focus hunting;
- incorrect exposure; sometimes caused by back lighting 'fooling' the light meter;
- macro-photos being attempted outdoors in windy weather conditions where sharpness is difficult to achieve;
- incorrect lens usage; telephoto used instead of wide-angle lens;
- incorrect format; vertical (portrait) format instead of horizontal (landscape) format;
- extremes of brightness contrast in a scene where neither are correct as the light meter/lens/shutter combination are unable to capture the exposure correctly in the bright and dark areas correctly;
- camera shake; where the camera needed support (e.g. a tripod) to produce a planned for sharp image;
- poor selection; where the photographer included everything in a scene to the point where the point of interest has blended into the details.

The above list is not exhaustive but regularly occurs in the pictures of inexperienced photographers. However, this should not be confused with images deliberately featuring these irritants when made by a photographer with a specific intent in mind.

Part 2: JUDGING IMAGES WITH COMMENTARY

Chapter 6: Categories of Photographs

Aesthetic evaluation is an evolving discipline and the medium of photography belongs in this aesthetic area of philosophy. The question of image evaluation is not whether aesthetic judgment is an art or a science but whether it is a *discipline*. If this is the case then certain guidelines apply..

Photographs surround us every day and they are accepted without analysis. The world of photography is growing in technical and aesthetic maturity and judges need to understand the various categories of photographs prior to their assessment. These categories of photographs are useful for interpretation:

Descriptive photographs – Painstakingly accurate picture reproductions of reality.

Explanatory photographs – Pictures that define a new insight, verifiable by the sciences, such as time/motion or social conditions.

Interpretive photographs – Often personal in approach. They are made pictures rather than found pictures.

Ethically evaluative photographs – Ethical judgments in picture form that are often political and passionate. Sometimes they are Marxist based as social commentary.

Aesthetically evaluative photographs – the photographs in this category point out what their photographers consider to be worthy of aesthetic observation and contemplation. This is 'fine art photography' familiar to most people. There is a wide subject matter but the most common subjects are the portrait, nude, landscape and still life.

Theoretical photographs – These are pictures about photography. They comment on issues about art and art making as well as other theoretical issues about photography and photographing. Occasionally the subject matter is of other paintings or photographs (copies in part) but with a twist. Conceptual photography is included here.

<p><i>If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves</i> Thomas A. Edison (1847 - 1931)</p>

Chapter 7: Distinguishing Features of Assessment

The crucial issue in a review of images is about what is meant by a work of art and how its properties may be identified. The assessor needs to identify, describe and interpret the ideas and materials presented. Quite often the distinguishing of these provides different approaches. For example, a description may be true or false but an interpretation has to be plausible or implausible.

Expressive, symbolic or representational qualities or meanings are difficult to *identify* as properties in works of art, but ought to be *referred* to when analyzing an image. Analytical interpretations must be formed based on certain elements found in aesthetics, composition and psychological considerations. These also provide the format for evaluative practice and may include a number of guidelines. For uniformity and consistency it should be possible to:

- Formulate guidelines for acceptable practice;
- Have guidelines adopted by a community of Practitioners;
- These should be effective confirming or denying relevant claims;
- They should not be distorted to examine new works that were not anticipated when they were adopted.

A suggested *ideal* for image evaluation is that: the interpretation be one that maximizes the value of the image in question. This is important for novice photographer's attempts, particularly if their pictures do not approach art, as this may be their only access to learning. However, some subjectivity can be considered in evaluative practice when dealing with description and interpretation.

When considering the nature of values in a photograph, expressing one's tastes, preferences (or likes and dislikes) may lead to questions about the quality of the judging appraisal. Statements about one's tastes are usually not considered standard or disciplined statements but really concern an aspect of the judge's disposition and behavior. Herein lays a crucial distinction. Value judgments that depend on personal tastes are strikingly different from those that do not. Alternatives that are based in aesthetics, which show integrity and depend upon discipline, are called "Findings".

"Findings" differ from "factual" personalized judgments insofar as they are linked to standards of merit. Findings will normally be made in accordance with socially institutionalized values and disciplines and not on one's personal tastes.

Appreciative judgments may be considered *weaker* forms of judgment than Findings as they assign certain esteem to a work in accord with one's personal tastes. In a Finding, one holds that a given work has (or lacks) a certain merit; the matter can be decided by attention to relevant criteria and evidence, as factual matters or disciplines.

The judge needs to have the ability to discover aesthetic truth in a picture. These found facts or truths become the Findings; these Findings are explained in the commentary. The commentary describes the aesthetics of a picture that will cover, at least in part, attributes of emotion, symbolism, composition, meaning, message and technical content in the image. These attributes can be applied to all kinds of images, of beauty in made and found pictures.

In conclusion, the principle issues of image evaluation are:-

- The identity and distinction of images (the conspicuous quality of an image/s amongst a larger group of pictures).
- The nature and characteristic properties of images (the inventiveness and technical aspects of the pictures).
- Description, interpretation, evaluation and theorizing
- Value judgments.
- The admissible varieties of, and constraints upon, evaluation of images.

When you hear criticism, be aware that you don't have to agree with it, and you don't have to fight it. Just think your own thoughts and feel your own feelings. Good criticism doesn't have to be agreed with to be useful. A critic with whom you disagree can also clarify your own view. "He's wrong about that" can be as useful as "That's right".

David Vestal (1924 -)

Everything depends upon the way we look at things.

Orison Swett Marden (1850 - 1924)

Chapter 8: How to Conduct an Evaluation Session – Personal Level

Ask yourself the obvious question “How can I evaluate the pictures of someone else if I cannot objectively judge my own work?”

This is the starting point for a prospective career in image evaluation.

The question has a range of implications:

1. That you are a practicing photographer (amateur, professional or work in the industry).
2. That you wish to assess your own pictures to learn about how to interpret and how to see.
3. You want to continually improve upon images each time a photograph is made.
4. You wish to gain the knowledge of how to create better pictures.
5. Effective judges grow through self-analysis of their own pictures and are never complacent about resting on their artistic talents with just one picture or with a self-satisfied level of achievement.
6. They are encouraged to make disciplined, intellectual, emotional, symbolic and spiritual interpretations of their own photos.
7. Judges need to check that they are not taking a step backwards; that they are not content with a comfortable plateau of quality; that the image does not fall into a clichéd template.
8. That they are not conforming to conservative and uninspired merit; and that they are not following the convenience of common tradition.
9. Through experimentation, judges should test their most recent research, ideas or thoughts in order to obtain better pictures or explore new directions.
10. Judges continue on the path of obtaining the photographic objectives they set themselves. They can set themselves meaningful long term projects, research work or formal study.
11. Other photographers can also assess their work in this way to gain meaningful feedback regarding their own progress.
12. As a judge, be true to your photographic self when your pictures are reviewed by another photographer. Did they find something in your photograph that you had not previously seen? Is this good or bad? With these findings or interpretations you must now test your own ethics and integrity.
13. Was the finding correct? A negative opinion or fact? A positive opinion or fact? Did this reveal to you your own grudging dislike or euphoric fondness for the picture?

14. After objective findings that found the image needed improvement, was the extent of your emotional ownership in your picture too great to bear any change in your attachment to it?
15. Did the diagnosis of your picture encourage you to see and seek a new way of approaching your photography?
16. Through visual inspiration did the judge motivate you towards making sublime and unique pictures?

Near enough is not good enough .

James Francis 'Frank' Hurley (1885 - 1962)

The important thing is that a critic does not have to knock pictures. What's wrong with praise? If you see its value, if a photograph says something to you, why not say so? If it has a little fault, ignore it. Bring out its main points. (Photographic Evaluation 1974)

Allan Gray, Hon. EFIAP, APSA

Few things in the world are more powerful than a positive push. A smile. A word of optimism or hope. A "You can do it" when things are tough.

Richard M. DeVos (1926 -)

I want you to start a crusade in your life – to dare to be your best.

William H. Danforth (1870 - 1955)

Chapter 9: How to Conduct an Evaluation Session – Club Level

SO THIS IS YOUR FIRST CLUB COMPETITION JUDGING!

So you were brave enough or confident enough or were drafted at your club to judge a competition! Where do you start?

All judges have had to judge for the first time and not all had the good fortune to be trained or learn about judging or to have someone alongside to mentor them through the process. There are some sequences of which you should be aware as the responsibility for the presentation ultimately rests with you. Your aim is to ensure that the judging of the competition goes smoothly and that you provide both help to those who have entered their photographs for rating and critique.

Being accepted as a judge you can also acknowledge it as an honour that you are being entrusted with the opportunity of making a public commentary upon the pictures of fellow photographers. If a Club is asking for something for which you do not have the time or skill then it is responsible to decline the offer to judge. Once your availability has been established then you are about to embark on a minimum of about an hour and a half to several hours on behalf of the Club and it is quite justifiable in asking their volunteers for reasonable co-operation.

IT'S NOT JUST A PICTURE – IT IS ALSO A PERSON!

Judging is a voluntary social service that is done for photography. When a picture is being evaluated, then by implication the maker of the picture is also being judged. The judge is not just dealing with an image but also a sensitive Ego. In a club open competition or exhibition a judge may be misguided, providing a weak personal opinion, where he/she is sympathetic to a personally favorite subject and neglectful of other subject matter or conversely is critical of a familiar subject but gives license to unfamiliar subjects. Balanced commentary upon aesthetics is what is required. When adjudicating images a sensitive assessment is one of the underpinnings of a quality evaluation even when an overly familiar, mundane subject and treatment is presented, as it may be new to the maker of the picture and contains meaning for him or her.

WHEN IT'S NEGATIVE – BE POSITIVE

In the discipline of judging it is preferred that positive comments, direction, encouragement and support are offered when evaluating images. Familiar or cliché subject matter, presented in a trite way that is wearisome to the judge, requires the judge to explain what can be done to improve the picture in a stimulating, novel and visually vibrant way by Using:

- A new treatment;
- A different technique;
- A rarely captured activity or surrounding environment;
- A unique approach to photographing the subject;
- Show what you mean with your own work, tear outs for comparison to other similar pictures in the exhibition – but do so as a means of inspiration not as a means of degrading the original image.

However, the judge is now referring to a different picture to the one being assessed and should be acutely aware of this as each picture is unique and can be completely new to the novice photographer. Alternatively, extra praise can be expressed for making interesting images of a commonplace subject.

AVOID IMPOSING YOUR LIMITATIONS

At the outset avoid expressing personal criteria of a defined set subject. The club definition is the one to be followed if there is one supplied (it may not concur with a lexicon version of the definition because the club may want to place a particular slant on the competition).

Should you pursue your personal criteria then you are not conforming to the definition supplied by the club, in effect as the judge, you may be seen to be saying that the exhibition/competition is invalid in your opinion. This is a very questionable approach from an ethical viewpoint and will cause difficulties during the judging session.

RELAX AND BE OPEN MINDED

The judging appointment must be approached with an open mind. An open mind towards a new treatment of a traditional subject is also a pre-requisite. Accept what is in the exhibition, irrespective of whether it is personally challenging; is a “golden oldie”; is so abstract it is difficult to understand; is displaying a different treatment or is presented in an unusual way. Photographers are attentive to pertinent, brief, but informative and entertaining commentaries. Remember that recognition is a powerful motivator. Apportion your commentary to suit the time available and to vary the pace throughout the session as well as the duration spent on each picture. Involve the audience or if time permits discuss pictures with their makers. Don't be too serious because at this level photography is a fun pastime, it is a hobby and is where photographers often get their only source of instruction about aesthetics. Be relaxed as this will create a soothing atmosphere within the audience.

RESPONSIBILITIES RUN DEEP, FAR AND WIDE

Judges have a responsibility to give of their best in evaluating images for the betterment of the photographic movement. Judges are not at the level of giving their best until they have stretched themselves beyond their previous limits of understanding of images and given the greatest support to the photographer. Judges also have a responsibility towards their fellow judges to continually improve their collective reputations. Judges are responsible for:

- Continuing photographers' confidence in the judging fraternity;
- Providing a helpful commentary from which improving images can be learnt;
- Making decisions about the competition/exhibition being judged;
- The results determined which is as much a reflection upon the judge as it is of the quality of the images presented;
- Praising the observed aesthetics in images as it will develop/enhance photographers self-assurance, optimism and resilience towards the challenges that they will face in higher level exhibitions;
- Describing why the best images are successful;
- Making visitors and newcomers feel welcome and encouraged.

JUDGES TEACH AND INSPIRE

As a judge you have a degree of authority at the competition/exhibition, therefore mention any forthcoming display, exhibition or event. If you can elaborate upon the show then it will have an impact upon the audience more than usual notices.

Judges are most importantly teachers of imaginative photography. Club members rely on them as a key source of photographic learning. Obviously a prime objective is to improve the group's aesthetics in photography and Judges should never give incorrect or misleading answers to questions. Answers and comments should be in simple terms, as too much technical jargon tends to confuse the novice.

Often contributors to competitions or exhibitions do not have the knowledge about the comparative quality of their images outside their club environment. Where images are of the standard seen in national or international salons, encourage the makers to enter these, it will boost their confidence. But, should images fall just short of national standard, and could, if repeated with suggested improvements reach that level of quality, indicate this to the maker as well. Do not be afraid to praise the image especially if it has challenged you. *Judging is not an exercise in fault finding it is a teaching and learning experience.* Judges' observations, casual or careful, are internalized by those to whom the comments are directed.

Chapter 10: Weak Commentary About Photographs

Weak commentary of pictures does not provide a satisfactory learning process from which photographers improve their pictures. A weak commentary will contain at least one of the following:

Ridiculing photographs: If you ridicule a photo, even in fun, you are ridiculing the photographer and ultimately yourself. As a judge you can ridicule your own pictures only, to put a point across. This critical rather than constructive approach is self-perpetuating in that the photographers may not change their photography for the better because they have not been taught how to change for the better. Judging that is based on determining what is wrong with images and therefore the best picture is the one with the least faults is hardly constructive. One of the most important discoveries in psychology is that people learn or change their behavior, only when rewarded. This being the case, emphasis should be on identifying good features and on giving constructive advice on how to overcome shortcomings. The carrot will always remain more effective than the stick.

Demonstrating bias: making a critical judgment on a style, subject or treatment or negatively comparing a picture to others. Your reputation as a judge will suffer.

Ego: that interferes with or dictates judging issues. Unfortunately those who are on an ego trip are usually the last to recognize it within themselves.

Using the latest views or trends: These should never shape judgment to the exclusion of the balanced evaluation of the aesthetics in an image or an exhibition/competition. Expressed in another way by Dr. Eddy Sethna by borrowing the term “Overvalued Idea” from psychiatry, where the judge promotes with great fervor the latest fad or idea as being very important in picture making but neglects all other aspects of the picture.

Comparing one type of subject with another in an open competition (i.e. a portrait with a landscape): Evaluate a photo within its own genre. If you perceive one image to contain a greater innate excellence than an image of another category then award the photograph that is the best of its type. This indicates the judge is conceptually aware of the relevant photographic qualities within various subject categories.

Using clichés: Evaluating pictures by the use of formulaic expressions. Evolve your own way of articulating your findings.

Being opinionated to the extent that the only way to make pictures is your way! The judge's approach may be seen as offensive and brutal even if that was not the intent. In photography everyone has the right to his or her own self-expression.

Offering knowledge about a subject, such as location or technique, without any visual evidence or without absolute proof to substantiate this.

Placing restrictions or rules on others that you would not impose upon yourself, especially when you know all rules can be broken to suit.

Applying a compositional “mental template”: This is where pictures must conform to a pre-determined layout. It means that if the elements fit your mental template then these must be the only photos worthwhile!

Failure to see the picture as a whole: If a picture is an object of art, it is the creation of an artist through which he or she attempts to communicate and that is the main thing a judge should look for. That can only be done if the judge sees the picture as a whole, as an entity in itself and not only as a collection of different tones, colours, shapes and light.

Rewarding effort or degree of difficulty put into getting or making a picture: It is hard to justify this approach. If effort put in by the photographer is included in judging then why not other considerations which affect picture making such as, the equipment a photographer can afford, the amount of travel that can be managed or even height which may provide an advantage in picture making.

Lack of contemporary technical knowledge regarding image processing.

It has always been my belief that the true artist, like the true scientist, is a researcher using materials and techniques to dig into the truth and meaning of the world in which he himself lives; and what he creates, or better perhaps, brings back, are the objective results of his explorations.

Paul Strand (1890 - 1976)

These, then, are the issues: whether we, as photographers, can make of our machine an instrument of human creation, whether we, as artists, can make of our world a place for creation.

Dorothea Lange (1895 – 1965)

Chapter 11: Club Administration for Competition Judging

There are at least six essential elements involved in managing a photography club competition or in-house exhibition.

1. Club members need to enthusiastically support the competitions by having their entries delivered to the competition steward at the agreed time. The entries should meet the club's definition and presentation criteria. It is the club's responsibility to ensure entries are compliant.
2. The club needs to organize their competition judge with appropriate notification and a person-to-person confirming telephone call between the judge and steward or with acknowledged messages (Telephone answering machine, Mobile SMS messages, Email or Post).
3. Clubs could consider limiting the number of entries to 100 – 120 pictures per night to allow the judge to provide a modicum of feedback. Limits about the quantity of section could also be considered.
4. The club should provide clear instructions to the judge regarding timeliness, awards and if any presentation is required. A score sheet with all relevant details must be provided.
5. The information given to the judge should include an outline of the meeting program, type of projector and screen, lighting and method of presentation of prints, whether a lectern and microphone is to be used and whether a projectionist will be provided. A contact name with home/mobile telephone numbers for any last minute urgent calls, the address of the club and a map of its location should be provided.
6. Upon arrival, the steward or other designated club member should meet the judge. At the outset of the evaluation or presentation, a glass of water should be provided. It is quite justifiable for judges to ask club volunteers for reasonable co-operation to achieve a smooth presentation.

I was asked to commence by setting out my qualifications as a Judge. I have none. I only continue to Judge because I am satisfied that no one else has any qualifications either. Amateur Photographer 1972

Sir George Pollock (1928 -)

Chapter 12: Scoring Systems in Photography Clubs

There are many systems in use in various clubs and societies. Here is a sample list: **First, second and third** with perhaps some merit/honour/highly commended/commended type entries. This is usually the easiest and quickest for the judge. The entries set the standard; but are the photographic equivalent of a mixed race between dogs, sheep, horses, tortoises and rabbits.

