



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# An Introduction to Judging

"No man has the right to dictate what other men  
should perceive, create or produce,  
but all should be encouraged to  
reveal themselves, their perceptions and emotions,  
and to build confidence in the creative spirit."

"Photography, as a powerful medium of expression  
and communication, offers  
an infinite variety of  
perception, interpretation and execution."

"There are always two people in every picture:  
the photographer and the viewer."

Ansell Adams



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**And we are all different!**



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Why do you want your  
**MASTERPIECE**  
to be judged?





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Why do you want your  
**MASTERPIECE**  
to be judged?



Judging  
always is  
and  
always has been  
**CONTROVERSIAL**







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so .... what is judging<sup>& JAP</sup> all about?

A programme designed to increase the judging pool

Club & Salons



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so .... what is judging <sup>& JAP</sup> all about?

A programme designed to increase the judging pool  
and to help you to develop from a "back of the room expert"  
to a judge whose public comments are  
**helpful, fair, unbiased and interesting.**





Every time you see a photograph  
you make judgments on it







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so .... what is judging all about?

Every time you see a photograph you make judgments on it

This can vary from quiet, personal thoughts,

through whispered comments to friends  
at the back of the club room,

to helpful advice and words of admiration.





One of the most difficult moments in the  
life of any photographer  
is hearing an analysis of his/her work.







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Why do you want your  
**MASTERPIECE**  
to be judged?



"There are always two people in every picture:  
the photographer and the viewer."



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Photographer

Decides

what to photograph

what to include

how to process

how to present



Viewer  
judge, friend,  
club members etc.

Interpret what has been  
photographed based on, what  
may be, a totally different set  
of values, experiences etc.

at least

"There are always two people in every picture:  
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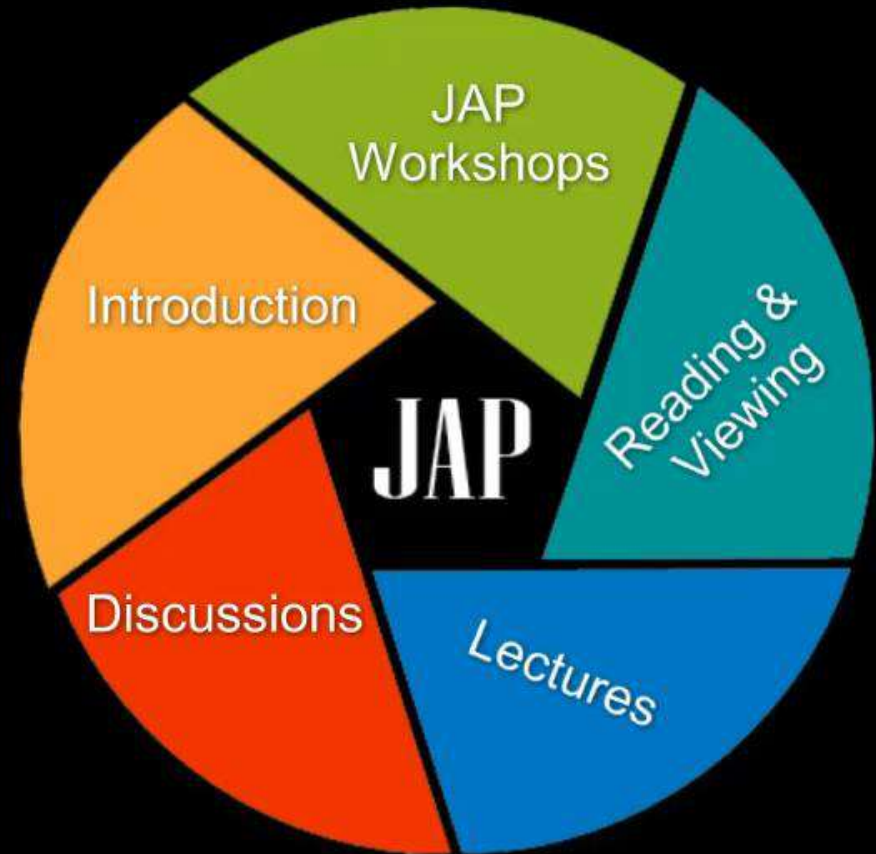
As a judge you do have a difficult task - you must be fair to the photographer  
but you have to be careful not to go overboard  
- you mustn't be too critical but equally you mustn't be too lenient -



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Training judges to look for the message that a picture/photographer is trying to portray.  
Analysing the picture content, technique and treatment.



