

KPAC Picture Judging – A "How To" & Analogy

This is an exciting event that happens 4-5 times a year with KPAC. Tonight you will see some of the best photography that our club has to offer.

Each club member may submit a *maximum of 2 images*. We will see each image at least three times. It is said that first impressions count for a lot so the images will be presented for about 3-5 seconds each as we move quickly through the submitted images for the first time. This is intended to provide you, the judges, with an overview of the images that will be evaluated tonight – better images will tend to leap out at you during this process. This will also give you an initial sense of where the images would fall in a relational ranking to each other.

The second viewing will be a bit longer – about 8-10 seconds. This will give you time to consider and evaluate the individual images from technical and artistic perspectives. This is where you would mark your score on the scoring form provided.

There will be a third quick run through of each image of about 5 seconds each to allow you to confirm the scoring you've put down. *If you wish to change the score, just put an X through the first score then write in the new score.*

Judging the Pictures

So – how should we judge a picture? Let's briefly consider the analogy of a hotel ranking system. We've all heard of 5-star hotels although most of us rarely have had the opportunity to stay in them (if at all). So, even though you may not have stayed at the Morocco Hilton, if it has a 5-star rating, you can be reasonably certain that it's somewhat better than the Super 8 Motel in downtown Surrey with a 2-star rating.

It's the same thing with the images that we'll see tonight. 10-point images may be few and far between, but you'll know one when you see it – and trust me on this, 10-point images do exist. Ranking a picture between 5 and 8 may be a bit difficult due to the subjective nature of the judging process. Here's where you look for critical things like focus (sharpness where the image needs it), contrast, and artistic merits such as composition. As Ansel Adams is reputed to have said, "There's nothing worse than a sharp image of a fuzzy concept".

All images must have score entered between 1 and 10, with 10 being the best. Pictures would score lower based on artistic appeal and technical defects only. For instance, a picture taken at high noon of an ordinary-looking view of Mt. Paul may only score 3 or 4. However, if you happen to capture a somewhat blurry picture of Mt. Paul erupting and exploding at high noon (think Mt. St. Helens), that may deserve a 10. In other words, technical factors being equal, images that have a higher "wow factor" should score higher than those that have a relatively low "wow factor".

There are different ways of scoring an image:

Bottom up – everybody starts with a score of 1. An additional 1 to 4 points are added for sharp focus where it needs it, colour, contrast and other technical considerations. So now we have a score of 1 to 5. An additional 1-2 points would

be added for artistic consideration and another 1-3 points for wow factor. This brings us to a maximum of 10 points.

Top down – everybody starts with 10 points. Deduct points as per above. Little or no wow factor, deduct 1-3 points. Poor composition, deduct 1-2 points. Technical faults (focus, poor Photoshop manipulation) deduct 1-4 more points. Now we are at a minimum of 1 point. *No image will score a 0.*

It is very important to put our personal prejudices aside when evaluating images. As a photographer that specializes in portraiture or architectural photography, you must put aside your dislike of landscape imagery or pictures of flowers or ducks. An image should stand on its own merits – a good picture is a good picture and a great image leaps off the screen.

Middle – everybody starts with 5 points. Deduct points for focus or other technical reasons. Add points for composition, lighting and the “wow factor”.

In summary:

Whatever method you choose, stick with it for all images. This will ensure a “level playing field”.

On Selection Night we will be seeing the best of what our club currently has to offer. Your job is to select, from all of the excellent images that we see, the best of the best of Kamloops Photo Arts Club images. This process will be accomplished by assigning scores from 1-10 for each image presented for your consideration. The selections that you make will be sent to another club for evaluation among all of the participating clubs' "best of" images for an eventual ranking between all clubs. CAPA competitions allow 6 images from each club. Other competitions vary.

But My Picture Wasn't Chosen

If your image is not selected for advancement tonight, do not despair. I know as much as anyone that photography is a learning process. The images that you see tonight will help you learn to take better images yourself. Once we learn whose images were selected for the competition, feel free to ask the person who created it how the photograph was taken or what Photoshop techniques were used to enhance the image. We are all a sharing group of easily approachable people, so don't be afraid to step up and ask questions – it can only make you a better photographer.