

12 Elements of a Merit Image:

Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling images evoke laughter sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense emotion. There can be impact in any of these twelve elements.

Creativity is the original, fresh and external expression of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message or thought.

Technical Excellence is the print quality of the image itself as it is presented for viewing. Retouching, manipulation, sharpness, exposure, printing, mounting and correct color are some items that speak to the qualities of the physical print.

Composition is important to the design of an image, bringing all of the visual elements together in concert to express the purpose of the image. Proper composition holds the viewer in the image and prompts the viewer to look where the creator intends. Effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the image maker.

Lighting - the use and control of light - refers to how dimension, shape and roundness are defined in an image. Whether the light applied to an image is manmade or natural, proper use of it should enhance an image.

Style is defined in a number of ways as it applies to a creative image. It might be defined by a specific genre or simply be recognized as the characteristics of manner when the subject matter and the style are appropriate for each other, or it can have a negative effect when they are at odds.

Print Presentation affects an image by giving it a finished look. The mats and borders used should support and enhanced the image not distract from it.

Center of Interest is the point or points on the image where the maker wants the viewer to stop as they view the image. There can be primary and secondary centers of interest. Occasionally there will be no specific center of interest, when the entire scene collectively serves as the center of interest.

Subject Matter should always be appropriate to the story being told in an image.

Color Balance supplies harmony to an image. An image in which the tones work together, effectively supporting the image, can enhance its emotional appeal. Color balance is not always harmonious and can be used to evoke diverse feelings for effect.

Technique is the approach used to create the image. Printing, lighting, posing, capture, presentation media, and more are part of the technique applied to an image.

Story Telling refers to the image's ability to evoke imagination. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect his or her own message or read his or her own story in an image.