

Loveland Photographic Society

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# LPS Competition Judging

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## Competition Overview

- Each month there are three categories of competition:

**Open**—The image must begin as a photograph taken by the entrant. From there, it is up to the photographer. Any type of photograph may be entered in the Open Projected category.

Rotating PSA category of **Nature**, **Travel**, and **Monochrome**—Images must adhere to the specific rules set by the Photographic Society of America. This gives LPS reps for the PSA interclub competitions a way to find photos to submit as entries from our club.

**Monthly Topic**—each month's theme is set by the competition chair.

- There are five competition groups, 1 through 5. Participation in a group is determined by the average of the member's most recent 9 LPS competition image scores within a 12-month period that fall within a predetermined range set by the competition chair.
- Each member's participation group might change from month to month as the oldest score(s) drop off and the new scores are included in the member's 9-score average.

## Image Qualifications

- All images must be the creation and property of the member.
- The photograph must not contain a date stamp, text, or watermark identifying the title or name of the photographer. The title and photographer name is included by the competition software and is visible on the website at the conclusion of the judging process.
- The image must not have as the only subject another artist's work but must contain additional elements that tell a story.
- All images must meet the requirements for the competition entered; it is the photographer's responsibility to be aware of the rules for the category to avoid having their image removed from the competition.
- It is the judge's responsibility to understand the rules of the competition category that is being judged. If there is a question about whether the image has not followed the rules, that should be decided in concert with the competition chair before the image is given a score. In some cases, when it is opinion based, such as over-sharpening or over-saturation, the image can be given a lower score, based on that element.
- The competition chair has the final decision as to disqualification of an image.

## Judge Qualifications

- ▶ Judging will be done by a panel of up to three judges or may be done by a single judge with recognized qualifications. It will be the responsibility of the competition chair to make that determination.
- ▶ Judges should be a member of LPS or an outside individual approved by the competition chair.
- ▶ Judges should have significant experience as a photographer and some familiarity with a variety of photographic genres and/or experience as a photography judge.
- ▶ Judges should have an understanding of the elements that comprise a well composed photograph, the ability to recognize aspects of an image that could be improved, and the ability to explain their critiques.
- ▶ Judges should have the available time to examine 50 to 75 photos and provide scores and ranking within a time frame of 3 days, plus being available to break ties if necessary.

## Judging Timeline

- ▶ Judging begins the Tuesday prior to the monthly meeting.
- ▶ Judging should be completed no later than Thursday midnight prior to the meeting.
- ▶ Judges are encouraged to complete all scoring and ranking ahead of the deadline, if possible, to give the competition chair time to handle tie breakers and complete other administrative duties in preparation for the club meeting on the following Monday.
- ▶ Judges might be asked by the competition chair to break ties for Best of Show and Award of Merit after the judging is complete. Judges can communicate with each other to agree on the awards. The competition chair is also allowed to make a final decision on any ties.

## Judging Procedure

- A video explaining how to use the online judging system is available on the LPS website under **Help/Videos/More Videos/Website Judging/How to Use the Judging Website**.
- Judges shall score and rank all entries independently unless the competition chair directs otherwise.
- Judges should use a large computer monitor (should not use a phone, tablet, or iPad) to view the images; do not zoom more than 100% into the image to “pixel peep.”
- In the “Select a Competition Level” box, the judge will select a competition group and score and rank the images in that group. In the Critique menu item at the bottom of the page, judges can write comments in the “Additional comments” box.
- After scoring each image in a group, the judge must click on “Save Updates.” If any changes are made to a score or a comment, “Save Updates” must also be clicked again or the changes will not be applied.
- The judging queue remains open to review and revisit scores and rankings and make changes at any time until the competition chair closes the competition after all judges indicate they have completed all scoring.
- Any judge that feels an image should be disqualified or infracts the rules shall notify the competition chair. The competition chair will make a final decision. If the image is disqualified, the competition chair will explain the decision to the photographer.
- When judges have completed scoring and ranking for all groups in a category, they shall check the “All images scored” box.

# Judging Procedure Video

1

Galleries Mentoring Judge My Account Administration **Help**

**Video Categories**

**Guide for All Members**

This category includes topics that should be useful to all organization members. It includes instructions for managing your own images, galleries, and entering competitions.

**Images, Galleries, and Competition Submissions**

These topics are intended for everybody and include how to upload and submit images, enter competitions and create galleries.

**Managing Competitions**

These topics are intended for Competition Managers.

**Website and Membership Administration**

These are topics for the website Administrators, Membership Managers, and Content Managers.

**Website Judging**

These topics are intended for judges and Competition Managers.

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2

5

Discussion Forums Affiliate Program Field Trips and SIGs Competitions

**Help**

Help

Install the Image Competition Manager

Privacy Policy

Recent Changes

Submit a Support Request

Subscription Information

Usage Agreement

**Videos**

Visual Pursuits Services

**Introduction**

Concepts

Galleries

Image Library

Image Sequences

Uploading Images

More Videos...