There are three difficulties here. 1) Images in open competition are not judged against like subject. 2) Entrants are not being made aware of the comparative standard of their images when not placed on the winning dais. 3) The judge may be unable to decide between two images for a specific place or if he/she finds that the standard is too poor but still has to award all placings.

No marks are awarded but four levels, or a combination of these is given. Non-acceptance, acceptance, merit and honor loosely based upon expected results in a national exhibition. This can be difficult especially if the judge is inexperienced in judging at national salons. Remember that an entry may be given a medal at one national and not at another. This indicates that results are based upon the standard of other entries and the particular judges.

Marks out of 5. Also used in most Australian national exhibitions, it often is applied in the following way:

Five points – *Award* - This entry must be considered for a major award.

Four points – *Acceptance* - This entry should be accepted.

Three points – *Contentious* - May be an acceptance but let other judges decide if it must be accepted.

Two points – *Rejection* - The entry is not up to national standard.

One point - *Should not have been entered* - Rarely used but is mostly applied to entries that clearly contravene the supplied definition.

Marks out of 15. Together with the preceding marking system these can both be considered as variations of the national judging system where each of three judges score in the 5 point range and their scores are aggregated. (Note: It is useful to attend a national or international judging and sit behind the official judges, mentally score each entry yourself and see how close you can get to the official result.)

Marks out of 10 or 20. This includes the APS Inc method of scoring folios. Often the judge will give clear marks to obtain a first, second and third placing. The result is that should an entry of sufficient quality, scores 16 or 17 out of twenty, it still may be awarded, for example, an acceptance at a national exhibition. Judges may rarely score entries below 4 or 5 in this scoring system.

Marks out of 100. This scoring system gives the judge a very wide scoring latitude. Some judges who have difficulty scoring in tighter ranges, i.e. out of 5 or 15, find this system more comfortable. Using marks gives the entrant an idea of how the quality of their entry fares in comparison to those receiving top marks. Often in conjunction with this scoring system first, second and third placing are also given. If this is the case, then those entries following close behind in marks receive an understanding of their comparative quality. This scoring system is regularly used at inter-club competition level. Judges rarely score below 40 to 50 points using this system. However, it becomes a problem if an entry scores one point more than another and an insensitive photographer claims that their photograph is better than the other. The reality is that in the body of work presented one point is almost meaningless.

Allocate marks for different aspects. When reviewing entries a guideline is provided and may be along the following lines, but there are variations on this theme amongst different clubs.

Aspect	Score	Aspect	Score	Aspect	Score	Aspect	Score
Subject	2	Composition	3	Technique	3	Impact/Interest	2

This approach to scoring entries makes a judge think about each aspect. Herein lies difficulties. The judge is limited to those aspects required for scoring purposes; an holistic view of the entry is forsaken and does not take into account other aesthetic values, psychological, symbolic and emotional content, for example. However, these aspects do become important when selecting the top entry. An entry can fail or succeed either because of a technical fault or in spite of a fault.

Handicap systems. There are wide variations in handicap systems amongst clubs. The most commonly used system is that based upon “A” (Advanced) and “B” (Beginner or novice) grades in clubs. The main difference for a judge is to be more helpful and perhaps more empathetic for “B” grade in the marks scoring system employed by the club. The club may have a handicap system that is applied after the initial evaluation and scoring by the judge.

While it does not concern the judge when scoring the entries, it can be disconcerting when an entry is given a placing by the club when the judge may have given the entry a lower score.

- **Club In-house.** This system varies from club to club where employed. Anything from a show of hands; to the usual scoring system used by the club; a selection panel within the club or a club member is selected to carry out the evaluation and scoring. The main weakness with this system is that members get to know the work of each other which may reduce objectivity to scoring.
- **Panel systems.** Not strictly a scoring system but is a useful way to launch the judging career. In a way the panel member is introduced to evaluation techniques in a supportive and mentoring manner. Also, occasionally the club membership becomes involved in the scoring and selection process. Further, clubs may appoint members to a panel for a particular competition, or may have a standing panel with a rotating position to be filled by a prospective judge. Aside from within a club an external panel is regularly used for end of year and interclub competitions.

A good judge must be up-to-date; he must see as many salons as possible, he must read photographic literature, photographic magazines and be thoroughly acquainted with what is going on in the photographic world. (The Australasian Photo-Review 15 Feb 1932)

“Judges and Judging” Extract from his address before the Sixth Kodak International Salon of Photography, Rochester, New York.

Alexander Leventon (1859 - 1950)

Art historians have come to realize that the “evolution” of artistic style, unlike development in the sciences, is not one of continual improvement, but rather expressions of the changing goals and values of those civilizations that create visual arts. Since the beginning of the Twentieth Century (and even earlier), artists have recognized and paid tribute to the styles of earlier masters and modes of creation. To this writer, it therefore seems peculiar that the stylistic guidelines to which amateur club photographers are expected to conform tend to limit themselves to a particularly art-historically blind aesthetic.

Robert A. Baron (c.1960 -)

Chapter 13: Standards of Recognition of Photographic Quality

Placing structure into the discipline of judging should provide reproducible uniformity for practicing judges because they will know the meaningfulness of a score in any competition. To streamline scoring systems, remove confusion for judges, be consistent nationally and internationally, maintain equitableness in competitions and exhibitions, provide standard recognition about the quality of any particular image relevant to aesthetic criteria and align the scoring discipline to the international scoring system then it seems logical that all club competitions or exhibitions adopt a 15 point scoring system. Should any club then overlay this system with placings or awards of merit, highly commended and commended then these overlays can be incorporated without undermining the basic scoring system.

People recognize a numerical measure for their pictures when they are compared to high quality photographs. This is important because they may not yet have fully developed skills in aesthetic artistry or emotional content in pictures. It is a steep learning curve at the beginning of any photographic career and some aspects may not be immediately understood in order to enable them to enhance their photography. People need time to improve and a numerical measure lets them know how they are progressing at a time when they are not yet understanding fully the application of aesthetics.

The adoption of the international standard of the 15 points scoring system is worthwhile but it may have a different meaning at different levels of photography. A novice photographer at a photography club or college student may score 15 points for a photograph at the local competition/exhibition but at international level it may score as low as 6 points out of a possible 15 point total. This relates to the recognition that at the international level a much higher quality is usually on offer and this is reflected in the scoring.

It is a formidable task for judges to select a top award in a competition especially when it is an open or general exhibition. To take an extreme example, it is possible that in front of the judge is the best landscape picture ever made, the best portrait ever made, the best still life ever made and the best nature picture ever made. Which is the best picture in the competition? The solution may be to give the top award to the most successful entrant rather than the so-called best picture. This can be done by giving an award to the photographer who has the highest total score from the entries for that individual. It is entirely possible that the highest total score is shared by several entrants, in which case judges would see each photographers' pictures together and decide which set is the best.

In practice this is much easier than selecting just one image. This also keeps the top award from going to a picture which was produced by chance or fluke by a less competent photographer, as it is most unlikely that any photographer would produce a group of outstanding pictures by chance. The principles of giving awards should be based on awarding the most competent and artistic photographer rather than an individual picture.

How to Conduct an Evaluation Session – Interclub Level: The Interclub Evaluation assignment is similar to Single Club with the exception that there is a minimum of two clubs involved and there can be as many as twenty or more clubs participating. One of the most important conditions at an interclub, or indeed within a club with a large entry, is to be mindful of the time-line involved. Commentary needs to be swift, to the point, enthusiastic, engrossing and insightful. An interclub is not just a competition between clubs but is also an opportunity to mix with like-minded hobbyists, exchange ideas, make new friends, renew old acquaintanceships and for participants to do more networking. The judge should encourage this and being brief in the commentaries is conducive towards a fraternal outcome.

When I was younger, I looked up at the top of the mountain and thought, “Wow, those guys are really smart!” When you’re near the top of the mountain looking down, you think, “Boy, if nobody is smarter than I am, the world is really hurting”
H. Kent Bowen (1941 -)

Mistakes are merely steps up the ladder.....
Paul J. Meyer (1928 - 2011)

Do not despise the bottom rungs in the ascent to greatness.
Publilius Syrus (c100 - 42BC)

Chapter 14: Image Evaluation Checklists

Some suggestions for the new judge making useful commentary at their very first exhibition concerns the basics of:

- Where to start.
- How to assess pictures in such a way that the judgment is meaningful:

Description: What is there?

Interpretation: What it is about?

Evaluation: How good is it?

Theorizing: Is it art?

New judges need to forget about their experiences and the details of how the judging of images was made in their presence in the past. Each judge has their own unique manner of expressing their assessment of images. The method of evaluation should follow a similar discipline but judges do look for a variety of qualities in images. The following checklist for new judges provides an immediate verification of some basics to carry out this task. It is merely an abbreviated reminder of pointers for expressing commentaries about the values inherent in pictures. There have been libraries of information written about each item listed. An image should capture and hold one's attention and have longevity such that it is appreciated from one era or generation to the next. If an image is to captivate the judge, then at least one of the elements will be present.

As can be intimated from the following Values Checklist, findings in judging are about the mood that a picture evokes which is the core of the 'message' and should be the basis of evaluation in a picture. It may be difficult for the judge to express feelings about a picture but this ability improves with practice. When observing a photograph, listen to your feelings and determine what in the picture provoked these feelings. For example, be aware that it may be a specific object, facial expression, mood or the holistic appearance of the picture through its treatment that captures the attention of the judge.

It is neither essential nor important for a judge to find out what the maker of the picture was trying to communicate. What matters is what feelings and thoughts it engendered in the viewer – the judge. More often than not a good picture conveys different things to different people and credit should be given to a picture that manages to do that. Ambiguity in a picture could be its greatest charm by providing an image on which viewers can project their own thoughts, feelings and imaginations.

Photographers generally work intuitively, from the heart, from what they feel and then from the mind. Their journey towards this combination of intuition and the intellectual is fraught with continual revision as it becomes understood as to what works and what does not. The judge may notice this process at work in the final picture (through its mistakes and its elegance) and can guide the maker along their chosen path.

A checklist for recognizing aesthetic values:

Imagination; the witty ideas that drive image making providing a surprise pleasing to the intellect.

Ingenuity; the inventiveness and originality used.

Emotive content; the sensuous or temperamental feelings in a picture.

Psychological content; the behavioral conduct and sensations in people; the empathy that the picture evokes in viewers.

Disturbance; where viewers pre-conceived ideas are ruffled .

Excitement; the stimulating & thrilling, when making & viewing the image.

Mood; disturbing or relaxing gained by texture, shadow and atmospheric effects as well as design.

Humour; those elements in an image that amuse the audience - Pleasure; enchantment, charm and delight.

Satisfaction; contentment or fulfillment and intellectual response.

Human interest; the frailties, passions, sympathies & qualities of mankind.

Communication; story telling or information or allegory.

Colour and or tonal rendition; its contrasts, harmonies and symbolism (colour and other forms vary from culture to culture) .

Impact or Interest; where our attention is gained and held.

Lighting; its direction, intensity and colour.

Composition; this is the skeleton or frame of the image but also includes framing and choice of viewpoint.

Design and graphics; the elements of construction, presentation and layout.

Style; manner of how images are repeatedly made & seen by others.

Educative content; the tuition or instruction provided by pictures.

Documentary content; the authoritative presentation of history.

Illustrative content; the clarity of the subject example in a picture.

Form; the contour and shape of a subject.

Simplicity; the natural that is not complicated, elaborate or intricate. Being aware of the impact of backgrounds and how they contribute or distract in an image.

Action; the energetic, nimble or agile motion represented. This also includes timing when relating one part to another in the picture.

Technical quality; sharpness, exposure, print characteristics, appropriate lens, depth of field, appropriate application of photographic and/or manipulative techniques (In camera or post-production).

A quality picture may convey a statement or a story as in photojournalism or documentary photography, but again the best pictures in these fields are laden with emotion. It could convey an idea through inventiveness such as in 'creative' photography where it could have been carried out during the shoot or by subsequent manipulation.

It is where the picture reflects the personal input of the photographer by providing an image onto which the viewer can project their own thoughts, fantasies and imaginations aroused by the image. The photographer can also add meaning to a picture with the ability to 'interpret' the beauty or otherwise of the subject that was chosen to captured. Different photographers interpret the same subject differently and some better than others; quality judging requires taking that into consideration.

A checklist for recognizing problems:

Visual distractions such as bright colours or white at the edge of a photograph. Eyes focus on brightness contrast and if these points are not aligned with the main point of interest then they may become visual irritants and destroy the point of interest by competing with it.

Lines parallel near the sides of the frame with light spaces between them and it.

A secondary interest that is equally eye-catching as the dominant one (It is preferable that the secondary interest is subdued and supplements rather than opposes the primary point of interest).

Incompatible montage images.

Unattractive foreshortening especially the limbs of people.

Inappropriate expression or colour within the subject. Unless deliberately used for humour in pictures, avoid foreign objects apparently growing out of people especially their heads.

Incorrect format - using a vertical format where a horizontal format is more appropriate and its converse as well as inappropriate lens usage.

Sensing the lack of control in making a picture; evidence of confusion, imbalance, indecision and anxiety, either consciously or unconsciously on the part of the photographer.

Competing themes in compositional terms, where there is a need to avoid more than one unrelated point of interest

Equal areas of light and dark tones.

Pictures cut in two by a horizontal line (but a specific subject may preclude this and the following) or by a vertical line as they will represent unresolved conflict.

Imaginative ideas not sufficiently well executed to clearly communicate the intended message.

Pictures displaying conceptual paralysis (boring pictures; 'chocolate box').

Inappropriate technical qualities for the particular picture such as lack of sharpness, burnt out highlights (not to be confused with the neutral colour white), incorrect exposure and colour casts.

Subtle quirks that seem to detract from a picture are more difficult to identify. However there are some poorly executed aesthetic conditions of which a new judge needs to be aware. The trap with visual irritations is to only comment about them in a picture then move to the next image; Avoid this pitfall by indicating to the maker of the image other references to great pictures of a similar subject that will help them in their endeavors.

There have been libraries of information written about defects in pictures. The above list contemplates those points that could be considered faults and need only scant commentary. Harping upon fault finding in pictures maintains focus on the faults and perhaps may cause its future avoidance; however it does not radically open the mind of the photographer to fertile, inventive depictions of this world or equally ingenious pictures derived from their imaginations. Fault finding without providing alternative ideas does not inspire thoughtful, provocative images. The maker has an emotional investment in the picture; unrelenting fault finding will cause resentment and may cause the person to reject exhibiting.

Avoiding visual irritants or optical distractions in photos helps improve pictures. Visual irritants reduce the effectiveness of different elements, compositional or otherwise. These distractions are usually seen at the edges of photos and include bright or white highlights, because the outside area is usually black (especially so for projected images). Therefore, it will have the extreme of brightness contrast at the edge - exactly the point where human eyes first naturally and automatically focus. Physiologically, our eyes need brightness contrast to focus. Visual irritants also include unrelated contrasting colours, objects that are distracting or discordant in images and busy-ness which is about the inclusion of parts that are irregular, crowded and distracting.

The judge should take note of these elements but should also err on the side of positive commentary. There is something in every picture where a comment can be made to provide helpful or meaningful feedback to the maker of the image. Direction in how to overcome any noted flaw is also part of this feedback. Judges provide their opinion about pictures but there is a distinction in expressing opinions; quality judging expresses opinion based in aesthetics but not opinion based in personal likes and dislikes.

Part 3: JUDGING IMAGES WITHOUT COMMENTARY

Chapter 15: State Exhibitions:

Beyond the local club level exhibition/competitions are those Interclub competitions conducted at State level sometimes in conjunction with Annual Conventions or Musters. Guidelines are re-issued each year to member clubs of the State Association regarding their entry. Usually three judges per section (9 judges plus three reserves in the case of VAPS Interclub) are invited from outside the club movement. These may be Past-Presidents of the State Association, or other experienced photographers who are familiar with club judging standards, but do not regularly judge at club level. The competition sections vary but mostly revolve around small prints, large prints, and digital projection in novice and regular sections as well as Audio Visuals.

Scoring in all instances is based on International standard scoring systems. For example, the three invited judges each score each entry out of five points, their three scores are combined (for a maximum of 15 points). The tally becomes the final 'Report Card' result.

The sections at State level are generally 'Open' or 'Free', providing photographers with the widest possible range of treatment and subject matter. Novice photographers are usually catered for in specific categories to ensure their entries are judged accordingly and not outweighed by the "advanced" maker. In conjunction with the scoring system, it offers the aims of a quasi-national exhibition for them to 'test their toes' in the wider photographic community.

This Interclub type of entry is somewhat different from a National Exhibition in that individuals do not directly enter. Their entry is part of a club or group entry and usually go through a pre-selection process at the club prior to appearing in the State exhibition.

The entries and the judging are organized in much the same way as a National Exhibition. Evaluations are carried out independently when scoring each entry and once the section has been completed, the judges confer to make their final choices to award winning places. Except for some nature competitions, the judges are usually not specialists in any particular field of photography; rather, they have a broad understanding of aesthetics and techniques.

Chapter 16: Australian National Exhibitions, Salons & Competitions

The Australian Photographic Society (APS): Approves amateur national level exhibitions that are carried out by each State around Australia at various times during the year and judges at the National Exhibition level are invited by the Exhibition Committee to participate on the judging panel. It is recommended that the judges selected have acknowledged achievement in at least national salons. That they are mainly drawn from those within the photographic communities who have formal photography qualifications, work in the industry or have been awarded distinctions by National or International photographic bodies for the quality of their photography.

For example in Victoria, at least a Licentiate of the Australian Photographic Society (LAPS) is recognized for this purpose. Exhibition Committees must attempt to follow the approach of using qualified or experienced judges to maintain maximum possible credibility profile to their exhibition/competition.

There is a mix of print and digital projection images in each exhibition, comprising a number of sections. The number of sections varies from exhibition to exhibition but each section is defined. These definitions follow those set/approved by the APS to maintain standards between exhibitions. An Exhibition Committee can conduct a National Exhibition without APS approval but the success of the exhibition may be doubtful without a formal APS approval number.