Sharing the information in a constructive package.





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JAP  
Workshops



# 1. An Introduction to Judging





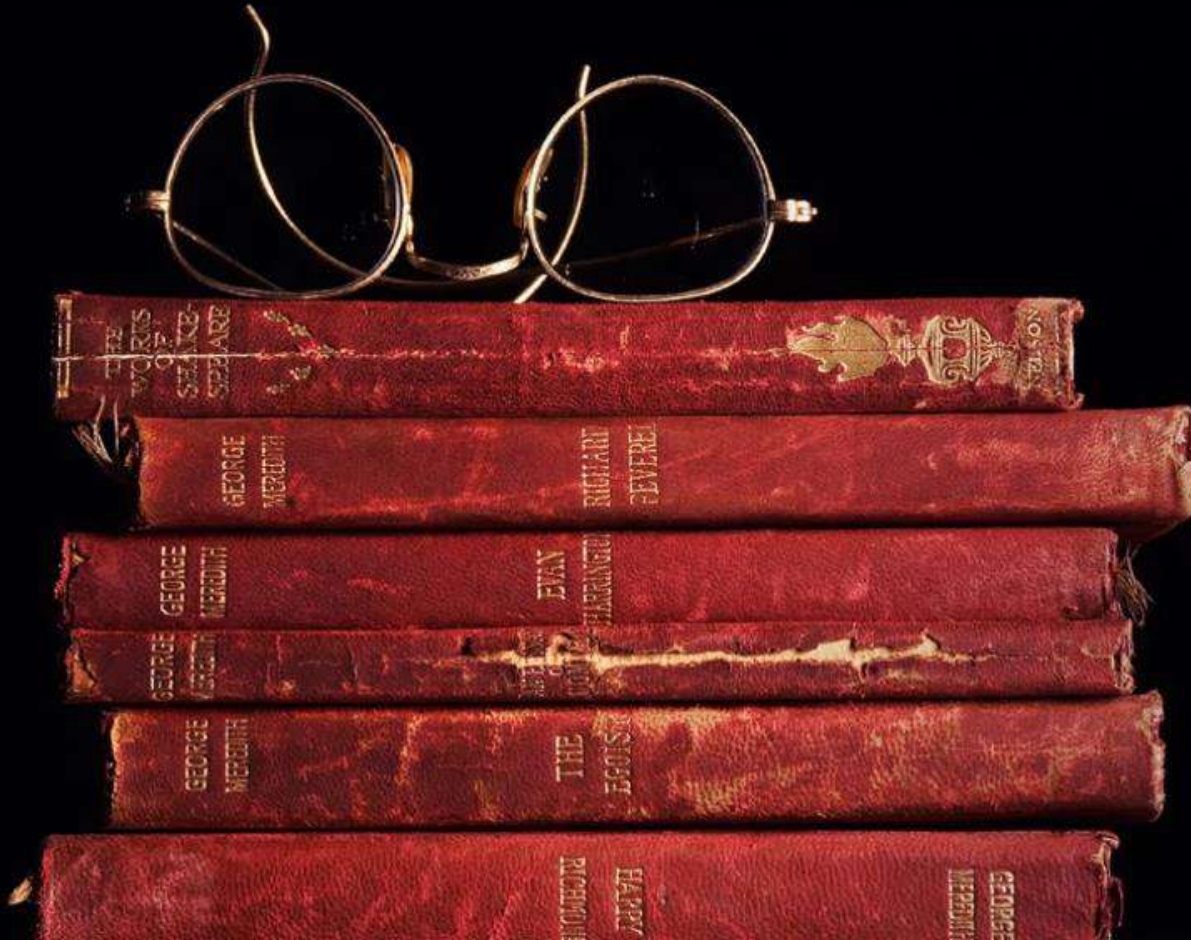
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# Eddie Sethna

## Hon RPS, FRPS, AFIAP

### An Analysis of Judging

Talks and articles on judging usually amount to individuals stating how they judge, and then seeking to justify their method as the best, without making any effort to compare their own techniques with those of others, and without trying to evolve from observations credible principles of judging.