**Wild Northern Hawk Owl**

Pat Gair

Trac Masters 2

3

View

## How to Judge using the Website

This topic is intended for judges that will be using the website to judge a competition.  
Duration: 00:10:50

## Judging the Images

- The judge should score each photograph from 5-9 for each of the main three elements of Impact, Composition, and Technical Quality, and then add those together for a total score. Because of the current judging software used by LPS and the use of a range of averages to set participation in competition groups, the goal is to maintain a total score range of a minimum total of 15 and a maximum of 27.
- Do not avoid giving an image a highest score; perfection is not required for an element to receive a 9 or for an image to receive a total score of 27. Reserve an element score of 5 for images with little or no impact, no apparent composition, and very poor technical quality.
- When judging images in the realism categories of Nature, Travel, and Photojournalism, a summary of the specific rules for each category are available on the LPS website under **Competitions>PSA Interclub Image Competitions**, along with a link to the full-length PDF guides on the PSA website. Most competitions allow a digital border, but borders in the realism categories should be small and neutral gray, black, or white. If a border is used, whether it adds or subtracts value should be included in judging the image.

## Guide to Scoring Image Elements

### ► **Impact**

- 5—elicits very little emotional response
- 6—average, not a significant element
- 7—evokes above-average emotional response
- 8—evokes strong emotional response
- 9—evokes immediate exceptional response

### ► **Composition**

- 5—displays little or no use of basic elements of composition
- 6—average, includes some effective use of compositional elements
- 7—includes above-average use of compositional elements
- 8—compositional elements used in a highly effective way, with few drawbacks
- 9—exemplary choice of compositional elements to convey the intended message

### ► **Technical Quality**

- 5—below average; issues with basic technical quality elements
- 6—average quality; some issues such as unintentional soft focus, poor color or tonal range, distracting choices in post-processing
- 7—above average technical attributes
- 8—strong technical attributes with few flaws
- 9—exemplary technical attributes

This is a guide to scoring. These element scores might not be shown in the critiques.



## Judge Critiques & Comments

- Judges are encouraged, time permitting, to add comments to each image to explain their score and to offer encouragement and/or helpful suggestions to the photographer and to other viewers of the image. Any judge can comment on the images; the competition chair may also assign one or more judges in each month to write comments.
- Critiques and comments should be made in a specific “Additional Comments” box on the image scoring page under “Critiques.” Comments do not need to be lengthy.
- Critiques remain with the image on the website and can be seen when viewing the competition photos under Competition Results.
- The purpose of making critiques available is to indicate reasons for the score given and to provide observations made by the judge, which can be helpful to the image creator as well as to other photographers viewing the image.

## Writing Effective Critiques & Comments

- A good critique should begin with observations about a positive aspect or aspects of the image. Positive comments should be sincere and not gratuitous.
- Give positive and negative comments separately. Do not follow positive words with the use of “however” or “but”!
- When noting aspects of the photo for which a low score was given, use language that does not denigrate the efforts of the photographer, but be clear about what you have observed that helps explain your score.
- Be clear that your comments are your own opinion, using such wording as “I think,” “I feel,” or “to me.”
- When possible make suggestions about ways the image could be stronger.

Some suggested links describing competition judging:

<https://www.theartistgallery.art/post/what-do-judges-look-for-in-photography-contests>

<https://www.ppa.com/events/photo-competitions/the-12-elements-of-a-merit-image>

<https://nanpa.org/2020/09/25/twenty-five-questions-to-think-like-a-photo-competition-judge/>

## Minimize Personal Bias

- ▶ As much as possible, keep personal biases out of the evaluation. You might not be as interested in landscapes as you are wildlife, but you still need to evaluate each image for its impact, composition, and technical quality.
- ▶ If the image contains special filters applied in post processing, try not to let your feelings about these effects color your judgement. Decide whether these effects enhance or detract from the image visually and not on your feelings about their use.
- ▶ We often have biases of which we are not even aware. Constantly examine your decisions for evidence of bias.
- ▶ Judge the image, not the perceived effort. All photographs are the accumulation of the photographer's experience, talent, inspiration, and luck. Avoid giving a high score because you feel the image was difficult to capture. Give it the same consideration as to impact, composition and technical quality. Judges should only assess the results.

## Ranking and Awarding the Images

- ▶ After scoring all images in a group, each judge will move the photos in order of their choice of ranking, highest to lowest from left to right.
- ▶ When more than one photo receives the same highest score for that group, the ranking by the three judges helps determine the images that receive Best of Show and Award of Merit for the group. If there is still a tie, the competition chair can notify the judges to vote on the BOS winner, or the competition chair can determine the winner.
- ▶ BOS and AOM awards are given in Groups 2 through 5. Only photos receiving a score of 18 or better will be eligible to receive a BOS or AOM award in any group.



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# Image Element Examples

Impact, Composition, Technical Quality

# Impact

- Impact is the emotional effect on the viewer.
- Emotions might be feelings of pleasure, humor, anger, fear, empathy, curiosity, serenity, etc.
- The greater the emotional response the greater the impact, although impact does not necessarily mean hit in the face!
- Emotional impact is not only affected by the subject but also by creativity or originality, lighting, and tones.