At some National Exhibitions, the exhibition committee will provide each judge with a report that summarizes how they scored each section. This is useful in that the judge can readily see the number of entries scored 5, 4, 3, 2 or 1. It reflects the quality of the entries combined with the attitude the judge had towards the standard of the work submitted.

With national exhibitions often the best projected image and best print is required by the Exhibition Committee and the entries for these two distinctions are drawn from the winning entries of each of the sections. For the two top or two champion images all the judges are drawn together and the best images are selected; in some cases by a simple vote, however a discussion may take place between the judges prior to the vote to help clarify the decision making.

In the “Schedule of Information and Requirements for Approved Exhibitions” the Australian Photographic Society Inc (Approved Revision 30 Nov 2006) provides the following guidelines for judging at their approved exhibitions.

10. JUDGES

- Prospective judges shall be approached at least nine months before an exhibition, so that arrangements can be made to obtain a well balanced panel before entry forms are printed.
- Judges shall be currently active in photography and experienced photographers. The caliber of the judging panel will have a bearing on the entries received.
- At least three persons shall judge entries in each section. A person may judge more than one section. No judge shall judge the same section at more than two consecutive exhibitions. Where an exhibition is having difficulty complying with this rule, the exhibition can apply for an exemption.
- At least two thirds the number of judges in each section shall be accomplished and practicing photographers in that section's type of photography.
- Nominated Judges may not enter photographs in the sections they are judging.

11. JUDGING PROCEDURES

1. Judges shall be provided with every facility to assist adjudication. A reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses may be offered to judges.
2. Each entrant's photographs shall be mixed with those of other entrants so that they are not seen consecutively by the judges.
3. Strict silence shall be observed, and movement in the judging rooms shall be kept to a minimum.
4. Stewards must refrain from commenting to judges during judging.
5. Discussion between judges is not permitted, except for the final awards, but they may direct questions to the section Director. Judges may request longer viewing or a focus check if in doubt.
6. Distance of the judges from the prints must be convenient to the judges. Closer inspection of prints shall be permitted where technical quality is in doubt and when determining the award winners.
7. Every care shall be taken in the handling of prints to avoid damaged corners and finger marks. Cotton gloves shall be used at all times.
8. Care shall be taken in recording points on the rear of each print, so that the print is not damaged either by ink pens or stamps, by adhesive labels, or excessive pen/pencil pressure.

9. For EDPI projections the file must be loaded to the computer hard drive to ensure smooth transitions between the images. A correctly calibrated monitor and projector must be used for the projection of EDPI images.
10. The distance between the screen and the judges should be between two to six times the diagonal dimension of the projected image, with a preference towards the greater distance.
11. Where practical the judges may preview all the entries in the section they will be judging. Time or available facilities may preclude the viewing of every entry before actual judging, in which case, in order to accustom the judges to the lighting conditions a selection of photographs not from that section, may be shown.
12. The approximate number of entries to be accepted in each section shall be determined before judging. The judges shall be advised of the total number of entries. (Author's note: Traditionally the number of acceptances is based upon the display space available for the exhibition)
13. The recording system may be a traditional combination of switching units and illuminated scoring boxes or alternatively modern computerized scoring systems.
14. It is essential that the full range of scores be used to ensure equitable decisions, the points allocated as follows:
 1. Obviously faulty technique or in the wrong section
 2. Reasonable entry, but inadequate for exhibition standards.
 3. Reasonable entry of good average quality, potential acceptance.
 4. Good entry, minimum faults, could be included in the exhibition.
 5. Entry of excellent quality and could be considered for an award.The definition of the points 1 to 5 shall be read out to the judges prior to judging an exhibition. For scoring out of a higher maximum number eg. 10 or 20, adopt a proportional definition level.
15. The scores for photographs are to be recorded, and the entries sorted accordingly into groups from minimum score to maximum score. The table on which the judged prints are placed immediately after judging shall not be in the view of the judges.
16. It may be necessary to accept only some photographs in a score grouping if by accepting all photographs with that score there are more than the total number of acceptances required. In that case, the judges shall review the total entries with that score and increase some of those scores by adjusting them upwards by one point so that those photographs become accepted.

17. Each judge shall be given a list of awards for their section. Award winners are selected from the highest scoring entries, determined with the agreement of the section judges. A judge may request that a specific photograph be considered for an award. The top award shall be the first determined, followed by other awards and finally merit certificates, which may result in altering the original allotted points.
18. Section Directors shall record entry details when the award placements are determined
19. An entry may not be accepted for inclusion in the exhibition by the exhibition organizers if that entry contravenes the law of the Commonwealth of Australia or of the relevant State or Territory. No entry shall be rejected by the exhibition organizers on the basis that it is substantially similar to a photograph entered by another entrant.”

To win.....you've got to stay in the game...

Claude M. Bristol (1891 - 1951)

Composition must be one of our constant preoccupations, but at the moment of shooting it can stem only from our intuition, for we are out to capture the fugitive moment, and all the interrelationships involved are on the move.

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908 - 2004)

The Australian Institute of Professional Photography (AIPP):

Conducts an annual print competition, the Australian Professional Photography Awards, where members are invited to submit a maximum of four prints which have been made in the last 24 months. Each print is given a score out of 100 and the average of the five judges becomes the final score. Gold and Gold With Distinction are for scores of 90 to 94 and 95 to 100 respectively. Silver and Silver With Distinction require 80 to 84 and 85 to 89 respectively. A score between 75 and 79 earns a Bronze award.

All judges are considered specialists in the categories they judge. There are two judging rooms and two judging panels. About 50 judges are invited over the weekend of the competition but only five are on a panel at any one time. There is a panel chair, an assistant chair and a scribe. The panel chair controls proceedings and ensures that the judging panel is even and fair. If one judge were overly generous or severe, that judge would be replaced. The objective is for the five judges to assess the prints as a team and not hold their personal assessment on a print to the exclusion of anyone else. If a judge gives a score that is more than ten points away from the average, he or she is asked to justify the score – they will have to 'talk to the print'. Owing to controversy within the panel if judgment is not deemed fair by the panel chair then it is sent to the alternate judging panel for further assessment.

The National Portrait Gallery: Conducts an annual portrait competition and the substantial cash prize is open to professional and amateur photographers. The Gallery reports to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and in conducting this annual competition it seeks to find high quality portraits of people photographed during the current year. The competition is conducted in two phases. First, entries are sent online to the gallery with a one hundred word statement against each of the three entries permitted for entry. The judging panel preselects from these the entries they choose for final competition. Second, once an entrant has been notified of success then the framed prints are sent to Canberra for final judging for the main prize.

This annual competition is judged by a panel of three judges nominated by the Gallery that changes membership from year to year but comprises highly qualified members. For example, it may include other gallery directors or the galleries own tutorial staff. They select a group of portraits for exhibition, and then select a winning portrait from the exhibition. The winning portrait is announced at the exhibition launch. At all stages, the decision of the judges is final and no discussion is entered into.

Walkley Press Photography Awards: The prestigious Gold Walkley is considered the pinnacle of journalistic achievement, they were established in 1956, with five categories, by Ampol Petroleum founder Sir William Gaston Walkley. William Walkley appreciated the media's support for his oil exploration efforts. He envisaged awards that recognized emerging talent in the Australian media. The annual Walkley Awards recognize excellence in Australian journalism across all mediums including print, television, radio, photographic and online media.

The Walkleys have grown to more than 30 award categories and upon his death, the awards were bequeathed to the Australian Journalists' Association, now the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA). The Association and, since 1990, the Alliance has remained the custodian of the awards. In 2000, the Alliance voted to formally establish the awards as the Walkley Foundation for Journalism.

The Nikon-Walkley Australian Press Photographer of the Year Award recognizes newsworthiness, impact, technical superiority, creativity and originality in news photography. It was first awarded in 1969 as a separate award, but in 2000 merged with the Walkley Awards to create the current prize. Judges appraise themselves of the 'The Alliance' Code of Ethics and bear this in mind when choosing finalists.

To enter into the Walkley Awards the competition is open to any photographer who has submitted a picture for publication in an Australian media outlet during the previous twelve months and must be a member of MEAA. The pictures are entered on-line into the categories of the photographers choice and are given a brief description of the images, publication and dates. The photographer then posts them on a disc together with a confirmation email with entry number for that particular category. The disc should also be clearly marked with the photographer's name and entry number. Entries to all photography categories may be either a single photograph or a series (up to five images) on the same subject – except in the case of photographic essay (up to 12 images), portrait (one image only) and press photographer of the year (six to eight images).

In the photography area of the awards there are several categories, together with their definitions they are –

News photography: Newsworthiness, impact, technical superiority, creativity and originality are considered in this category. The category incorporates the previous categories of spot and general news, but still includes the criteria of capturing an exclusive or spontaneous news moment and depicting news-value images on the day. Up to five images on one subject, story or event (not theme) may be entered.

Daily life/feature photography: Images submitted for feature or magazine purposes. Ideally, they should be human-interest photos displaying creativity, originality and technical photographic excellence.

Sport: This category rewards those who capture the emotion and drama of sport. Entries may show action and/or feature imagery in the sporting arena. Will be judged on an entry of up to five images on one subject, story or event (not theme)

Photographic essay: Up to 12 images of a news or feature story, of which one photograph must have been published.

Nikon-Walkley Prize for Portrait Photography: Recognizing excellence in portraiture, photographers can enter a single image for this Nikon-Walkley prize.

Nikon-Walkley Prize for Community/Regional Photography: Celebrating the best work of photographers working in regional and community media, entries for this Nikon-Walkley prize can comprise up to five images.

Nikon-Walkley press photographer of the year: Entrants must submit a body of work of six to eight images showing the photographer's range and self-editing skill. Body of work can encompass any genre.

Judges for the awards are drawn from a number of photographic backgrounds and typically for 2011 the range of judges displayed the ambit sought to arrive at a satisfactory result. The judges of the 2011 awards were freelance photographer David Sproule, Getty Images managing editor Dawn Hillier, freelance documentary photo curator and consultant Yumi Goto, *Illawarra Mercury* pictorial editor Kirk Gilmour and photographer for *The Australian*, John Feder. As with the journalistic approach with the awards the photographic emphasis was on creative and courageous photography - the different rather than the predictable.

<p><i>If I have any 'message' worth giving to a beginner it is that there are no short cuts in photography.</i></p>	<p>Edward Weston (1886 – 1958)</p>
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Chapter 17: International Exhibitions

In most ways International Judging is carried out in the same way as the National Exhibitions. Differences between the two types of exhibitions are usually in the range of sections. The International may have more set subjects, all of which are defined. The definitions are mostly standard and approved by at least one international photographic body. The three main bodies that approve exhibitions are the Photographic Society of America (PSA), the Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique (The International Federation of Photographic Art) (FIAP) and The Royal Photographic Society (RPS). Most developed countries conduct at least one international competition/exhibition annually.

The Exhibition Committee invites judges onto the selection panel and in Victoria the only current International Salon is VIGEX held in Geelong bi-annually. International Salons attempt to gain entries from around the globe in an effort to provide a truly international flavour for its exhibition. As can be expected, the level of quality of submitted images is of the highest standard.

As with State and National level competitions, when the judge enters the print room (there are usually several rooms operating at the same time) a steward will also be allocated to the judge. The steward will be wearing white gloves with which to handle the prints, the judge cannot handle prints and specifically cannot look at the back of prints prior to allocating their score. The steward writes the points indicated by the judge, in pencil on a label on the back of the print. The steward cannot influence the judging in any way and in most cases it is not recommended the two converse.

In the projection room, the three judges are provided with keypads displaying the numbers 1 to 5. As each image is projected, the section coordinator requests each judge in turn to score the entry on their keypad. The score is automatically entered into a computer from the keypads and those entries at the higher end of the scoring range are set aside for final debate amongst the judges for the distribution of awards. It is the usual practice that prior to the actual judging of the section that all entries in that section are briefly projected so as to give the judges an idea of what is ahead of them.

Nothing happens when you sit at home. I always make it a point to carry a camera with me at all times...I just shoot at what interests me at that moment.

Elliott Erwitt (1928 -)

Part 4: THE AUDIO VISUAL

Chapter 18: The Concept of the Audio Visual (AV)

The audio visual is unique in photography in that it encompasses other media to achieve its end result. Still photographs are used as part of the sequence for narrative purposes. In Australia Audio Visual or Diaporama is defined as a sequence of still images where the storyline or theme, sound, transitions and images are interdependent. An effective sequence will have unity of its three parts: the conception, the visuals and the sound. Generally, these three elements should reinforce each other in such a way that any one without the other two would be unsatisfactory. Adequate conception involves an idea with a suitable introduction, an interesting development of the idea and an appropriate close. Narrative or text may be employed but is not mandatory. The medium is very flexible and artistic expression within it can take many forms.

To commence working in AV's it would be satisfying to produce AV's for personal enjoyment or for family viewings. This is where the techniques are learned often by trial and error. A misconception is that AV's are a collection of pictures with sound.

AV's have their roots in cinema/video work whose technical advances continue to drive development in AV's where the visual is important as is the sound but of greater importance is the conception. There are two types of audio visual mostly offered:

1. The EDPI collection or 'slide show', with or without sound, and
2. The style where the artistic elements across all appropriate disciplines are employed; including continuity of the sequencing of sound and images.

The second style is that which has the greater value.

In competitions there are no restrictions on subject matter but each sequence must be placed in one of the categories listed on the Exhibition entry form. The most common subjects are Theme, Documentary, Humour, Natural History and Music/Poetry/Song. Each sequence awarded an "Acceptance" is eligible for consideration for Licentiate, Associate and Fellowship Honours levels in Australia.

The best camera is the one that's with you.

Chase Jarvis (1975 -)

Chapter 19: Components of AVs

The production of an audio visual comprises specific aspects that are made up of its management, photography and sound-dubbing. These aspects are defined as:

MANAGEMENT

Style – This is an audio visual of individual images or frames that excludes any form of motion capture.

Adaptation - If based on a published work, the AV should accurately interpret the storyline.

Script- Is an original storyline or shows faithfulness to a known story. When it is recorded in the language of an explanatory style (For example, in the style of the naturalist, Sir David Attenborough) that entertains with enthusiasm.

Directing – Concerns the general artistic control over the AV

Editing – This is the process of assembling a complete programme from all the raw material. It is to facilitate the perceptual grouping of elements that occur in time and space.

Continuity- Is where all details in shots, that are meant to follow each other, are identical. For example, clothing or the surrounding environments within specific sequences are alike.

Synchronization- Concerns the exact matching of sound to images. This is where the judge listens and looks for sound that is appropriate to the story and that music is matched to the speed of images.

Post production- Puts the visuals in order, sequences the sound and puts the two together. For example, images can be turned into B&W, with titles, with graphics and fade in/out together with appropriate sound. However, repetitive technical effects can be boring to the point of irritation especially in relation to dissolves.

Producer - The maker or makers of an AV is the producer.

There is nothing worse than a brilliant image of a fuzzy concept.

Ansel Adams (1902 - 1984)

In a film, video or multimedia, a good musical accompaniment will not call attention to itself.

Faith Renee Evan (1973 -)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Gerard Desroches of Luxembourg believed that the photographs are not the center of the sequence – but an ingredient amongst others. However, if the photographic effort is poorly executed then the visual component of the AV will not be effective.

Photography - concerns the quality, technique, variety, colour, mood and suitability of individual images to the chosen theme. For example, if the AV revolves around a song, do the pictures match the storyline or the lyrics of the song. The photographs are also a body of work that shows the quality of photography of the producer.

The AV should show a bias towards single image orientation. In line with the approach to photography appropriated images are permitted but may be limited to a maximum of 25% (which has varied from time to time) of the pictures in the sequence. Similar to the cinematic arts where all contributors are acknowledged the source of appropriated or attributed images and sound must be credited.

Lighting - concerns its quality, evenness between specific sequences and suitability for the theme and mood.

Special effects – is about visual effects to enhance the impact of the audiovisual.

Transition - concerns the process of moving from one shot to another where the change follows a pattern. For example, fade in/out or a new image growing out of a previous image or overlaying images one over another. At the time of writing AV's are in the 'Introductory Era' of the use of transitions. Some transitions are overused and rely on the initiatives of software development for achievement.

Sequence Outline - concerns the inclusion and quality of the opening title and credits, image storyline, conclusion and comprehensive end credits. End credits should be of sufficient duration to be adequately read. Acknowledgment of the work of other artists (e.g. music, text, poetry and images) must be included at the end of the sequence. Display of the author's name is optional but if used it *must* be at the end.

Shoot for the secrets, develop for the surprises.

Diane Arbus (1923 - 1971)

SOUND DUBBING

1. *Pre-production* – Is the conceptualization of the sound component.
2. *Sound tracking/recording* – Is the actual process of capturing the sound.
 - 2.1 *Field recording* – Is the process of capturing sound in an environment.
 - 2.2 *Soundscapes* – Is the sound or the sound that makes up an immersive acoustic environment.
3. *Sound mixing* – Is the effective combination of several sound sources and is the first step in post-production. This is where the sound and images are matched together.
 - 3.1 *Sound levels* - Evenness or special effects variations such as volume, tone and mixed balance.
 - 3.2 *Sound Effects* – Is the altering of recorded sound at the point of capture, mixing or mastering e.g. reverb, compression.
4. *Mastering* – Regards the overall details, overall tone balance and the polishing of the final mono/stereo mix. This also applies to the formats of 5.1 and 7.1 as well as any future formats of surround sound. Most AV's use stereo at the current standard and should not be compressed. (Formats regard the speaker layouts in a space; 5.1 means 5 speakers and 1 sub- woofer).
 - 4.1 *Overall music* - From records or original, theme or incidental music. There should be a sense of location or mood in the sound track.

Photography...it's the easiest medium in which to be competent. Anybody with a point-and-shoot camera can take a competent picture. But it's the hardest medium in which to have, to express, some kind of personal vision. Because there is no touch, there is no hand, there is no physicality. The fact that you CAN have something that's recognizable from 50 feet across the gallery as a Diane Arbus or an Irving Penn...the fact that you can have recognizable authorship means they really have done something.