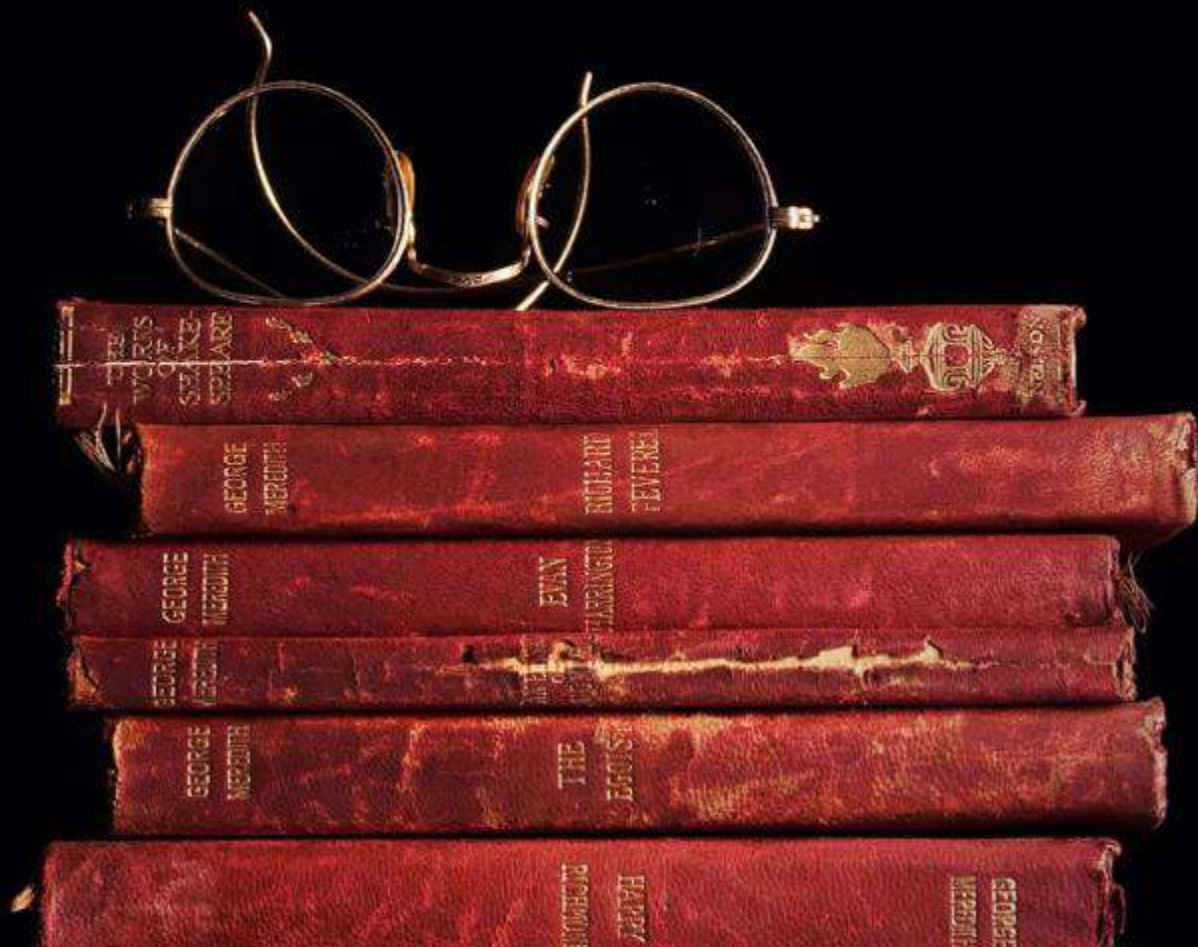




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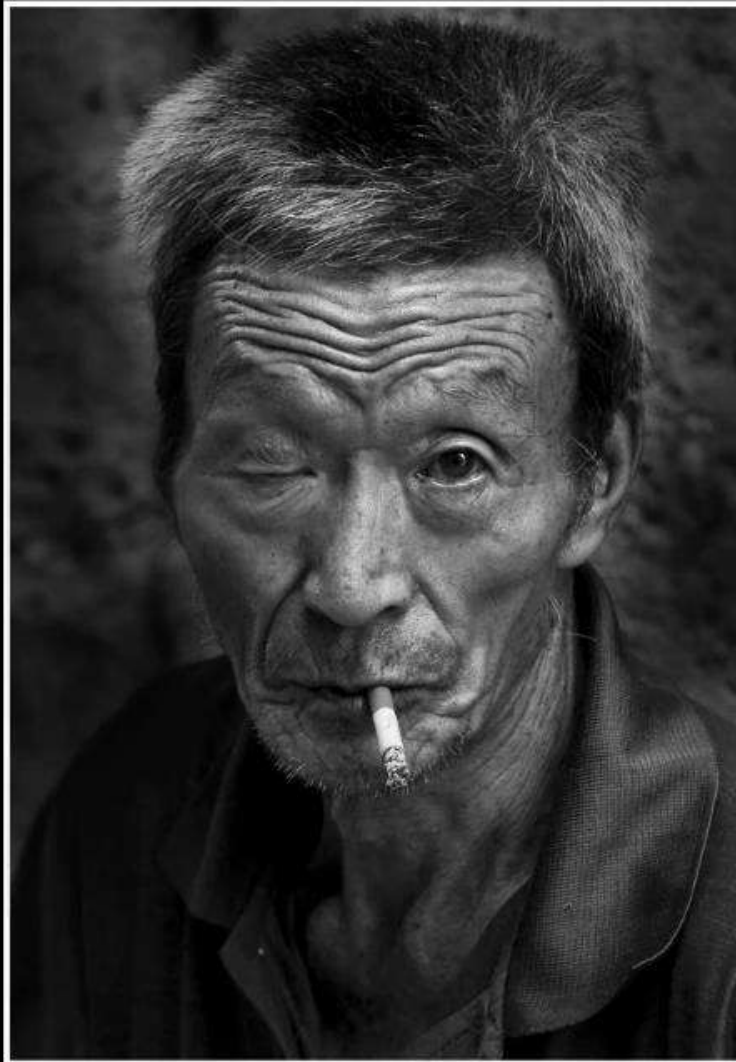
