

Critique Forum March 22, 2018

- To become a better photographer, critiquing photos is a skill you should learn. However, critiquing takes practice to be effective.
- We will critique each others' photos as a group.
- The purpose is to learn from each other.
- Most people would like to receive feedback which results in their taking better photos.

Ground Rules

- Photographers will have the opportunity to tell a brief story of each image selected, including what they were trying to accomplish.
- The group identifies two or more positive aspects of the photo.
- The group provides several ways to improve the image AND explains "why."

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Critiquing Photos of Others

Here are five things one should consider when giving critique:

1. Critique with the **intention to help**. There is no better way to critique than with good intentions.
2. Give a **"Why"** when commenting on technique.
3. Avoid **personal bias**.
4. Avoid **altering the message** the photographer wants to convey.
5. Avoid **short statements** that **offer no direction**, e.g., "It's nice." or "It's OK." or "Used wrong lens!"

Learn the skill of critiquing photographs with these 5 tips at

<https://www.lightstalking.com/critiquing-photographs/>

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Need for Analysis

Since photo critique is a detailed assessment of someone's photograph, the key activity in critique is **analysis**. One uses the results of their analysis to carefully frame their critique statements.

I have developed a Critique Checklist to help you with the analysis phase. I broke analysis into four broad categories:

- A. **Technical** aspects
- B. Aspects about the **Subject** (focal point)
- C. **Compositional** aspects
- D. Aspects of **Impact**

- Note: a photo could be technically well done, with a clear subject, and good composition, but be totally boring! **Impact** asks: Is the photo interesting? Does the photo work? Would someone frame it and hang it on a wall?

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A. Technical Aspects

1. Proper **focus**? Subject in focus? Appropriate parts out of focus? Are the eyes of the subject in focus?
2. Proper **exposure**? Parts too dark? Parts too light?
3. Good use of **depth of field**?
4. Proper **shutter speed**? Is image **sharp**? Problems with camera shake? Good use of **blur** to show motion?
5. Good use of **lighting**? Good use of **light** and **shadows**? Proper time of day? Back light? Side light? Use of **flash**?
6. Proper **lens** for the image? Proper focal length lens? Subject too far away?

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B. Aspects about the Subject (focal point)

7. Is the **subject** of the image clear?
8. Do all the elements in the image **support** the subject?
9. Are there elements that **distract** from the subject? Is the background **cluttered**? Any distractions near the **edges of image**?
10. Ways to better **emphasize** the subject? Ways to **isolate** the subject? Ways to **simplify** the scene to enhance the subject?

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C. Aspects of Composition

11. Are the **compositional elements** arranged in a pleasing manner?
12. Are the compositional elements **balanced**? Are **shapes** balanced? Are **tones** balanced?
13. Is the **horizon** level? Are **vertical lines** straight up and down? Are buildings **keystoned**?
14. Could the photo be enhanced if **cropped**?
15. Could a different **point-of-view** or **angle** improve the image? Shoot from high up? Low to ground? At pet's level?
16. Good use of **repetition**?
17. Good use of **pattern**?
18. Good use of **texture**?
19. Good use of **leading lines**? Use of curves such as **"S" curve** to lead the viewer's eye to the focal point.
20. Does the scene have a **foreground**, **middle ground**, and **background**?
21. Good use of a **frame-in-a-frame** to draw viewer's eye to subject?
22. Good use of **reflections**?

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D. Aspects of Impact

23. Does the image have **emotional impact**?

24. Does the image tell a **compelling story**?

Repeating: a photo could be technically well done, with a clear subject, and good composition but be totally boring!

Impact asks:

- Is the photo **interesting**?
- Is the viewer **impacted** by the photo? The **WOW!** factor.
- Does the photo **work**?
- Does it achieve what the photographer **intended**?
- Would someone **frame and hang it** on a wall?

Homework Assignment

Everyone should read the following two articles

1. Five tips of critiquing other people's photographs

<https://www.lightstalking.com/critiquing-photographs/>

2. "10 Ways to Critique Your [own] Photos to Improve Your Photography"

<https://expertphotography.com/10-ways-to-critique-a-photo/>

Now to Practice!

- Use the Critique Forum Checklist to take notes.
- Take your notes home with the goal to improve your photos!

We critiqued nine images submitted by members.

End of Critique Forum
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