## Evaluating Impact

- ▶ Does the image capture your **attention**?
- ▶ What type of **emotional** response does the image elicit? If the response is negative, is it due to personal bias (e.g. don't like sunsets, abstracts, high-key, etc.) or due to uninteresting treatment of the subject or setting?
- ▶ How strong is your emotional response?
- ▶ Does the use of **light** enhance the main subject or contribute to the **storytelling** value or intended atmosphere of the scene?
- ▶ Is there **creativity** or **originality** that contributes to the impact?
- ▶ Does the use of **color** and **tone** or choice of B&W contribute to the impact?

Note: It is not always easy to separate emotional response from the composition and technical quality.



## Impact Evaluation #1

**Impact—score 5-9**

**Consider:**

Attention

Emotion

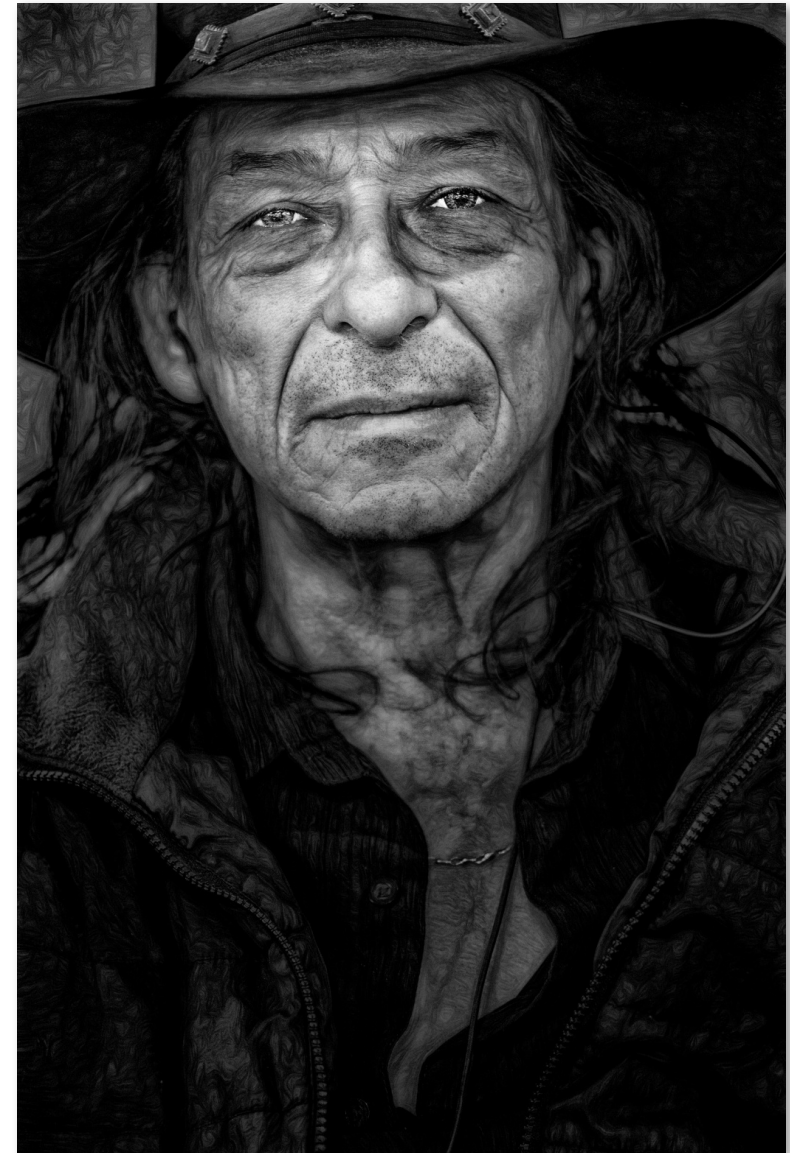
Light

Storytelling

Creativity/Originality

Color

Tone





## Impact Evaluation #2

**Impact—score 5-9**

**Consider:**

Attention

Emotion

Light

Storytelling

Creativity/Originality

Color

Tone



## Impact Evaluation #3

**Impact—score 5-9**

**Consider:**

Attention

Emotion

Light

Storytelling

Creativity/Originality

Color

Tone





## Impact Evaluation #4

**Impact—score 5-9**

**Consider:**

Attention

Emotion

Light

Storytelling

Creativity/Originality

Color

Tone



## Impact Evaluation #5

**Impact—score 5-9**

**Consider:**

Attention

Emotion

Light

Storytelling

Creativity/Originality

Color

Tone





## Impact Evaluation #6

**Impact—score 5-9**

**Consider:**

Attention

Emotion

Light

Storytelling

Creativity/Originality

Color

Tone



## Impact Evaluation #7

**Impact—score 5-9**

**Consider:**

Attention

Emotion

Light

Storytelling

Creativity/Originality

Color

Tone





## Impact Evaluation #9

**Impact—score 5-9**

**Consider:**

Attention

Emotion

Light

Storytelling

Creativity/Originality

Color

Tone



## Impact Evaluation #10

**Impact—score 5-9**

**Consider:**

Attention

Emotion

Light

Storytelling

Creativity/Originality

Color

Tone





## Impact Evaluation #11

### Impact—score 5-9

#### Consider:

Attention

Emotion

Light

Storytelling

Creativity/Originality

Color

Tone



## Impact Evaluation #12

**Impact—score 5-9**

**Consider:**

Attention

Emotion

Light

Storytelling

Creativity/Originality

Color

Tone





# Composition

- Composition is the arrangement of image elements to provide interest with clarity and balance.
- There are many rules and guides to composition available online.
- Ansel Adams said: "There are no rules for good photographs, just good photographs."
- Rules don't make great photographs; great photographs inspire rules.