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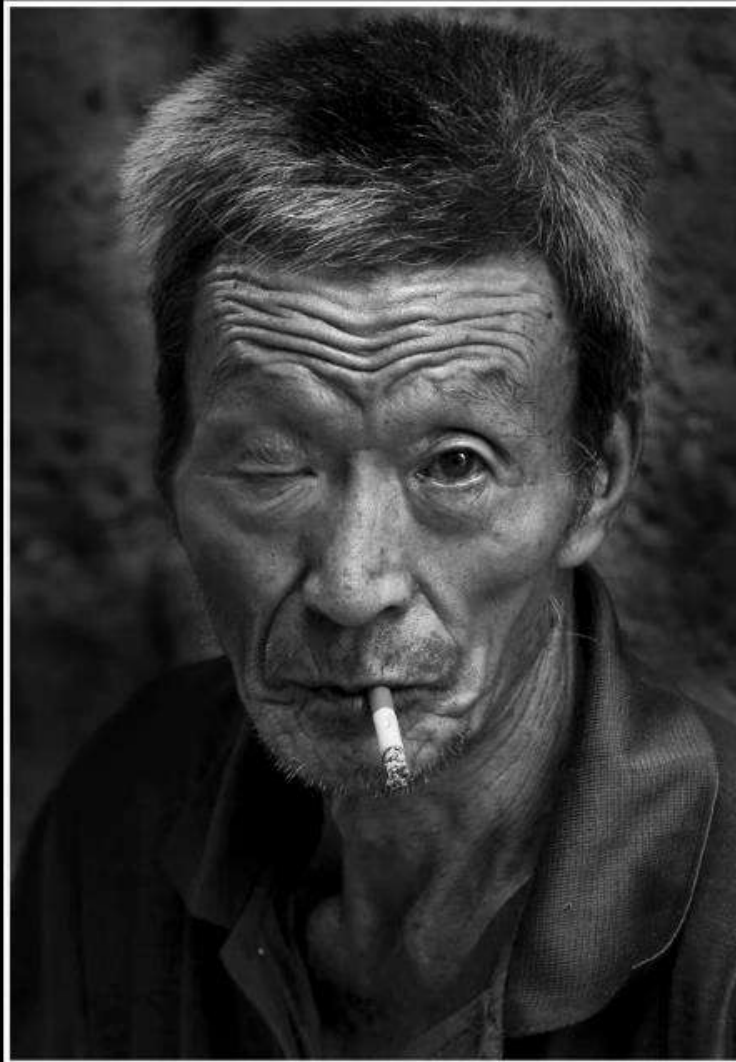
**The intention is to teach  
but not to produce clones.**