Chuck Close (1940 -)

If I saw something in my viewfinder that looked familiar to me, I would do something to shake it up.

Garry Winogrand (1923 - 1984)

DURATION AND PROJECTION OF AVs

Time-lines vary for most sequences but the International standard is that they should not exceed 12 minutes. There are some specific time-line guided A/V's, such as up to 3mins 21secs, first adopted in France then spreading internationally. In Australia this time-line is set specifically at 3mins 21secs.

Since 2002 digital projection of 1024 x 768 pixels (the 4/3 ratio format) at the amateur and commercial levels was most popular. After about a decade in Australia, notably at The Melbourne Camera Club, the quality of the projected image was improved in 2011 to 1920 x 1200 pixels (the 16/10 ratio format). Great Britain used several formats such as 1440 x 1050 pixels (the 4/3 ratio format) as well as 1920 x 1080 pixels (the 16/9 ratio format) and 1920 x 1200 pixels. The Royal Photographic Society expects the use of 1400 x 1050 pixels.

The PSA takes another approach to AV's with guidelines for photographic essays comprising no more than 20 images. There is no specific division for AV's but all divisions make AV's.

To drive the AV system a lap top or desk top computer is used. Their screens feature transmitted light which looks different to the reflected light through a digital projector. At the screen the brightness should measure 7 on the Richter Scale or 7000 candle power but tolerances near these can be acceptable. For judging purposes to maximize the quality of the image the viewing distance is acceptable at 1.5 x the diagonal of the screen.

Screens vary considerably with no particular standard being adopted but a recommendation would be for a matt screen. Brightness at the screen should be about 4,500 lumen's or as measured through the EV scale at 100 ISO @ f5.6 the shutter should be 125/sec (Tolerance of 6 - 9 EV can be considered but 9 is the better quality)

Which of my photographs is my favourite? The one I'm going to take tomorrow.

Imogen Cunningham (1883 - 1976)

It can be a trap of the photographer to think that his or her best pictures were the ones that were hardest to get.

Timothy Allen (1971 -)

Chapter 20: The AV Review

According to the Royal Photographic Society in Great Britain the most important point to grasp is that it is the complete AV sequence that counts, not the individual components. This means that the concept of the sequence is extremely important. An effective sequence will have unity of its three parts: the concept, the visuals and the sound. These three elements should reinforce each other so that any one without the other would be unsatisfactory. The elements are completely interdependent as the AV is a presentation involving or directed simultaneously at the faculties of seeing and hearing.

Maureen Albright (AV judge from the United Kingdom) has indicated that if you can join the journey or view the sequence at any stage and you do not need to join it from the beginning, it is not a true AV. Instead it may be a good quality slide-show.

The AV concerns the storyline (Beginning, middle and ending) or theme that effectively engages an audience with a message or an idea. A good AV is more than a set of good images, in fact some of the best transitions can be less successful as images. Holistic completeness where all components form a satisfactory whole is the general aim.

Cliché pictures that slavishly follow words or lyrics may be too literal. Use of counterpoint or tension in the visuals may be more effective in expressing a point. The AV should be engaging, be either inspiring, memorable, heart rending or create awe in the viewer; its emotive quality will have an effect upon the audience. The success of an AV is about how effectively it engrosses or involves the audience or the judge.

Humour is a difficult subject to undertake as there are misconceptions of how to go about this. The most common mistake is an AV that shows people having fun, it may touch the sense of humour in the audience but generally this is not the case. The AV should emit a sense of humour by provoking amusement in the audience.

The technical driver of the Digital Audio Visual and its equipment is the computer program. During the first couple of decades of DAV's some of the more popular programs in Australia have been:

ProShow Gold (PC only - from the USA) - <http://www.photodex.com/>

Pictures to Exe and mostly overseas (PC only) - <http://www.wnsoft.com/>

For Mac users is Fotomagico - <http://www.boinx.com/fotomagico/overview/>

For audio creation the Mac use Garageband (which comes when purchasing the Mac).

Audacity can be used on both platforms for audio, and it is free to download - <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

Adobe Audition can be downloaded at a price - <http://www.adobe.com/products/audition.html>

I don't know if it's a movement, but the only thing new that's happening is that I think music and art and video and fashion are all kind of thrown into one big ball that's on television, and people see that all the time - you see a fusion of all those things.

Stephen Sprouse (1953 - 2004)

I treat the photograph as a work of great complexity in which you can find drama. Add to that a careful composition of landscapes, live photography, the right music and interviews with people, and it becomes a style.

Ken Burns (1953 -)

Chapter 21: Methods of Judging AVs

At the judging of AV competitions often an audience is present but at the request of organizers prior to any judging they are requested to be a silent audience. Should silence not be observed then those concerned will be reminded of this or asked to exit the showing. Judging an audio visual can be undertaken in a number of ways, such as:

Single judge. Here the judge must be given the opportunity to review the AVs prior to the public judging. The judge will need to respond to the emotional time investment by the maker, to understand all the technical and aesthetic values and review them over several showings. (The great cinema director Alfred Hitchcock 1899 – 1980 thought that to fully observe a picture then it should be seen at least three times to pick out all the details and intentions behind them).

Three judges. Working as a specialist team each judge would have expertise in a particular area; one in each - concept, imaging and audio.

Three judges. A generalist team of diversely qualified judges with experience in AV making.

Judging competitions with a large number of entries include:

Pre-selection where the number of entries escalate to be more than two days duration of judging. Not used in Australia prior to 2012 but used with controversy in Europe pre-selection determines those AVs that are presented for formal judging.

The A, B & C approach is taken in a large entry competition at international level. The first cut (or viewing) of the AVs are divided into groupings of 'A' (Up to 60% acceptance level and in which awards are made), 'B' (All AV's that are subject to review and may be up-graded for further consideration in the 'A' grouping or discarded in the 'C' group) and 'C' (These are AV's that have not met the standard and are discarded).

Based on international standards the current standard for Australian AV's is that they are marked out of 20 points. A weighting of 50% of the marks are allocated for its management, 25% for photography and 25% of marks for sound. If there is a single judge then 20 points apply but for a panel of judges each judge marks out of 20 points for an aggregate result.

The exhibition organizers announce the judging panel, read out definitions, outline the quantity of AVs in each section and the time-line involved. Prior to the showing of each AV a description of it by the producer is also read out. Judges are provided with a form that is filled out at the end of each AV which includes scores. Digital Audio Visuals (as with those of slides/transparencies in the past) have the same basic content to review.

The criteria for judging encompasses:

- Technical quality;
- Relationship of elements;
- Text;
- Sound;
- Originality.

Judging looks for the creative input of the author, as opposed to the software developer, in the production values of a sequence.

.....intrusion into their world may be made only with the utmost regard for their welfare.
A.G. 'Bert' Wells (c.1940 -)

Most things in life are moments of pleasure and a lifetime of embarrassment; photography is a moment of embarrassment and a lifetime of pleasure.
Tony Benn (1925 -)

Photography deals exquisitely with appearances, but nothing is what it appears to be.
Duane Michals (1932 -)

The heart and mind are the true lens of the camera.
Yousuf Karsh (1908 - 2002)

Chapter 22: Judging Criteria for AVs

After each section of AVs have completed their showing then the judges discuss what was presented to them to identify Acceptances, those for Review and those Rejected. Placings may also be made at this stage. **When assessing an AV judges need to ask themselves some pertinent questions:**

1. Presentation, Concept and Interest (Management) 50% of the marks.

- Did this AV maintain our interest from beginning to the end?
- Was the idea/story of the AV introduced, developed logically to an obvious ending?
- Did the sequence flow smoothly?
- If there were sudden breaks in the flow - was this for a deliberate effect?
- Were variations in slide length and transitions used effectively?
- If pans/zooms were used - were they effective?
- Duration: Was the AV too short or too long?
- What was the overall quality of the presentation?

2. Audio: 25% of the marks.

- Did the soundtrack fit with the images and the concept of the AV?
- If voice or sound effects were used, were they appropriate to that AV?
- Clarity of sound, for example, if there are voice overs are they too muddy or dull or too sibilant (poor quality). Does it sound as if someone is actually talking to the audience ? It should not sound as if someone is talking in a room next door or shouting in your ear!
- Nuances of sound are more effective in cold still air. Does the recordist give some respect as to how physics of sound works in space ?
- Does the most appropriate use of post production effects support the concept and imagery ?
- Are the recording techniques correctly carried out. Do recording techniques include recording levels (gain structure), microphone placement and protection from wind/vocal plosives.

3. *Image Quality: 25% of the marks*

- Within this percentage of marking it has been suggested in Europe that the actual photograph carry a further percentage characteristic. This provides clarity to the judging exercise and the photographic artist in that aims are not drowned in confusion and arbitrary rules. This engenders freedom of expression and imagination for Audio Visual sequences only and does not imply anything else. The weighting approach is:
- What a picture communicates – the 'message' with a weighting of 50-60%
- The content of a picture and how it is dealt with at a weighting of 30-35%
- The technical aspects of a picture- the 'medium' with a weighting of 10-15%

4. *Overall technical quality (Considerations that are not marked).*

- △ Currently there are no computer standards and the projector is governed by the computer. There are no performance criteria. However, during the judging of AV technical quality must be considered and some may be outside of the producers control. Technical problems include but are not confined to the following:
- *Pixelation* – is an effect caused by displaying a bitmap (or section of it) at such a large size that individual pixels (the small single-coloured square display elements that comprise the bitmap) are visible to the eye.
- *Pixel winking* - is where the brightness of pixels (or groups of pixels) alters during projection giving a winking effect. If extreme will also appear as if a wave is moving across or down a screen.
- *Staircasing* – where stepping occurs on straight lines.
- *Jagging* – where smooth panning is interrupted (it hiccups).
- *Audio drop-out* – where the sound track ceases to operate altogether or is interrupted.
- *Audio mis-synchronisation* – where the sound track does not match the imagery (similar to cinema where vocals do not match lip movement).
- *Sound levels* – once established at the outset of the AV they should not be altered. The levels contribute to the drama of the AV or could be poor quality.
- *Background sound* – the volume levels of music behind narration should be considered for appropriateness.

- *Failure to test run* – prior to judging all equipment, in particular computers should be test run. Evidence of failure to test includes sound failure, de-linking of sound to picture and video card failure where transitions are discarded.
- *Production difficulties* – zooming made too quickly or vertical panning carried out too speedily for the kind of presentation being made.
- *Technical problems* – If these occur near the commencement or during the AV screening then the judges should ask for a replay or re-start of the AV.

However, quality judging would require some flexibility in the weighting. If a picture reveals an exceptionally high standard in one of the above three features it would be entirely appropriate to modify the weighting beyond that suggested in the range. A photograph which by its very nature did not have a strong emotional message but which was a superb example of timing of taking, the picture would deserve an extra weighting in the second point and lower in the first point. If there was a consensus on what should be taken into consideration in marking and weighting given to each attribute chosen, it would help entrants to competitions and exhibitions to know what was expected of them and the results of judging would be more consistent and fair. This does not imply rules on what the judges should select but agreement on what aspects of the picture they should be taking into consideration in judging. It would in fact mean fewer rules than has been experienced since individual judges have/do make rules based entirely on their own way of thinking.

A good video can make all the difference.

Brian May (1947 -)

The vocabulary of visual art includes concrete elements of line, shape and form. The grammar includes principles of design that refer to pattern, rhythm, balance, texture and value (lights or darks) and colour.

Kipp Baker (c.1938 -)

PART 5: DISCIPLINES FOR EVALUATING IMAGES

Chapter 23: Aesthetic Judgment

In essence evaluation of images is an informed discourse. Using photographs to increase feeling, thinking and understanding about artistic images. Out of the mix of style, subject matter, photographic method, quality and presentation a judge needs to be disciplined in their approach in evaluating each image. Failing to be consistent will undermine the credibility of the judge, the exhibition and judges as a group.

As a first step judgments of aesthetic value clearly rely on the ability to discriminate at a sensory level. Judgments of beauty *are sensory, emotional, intellectual and cultural all at once*. In practice judges distinguish between aesthetic and secondly, artistic judgments. The first refers to the sensory contemplation or appreciation of an object (not necessarily an art object), while the other refers to the evaluation of an art work.

But what is a work of art? The current sense of the word “art” generally refers to “fine art”; a term used to describe the skill used to express the photographer’s inventiveness, or to engage the audience’s aesthetic sensibilities, or to draw the audience towards consideration of “finer” things. Art usually implies no function other than to convey or communicate an idea, over the centuries art aimed at beauty, more recently at the sublime together with expression.

Judgments or evaluations depend on reasons. To declare something good, bad, original or remarkable without giving reasons is merely to offer a conclusion. The conclusion is useless without providing supportive evidence.

Critical judgments entail three aspects, or 'appraisals' that are based on 'reasons' which are founded in 'criteria'. Judgments must increase our knowledge and understanding of photography. Responsible judgments can and should be explained not pronounced. A judgment without the benefit of an interpretation is irresponsible as is a rating without reasons. Opinions that are not supported by reasoning are not useful or meaningful. Those that are derived from careful thought and supported by evidence carry weight.

Chapter 24: The Identity and Distinction of Images

“There are two distinct roads in photography – the utilitarian and the aesthetic; the goal of the one being a record of facts, and of the other an expression of beauty. They run parallel to each other, and many cross-paths connect them,” so wrote Charles H. Caffin (1854 – 1918). These two paths are readily recognizable in subject and depend upon the intent of the photographer.

One distinction of the utilitarian record of facts is there is no distortion of the truth, often referred to as the “purist approach”. It is mostly found in architectural, nature, photojournalism and industrial photography, as well as in a large part, travel and portrait photography. Identifying the quality or the degree of competency in these images is mostly self-evident where the photographer has a unique vision of the subject. The response to these images can be innately felt or intellectualized by the measure of respect given to them by the observer.

The second distinction concerns the aesthetic. Where photographs register accuracy of likeness and through skill and sensitivity also see it for its own form and sense of beauty; it has thus been elevated into a work of art. This distinction is found amongst a batch of pictures where a particular picture stands out because it affects the positive or negative emotions of the viewer, or is innately appreciated by the viewer without their understanding why was the image so affecting. The picture is readily accepted for its worth.

The American philosopher Charles Peirce (1839 – 1914) identified three ways of representing something: it can be done Iconically, Indexically and Symbolically. An interpretation of these representations are:

- Iconic – The picture looks like the subject, e.g. a motorcycle.
- Index – The picture is an indirect reference to the subject, e.g. the shadow of the motorcycle .
- Symbolic – The picture is of the logo of the motorcycle.

These forms of identity become practicalities in photography as each are visual. To construct a quality picture the photographic artist then builds layers into the image that lends itself to several meanings.

The soul never thinks without an image.

Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC)

The Gestalt principle is another attempt to identify the way we segregate and group visual elements into patterns or units. It is where properties minimize tension and stress and maximize stability and equilibrium. If mechanically applied without sensitivity, Gestalt may produce boring pictures where there may be no challenge, excitement or curiosity. The four prime Gestalt principles are:

Proximity, Similarity, Continuity and Closure.

- Proximity is about what influences how we see objects in a picture. When grouping things the photographer can encourage people to see the relationship they want viewers to see. Area and contrast influence what is first seen as a figure (i.e. the subject).
- Similarity is about the shape, size, direction, colour and movement of subjects that tend to be seen as related. The resulting symmetry (bilateral, twofold and fourfold) provides visual balance and if also similar can provide visual rhythm.
- Continuity is where visual elements that require the fewest number of interruptions will be grouped by our minds to form continuous straight or curved lines. It deals with spacial and temporal arrangements. Intervals in continuity can change the understanding of a subject. Continuity can be important in the production of Audio Visual presentations.
- Closure is where nearly complete but familiar lines and shapes are more readily seen as complete (closed) than incomplete lines and shapes. Areas with closed contours are more readily seen than areas with open contours. Closed areas are more formed and stable.

Visual rhetoric is a further means of identifying and providing distinction to photographs. It is the art and study of selecting and arranging visual elements to influence the thoughts and actions of the viewer; Visual rhetoric is about tone modulation and how the elements are arranged.; these include elements that are added, suppressed, substituted or exchanged.

- Addition involves: repetition.
- Similarity: visual elements that are alike but not identical as in repetition.
- Difference: elements that are different but with purpose, difference in accumulation (building a picture of objects to make clear a message).

- Opposites: (a juxtaposition of opposing visual elements to attract attention. In composition this is also known as Contraposition),
- False homology: ambiguity and paradox play off the opposition between what is seen – *perception* – and what is known – *reality*. Similarity of form can cause a difference in content and cause ambiguity.
- Suppression involves preterition (where a picture deliberately neglects, disregards or omits something), reticence (the restraint, reserve and silence about something), dubitation (where there is doubt or dubiousness about something), suspension (where something is held back and revealed later to create a sense of suspense) and circumlocution (a roundabout way to show something). Suppression is most useful in the audio visual medium.
- Substitution is about hyperbole (exaggeration to make a point in a dramatic fashion), allusion (making reference to an earlier similar event), metaphor (showing one thing in terms of another).
- Exchange is about inversion (to turn something upside down or inside out, to reverse colour or tonalities), homology (similar with respect to some quality where the same meaning is presented in successive images but in different forms).

It has long been recognized that the great works of man combine high order with high complexity.

Rudolf Arnheim (1904 – 2000)

The eye appears to act according to the principle of least effort and do no more than is imposed on it.

Floyd Ratliff (1919 - 1999)

In photography there is a reality so subtle that it becomes more real than reality.

Alfred Stieglitz (1864 - 1946)

Unless a picture shocks, it is nothing.

Marcel Duchamp (1887 - 1968)

Chapter 25: The Nature and Characteristic Properties of Images

This often refers to style, usually understood to be realistic, representative, documentary, fashion, moody, fanciful (inventive) or abstract. A “stylized” work conforms to a formal convention or rules, such as an artistic movement, and is recognized by the way the subject matter and the formal elements are managed. It also refers to the choice of subjects the photographer photographs.

The stylistic influence of an image is the explanatory and historical information about the photographer, the style (genre) or movement to which she/he belongs, and which preconditions and influences the reception of the judge’s interpretation of the works. Putting the image into a broader framework reinforces the notion that all art comes from other art or that all artists are influenced by others. This interpretation is similar to a ‘Comparative Interpretation’ (where the picture is compared to another image) as it assumes the audience has knowledge of the ‘others’.