## Evaluating Composition

- Is the main **subject or point of view** effectively emphasized? Do other image elements contribute to the story or are there image elements that **distract** the eye from the subject?
- Is the composition **balanced** in weight and tone?
- Is the choice of **symmetry or asymmetry** appropriate for the subject or point of view?
- Is there adequate **space** for the subject? Does the choice of cropping contribute to the effectiveness of the capture or is there awkward chopping of body parts or other image elements?
- Is there appropriate **depth of field** for the subject/story?
- Does the **background** enhance or detract from the subject? Does the image give the feeling of depth (foreground, mid ground, background)?
- Are **compositional techniques** such leading lines, patterns, and rule of thirds used to lead the viewer's eye?
- If traditional rules are not followed, do the photographer's choices result in a pleasing arrangement of the elements?

## Composition Evaluation #1

### **Composition—score 5-9**

#### **Consider:**

- Clear subject/point of view
- Distracting objects
- Balance
- Symmetry/asymmetry
- Space
- Depth of field
- Background/mid/foreground
- Leading lines/rule of thirds





## Composition Evaluation #2

### **Composition—score 5-9**

#### **Consider:**

- Clear subject/point of view
- Distracting objects
- Balance
- Symmetry/asymmetry
- Space
- Depth of field
- Background/mid/foreground
- Leading lines/rule of thirds



## Composition Evaluation #3

### Composition—score 5-9

#### Consider:

Clear subject/point of view  
Distracting objects  
Balance  
Symmetry/asymmetry  
Space  
Depth of field  
Background/mid/foreground  
Leading lines/rule of thirds





## Composition Evaluation #4

### Composition—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Clear subject/point of view
- Distracting objects
- Balance
- Symmetry/asymmetry
- Space
- Depth of field
- Background/mid/foreground
- Leading lines/rule of thirds



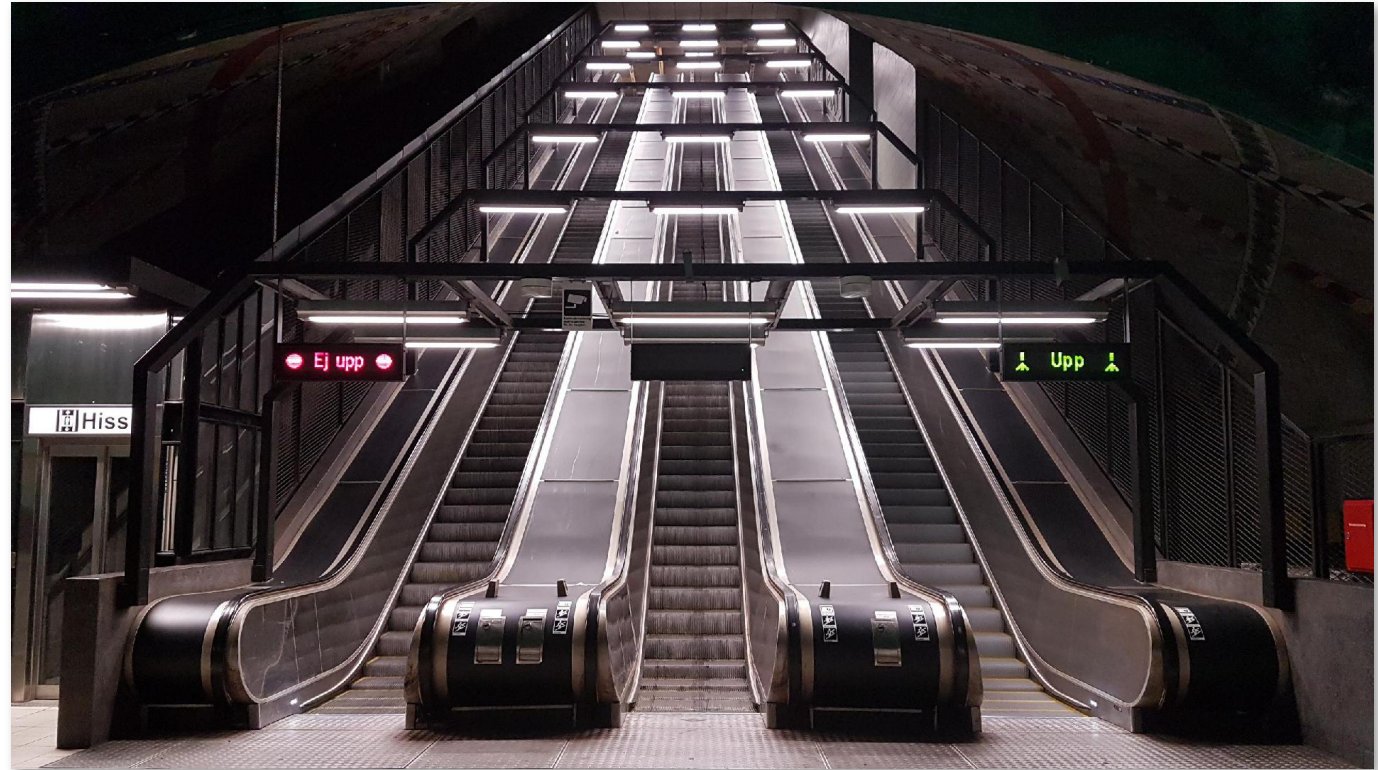


## Composition Evaluation #5

### Composition—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Clear subject/point of view
- Distracting objects
- Balance
- Symmetry/asymmetry
- Space
- Depth of field
- Background/mid/foreground
- Leading lines/rule of thirds



