

A GREAT STEREO (3-D) PHOTOGRAPH HAS:

1. STEREO EFFECT:

The photo should show strong stereo effect (planes of depth) in the foreground to middle-ground.

The most concentrated 3-D effect occurs between 7 and 35 feet into the scene based on the standard Realist format.

When viewed, the left and right image should pop into the one stereo view easily.

Close subjects should be just behind the stereo window. Subjects should never come through the window at sides or corners of the frame.

2. SHARPNESS: The entire scene is expected to be pin-sharp, especially the main subject area. Set the f-stop to f-8 and above to ensure sharpness. Use a tripod or monopod.

3. LEVEL IMAGE & CORRECT MOUNTING: The camera must be held perfectly level horizontally from side to side (avoids tilted horizons). The image left and right views must each be mounted perpendicular to the horizontal. The correct near subject and far subject mounting guideline procedures have been followed.

4. EXPOSURE: Exposure must be appropriate for the scene and expectations of the viewer of the photo and the effect desired by the photographer. No lost important detail in shadows and no washed out important highlights.

5. IMPORTANT SUBJECT & FOREGROUND: The foreground should be strong; that is showing maximum 3-D (depth planes) effect and leading the eye to the important subject. The subject should be obvious, stand out and make for continuity in the effect desired.

6. COMPOSITION: The rule of thirds applies in most cases. The important subject should not be lost to overwhelming or busy backgrounds and foregrounds. The stereo window should be appropriate for the scene. Prominent and/or broad areas of contrasting color enhance the composition and 3-D effect.

7. LIGHTING: Light source usually comes from behind the photographer and ideally from one side of the subject. Lighting should be appropriate for the subject such as fill flash for people portraits in shade. The angle of the lighting should enhance the subject.

ADDENDUM: These guidelines apply to film and digital and B/W images. As always these are only standardized guidelines and meant to be broken. However, *only when you have followed and mastered these guidelines precisely will you find satisfaction in occasionally stretching beyond the mundane. For technical details read a good 3-D book or find a 3D photography tutorial/webinar on the internet!*

Making a successful photograph

Just in time for the holidays we present these excerpts of a Bill Black article found in the July 1998 PSA Journal. Neil Steller helped your editor round up this information.

Mr. Black states that as an exhibitor in PSA International Salons, he has concluded on some basics which frequently make a successful image, especially in competition.

1. Impact: Immediately upon seeing an image there is a burst of excitement, an emotional response. This emotional experience may override the image's photographic qualities or it may lead to thoughtful consideration of the image qualities.

2. Composition: This is the way the photographer chooses to arrange the elements of their design. This includes shapes, line, space, texture, pattern, gesture, color, tones and light.

a. Position: Try for off center subject rather than centered, static subject. The rule of thirds is an effective tool.

b. Lines: Diagonal implies motion. Horizontal implies a static effect. Vertical implies strength but may also be static.

c. Shape: Circular are restful. Rectangles make for a static image. Triangular are forceful or dynamic.

3. Technique: This is the proper use of light, exposure, depth of field, viewpoint, processing and mounting.

4. Interest: An interesting subject will keep the viewer from being lost, confused or bored. It is the photographer's responsibility to cause the viewer to experience what the photographer is portraying.

Bottom line: A competitive image expresses simplicity. It should contain only what is necessary in the frame. It should make one and only one statement.

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Create the Appearance of Depth

(Thanks to Neil Steller, the following excerpts are from Peter Kolonia's article in the October 1999 issue of Popular Photography.)

Shoot deep scenes. First a scene must have depth - that is, a clear fore-, middle- and background. The more empty space that separates the three planes, the more depth will be exaggerated in your photo.

Frame your subjects. Find a camera angle that puts a foreground object near one or more of your scene's four corners. The more corners you can fill, the more exaggerated depth will become.

Use diminishing scale. By composing your pictures to include same-size objects shown in dramatically diminishing sizes, you can manufacture a sense of depth. A stereoscopic image will capitalize on this type of composition.

Find converging lines. When two straight (could also be curved) and apparently parallel lines appear to converge at a common, distant vanishing point, our minds tell us that where the lines are wider apart is "near", and where they're closer together is "far". Compose your photos to include such converging lines and you'll increase apparent depth. Again, this is a great procedure to enhance a 3-D image.

Separate the planes. Arrange the fore-, middle- and background subjects so that the planes are clearly separated which enhances the sense of depth which 3-D photos portray. Another key here is to minimize or eliminate the far background - simplify.

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