1. An Introduction to Judging
2. The pitfalls of judging





## Rules & Judging

Subject in the middle / thirds / center of interest

Negative space

Leading Lines

Wrong time of day / Unnatural Colours

Even/uneven numbers

Can't see the face / eyes / highlights

Cropping vs amputating

Borders - yes or no

Distortion / Verticals not vertical

Mono must have from pure White To Black

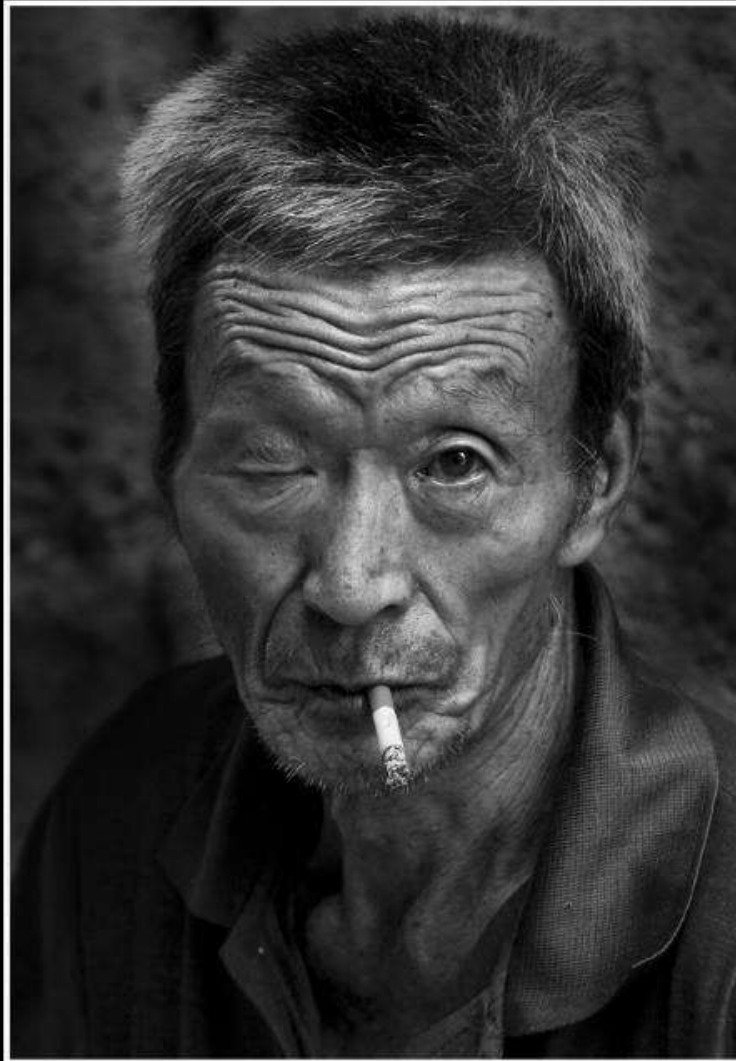
Personal likes/dislikes





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## Rules & Judging

Subject in the middle / thirds / centre of interest

Negative space

Leading Lines

Wrong time of day / Unnatural Colours

Even/uneven numbers

Can't see the face / eyes / highlights

Cropping vs amputating

Borders - yes or no

Distortion / Verticals not vertical

Monochrome must have from pure White To Black

Personal likes/dislikes

There are NOOOO rules in photography, only guidelines!!!!!!!



1. An Introduction to Judging
2. The pitfalls of judging
3. Getting the score right





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Eddie Sethna  
Hon RPS, FRPS, AFIAP  
An Analysis of Judging

In good judging I found that three attributes of the picture were taken into account:

1. What the picture communicates - the message





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Eddie Sethna  
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An Analysis of Judging

In good judging I found that three attributes of the picture were taken into account:

1. What the picture communicates - the message



It is neither essential nor important for a judge to find out what the author of the picture was trying to communicate. What matters is what feelings and thoughts it engenders in the viewer - the judge.





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# Eddie Sethna Hon RPS, FRPS, AFIAP An Analysis of Judging

In good judging I found that three attributes of the picture were taken into account:

## 2. The Content of the Picture - the medium





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# Eddie Sethna Hon RPS, FRPS, AFIAP An Analysis of Judging

In good judging I found that three attributes of the picture were taken into account:

## 2. The Content of the Picture - the medium



What appears good to the eye does not necessarily make a good photograph.