## Composition Evaluation #6

### Composition—score 5-9

#### Consider:

Clear subject/point of view

Distracting objects

Balance

Symmetry/asymmetry

Space

Depth of field

Background/mid/foreground

Leading lines/rule of thirds





## Composition Evaluation #7

### Composition—score 5-9

#### Consider:

Clear subject/point of view

Distracting objects

Balance

Symmetry/asymmetry

Space

Depth of field

Background/mid/foreground

Leading lines/rule of thirds



## Composition Evaluation #8

### Composition—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Clear subject/point of view
- Distracting objects
- Balance
- Symmetry/asymmetry
- Space
- Depth of field
- Background/mid/foreground
- Leading lines/rule of thirds





## Composition Evaluation #9

### Composition—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Clear subject/point of view
- Distracting objects
- Balance
- Symmetry/asymmetry
- Space
- Depth of field
- Background/mid/foreground
- Leading lines/rule of thirds



## Composition Evaluation #10

### Composition—score 5-9

#### Consider:

Clear subject/point of view

Distracting objects

Balance

Symmetry/asymmetry

Space

Depth of field

Background/mid/foreground

Leading lines/rule of thirds



## Composition Evaluation #11

### Composition—score 5-9

#### Consider:

Clear subject/point of view

Distracting objects

Balance

Symmetry/asymmetry

Space

Depth of field

Background/mid/foreground

Leading lines/rule of thirds





## Composition Evaluation #12

### Composition—score 5-9

#### Consider:

Clear subject/point of view

Distracting objects

Balance

Symmetry/asymmetry

Space

Depth of field

Background/mid/foreground

Leading lines/rule of thirds





# Technical Quality

- ▶ Technical quality encompasses technical camera skills including choice of exposure and camera settings and use of post processing to produce the best possible image.



## Evaluating Technical Quality

- Is the **point of focus** and **sharpness or blur** appropriate for the subject?
- Does the exposure capture detail in the **shadows** and **highlights**?
- Is the image **oversaturated** or does it exhibit harsh **contrast** (unless it appears to be part of the photographer's artistic intention)?
- Are the main vertical and horizontal lines **straight**, or if not, is it an intended feature of the image?
- Is there excessive **noise** (unless part of the style) or are there visible lens **dust spots**?
- Is there **color fringing or haloing** or other **processing artifacts**?
- Consideration should be given for the effect the photographer was trying to achieve such as high key, multiple exposure, or selective focus.

## Technical Quality Evaluation #1

### Technical Quality—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Sharpness/blur
- Highlight/shadow detail
- Saturation/contrast
- Straight lines
- Noise
- Dust spots
- Color
- Post-processing artifacts



## Technical Quality Evaluation #2

### Technical Quality—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Sharpness/blur
- Highlight/shadow detail
- Saturation/contrast
- Straight lines
- Noise
- Dust spots
- Color
- Post-processing artifacts





## Technical Quality Evaluation #3

### Technical Quality—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Sharpness/blur
- Highlight/shadow detail
- Saturation/contrast
- Straight lines
- Noise
- Dust spots
- Color
- Post-processing artifacts



## Technical Quality Evaluation #4

### Technical Quality—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Sharpness/blur
- Highlight/shadow detail
- Saturation/contrast
- Straight lines
- Noise
- Dust spots
- Color
- Post-processing artifacts





## Technical Quality Evaluation #5

### Technical Quality—score 5-9

#### Consider:

Sharpness/blur

Highlight/shadow detail

Saturation/contrast

Straight lines

Noise

Dust spots

Color

Post-processing artifacts



## Technical Quality Evaluation #6

### Technical Quality—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Sharpness/blur
- Highlight/shadow detail
- Saturation/contrast
- Straight lines
- Noise
- Dust spots
- Color
- Post-processing artifacts





## Technical Quality Evaluation #7

### Technical Quality—score 5-9

#### Consider:

Sharpness/blur

Highlight/shadow detail

Saturation/contrast

Straight lines

Noise

Dust spots

Color

Post-processing artifacts



## Technical Quality Evaluation #8

### Technical Quality—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Sharpness/blur
- Highlight/shadow detail
- Saturation/contrast
- Straight lines
- Noise
- Dust spots
- Color
- Post-processing artifacts





## Technical Quality Evaluation #9

### Technical Quality—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Sharpness/blur
- Highlight/shadow detail
- Saturation/contrast
- Straight lines
- Noise
- Dust spots
- Color
- Post-processing artifacts