Characteristics that can be considered unique to photography, aside from the abstract, include:

- The thing in itself – photography deals with the actual.
- The detail – photography is tied to facts of things.
- The frame – the photograph is selected (isolated in the frame) and not conceived.
- Time – photographs are time exposures and describe discrete parcels of time.
- Vantage point – photographs provide everyone with new views of the world.

I am not interested in rules or conventions. Photography is not a sport.

Bill Brandt (1904 - 1983)

You’ve got to push yourself harder. You’ve got to start looking for pictures nobody else could take. You’ve got to take the tools you have and probe deeper.

William Albert Allard (1937 -)

Chapter 26: Modes of Practice in Making Images

Qualities assessed in a photograph are based on the premise that a high quality picture needs to be founded on a sound idea. The idea will have direct visual and emotional impact and evoke these from the viewer. Composition and technical properties contribute to the aesthetic qualities in pictures, but the approach of the photographer and how and why the picture was made in a particular way, must also be taken into consideration.

The photograph or the photographer may deliberately or accidentally enter into well defined common practices. The practices are also known as criteria and the two most practiced are Realism (also called Mimesis) and its tradition can be seen as the 'window to the world' as well as Expressionism with its tradition being 'mirrors of the world'.

Expressionism is about the intensity of the photographer's experience in making the picture and the judge should assess the image according to the intensity of the feelings that it provokes in them. The intensity of the expression, the artistry, is more important than the accuracy of the representation. An example of this is pictorialism, where photographers attempt to use the medium to imitate paintings.

Realism takes the opposite approach which is built on the premise that the world exists independently of human attention and that it contains discoverable patterns of intrinsic meaning. For the realist, because the world is the standard of truth and is incomparably beautiful, the noblest goal of the artist is to attempt to accurately portray the universe in all its natural variations. The American photographer Paul Strand (1890 - 1976) believed "absolute and unqualified objectivity" should be sought. Realism attempts to capture the object of the camera at its most beautiful.

Formalism is about 'art for art's sake' and directs attention towards the abstract form rather than the physical or social aspects of the world. Formalism upholds the sovereignty of form and considers subject matter and references to religion, history and politics as aesthetically irrelevant or non-artistic concerns. The image stands on its own without the need for explanations.

Instrumentalism rejected the 'art for art's sake' approach and instead embraced 'art for life's sake'. It is concerned with the consequences of art. It holds the view that art is in the service of causes, hence the 'concerned photography' and other purposeful images are designed to effect social change, save lives and not to produce art museum masterpieces. Thus the instrumentalist criteria of judgment are to encourage examination of art based on social, moral and economic purposes of art, how art is used in society and its consequences. Often photojournalistic in style it is about encouraging a social reaction to the cause of the photographer.

Chapter 27: The Description of Photographs

To describe a photograph or exhibition is to communicate what has been observed about it, simply put, it is to tell out loud what things have been noticed. As the description progresses facts about the image are explored which usually include objects depicted in the image, the subject matter and composition. The description lists facts and answers questions such as:

What is here?

What am I looking for?

What do I know for certainty about the picture?

Descriptive information looks for:

- The formal graphic elements: dot, line shape, light, colour, texture, mass, space, volume, contrast, frame and edge. The abstract work may be described in abstract terms, which involves interpretation.
- The photographic elements: depth of field, sharpness, exposure, type of focus, lens used, technique, printing and its manipulations.
- The presentation elements: format, image size, matting and shaping, whether it is a print, projected image, installation or 3D.
- The design principles: scale, proportion, unity within variety, repetition and rhythm, balance, directional forces and subordination.
- The subject matter, where possible information about the photographer, times during which it was made and the social milieu from which it emerged.

Description is a collection of informed or felt discourses, which increase our understanding of the work, and sometimes the intent of the maker. Descriptive photographs include medical, police, scientific images and any other picture that purely records the subject. Explanatory pictures, on the other hand, explain visually how things work. Examples are seen in industrial, press and frame quantity photography (similar to the audio visual). Descriptions are made with accurate adjectives and support a judge's interpretation and judgment. The judge uses carefully selected words so that as the photographer gives us the images so the judge gives us words for the images. Descriptive statements about subject matter identify and typify persons, objects, places or events in a picture.

Different judges may see different aspects and characteristics in a picture they are describing. To summarize, they are:

Form: Refers to how the subject matter is presented in terms of line, shape, colour and texture etc.

Medium: Refers to what an art object of which it is made. For photography this includes how the image was captured, type of printing paper, method of processing and presentation.

Style: Shows a resemblance amongst a variety of art objects and is recognized by a characteristic handling of the subject matter and formal elements.

Comparing and contrasting: This is about the analysis of pictures with other work by the same photographer or to other photographers' pictures perhaps in the same exhibition or to works by other artists. In so doing, what is common to and what is different to other works is identified.

Internal and external sources of information: External mostly refers to further information found out about the picture or photographer, for example, information found in the media, books, catalogues and other articles. Internal sources of information are gained direct from the photographer and may help clarify the assessment of relevant pictures.

To describe a picture is to get to know and understand it and the assessment gauges its quality. To describe subject, form, medium and style is to consider photographs as pictures and it is virtually impossible to describe without interpreting; they blend during the commentary as description moves from picture parts to the whole and returns in a circular manner.

A thing that you see in my pictures is that I was not afraid to fall in love with these people.

Annie Leibovitz (1949 -)

...to photograph is to frame, and to frame is to exclude.

Susan Sontag (1933 - 2004)

Chapter 28: The Interpretation of Photographs

Interpretation comes in many forms that are not necessarily equal. Some interpretations of the meaning of an image are better (truer), plausible (acceptable) or more reasonable (supported by evidence) than others. Instead of looking for the ‘true’ interpretation from a judge, we should assess their critique where a good or convincing interpretation can be plausible, interesting, enlightening, insightful, meaningful, revealing, original and inspirational, or conversely: unreasonable, unlikely, impossible, absurd, far fetched, strained, subjectively personal or inappropriate.

All photographs, even the most simple, require interpretation in order to be fully understood and appreciated. They need to be recognized as pictures about something and for communicative and expressive purposes. Interpretation is telling about the aims and objectives, the meaning, the sense, the tone or mood of a photograph. It is about matters of meaning and what the judge understands and thinks what the photograph is about.

Photographs made in a straightforward, stylistically realistic manner especially need interpretation. Some realistic pictures are very natural (e.g. National Geographic quality and style) and others capture images that are accurate recordings (e.g. straight pictures for memory purposes) but all equally need interpretation. The photographer has made choices based on culture, attitude, beliefs and values about what and how to photograph a subject. This may be a simple process (a novice photographer doing no more than pointing the camera at a subject) or a sophisticated process (an experienced photographer making a more considered picture of a subject). Therefore, pictures are not merely images of reality as if seen through a window but deserve to be described, analyzed and deconstructed.

The French scholar Roland Barthes (1915 - 1980) studied how culture expresses meaning. He identified two practices of meaning: “denotation” and “connotation”. A still life photograph may denote (show) flowers in a vase and may connote (suggest/imply) peace, tranquility and the delightfulness of the simple. In judging to miss what pictures express is to miss the point of the pictures.

A fully developed interpretation is an argument that has premises leading logically and forcefully to a conclusion. The fully developed is usually mixed with descriptions and occasionally with evaluations.

Interpretations are answers to questions people have about photographs and they all share a fundamental principle which is that photographs have meanings deeper than what appears on their surfaces. Kinds of interpretation include:

- Comparative Interpretation is based on a comparison of the photographer in question to another or to a whole movement; one picture to another or one idea to another.
- Archetypal Interpretation refers to the original on which others are based. Here, the interpretation is self-referencing and it refers to the 'essential' and characteristic newness of the style of work, which fits nowhere else, and thus makes its own class. It identifies or expands upon obvious ideas or messages.
- Psychoanalytical Interpretation refers to the use of ordinary objects suggesting other meanings. Illusions through symbolism and allegorical messages are significant here.
- Semiotic Interpretation is based on signs or sign language. Here an insert or a smaller image defines the relationship with a larger image in the same frame and thus it defines meaning of the whole. It is about our understanding how an image means rather than what it means.
- Biographical Interpretation is where a critique explains the cause-and-effect of why a photographer makes images in the way that they do. (Their style). Is the photographer influenced by their life experiences?
- Technique Interpretation relates as to how the image was made. These are descriptions of the media used, rather than the meaning of the work hidden beyond its surface. It will include information about how the photographer works and also their subject choice.
- Feminist Interpretation is about social issues and women's rights.
- Marxist Interpretation is based around broad social inequalities and other social agendas.
- Emotional Interpretation is about emotions and feelings evoked by an image rather than the emotions or feelings shown in the photograph.

- Significance Interpretation refers to how an image affects us or what it means to us.
- Stylistic Interpretation is about the influences or references to historical or stylistic contexts of the photograph. This may not be a strong interpretation if the audience does not know about the references.
- Formalist Interpretation is about commentary of the formalized balance of photographs. Description and interpretation can merge during the commentary but care must be taken not to overly conjecture (guess or speculate what the picture is about especially with abstract photographs).
- Intentionalist Interpretation is about revealing the intended meanings of photographs as observed by judges or the photographer's themselves. It is beneficial for photographers to carefully consider what it is they intend to express and to consider whether they have achieved their intents and whether their intents are worth achieving, sometimes the intent may be weak. However, photographers are frequently unaware or do not care about the pictures intention. But it is appropriate for judges to critically consider the intent of novice photographers' photographs but keep in mind that the judge ought to work with the pictures photographers make and not the minds of the makers.
- Combination Interpretation uses a hybrid of two or more of the above approaches. This may produce interpretations which when they compete with one another can cause confusion with the audience.

If the interpretation is too removed from what is shown and known then it is flawed. Thus, these criteria help the interpreter of the image to concentrate on the picture and prevent the interpretation of the meaning from being too subjective; interpretations are arguments for a certain understanding of a photograph.

To interpret a photograph is to identify its meaning or what it is about. The judge has gathered the visible aspects of the photograph and tries to understand the relationship between them. What is the dominant theme and purpose? The act of interpretation follows description to uncover the meaning and how to understand it. Meaning identified in photographs is done in two ways; by denotation (showing what is) and by connotation (implied suggestion).

Photographers design to imply an effect. Of all the criteria and interpretations that can be put in place in judging a picture the photograph itself may determine the approach taken to judge it. For example, it will be judged on Realist grounds if it is a descriptive picture.

Correct Interpretations are attributed to the judge's greater knowledge of the subject matter and/or the photographer. Hence the teaching role of the judge. Some photographs are understood better by some viewers' or judges than others. In practice independent judgments of a photograph, that consistently accept its quality, verifies the worth of the image and in competition photography the result is often referred to as a champion print.

Reality offers us such wealth that we must cut some of it out on the spot, simplify. The question is, do we always cut out what we should? While we're working, we must be conscious of what we're doing. Sometimes we have the feeling that we've taken a great photo, and yet we continue to unfold. We must avoid however, snapping away, shooting quickly and without thought, overloading ourselves with unnecessary images that clutter our memory and diminish the clarity of the whole.
On Photojournalism, American Photo, September/October 1997, page 76.
Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908 - 2004)

There are no rules for good photographs, there are only good photographs.
Ansel Adams (1902 - 1984)

I shutter to think how many people are underexposed and lacking depth in this field.
Richard 'Rick' Steves (1955 -)

When you find yourself beginning to feel a bond between yourself and the people you photograph, when you laugh and cry with their laughter and tears, you will know you are on the right track.
Authur Fellig (Weegee) (1899 - 1968)

Chapter 29: The Evaluation of Photographs

When judges evaluate a photograph they make statements of appraisal, stating how good it is or is not. Evaluation is a 'what' that demands a 'why'. Evaluations, like interpretations, depend on reasons. Evaluations without reasons are not beneficial because they may not improve our understanding of the picture. To declare a photograph as 'good', 'bad', 'original' or 'remarkable' without offering supportive reasons is merely a conclusion. Evaluations are arguments that require evidence.

Complete and explicit evaluations entail three aspects; 'appraisals' that are based on 'reasons' which are founded in 'criteria'. Norms are standards for greatness upon which appraisals are ultimately based. Positive evaluations are sometimes assumed to be obvious for which they may not be explicitly argued. Criteria are usually based in definitions of art and aesthetic theories of what art should be. In casual art critiques, appraisals are abundant but reasons are rare and criteria are more rare again. Criteria are many and include imagination, a good idea, realism, expressionism (pictorialist), formalism, instrumentalism or intentionalism. Evaluations can be revised as more enlightened understanding is encountered.

He will take his camera and ride off in search of new evidence that his city, even in her most drunken and disorderly and pathetic moments, is beautiful.

William McCleery (Extract from Weegee's book "Naked City" 1945)

No place is boring, if you've had a good night's sleep and have a pocket full of unexposed film.

Robert Adams (1937 -)

When it comes down to it we're not looking for the person, we're looking for a clue.

Ken Duncan (1954 -)

Chapter 30: Theorizing about Photographs

Some theoretical positions about photographs have become conventionally accepted even if there is disagreement about their approach to photography. It is concerned with the fact that photography can be influenced and clarified by theory. The major theoretical positions are:

REALISM OR CONVENTIONALISM : In 1839 Louis Daguerre (1787 - 1851) with the invention of photography, declared that the medium had accuracy and perfection of detail previously unobtainable. It is infinitely more accurate than any painting made by human hand. His declarations have been echoed since in that the very essence of photography is an absolute unqualified objectivity. It anticipates the existence of objects. Realism is also transparent, meaning that we can see things that are not in our presence – we see the view that was photographed. Location and time or history are brought into our presence and we accept as accurate what was photographed. Pictures are generally seen by people as believable.

MODERNISM: Its aim is to have photography accepted as a legitimate art form. Photography modernists try to establish that the medium is unique, that realism is its proper mode and straight photographs are what photography does best. Modernism looks at form rather than subject as the important element. The features of modernism are:

- A superior attitude towards and opposition to popular culture.
- Emphasizes high art and superiority of the crafts.
- Objects to art as entertainment.
- Self-sufficiency and transcendency (“art for arts sake”).
- Art primarily refers to other art rather than the social world.
- A desire to be judged by formalist criteria and how artwork furthers the history of art.
- Disregards context in interpretations.
- Preoccupied with the purity of the medium.
- Rejects narrative content (Message or story telling) as appropriate for serious art.
- Believes in the individual genius of the artist.
- Looks for originality and the new in photographs.
- Reveres the precious, unique artwork.

POST-MODERNISM: It rejects the approach of modernism. The main features of this theory are:

- Art exemplifies the political, cultural and psychological experience of a society.
- That photographs can be mass produced or repeated.
- Photographs are adaptable in that they can be enlarged, cropped, placed on billboards as well as in newspapers, books and catalogs.

MARXIST: Post-modernism can also be rejected on the grounds of cynicism and self-referential mannerism but unlike Post-modernism Marxist theory refuses to treat photographs as privileged objects and instead use it as an ordinary cultural artifact. Marxist theory through photography aims for a collective struggle for social change.

FEMINIST: Abigail Solomon-Godeau (c.1953 -) defines Feminist theory - “Central to Feminist theory is the recognition that woman does not speak herself: rather, she is spoken for and all that implies: looked at, imagined, mystified and objectified”. The Feminist photographer Barbara DeGenevieve (1947 -) believes that photographs can carry ideological messages which cumulatively shape the culture's ideas, values and attitudes. If we see enough pictures of a certain type, such as women being brutalized by men, we can conclude that such imagery is valuable to the culture.

Theoretically the photographer has been possessed of an inferiority state; this has been created by the critics' disdain. 'But photography is not Art' has been their loud utterance ever since they witnessed the first efforts of Daguerre and Talbot. The reflex of this scornful dismissal has been a tremendous survival action on the part of photographers to assert their egos and to beat the critics into the dust. Slowly, with sweat and tears, they have achieved this end; their efforts have been so enormous that they have almost overshot their mark and created a new aesthetic pertaining to photography alone, isolating it from the dogmas of pictorialism and professional picture painting. The boot is now on the other foot; photography is food and inspiration to the artist. Its influence on the futurist movement in Italy is a good example of this.

Max Dupain (1911 - 1992)

Chapter 31: Objective Judgments about Images

These judgments include those that are:

Ethically based where moral, praising or condemning assessments are made about the picture.

Aesthetic evaluations about art photography of beautiful things or people that are photographed in beautiful ways, for example, nudes that are carefully lit, posed, impersonal and artistic. Another example is landscape views transformed from real world into images which possess mystical and spiritual content.

Theoretical appraisals about conceptual pictures where the language is more open to new ideas and may be inconclusive in their resolution.

I take photographs with love, so I try to make them art objects. But I make them for myself first and foremost - that is important.

Jacques-Henri Lartigue (1894 - 1986)

The mission of photography is to explain man to man and each man to himself. And that is the most complicated thing on earth.

Edward Steichen (1879 - 1973)

A hundredth of a second here, a hundredth of a second there - even if you put them end to end, they still only add up to one, two, perhaps three seconds, snatched from eternity.

Robert Doisneau (1912 - 1994)

I wanted to make moody images. That meant working with very little light. So I had no option; I had to use fast films - that dictated my pictures being grainy. I did not choose the technique first. When I make a picture I always choose the light before I choose the technique.

Sarah Moon (1940 -)

Chapter 32: Inappropriateness that Erodes Disciplined Image Evaluation

Factual narrations about images can be clouded by observations that are perceived to be true but are based on personal tastes. These hidden personal tastes appear as truths until the light of logic is shone upon them. Should a description or an interpretation include observations made during a critique referring to a picture as confrontational, arrogant, controversial, condescending or glamorizing then these views do not stand up to objective scrutiny taking into consideration the wider communal persuasion of tolerance and understanding.

The connoisseur review is very limited. Here the judge asks of themselves “Is the image good or bad?” The judge then makes a proclamation based on a personal style. For example, a judge may indicate prior to delivering an evaluation that they either favor certain topics or styles, or do not understand them, or outright dislike them and will thus offer their assessment in view of these biases.