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Eddie Sethna  
Hon RPS, FRPS, AFIAP  
An Analysis of Judging

In good judging I found that three attributes of the picture were taken into account:

3. The Technical aspects of the picture





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## 3. The Technical aspects of the picture

If there are basic technical problems such as lack of focus, exposure/lighting and processing problems these are going to come into play even before you consider points 1 & 2.







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## Hendrik Ferreira FPSSA On Judging and Evaluation

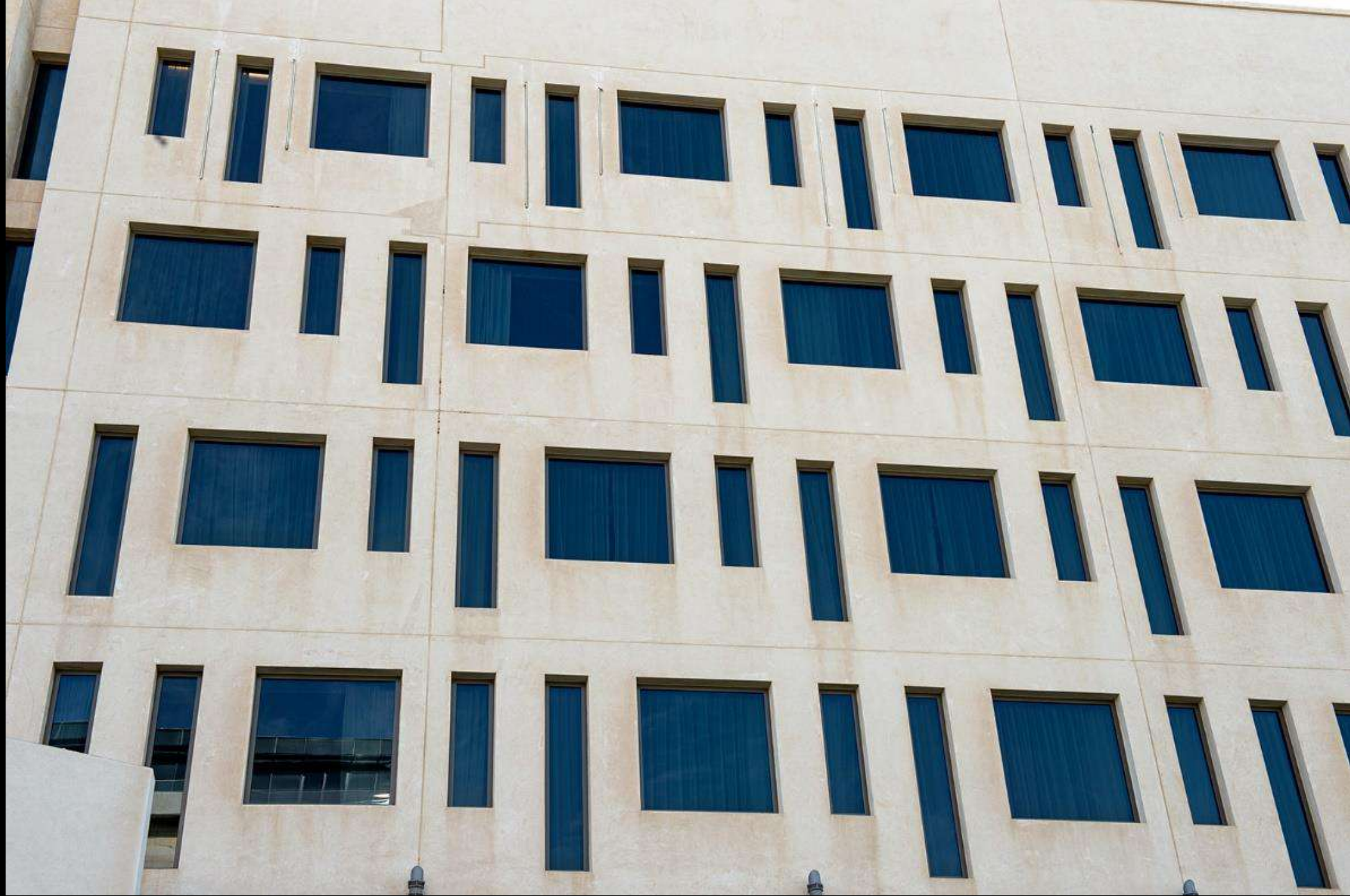


Perhaps in a large extent due to this  
technical dogma,  
club photography  
is sometimes experienced by  
outside art critics as perfect  
to the  
point of being sterile,  
predictable and boring.

