

THE GRAND RAPIDS CAMERA CLUB JUDGING GUIDELINES

A. SCORING CRITERIA

Judges may score from 1 to 5

5) A judge's highest score. A five is an image of highest quality in all technical and compositional respects, with impact. Impact is exhibited when a photograph is striking and has an *immediate* and *strong* effect on those viewing it.

4) An above average image. An image is excellently lighted and superbly composed with no noticeable technical flaws in such things as focus, color, slanted horizon, distracting backgrounds, or empty foregrounds. All elements of the image work together.

3) An average image. This image is properly exposed, correctly focused and has good composition. It is acceptable, but does not generate any special interest or stir emotions. Technical flaws are not immediately obvious.

2) Below average image. The image exhibits technical flaws in such areas as exposure, focus and composition.

1) Well below average image. Exhibits *several* technical flaws.

9) Judges will score a 9 if they feel the image does not meet the category criteria for judging. The score keeper will then call for a discussion. A re-vote will require at least two judges voting nine to disqualify the image. If an image is disqualified, it may be re-entered at a future competition in the appropriate category.

The score keeper may also call for a re-vote if the range of scores between any two judges is 2 points or greater. At that point the score keeper will clear the score and judges will re-judge the image. Before making their decision, judges should re-evaluate the image and look at their scoring box to determine if that is the score that they intended.

0) A judge shall vote 0 if the image is their own or that of an immediate family member. The other two judge's scores will then be averaged to determine the point value to be assigned to the image.

Scoring is used to separate competition entries into groups of similar quality, thus allowing honors to be given, and standings to be defined. The judging process however is more than just scoring for honors. It provides a maker with feedback as to how successfully he or she may have been in creating a striking image. While the numerical score does provide some feedback to a maker, a score should not be considered to be a definitive evaluation of photographer's work. It is simply one judge's perspective on the image at that particular time.

B. CATEGORIES

ASSIGNED: The Grand Rapids Camera Club board members select a subject for each month of the competition year as the “assigned” subject. The assigned category is designed to challenge your photographic skills and to encourage you to photograph images that you may not have normally. Give a lot of thought to them. Be creative. The applicable subject may be one or many, but remember that the subject must be the dominant feature. All possible digital manipulations are permitted unless the assigned subject specifically calls for the image to be captured and submitted as a nature or photojournalism image within the assigned category.

CREATIVE: The creative category is for manipulated and enhanced images and those where the maker’s creativity comes into view in the final image. Images entered should be unique and different, perhaps out of the ordinary. A photographer’s creativity can either be in how the photo is taken or that the final image is created using Photoshop or other image editing software.

OPEN: All images, regardless of the subject matter or technique are eligible in the Open category. All digital enhancements and manipulations are permitted in this category.

NATURE: Any image that is presented in a manner that does NOT depict the influence of human habitation (the hand of man). This category includes such subjects as botany, zoology, geology, archaeology, etc. Subjects that do NOT qualify include domestic animals, horticultural varieties of plants or hybrid plants. Computer manipulation with the exception of minor adjustments is *not* allowed. Enhancement of digital images should not call into question the integrity of an image. Visibly manipulated images must be entered in the Open or Creative category.

PHOTOJOURNALISM: This type of picture or series of pictures tells or illustrates a story, such as those used in the news media and periodicals. This includes subject matter such as spot news, contemporary life, human interest, sporting events, documentaries etc. **An entry in the photojournalism category must tell or illustrate a story.** A member can enter from one to 4 images. If entering one image it must stand alone and tell the story in its own right. When entering a series of images, the story should be presented in chronological order. A judge’s 1st consideration should be in how well its story is presented to its viewers. Any technique or digital manipulation that tends to deprive the picture of its spontaneity should be avoided.

PORTRAITURE: This category is for *human* portraiture. Any photograph of a male or female, regardless of age, could be considered. Although it would usually be a head and shoulders or an above the waist photograph, the entire human form can be included. The definition of portrait in the dictionary is “an image of a person in which the face and its expression are predominant.”

C. DIVISIONS

DIGITAL: Entries should have impact, a strong center of interest and a background that does not distract from the main subject. Not all are going to have all the desired qualities of perfect technique and composition. Proper exposure is critical. Detail should be seen in both shadow and highlight areas. Since complete control is possible with digital images, consider the following additional points:

- Although digital images are not matted and mounted, if a matt or decorative or artistic border is included in the image, that treatment should also be considered when scoring the image.
- Post-capture enhancements and manipulation must also be considered when scoring digital images. They should be done carefully. The skill in using them should be considered in scoring the image. These treatments should not distract or detract from the image itself.

PRINTS: Remember that only the very best of images will be made into prints. The same guidelines that apply to digital should be applied to prints with the following additional considerations:

- In black and white prints, look for shadow detail.
- In color prints, look for detail in highlight areas.
- The work that is put into the presentation (mounting and matting) should also be reflected in the final score.

A SYNOPSIS FOR JUDGES

A Judge should

- Be open to freshness and new vision, and not assume that the only successful competition images are those which fit a certain time honored mold. He or she should be willing to recognize those photographers who bring new life, spirit and vision to an age old craft and thus to the organization as a whole.
- Be willing to reward both freshness and creativity along with technical excellence.
- Strive to remove personal bias and not unduly favor or penalize images based upon their subject matter, the difficulty of the shot, or knowledge of the maker.
- Apply scores consistently so that all images given a certain score can be expected to be of comparable quality. He/she should not succumb to the temptation of changing his/her standards midstream. No matter whether individual judges' scores as a whole are perceived by the audience and "high" or "low" the consistency is perceived as fairness.
- Use the entire scoring scale effectively to differentiate images.
- Be sensitive to a maker's feelings but the judge must still be honest. A judge giving inflated "feel good" scores should realize that his or her unwillingness to give the low score that is deserved often results in the deflation of another maker whose work truly deserved the higher score. That maker is now having his or her work placed in the same category as a decidedly worse image. True learning does not come from false complements, but honest appraisals. An image should be scored a 2 if it exhibits technical flaws, such as obvious over or under exposure, is out of focus or shows very poor composition.