Prejudiced interpretations of images depicting the beauty of women treat the images as one of exploitation and oppression. These interpretations see such images fit the old traditions of a woman as a possession, as giver and as sacrificial. The interpretations can be a bias of the judge.

Inference interpretation is based on guessing the photographers’ intended message in an image or through interviews. Both can be very wrong as the judge may misunderstand the message and the maker may not be fully aware of their own motivation as is most common with artists. Artists express through their media the pent up feelings about their existing state or an impending change and are often not consciously aware of them or not able to articulate them. The left brain/right brain photography deals with this issue encouraging makers to photograph like a child and to select like an analyst. For this reason the judge may wish to ignore the maker’s explanations or given titles. If the maker’s intent is known then the interpretation may follow in terms of its effectiveness rather than what the image actually invokes.

Generalized interpretations applied to composition, treatment and subject are incompatible with the uniqueness encouraged in picture making and discourages inspiring the imagination of photographers’ to see in new ways or invent new approaches.

Good interpretations offered during a critique are convincing and weak ones are not. It is intellectually irresponsible and lazy to say that all critiques are subjective; in a democratic society most people think that all opinion is equal or that opinions are subjective. This is not so. It is incorrect to believe that opinions are just the expedient opinions of the judge and they do not mean much to anyone. If the judge relates the interpretation to the photographic artwork and not to personal taste, then the comments are objective and not subjective. Interpretation is not just an intellectual act it also relies on feelings and often on a flash of insight; these need to be acknowledged and articulated. Thus the judge offers not just a personal but rather an informed critique that enriches the understanding of the photographer and the audience before whom the delivery is offered.

The judge's evaluation should be better than most. The judge should be a practitioner in the art form under consideration, have a broad understanding of aesthetics and be sensitive to feelings and how others see. The delivery of narration should be considerate and respectful towards the image and its maker.

It's one thing to make a picture of what a person looks like, it's another thing to make a portrait of who they are.

Paul Caponigro (1932 -)

Mere technical perfection is not a sufficient skill to produce works of art. There appears to be a need for an additional input of individual expression – a degree of individuality or originality – and that is what finally distinguishes the work of the artist.

Robert Rankin (c.1940 -)

Everyone will take one great picture, I've done better because I've taken two.

David Bailey (1938 -)

If your pictures aren't good enough, you're not close enough.

Robert Capa (1913 - 1954)

Part 6: THE JUDGE

Chapter 33: Criteria for the Judge

The American psychologist and philosopher John Dewey (1859 – 1952) addressed the nature of criticism in his book *Art as Experience*. The chapter entitled *Criticism and Perception* has been summarized and commented upon in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Dewey holds that there are no infallible touchstones in critiques. In fact, it is harmful to think that there are. Good judgment requires a rich background, disciplined insight and the capacity to discriminate and to unify. There are no standards for judgment but there are criteria and these are not rules but rather means of discovering what the work of art is *as an experience*.

For Dewey, judgment is an act of intelligence for the purpose of more adequate perception. In other words judging requires intelligence and has the capacity to suggest improvement to images. It is development in the medium of thought of deeply realized experience. He rejects, therefore, judicial criticism in which the verdict is the key result without narrating the supporting evidence. Such critiques are produced out of a desire for authority by judges and for protection from a challenging evaluation on the part of the audience.

The business of a critique is to deepen experience for others through enhancing perception. The work is fully understood when the judge goes through the same processes the artist went through when producing it and the judge shares in promoting this process. Hence, a practicing photographer offers the greatest value to judge a photographic exhibit as the instinct, understanding and empathy required is the closest relevant approach.

Dewey holds that judgment has two main functions, discrimination and unification. The first involves understanding the parts, and the second leads to understanding how they relate to each other and to the whole. The first is analysis and the second in synthesis. The two are inseparable. The judge gains a capacity for analysis through a long-standing consuming interest in the subject. The judge should like and understand photography and preferably have a rich and full experience of it, as well as a personal intimacy with the tradition of the subject's art form. Acquaintance with the masterpieces of the tradition will be their touchstone and the judges should also be familiar with an international variety of traditions. Lacking this knowledge leads to overestimation of some photographers at the expense of others.

Since judges will have knowledge of a wide variety of conditions and materials, they will appreciate a multitude of forms and will not praise work simply for technical skill. A wide knowledge will also allow for discrimination and for determining the intent of the photographic artist. The judge should also have knowledge of the logical development of the individual artist's work, for example, at photography club level this comes with dealing with individual photographers who consistently produce recognizable, quality results over an extended period of time. As both judges and photographic artists have personal areas of interest, they tend to push to their limits the unique modes of vision associated with these areas. The artist and the judge teach each other, but judges fail when they think that their own tendency or view is the only legitimate one.

For Dewey, the unifying phase of a critique involves the insight of the judge. The judge must discover some "unifying strand" in the work, one that is not simply imposed on the work, such as having a mental template of what a picture should look like. There are many unifying ideas in a work of art but the theme and the design described by the judge must really be present throughout.

One of the dangers in critiques is the reduction of an entire work to an isolated element, for example, looking at technique separately from form. Dewey believed that the aesthetic merit of a work lies *within* the work and extraneous material should not substitute for understanding the work itself. Art uses its medium to enhance experience. The value of experience is greatest in its ability to reveal many ideals and the value of ideals is in the experiences they generate.

The Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce (1860 – 1952) had a similar approach. He believed that the first task of the spectator of the work of art – the judge – is simply to understand the intuition, or perhaps better, to realize the intuition, which is the work of art. The judge may fail in this endeavor where haste, vanity, want of reflection and theoretical prejudices may bring about what the judge finds beautiful what is not, or fails to find what is beautiful. Croce believed that the judge's task is the same as the artist:

‘How that which is produced by a given activity could be judged a different activity? The critic may be a small genius, the artist a great one.... But the nature of both must remain the same.’

In the moment of contemplation and judgment, the judge's spirit should be at one with the photographer and in that moment the judge and the photographer are one thing.

This means that the capacity for aesthetic judgment – that is the genius to find beauty – and by genius it is meant the capacity to produce beauty, then they are the same: the capacity to realize intuitions.

Judging is more than measurement or commentary upon technical quality. For the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) aesthetic judgment is not merely a statement of personal opinion but the perception of significance in a work. As such, it can act as a spur to further aesthetic judgment and to the production of further artwork.

Just because it's beautiful, it ain't Art.

Susan Sontag (1933 - 2004)

The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery.

Mark van Doren (1894 - 1972)

Photography is a new means of expression in society. In a hundred years it has evolved to a state of being a primary visual force in our lives. 'The present standard of visual expression in any field, painting, sculpture, architecture and especially the advertising arts, is nourishing by the visual food which the new photography provides.' In the past it was the painter who brought the behaviour and expression of peoples to the surface of consciousness, today it is the photographer.

Max Dupain (1911 - 1992)

I know how my paintings will look but photographs are always a surprise to me.

Andy Warhol (1928 - 1987) comment to Yousuf Karsh (1908 - 2002)

If you see something that moves you, and then snap it, you keep a moment.

Linda McCartney (1941 - 1998)

Chapter 34: The Qualities of an Ideal Judge

The qualities of an ideal judge are that the judge should:

- Be empathetic about the image being presented.
- Be a practicing photographer and exhibitor.
- Intuitively sense what the photographer is imagining in the picture.
- Be rational in their teaching of aesthetics.
- Identify their findings in the images rather than presenting personal opinions.
- Have public speaking abilities.
- Have the courage to tell the truth about an image in a diplomatic manner.

A key question about judging is who can be a judge? In most organizations whether it be professional, amateur or galleries there is a tendency to attract judges from amongst their own ranks. This approach is regularly supplemented by drawing upon others outside the immediate field but still within the photographic fraternity. Those who provide critiques of photographs include:

- Syndicated columnists reviewing museum or gallery exhibits.
- Critics reviewing photographic exhibitions in local newspapers.
- Critics assessing images in photographic publications.
- Judges of photographic salons at local, national and international levels.
- Judges of club photography competitions.

Within State amateur photography organizations in Australia regular access to art teachers, artists, photography teachers, picture framers, curators, photographic library managers, employees of photographic shops/laboratories and professional photographers provide alternative dimensions to judges from within their own ranks. These organizations, as well as the national body, The Australian Photographic Society (APS) train potential judges (usually being successful photographers at national and international competition levels) who are drawn from amateur clubs.

However, not all photographers may be suitable to judge where a commentary is to be publicly made. The photographer may be shy about judging publicly or may not have suitable gifts of oratory or may need a lot of time to examine pictures which causes difficulties for organizers of exhibitions or competitions when 'cold' judging is required (Where the judges task is to make evaluations and decisions without prior inspection of the images).

According to Dr. Nigel Spivey (1958 -) historically in the late nineteenth century, the first discoveries of European prehistoric painting, as with Australian Aboriginal Rock Art, were greeted with incredulity. How could there have been such deft and skilful artists in the world over 30,000 years ago? The exploration of this mystery led to a trail of further intriguing problems. Images came to us before the written word - so how did we use images to tell stories? The representation of our human form has been a preoccupation of artists through the millennia - so why is it that from the very beginning we have preferred images of the body with distorted or exaggerated features? Scientists who study altered states of consciousness suggest that the answer lies in the hard-wiring of the brain.

People didn't just one day decide to invent making pictures. Rather, prehistoric artists were experiencing sensory deprivation deep within their caves—in a sort of trance state—resulting in powerful hallucinations. These hallucinations were of such robust emotional importance they felt compelled to paint them on the walls. According to this theory, these artists were simply 'nailing down' their visions. To their peers these paintings were not pictures as is understood today but rather seen as lines and blobs of colour. Further explanation is that this discovery of how the first pictures were made has application in the judging and appreciation of pictures – some paths are pre-wired by our experiences and some by genes. The ramifications of this is in the education of photographers to be judges as some may not be able to see the image and express their thoughts about it in a helpful, analytical and thoughtful way.

Should the standard of judging require improvement then it would be best if such a stipulation was made. If judges who are not practicing photographers and current exhibitors continue to act as judges in future years then they may adopt outdated ideas when photography has moved on since they were exhibitors. The best way to encourage judges to change their ways and methods would be to reward them for their effort and expertise. This implies some form of recognition or some other form of reward, including payment according to the standard attained.

A further aspect a judge needs to consider is what to appraise? To a new judge the answer may seem obvious in that it is a photograph. However, judges assess more than a picture. During the career of a judge they may not only review individual photographs but also portfolios, exhibitions, the entire life work of a photographer, movements, styles and historical periods of photography. Judges critique new work and also re-evaluate older work.

A judge with some training will have the benefit of multiple experiences during their education. In the beginning a potential judge is encouraged to consider:

Brainstorming as a means of critique. Here a picture becomes more to do with sensing and intuiting, a right brain approach. As with all brainstorming processes there are no incorrect thoughts at the outset.

Group dynamics. Interactive group critique is where a large group segments into small teams to discuss pictures, **THAT ARE NOT THEIR OWN.** They then reconvene as a large group to share their results through a spokesperson or secretary for each team. The teams think critically and make independent aesthetic judgments.

Semantic differential becomes more focused on an individual and their perceptions of pictures. Here a rating scale is used of bipolar adjectives that can measure word meanings a person associates with a picture. The following is a condensed list that can be expanded during training to include a variety of descriptive words. An 'X' in the middle means a neutral position.

SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL

Emotional.....Rational
Vibrant.....Calm
Active.....Passive

Team judging is where an inexperienced judge begins to encounter actual judging in a competition. The experienced team members carry the training role in a live situation.

Mentoring: this is where a fledgling judge becomes exposed to live competition judging but with an experienced judge in support to advise upon the practicalities of judging with an audience.

<p><i>What makes something art or not, is how it is experienced by its audience, not by the intentions of its maker.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Leo Tolstoy (1828 – 1910)</p>
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Part 7: ETHICS IN PHOTOGRAPHY

Chapter 35: Ethics in Judging

Ethics, also known as moral philosophy, is a branch of philosophy that addresses questions about morality – that is, concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice as well as justice. There are several branches of ethics, they are:

Meta-ethics is about the theoretical meaning and reference of moral propositions and how their truth-values (if any) may be determined.

Normative ethics is about the practical means of determining a moral course of action.

Applied ethics is about how moral outcomes can be achieved in specific situations. It is practical in that it is a discipline of philosophy that attempts to apply ethical theory to real-life situations, for example, in business ethics.

Moral psychology is about how moral capacity or moral agency develops and what its nature is.

Descriptive ethics is about what moral values people actually abide by.

Within each of these branches are many different schools of thought and still further sub-fields of study. It is also beneficial to understand what ethics is not; this has been the subject of the Australian philosopher Peter Singer (1946 -). He claims ethics is not a moral code particular to a sectional group nor is ethics a "*system that is noble in theory but no good in practice*" a theory is good only if it is practical. He agrees that ethics is in some sense universal but in a utilitarian way it affords the "*best consequences*" and furthers the interests of those affected.

Some consider aesthetics itself the basis of ethics, also as a personal moral code developed through art and storytelling becoming influential in one's later ethical choices. Philosophers of Descriptive ethics view aesthetics, etiquette and arbitration as a more fundamental philosophy in that it percolates from the "bottom up" to imply the existence of, rather than explicitly prescribe, theories of value or of conduct. It examines ethics made from observations of actual choices made by moral agents in practice. These observed choices made by ordinary people, without expert aid or advice, are about those who decide what is worth valuing, for example, those who vote and those who buy which is a major concern of sociology.

Judging requires a high standard of personal integrity to provide rational conclusions about pictures based in aesthetics. Personal likes, dislikes, biases, friendships, collegiality, notoriety and celebrity should be disregarded when identifying aesthetic truth while examining photographs.

Ethics also requires honesty in all areas of photography, from those submitting pictures - where the work should not be plagiarised; to those hanging pictures - where pictures should not be damaged or removed from exhibition; and to those judging - where there is no skewing of commentary or marking to personally favoured subjects or treatments.

Etiquette concerns simple civility and decency, etiquette is voluntary and its enforcement arm is social disapproval. In private then, it will be those individuals who are courteous, well mannered, and decent, who will be recognized for their politeness. To put this manifestation of everyday etiquette into perspective it is about respectful manners towards fellow human beings; it is common sense consideration towards others. In practical terms this means that when a judge is assessing an exhibition/competition then embarrassing public challenges in either direction should be moderated and debates should be held subsequently in private.

During the delivery of the evaluation of pictures at a photography club or local competition the judge should do their utmost to give fair opportunity for reply. This can be carried out during the delivery or, agree to discuss the picture/s further with the photographer when the judging has finished.

Judges should have respect for the rights of others and not place unnecessary emphasis on personal characteristics of photographers or their pictures that includes race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, family relationships, religious belief or physical or intellectual disability.

Judges should not allow personal interest, or any belief, commitment, payment, gift or benefit to undermine their accuracy, fairness or independence. The onus for declaring a conflict of interests falls on individual judges. A conflict of interest is where a judge has a personal or professional relationship with a person that throws into question their ability to fairly and independently judge the entry.

The infusion of personality into a photograph is basically the factor which renders it subject to emotional responses. That this is possible has been well illustrated by the old trick of using several photographers to photograph the same object. This always result in a varied range of approaches and technical manifestations, each one expressing a different impulse or subconscious energy stimulating its realization. In other words, this means the photographer's individuality or self-identity works in varying degrees according to the degree of emotional contact with the subject matter.

Max Dupain (1911 - 1992)

Chapter 36: Code of Conduct for Judging at a Photography Club.

The Victorian Association of Photographic Societies issues guidelines noted on the VAPS Judges List provided to all member clubs. At club level it generally is the task of the Competition Steward to engage a judge from this list but this does not happen always. The list aims to give basic details about judges' availability, current image making activity and proficiency. The aim of the Competition Steward is to match the judge to the needs of the club members-

Part 1: Judges can expect that the club will:

- Confirm in writing any telephone or verbal booking well in advance of the judging date, and provide contact details for the club as well as details of the venue location, time, set subject/s, scoring requirements and other relevant details, even if the judge has been there before. Judges have a life and it is reasonable to arrange their appointment some time in advance. Leave it too late and the club could miss out, book too far ahead and the club may face an inconvenient change.
- At the time of booking a judge an estimate of the number of images being exhibited should be given. The clubs scoring method and grading structure, i.e. Novice/Advanced should also be explained to the judge. This allows the judge and the club to assess the approximate duration of the judging based on the preferred time of about a one minute critique per picture.
- Similarly, if 'cold' judging is being undertaken, then prior to the club meeting commencing, the judge should be informed about the number of sections to be judged and the number of images in each section.
- There should be a follow up by phone a few days prior to the judging date.
- A club member should be assigned to meet the judge upon arrival and introduce him or her to the President, Competition Secretary and other club officials as appropriate. If parking spaces at the club are limited, reserve one for the judge.
- If more than 5-10 minutes is required to conduct club business prior to judging commencing, allow for this in advising the judge on the time he/she is required.
- Obtain a few relevant details from the judge prior to him/her being introduced, e.g. honours, home club (if any), photographic interests etc. if these are not already known. Using their resume would help.
- After the meeting has concluded, assign a club member to ensure that the judge is catered with supper.
- A contribution should be provided to cover the judge's expenses.

Part 2: Clubs expect that judges will:

- Be on time.
- Give ample notice to a club if unable to meet a commitment.
- Speak clearly.
- Ensure that time is allotted proportionally to the number of sections.
- Be concise and constructive in his or her comments.
- Avoid comments which are insulting or demeaning to the author of an image being judged.
- They should also score the images within the presented level of competition, rather than against an arbitrary standard, such that the best image in the set receives the maximum points, regardless of how that image might fare in a higher standard competition. A wide range of points should be applied to the competition commensurate with the standard of entries. This provides a guidance to the entrants about the standard of their photography within that competition. A narrow scoring range can confuse entrants when there are obvious disparities between scoring and picture quality.
- It is good practice if a judge alters an EDPI image to clearly show an improvement to a competing picture then the altered copy should be shown privately to the entrant rather than publicly in front of an audience.