## Technical Quality Evaluation #10

### Technical Quality—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Sharpness/blur
- Highlight/shadow detail
- Saturation/contrast
- Straight lines
- Noise
- Dust spots
- Color
- Post-processing artifacts





## Technical Quality Evaluation #11

### Technical Quality—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Sharpness/blur
- Highlight/shadow detail
- Saturation/contrast
- Straight lines
- Noise
- Dust spots
- Color
- Post-processing artifacts

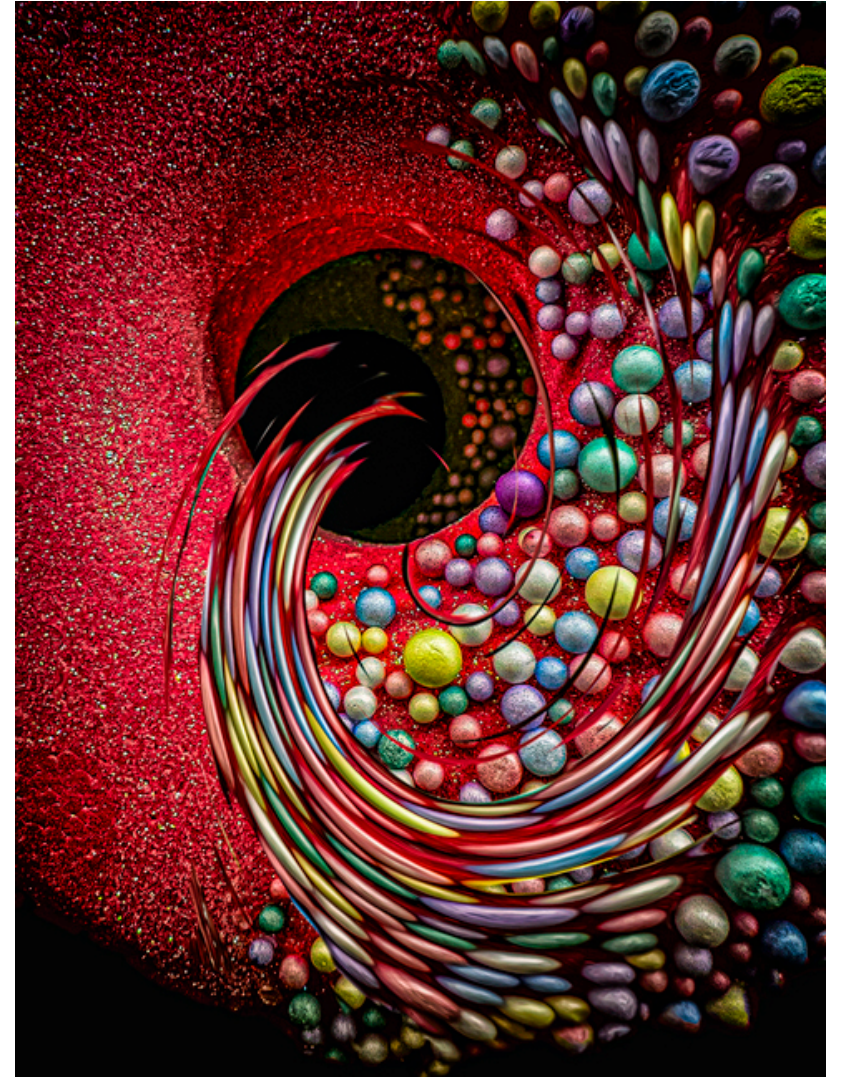


## Technical Quality Evaluation #12

### Technical Quality—score 5-9

#### Consider:

- Sharpness/blur
- Highlight/shadow detail
- Saturation/contrast
- Straight lines
- Noise
- Dust spots
- Color
- Post-processing artifacts



## Scoring & Ranking Exercises

- Evaluate and score the next 3 sets of 6 images each, considering impact, composition, and technical quality.
- Apply a score to each element of impact, composition, and technical quality and total your scores.
- The last slide of each set will be all 6 images, numbered.
- Rank the 6 images from highest to lowest, using the slide number to indicate your ranking.
- Review your scores and ranking and make any changes to your scores as you think appropriate.
- Be ready to explain your scores and rankings if asked.



