

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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