The only purpose I wrote my brief opinions on the photos and actually the only purpose of this comment is to show how people with same ideas and same understanding of things in theory still disagree when it comes to concrete pieces of art. This is a problem of contests in all arts not only photography.

Haje Jan Kamps (1981 -)

One day I saw a copy of the Australian Photographic Review. I was fascinated by the pictures, the cameras and the technical talk. It opened up a new world for me.

Damien Parer (1912 - 1944)

I spent an afternoon at the You-Yangs as a change from the sea, and it's marvelous how stimulated one can be with such a common place landmark when following a theme.

Laurie Wilson (1920 - 1980)

Chapter 37: Ethics for Photographers and Clubs

Misbehaviour is unacceptable because it defames the profile of photography and its organizations. Exhibition organizers and clubs should reserve the right to determine what is unacceptable behaviour. Misbehaviour includes, but is not limited to: use of foul language; physical battery; intoxication; harassment; defaming fellow club members and judges. Tampering with and/or destruction of a venue or property.

The person involved in such negative activities may be disqualified, suspended or expelled from participation at the particular event or from a club. Photographic organizations should determine the specific consequences from each action on a case by case basis and an official letter may be sent to administrator(s), notifying them of the incident and requesting their assistance in ensuring that it does not reoccur.

In the act of making pictures photographers need to be mindful of :

- The laws of the countries in which they operate;
- They do not plagiarise;
- They present pictures and sound which are true and accurate;
- Any misleading manipulation should be disclosed;
- Respect personal privacy and if appropriate use model releases.

During club exhibitions/competitions when judging is being carried out then the audience should:

- not go to sleep in front of a judge;
- not talk to others;
- not heckle;
- not carry out unnecessary organizational business prior to the judging.

The audience and organizers should:

- care for the welfare of the judge;
- have adequately prepared for the evening;
- ensure equipment is operational and calibrated..

Competitions can also become a game of gaming the judge. It is not a secret, but some of our members keep dossiers on our judges' aesthetic preferences, and when able, choose their own competition entries accordingly. To combat this game Westchester Photographic Society recently made the schedule of judges top-secret, only one person knows who is on the agenda for a given date.

Robert A. Baron (c.1960 -)

Chapter 38: APS - Plagiarism and Ethics Issues

The Australian Photographic Society Inc has issued guidelines in regard to photography under its province. In summary the guidelines are:

- Plagiarism of a Photograph is the use of another's photograph or portion of a photograph when done without proper acknowledgment of the original source.
- Appropriation of a Photograph refers to the borrowed elements of another's photograph in the creation of new work.
- Copyright Law protects exclusive rights of creators of 'artistic works' (including photographs) to reproduce, publish, and communicate their photographs to the public, and moral and personal rights such as – the right to be attributed; the right not to have work falsely attributed; and the right to have the integrity of the artist's work respected.
- Copyright is bestowed automatically when an image is created, it does not depend upon registration.

Plagiarism is in direct conflict with the rule which states that the use of others' images is not allowed by APS, in competitive competitions run under APS approval, for single submitted images, which may be composites of a number of single images, all of which must have been taken by the person who enters them. Nor is it allowable by copyright law, for images so covered.

Appropriation (suitably acknowledged, and with copyright permission if necessary) may sometimes be necessary or thought desirable by the author. For instance, some images used as part of a historical or documentary AV where it is impossible for the 'author' of the AV to have personally taken suitable images. Contemporary photography is another area where appropriation might be appropriate. Non-competitive display exhibitions are a context where authors would be expected to acknowledge any appropriation.

Photographers can read about copyright law on the Australian Copyright Council website: www.copyright.org.au. Any legal issues involving copyright law are between the submitter of the work in question and the person who queries ownership. It is not APS's role to get involved in such legal matters.

However there are circumstances where APS may have a role. If someone becomes aware (or believes) that plagiarism has occurred, for example in an exhibition with APS approval, that would obviously be unfair to other entrants. If APS is informed, there is an investigation procedure so that the truth or otherwise of any allegations can be established.

All involved will have the opportunity to state their cases. APS believes that the vast majority of members wish to do the right thing, once they are clear as to what the right thing is.

APS Ethics Statement

A member of the Australian Photographic Society shall act in accordance with all APS policies. A member shall be ethical in making and presenting photographic images. A member shall be honest in performing and reporting service to the Society. Members not in compliance with this ethics statement will be subject to loss of APS membership and/or awards and honours.

APS Ethics Standards

- a) Images submitted for competition shall originate as photographs by the entrant on photographic emulsion or acquired digitally, i.e. images to which the submitting entrant holds copyright. By virtue of submitting an entry, the photographer certifies the work as his/her own and affirms that he/she holds copyright.

- b) Any image accepted in an APS-recognized exhibition shall not be re-entered in the same or different format in any section of that exhibition, either under the same title or using a different title. A like in-camera duplication or a reproduction duplication, or an image so similar as to be confused with the original work, are likewise not to be subsequently entered. An accepted image may not be re-titled for entry in the same or other section of any other APS-recognized exhibition.

- c) Images submitted in internal (APS members only) competitions, folios and the like shall strictly follow these standards, both written and as obviously intended, without reservation.
 - Information included in skill honours proposals shall be exact and true. Nominators and seconders for service honours and awards, when signing such forms, shall be conscious of the fact that they are vouching for the accuracy of the information supplied.
 - Material and photographs submitted for possible publication in “Image” and/or the APS Website shall be the work of the author(s), who must hold copyright for such photographs and written material. Quotations from other authors’ work, or the use of other authors’ photographs, may only occur if permission is obtained from the copyright holder and also the author/copyright holder is acknowledged.

Part 8: AESTHETIC FOUNDATIONS IN PHILOSOPHY TO GUIDE THE EVALUATION OF IMAGES

This is a thumbnail sketch of Western historical philosophical trends which provides part of the background to photography as an art form. Each approach is unique and there is a similarity between them. In the history of the theory of knowledge, the greater part is given to arguments that try to drive apart conceptual judgment and aesthetic experience. Plato (429 – 347 BC) felt that beautiful objects incorporated proportion, harmony and unity among their parts. For Plato, art and knowledge are wholly opposed to each other, as knowledge consists of intellectual meditation on the essential, fundamental, nature or character of things, their essences, whereas art is merely the reproduction of outer appearances and therefore, an activity which leads people away from the inner essence of things. In a similar way Descartes (1596 – 1650), in his “Meditations” argues that the elements of knowledge are clear and distinct ideas, as opposed to the information delivered by the senses. Descartes argued that rational knowledge is a completely distinct order from sensory experience.

Chapter 39: Non-Scientific Approaches to Aesthetics

Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804), made a radical shift in the attitude, or point of view, of philosophy because he demonstrated a necessary condition of interrelationship between two realms – the conceptual and the sensible (*that perceived by the mind and that perceived by the organs of sense*), that had traditionally been regarded as opposed to each other.

Kant believed that the relationship between art and knowledge is inverted and organized in such a way that art is shown to be a result of our capacity to generate knowledge. All experience occurs as *experience under a description* that is to say, all experience is conceptually informed. This means that we receive “intuition” from the world; this is source material which requires mediation and determination or as Kant so clearly points out “thoughts without content are empty; intuitions without concepts are blind.” Kant calls this process of conceptual determination “*judgment*” and divides it in two: determinative and reflective judgments.

<p><i>There lives on earth no one beautiful person who could not be more beautiful.</i> Albrecht Durer (1471 - 1528)</p>
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Determinative judgment creates knowledge that classifies an intuition under a concept, and thereby determines an object to be a certain kind of thing, for example, “This is a Tasmanian Tiger”. If we were to describe a work of art purely in terms of determinate judgments, we would list all those qualities about it that are *verifiable through observation and measurement*, which are principally the materials used, the picture’s physical dimensions and whether it is a print or a projected image.

A reflective judgment is one made in the absence of an empirically, determined concept. In other words, it does not identify or assign properties (*measurements*) to an object. One of the principal forms of reflective judgment is aesthetic judgment, the kind of judgment that is made in response to an artwork, for example, “The print is painterly in style”. To describe a photographic print as painterly is not to indicate its qualities based upon measurements about its dimensions but rather to comment upon *how the artworks are perceived or interpreted by the viewer*. Kant defines perception as “the determination of intuitions by concepts”. Purposiveness – the appearance of the world as if it had been designed for our awareness – is the concept. A reflective judgment can be used to give aesthetics a knowledge (*cognitive*) dimension. Aesthetic judgment is a form of reflective judgment because it does not determine an object to be of a particular (*measurable*) kind. The demands made by an artwork to find the appropriate words to describe its effects or significance are examples of the conceptual or interpretative decisions which have to be made for reflective judgments at large.

Art is a thoroughly conceptual process and applies to both determinative and reflective senses. This is why so many of our responses to art are metaphorical. Metaphor loosely defined, describes one thing in terms of another, e.g., beauty is angelic, red as a raging bull or hair like shining gold. Then is the knowledge of art simply a matter of producing good metaphors and similes for aesthetic judgments? For Kant, aesthetic judgment is not merely a statement of personal opinion but the perception of significance in a work. As such, it can act as a spur to further aesthetic judgment and to the production of further artwork

In “Aesthetics” (1922) Benedetto Croce (1866 - 1952), published his view that essentially a creative artist does not really know what the quality of his creation will be until he has fully expressed it.

For Croce the first task of the spectator of the work of art – the critic – is to reproduce the intuition, or perhaps better, to *realize* the intuition, which is the work of art. One may fail, and Croce is well aware that one may be *mistaken* as ‘haste,

vanity, want of reflection, and theoretic prejudices' may bring it about that one finds beautiful what is not, or fail to find beautiful what is (*Aes.* 120). But given the *foregoing* strict distinction between practical technique and artistic activity so-called, his task *is the same as that of the artist.*

In Croce's overall philosophy, the aesthetic stands alone in having intuition; one has succeeded entirely insofar as aesthetic value is concerned. Therefore there cannot be a real question of a 'standard' of beauty which an object might or might not satisfy. Thus Croce says: " *...the criterion of taste is absolute, but absolute in a different way from that of the intellect, which expresses itself in ratiocination* (meaning - reason). *The criterion of taste is absolute, with the intuitive absoluteness of the intuition.* (*Aes.* 122)"

Of course there is, as a matter of fact, a great deal of variability in critical verdicts. But Croce believes this is largely due to variances in the 'psychological conditions' and the physical circumstances of spectators (judges) (*Aes.* 124). Much of this can be offset by 'historical interpretation' (*Aes.* 126); the rest, one presumes, is due to disturbances already mentioned; '*haste, vanity, want of reflection, theoretical prejudices.*'

In "The Sense of Beauty" (1896) by the Spanish philosopher George Santayana (1863 -1952); the words *criticism* and *aesthetics* were examined. *Criticism* implies judgment and *aesthetics* is perception. He combines their meanings to produce a new meaning for *aesthetics*: the perception of values. In "values" he explains that we need for anything good to exist, not only "*consciousness but emotional consciousness.... Observation will not do, appreciation is required*". Excellence can only be recognized if we actually have feelings about it. When we try to place a value on something to which we have no feelings for or against, we tend toward conventional clichés and no real evaluation can take place.

There are contrasts between moral and aesthetic values. Moral judgments are negative and perceptions of evil; aesthetic judgments are positive and perceptions of good.

Santayana goes on to look at what we do (activities), in relation to values. Work is what we do to survive – we do not necessarily want to do it. Play (*activity of pleasure such as the hobby of photography* - Author's emphasis) is what we do for the pure enjoyment it gives. Play may then be "*our most useful occupation*" and the highest attainment of civilization.

Taking a closer look at the idea of play as the important activity, he says that things of the imagination have intrinsic value, "*that in them is one of the sources of all worth*". Instead of basing the value of something on its consequences, "*we must reach the good that is good in itself*". Moral values are dependent upon the accrual of benefits, but aesthetic values are intrinsic and immediate. In a utopia, aesthetic pleasures are the cause of happiness. This leads us to the appreciation of beauty. "*If we were not interested in beauty, if it were of no concern to our happiness whether things were beautiful or ugly*" we would have no interest in aesthetics at all.

To feel beauty is a better thing than to understand how we come to feel it. To have imagination and taste, to love the best, to be carried by the contemplation of nature to a vivid faith in the ideal, all this is a great deal more than any science can hope to be. However, many people think that if they judge something to be beautiful, it is objectively beautiful, and all others should feel the same way about it and that we cannot participate in artistic criticism or create artistic precepts unless we accept this fact. This opinion has no worth because no two people have exactly the same faculties or values, so it is not likely they will always agree on what is beautiful.

According to Santayana, when we insist that another ought to see something in the same way we do we may really be saying, that if they were what we consider to be an "ideal human", they would see it our way. "*We take.... a certain pleasure in having our own judgments supported by those of others; we are intolerant, if not of the existence of a nature different from our own, at least of its expression in words and judgments. We are confirmed or made happy in our doubtful opinions by seeing them accepted universally*". But, "*if we were sure of our ground we should be willing to acquiesce in the naturally different feelings and ways of others.*"

When judgments are shaky, because one really does not know what one is talking about, it is not taken well when others doubt the judgment. We want everyone to agree with us so our opinions can seem true. However, "*nothing has less to do with the real merit of a work of imagination than the capacity of all men to appreciate it; the true test is the degree and the kind of satisfaction it can give to him who appreciates it most.*" When one school of art (read – *photography*) argues loudly against others, it indicates artistic health. The clamoring defense of specific kinds of beauty shows a passionate love and aesthetic sincerity.

Although beauty cannot possibly be seen by all in the same way, those who are zealous in producing and defending the kind of beauty they deem universal are being more honest and have a true aesthetic preference.

Beauty is not within an object but is instead a value we place on the object.
“(Beauty) exists in perception and cannot exist otherwise”.
So for Santayana to “define beauty it is value positive, intrinsic and objectified”.
Or, in less technical language, ‘Beauty’ is pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing” “This value is positive; it is the sense of the presence of something good....”
This is where it is believed that great beauty enhances the quality of an image.

Photography may not be an art, but this work proves that many photographers are artists.
Harold Herbert (1892 - 1945)

It should be obvious that although there are no specific rules of composition, certain principles exist by which a photographer can let himself be guided. Such principles derive from the realization that composing means “giving form by putting together”.

Andreas Feininger (1906 - 1999)

Praise invariably implies a reference to a higher standard.

Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC)

*Even if I managed to freeze the river, hide the thistles, capture a little of the splendour of the roses and the glory of the oaks, would it be an honest picture?
Honest, possibly; truthful, well...*

Lord Patrick Lichfield (1939 – 2005)

It may be those who do most, dream most.

Stephen Leacock (1869 - 1944)

Chapter 40: Naturalistic or Scientific Approaches to Aesthetics

The “Pleasure Theory” also known as the ‘Hedonistic School’, is where spontaneous emphasis is given to the simplest aesthetic delights. It is where liking a thing for itself, as opposed to liking it as a means to an end, is primary. Simple is Good.

“Scientific Method of Aesthetics” (1928) and “Form and Style in the Arts” (1970) by the American philosopher Thomas Munro (1897 - 1974) are published ideas which expound that aesthetics should be treated as a science but those scientific discoveries are far from being examined to the point of giving even basic coherence and comprehensive understanding of aesthetics.

Munro found that one cannot easily prove that aesthetic theory has had much effect on action, even in the field of art. For trends in aesthetic theory have, on the whole followed, not preceded, major trends in art; justifying or condemning the latter after the fact, and largely ignored by later artists. Aesthetics is traditionally the subject which concerns itself with works of art and their attributes, directly and explicitly. To some extent nearly everyone uses art, perhaps for their immediate enjoyment, escape, or to enrich experience - it is used to control immediate moods and trains of thought.

Applied aesthetics does not wait for pure aesthetics to solve its abstract problems, but proceeds to experiment with rule-of-thumb hypotheses derived from practical experience, and usually not regarded as pertaining to aesthetic theory. Proponents of pure aesthetics, on the other hand, might learn much by observing the results of such practical experience in the control of art. Notice how *aesthetics* is defined in Webster’s *New International Dictionary* (2nd ed.): “The branch of philosophy dealing with beauty or the beautiful, esp. in the fine arts; a theory or the theories of beauty, its essential character, the tests by which it may be recognized or judged; and its characteristic relation to or effect upon the human mind....” Thus the aesthetician’s quest is directed from the start.....toward a conceptual will-o’-the-wisp, an abstraction whose meaning is endlessly debatable and ambiguous. Webster’s aesthetics is “the scientific study of taste (sense 7).” For taste, is said to mean “*the power of discerning and appreciating fitness, beauty, order, congruity, proportion, symmetry, or whatever constitutes excellence, esp. in the fine arts and belles-lettres*”.

To be sure, the *words* “beauty” and “taste”, like “ugly”, “sublime”, “romantic” and other names for the traditional aesthetic categories, *are* phenomena of human thought and behavior, and can be objectively studied as to their origins, meanings and uses. The term “science of art” stands for a future goal, not a present achievement; but there is some advantage in keeping the goal explicitly before our minds. Insofar as aesthetics itself becomes regarded as the science of art there is, of course, no need for the distinction.

The German born philosopher and perceptual psychologist Rudolf Arnheim (1904 – 2007) in his 1954 book (Reviewed and re-printed in 2004) “Art and Visual Perception – a Psychology of the Creative Eye” wrote about balance, shape, form, growth, space, light, colour, movement, dynamics and expression.

Arnheim argued that art seems to be drowned by talk and that innate visual awareness has become comatose and must be re-awakened. This can be best accomplished by using pencils, brushes, chisels and cameras. Visual things cannot be conveyed by verbal language. Experiencing life visually and artistically is available to every sane person who has eyes. Art is the most real thing in the world and there is no justification for confusing the mind of anybody who wants to know more about it.

If anyone wants to see a work of art, they must first of all, see it as a whole. What is it that comes across? What is the mood of the colours, the dynamics of the shapes? Before any one element can be identified the total composition makes a statement that cannot be lost. A theme is searched for, a key to which everything relates. If there is a subject matter, as much as possible is learnt about it, for nothing an artist puts in his work can be neglected by the viewer with impunity. Safely guided by the structure of the whole, there is then an attempt to recognize the principal features and explore their control over dependent details. Gradually, the entire wealth of the work reveals itself and falls into place, and as it is perceived correctly, it begins to engage all the powers of the mind with its message. This is what the artist works for.