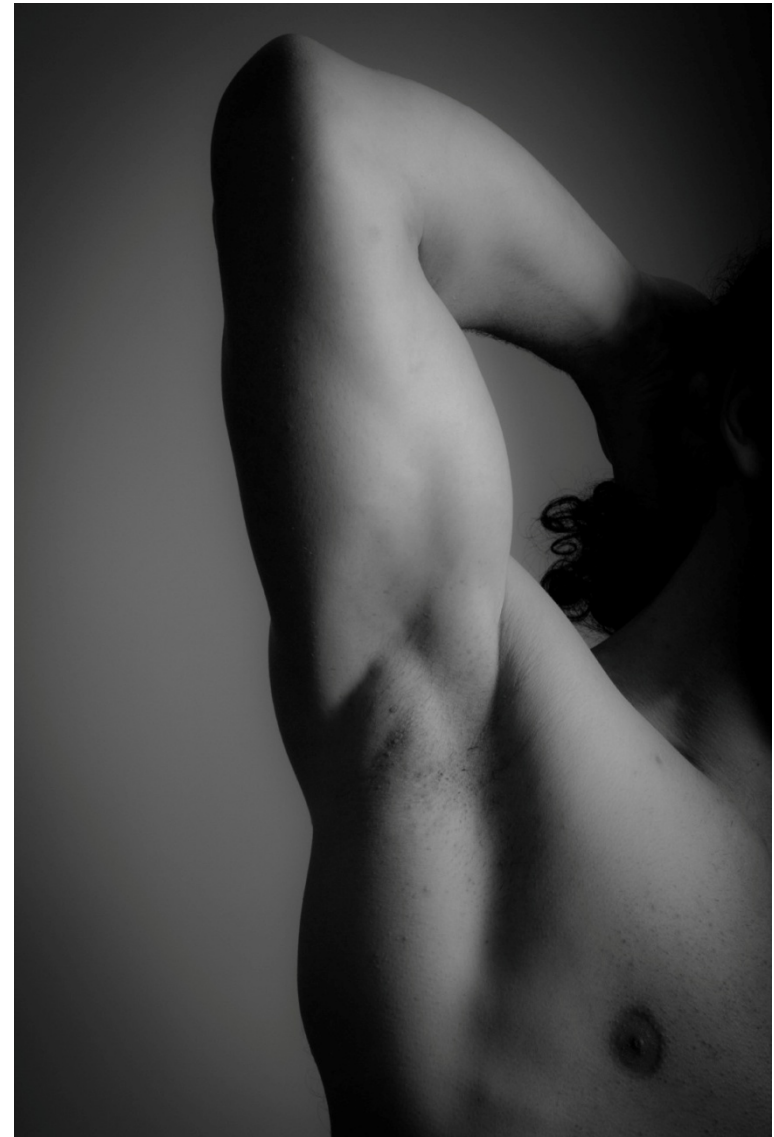
## Exercise 1—Image 1

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—





## Exercise 1—Image 2

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—



## Exercise 1—Image 3

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—





## Exercise 1—Image 4

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—





## Exercise 1—Image 5

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score:



## Exercise 1—Image 6

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—





## Exercise 1—Rank All Images

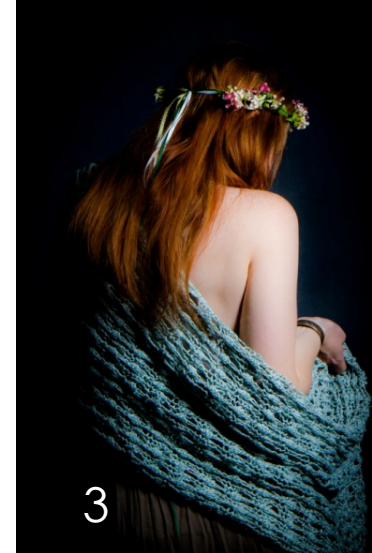
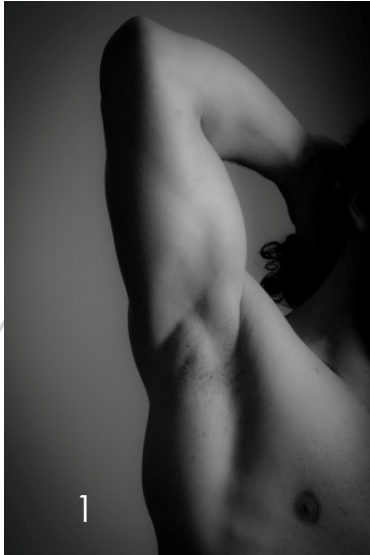


Photo #1—Score:

Rank:

Photo #2—Score:

Rank:

Photo #3—Score:

Rank:

Photo #4—Score:

Rank:

Photo #5—Score:

Rank:

Photo #6—Score:

Rank:



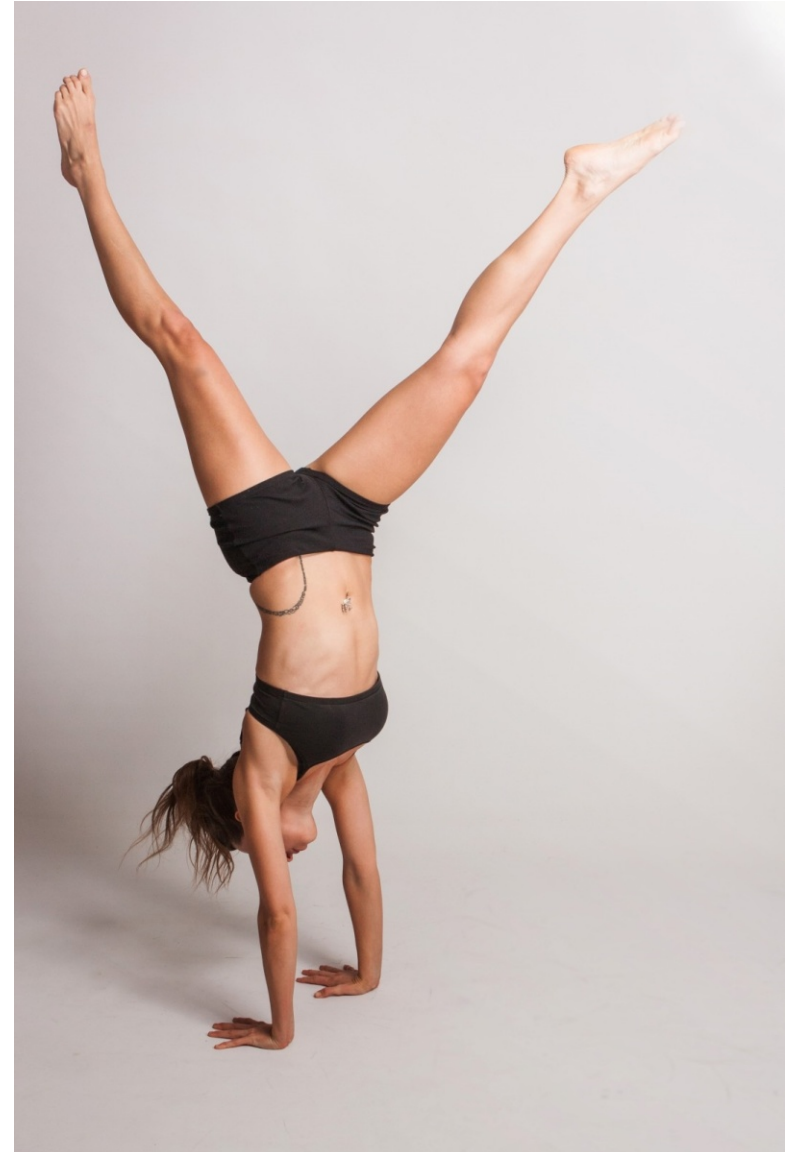
## Exercise 2—Image 1

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—



## Exercise 2—Image 2

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—



## Exercise 2—Image 3

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—





## Exercise 2—Image 4

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—



## Exercise 2—Image 5

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—



## Exercise 2—Image 6

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—





## Exercise 2—Rank All Images

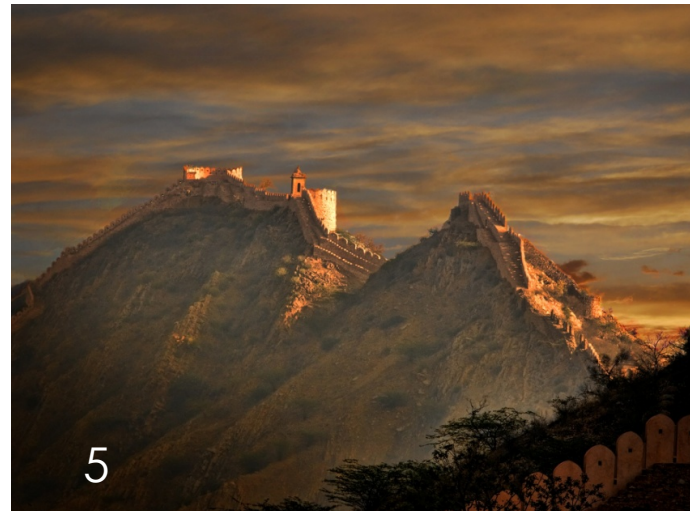


Photo #1—Score:

Rank:

Photo #2—Score

Rank:

Photo #3—Score:

Rank:

Photo #4—Score:

Rank:

Photo #5—Score:

Rank:

Photo #6—Score:

Rank:

## Exercise 3—Image 1

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—





## Exercise 3—Image 2

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—





## Exercise 3—Image 3

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—



## Exercise 3—Image 4

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score:



## Exercise 3—Image 5

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—





## Exercise 3—Image 6

Impact 5-9

Composition 5-9

Technical Quality 5-9

Total Score—



## Exercise 3—Rank All images



Photo #1—Score:

Rank:

Photo #2—Score

Rank:

Photo #3—Score:

Rank:

Photo #4—Score:

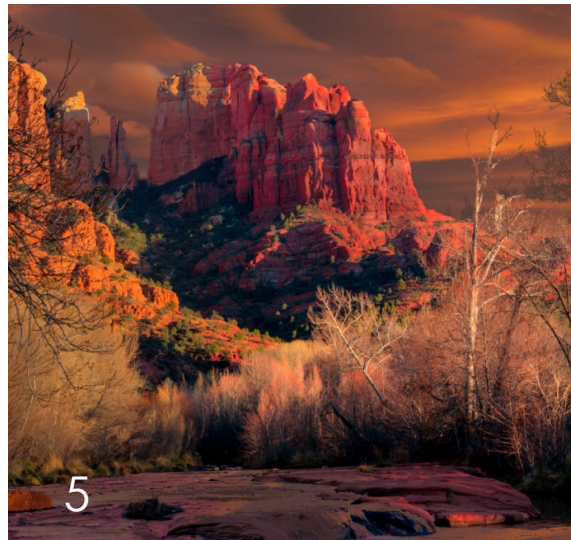
Rank:

Photo #5—Score:

Rank:

Photo #6—Score:

Rank:



# Thank You for Your Time

- If you would like to join the LPS roster of judges, contact the Competition Chair.
- This Judge Training PowerPoint will be available to refer to on the LPS website, [www.lps.cc](http://www.lps.cc):  
**Competitions>Detailed Rules>Judge Training**