The camera is just a piece of mechanical apparatus you are its intellect.

Frank Hurley (1885 - 1962)

Chapter 41: Aesthetic Theories

Aesthetic theory has a rich history and continues to grow. Theories sometimes contradict each other but all are of value when judging pictures. Some of the basic theories are:

- The Organistic School of thought was first propounded by the Germans, Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) and Georg W.F. Hegel (1770 - 1831) who believed that concentration is entirely on the integrative function of art culminating in the concept of the organic whole. An organic whole is a structure or form in which every detail is so intimately related to every other detail that the whole is destroyed or damaged by the loss or disturbance of any one of them.
- The Formistic School (Also known as Imitation Theory) proposed the artist represents the form, not the particulars; they seek in their view, to look through the particular to the form, as a great artist brings out the character of his sitter in a portrait rather than a momentary appearance. Aristotle (384 – 322 BC) spoke on this theory at length in “Poetica”. A further development by Aristotle is that form produces objective ideal to evaluation - a good specimen is difficult to find. For example, a collector of cameras will often have to discard many individual specimens before a ‘perfect specimen’ is obtained for the collection. A form sets up an ideal for its species. This theory was further explored by the Frenchman, Hyppolyte-Adolphe Taine (1828 - 1893) in “Philosophie de L’Art” (1865 English translation).
- The Mystic Theory argues that mystical aesthetic beauty is found in the symbols of mystic peace and unity to be felt in nature and in works of art. For some appreciation of the efficiency of these symbols, one is best served by the paintings of the mystics themselves, particularly classic Chinese painting, which is saturated with mystical symbols. One of the most striking symbols is the presence of great empty spaces in this art. When the viewer concentrates on these spaces in the context of a serene ink painting, for example, they cease to be mere vacancy. The mystics render them alive in their emptiness. References include the works of the third century philosopher, Plotinus (204 -270 AD) and the Polish born philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 – 1860).

Chapter 42: Beauty in Aesthetics

Beauty in art should not be confined to the general acknowledgment of something or someone as beautiful. Beauty, in the sense of a work of art, can be particularly disconcerting because it does not necessarily mean or refer to a beautiful subject. If then, a judge reviews an exhibition of a set subject of one beautiful person, (all the pictures are of the same person) some pictures may have no beauty regarding this beautiful person. The beautiful person does not make the picture automatically a picture of great beauty. The distinction is in the intrinsic quality of the picture produced by the photographer. Further, a work of art, in the human sense, of a lined, unkempt, aged or world-weary face or a suffering famine victim or a harmed and injured war casualty can have the same beauty value as a work of art of a beautiful person. Beauty can be perceived in the message, appearance, experience, refinement, excellence or communication in the image.

Santayana stated “*beauty exists in perception and cannot exist otherwise*”. To define beauty it is value positive, intrinsic and objectified. Or, in less technical language, Beauty is pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing (*picture* – Author’s note). This value is positive; it is the sense of the presence of something good. Santayana is saying value positive means that it is definitely without qualification and it has worth in terms of desire or usefulness. “Intrinsic” means inherent quality where it is naturally and inseparably associated with and not dependent on outer circumstances. “Objectified” means having a quality of independent existence in it and not existing merely in an individual mind (i.e. subjective mind).

The English classicist painter, William Hogarth (1697 – 1764) thought that beauty consists of fitness of the parts to some design and featured variety in as many ways as possible. Uniformity, regularity or symmetry, is only beautiful when it helps to preserve the character of fitness. Simplicity or distinctness, which gives pleasure not in itself, but through its enabling the eye to enjoy variety with ease, contributes to beauty. Intricacy provides employment for our active energies, leading the eye a wanton kind of chase. Quantity or magnitude, which draws our attention and produces admiration and awe, also contributes to beauty.

Aristotle found the universal elements of beauty were order, symmetry and definiteness. His teacher, Plato, felt that beautiful objects incorporated proportion, harmony and unity among their parts.

George Hagman (1949 -) described, in The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, that the sense of beauty is an aspect of idealization in which an object or concept is believed to possess qualities of formal perfection.

However, beauty can be found in what is superficially and conventionally seen as ugliness. Beauty is where the uniqueness of physical appearance, spirit, personality and character of the subject, together with aesthetic considerations, are captured with sensitivity and empathy by the photographic artist. Aesthetic characteristics in a picture transcend the historical wisdom of beauty and transform the ugly into a visually beautiful image. A distinction is made between the physical appearance of the subject and the end result gained in an artistic picture of the subject.

I think they're very natural images ... so whether it's family or close friends, you get a sense of compassion and love and caring coming through.

Jacqueline Mitelman (1952 -)

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.

Ernst Haas (1921 - 1986)

Whether the picture be of figures, landscape or a formal arrangement of patterns and tones, the "Interest" moves into the picture and not out of it.

John 'Jack' Cato (1889 - 1971)

Nature does not create works of art. It is we, and the faculty of interpretation peculiar to the human mind, that see art.

Man Ray (1890 - 1976)

In the end, the only people who fail are those who do not try.

David Viscott (1938 - 1996)

Chapter 43: Cultural Aesthetics

Aesthetics have subtle variations in meaning and how they are applied. Surprisingly, different cultures have startling similarities in their awareness of beauty that can be recognized by those from different cultures.

European Aesthetics:

In this culture it is defined as relating to the perception of the beautiful and the canons of taste upon which criticism (critiques) of the arts is based. It is about that which appeals to the senses. Plato felt that beautiful objects incorporated proportion, harmony and unity among their parts. Similarly, in *Metaphysics*, Aristotle found that the universal elements of beauty were order, symmetry and definiteness.

Indian Aesthetics:

In Pan Indian philosophic thought the term 'Satyam Shivam Sundaram' is another name for the concept of the Supreme. 'Satyam' means truth, 'Shivam' means eternal; and 'Sundaram' means beautiful. Despite its volatile history Indian aesthetics has been continual with emphasis on expressing philosophical and religious concepts through a complex language of images and symbols. Artists emphasized bringing the Gods (considered the source of knowledge, power and wisdom) nearer to us by working along the 'beauty' aspect of the Gods. It expresses the majestic, pure calm and forceful control, dignity and kingship of existence.

Man is considered miniature God with Divine abilities, but is oblivious of this knowledge. Man through education, experience, conceptualization and practice realizes the three-value system of Satyam Shivam Sundaram. It is the response of Man's creative soul to the call of the Real. This journey of aesthetics is a devotional journey towards Ultimate Reality with the sole purpose of merging with the Supreme. Indian Art is idealistic, mystic, symbolic and transcendental.

Islamic Aesthetics:

The term Islamic refers not only to the religion, but to any form of art created in an Islamic culture or context. It would also be a mistake to assume that all Muslims are in agreement on the use of art in religious observance, the proper place of art in society, or the relation between secular art and the demands placed on the secular world to conform to religious precepts. Islamic art frequently adopts secular elements and elements that are frowned upon, if not forbidden, by some Islamic theologians.

Islamic philosophical thought surrounds abstract possibilities that have been explored by artists as an outlet to artistic expression, and has been cultivated to become a positive style and tradition. According to Islam, human works of art are inherently flawed compared with the work of God; thus, it is believed by many that to attempt to depict in a realistic form any animal or person is insolence to God (however human portrayals can be found in early Islamic cultures with varying degrees of acceptance by religious authorities). This tendency has had the effect of narrowing the field of artistic possibility to emphasize the decorative function of art or its religious functions via non-representational forms, sometimes in an abstract manner, such as geometric and floral patterns as well as arabesques.

Beauty, be it sensible or intelligible, becomes an object of contemplation, in turn it is a source of pleasure for the one beholding it. Beauty is found in composition as well as symmetry and this love of beauty is purely natural, arising either from instinct or from the simple pleasure of sensible perceptions. Rationally, love of beauty is more reflective.

Chinese Aesthetics:

Confucius (551BC – 479 BC) emphasized the role of the arts and humanities (especially music and poetry) in broadening human nature and aiding "li" (etiquette) in bringing us back to what is essential about humanity.

Chinese society, basically agricultural, has always laid great stress on understanding the pattern of nature and living in accordance with it. The world of nature was seen as the visible manifestation of the workings of a higher power through the generative interaction of the *yin-yang* (female – male) dualism. As it developed, the purpose of Chinese art turned from propitiation and sacrifice to the expression of human understanding of these forces, in the form of painting of landscapes, bamboo, birds and flowers.

Critical to all artistic considerations was the belief that the energy and rhythm generated in artistic practice allied the practitioner with the ultimate source of that energy, drawn forth from earthly and heavenly sources and from the sacred path itself. Calligraphy and painting had the capacity to rejuvenate the artist or to damage him spiritually, according to the rightness of his practice and the character of the man. Art was seen in these terms, as was the viewing of art, taking the artist as much into account as the artistic subject, with regard to erudition, moral character, and harmonic alignment with (or alienation from) the forces of nature.

African Aesthetics:

African art existed in many forms and styles, most of it followed traditional forms and the aesthetic norms were handed down orally as well as written. The Nok culture from Nigeria is testimony to this which flourished from 1,000BC to about 500AD. It may have evolved from earlier cultures from 10,000BC and subsequently assimilated into other African tribal groups. It emphasizes realism and fertility through terracotta statuary of human and animal forms – some of its sculpture of abstract and partially abstracted forms are valued.

Australian Aboriginal Aesthetics:

Owing to the nomadic lifestyle, no written works and the emphasis upon one in being with the earth there has been no formal philosophical aesthetics promulgated. However, being the oldest unbroken culture on the planet, this 75,000 year old culture found its expression through rock painting and sand designs. Subjects derive three basic forms being X-ray style, dot style and cross-hatch style in application. The X-ray and cross-hatch style are realist and the dot style is abstract and symbolic. Their evocative meaning is about communication and in some instances indicates the availability of food sources (game) in the area.

The basic project of art is always to make the world whole and comprehensible, to restore it to us in all its glory and its occasional nastiness, not through argument but through feeling, and then to close the gap between you and everything that is not you, and in this way pass from feeling to meaning. It's not something that committees can do. It's not a task achieved by groups or by movements. It's done by individuals, each person mediating in some way between a sense of history and an experience of the world. (Shock of the New)

Robert Hughes (1938 -)

For me the printing process is part of the magic of photography. It's that magic that can be exciting, disappointing, rewarding and frustrating all in the same few moments in the darkroom.

John Sexton (1953 -)

Part 9: PUBLIC SPEAKING

Public speaking in photography clubs is fun and has an easy cross flow of ideas. If one is a bit shy, half of it is done in the dark – during image projection. As a new judge most club members and especially club presidents are supportive and sympathetic. *Trouble begins when a judge's ego gets in the way, is opinionated to the point of arrogance or is out to find fault in all images.* Generally, judges are dealing with a like-minded fraternity and after a time the clubs become an extended family. At this point in your career the evenings become relaxed, happy and fun filled events.

Judging has a number of elements; public speaking is one and is often the most feared at photography clubs. Take it from one who could barely string a sentence together as a teenager and even now in business requires thinking time to clearly express ideas, public speaking does not come easily when dealing with a subject in which one has very little knowledge or experience. But, if you are contemplating taking on a judging role, then in photography you do have experience, knowledge and insight towards making top class photos. In other words, even if you do not realize it, you already know your subject, which places you in a confident position and this is an empowering internal resource.

Chapter 44: Preparing for a Presentation

COLD JUDGING

There are two kinds of image evaluation at clubs, those where the judge is given the images for preview judging and those where you are unable to view the images prior to evaluation that are judged 'cold'. It is recommended that until you have gained some experience then cold judging should be avoided.

It is recommended for cold judging that the judge quickly scan the images as a group if they are hung around the clubroom; if not, then quickly view the stacked images (3 or 4 seconds each) prior to commencing the evaluation. This quickly gives the judge an idea of the range of quality across the group of entries.

PREVIEW JUDGING

Where the judge previews at home, then the evaluation can be more structured than cold judging. The judge can –

Plan what to say (List the items you wish to cover in your review, talk about key features and close your presentation in a positive way so that the audience knows you have finished)

Summarize your review (Three or four words will suffice. Unless you are making a specific teaching presentation, then do not write out notes and read them in full as you need to make your review come across as spontaneous).

Rehearse your evaluation (During the first few times you elect to judge, it is worthwhile to rehearse what you are going to say as it reduces the need for notes and builds confidence. As we speak differently from how we write, practice with words you are comfortable using.

Practice with your presentation aids (If you are using pointers and masks with prints and projected images then practice with them during your home evaluation).

Anticipate the questions that you might be asked. This is difficult to do so get a friend along to put questions to you. You may then have a prepared response to a similar question that may be put at the club meeting).

The imagination is literally the workshop wherein are fashioned all plans created by man.
Napoleon Hill (1883 - 1970)

I think you have to have a real point of view that's your own. You have to tell it your way. And, I think that it's a mistake to shoot for a specific magazine's point of view because it's never going to be as good. You have to shoot for yourself and photograph the way you believe it.
Mary Ellen Mark (1940 -)

My portraits are more about me than they are about the people I photograph.
Richard Avedon (1923 - 2004)

Chapter 45: Giving a Presentation

1. CHECK THE VENUE PRIOR TO THE APPRAISAL

To be relaxed about the forthcoming judging become familiar with the clubroom prior to your evaluation or appraisal of the club competition or exhibition. Take a mental note of the room size and layout, seating arrangements, availability of equipment for example: lectern, projectors, microphones, whiteboards, computers, easels etc. Note the agenda format; other speakers, the time limits, what to do and when.

Do not be afraid to ask club members to group closer together if they are spread intermittently around a room. Don't be afraid to negotiate to re-arrange a club routine if there is a particular point you wish to emphasize; such as showing your work prior to the judging session.

2. SPEAKING VOICE

The greater the variety you can use in your voice, the greater your capacity to captivate your audience. To do this you need-

- **Volume:** Be conscious that the audience needs to hear you – you may need a microphone. Check with someone at the back of the room that you can be heard but also vary the volume in your voice.
- **Tone:** Show excitement, enthusiasm, happiness, inquisitiveness, surprise – notice that these are all positive signs.
- **Pace:** Do not speak too quickly – this is the quickest and easiest way to lose your audience. Vary the pace and avoid “umms” and “ahs”
- **Style:** You can infect your audience with the style of your delivery, making them more receptive to your message. Be confident, relaxed, clearly spoken and be your natural self.
- **Time-line:** If there is a time-line to meet then adjust the commentary to suit. Notice people fidgeting or worse still, sleeping may be a self evident learning curve about speech delivery, enthusiasm and liveliness are required to keep the audience entertained. Boring delivery, hollow or lengthy commentary and over labouring of points is also a needless consumption of time.

3. STIMULATING AND HANDLING QUESTIONS

Let the audience know from the outset that you welcome questions. Questions can be at the end of the presentation or during it, but in the latter case take care not to stray too far from the night's proceedings.

When a question comes repeat it so that everyone knows what is being asked. Reply to the audience or to the person directly (if you know him or her) and keep replies brief. Treat comments as questions and do not put anyone down. Never get into an argument, retire gracefully, you are in control and you can always put your viewpoint at a different time, at your choosing and to your advantage.

4. APPEARANCE

- Appearance is important. One does not need to turn up for a club judging in a dinner suit or the latest evening gown creation if everyone else is dressed in jeans; however dress to suit the occasion. Usually smart casual will be satisfactory, but an inter-club or end of year presentation night may require improved attire.
- Body language. When expressing your evaluative views to an audience you should be natural and relaxed. Body language can be used to demonstrate or emphasize aspects of a presentation. Be animated when declaring your ideas – walk around the room, move your hands and arms, nod your head and use facial expressions to support what you are saying.
- Eye contact. As you talk to one person you look at that person. When talking to a group of people have eye contact with everyone in the group, make them feel you are talking to each and every one of them. Keep doing this spontaneously around the room for the length of your presentation.
- Try and avoid focusing on one person, as this may make them feel intimidated or embarrassed and will make the rest of the audience feel left out.

5. KNOW THE AUDIENCE

Know the audience. Check their level of understanding of the subject and their technical expertise; adjust your mode to suit the audience.

The audience will form an opinion about you from the moment they lay eyes on you and that opinion becomes difficult to change. Ensure that the first impression you create is a good one.

I think that emotional content is an image's most important element, regardless of the photographic technique. Much of the work I see these days lacks the emotional impact to draw a reaction from viewers, or remain in their hearts.

Anne Geddes (1956 -)

Chapter 46: Some Useful Hints

- Use only jokes and stories that are pertinent to the subject – do not get sidetracked.
- Know your topic – if it is an unfamiliar topic, research it. Get feedback afterwards.
- Use good eye contact and smile.
- Listen to and answer questions with authority. If you do not know the answer then say so – there is no need to bluff.
- You may be able to refer the questioner to an area that they can obtain a satisfactory for themselves with a little research.
- Use effective handouts, visual and props.
- Pause at the end of an important point to let the audience absorb the information before the next point.
- Use your voice effectively. A drone will send an audience to sleep and arrogance will get them offside.
- For variation, ask the audience questions before you bring in a point.
- Familiarize yourself with the club room before the audience arrives.
- Dress to meet the audience's expectations.
- Check the equipment prior to your presentation. Use a microphone sparingly.
- Do not have the microphone too close to your mouth as people will hear you breath. As you turn your head from side to side move the microphone accordingly.
- When projected images are being shown face the audience when speaking and not the screen.
- Do not be too technical and do not use too many 'buzz' words.
- Finish on time. If unsure of the time the club is to finish the evening's proceedings find out before you commence the judging session.
- Sometimes time can inadvertently get away from you, be aware of this and occasionally check where you are in relation to the time you have been allotted and the number of images you are yet to comment upon.

I began to realize that the camera sees the world differently than the human eye and that sometimes those differences can make a photograph more powerful than what you actually observed.

Galen Rowell (1940 - 2002)

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DEFINITIONS

APS – Australian Photographic Society Inc.

FIAP – Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique

Pixel – short for Picture Element

PSA – Photographic Society of America (USA Based)

RPS – Royal Photographic Society

VAPS – Victorian Association of Photographic Societies Inc.

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