However, good judging does require some flexibility in the weighting.



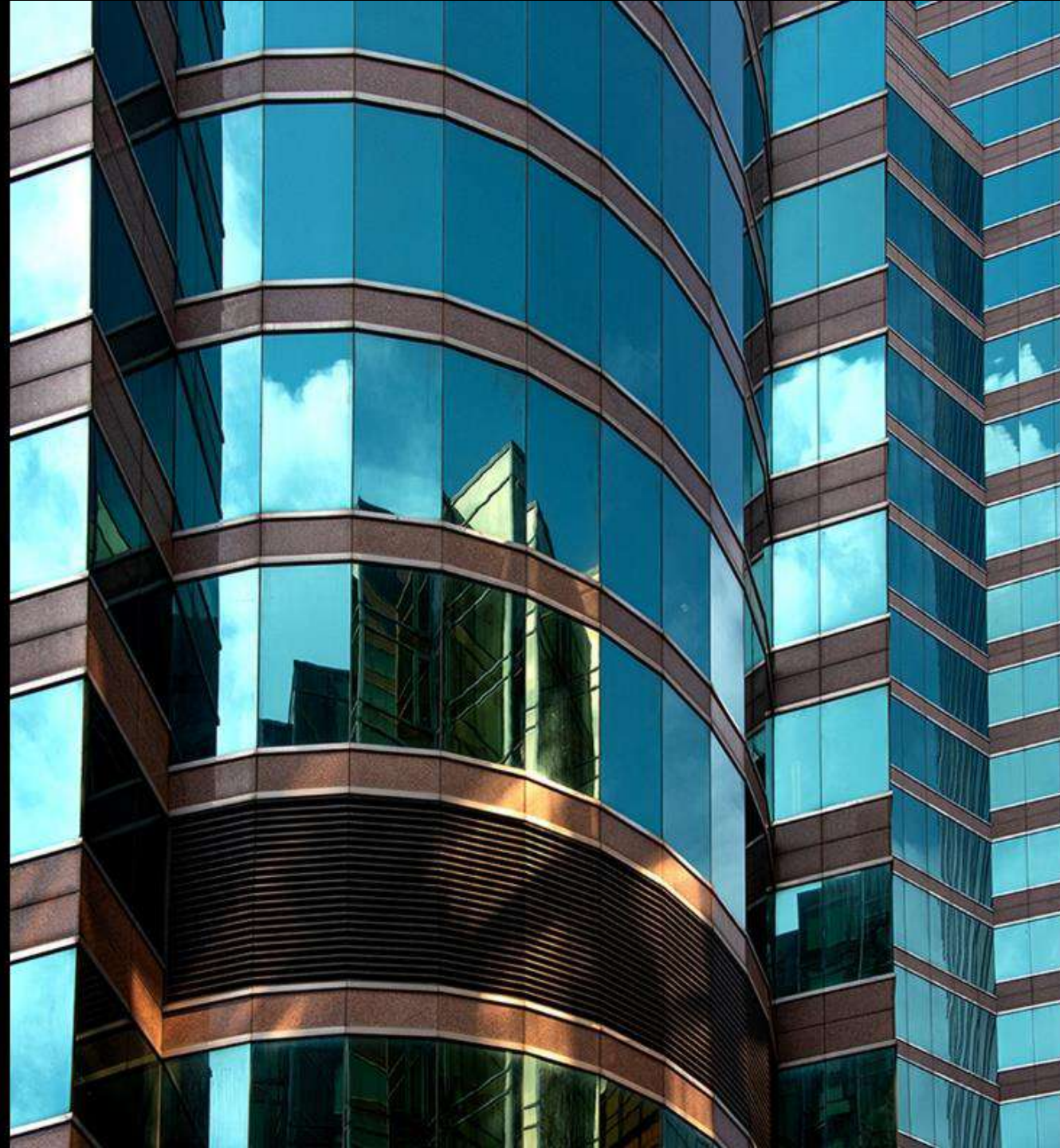




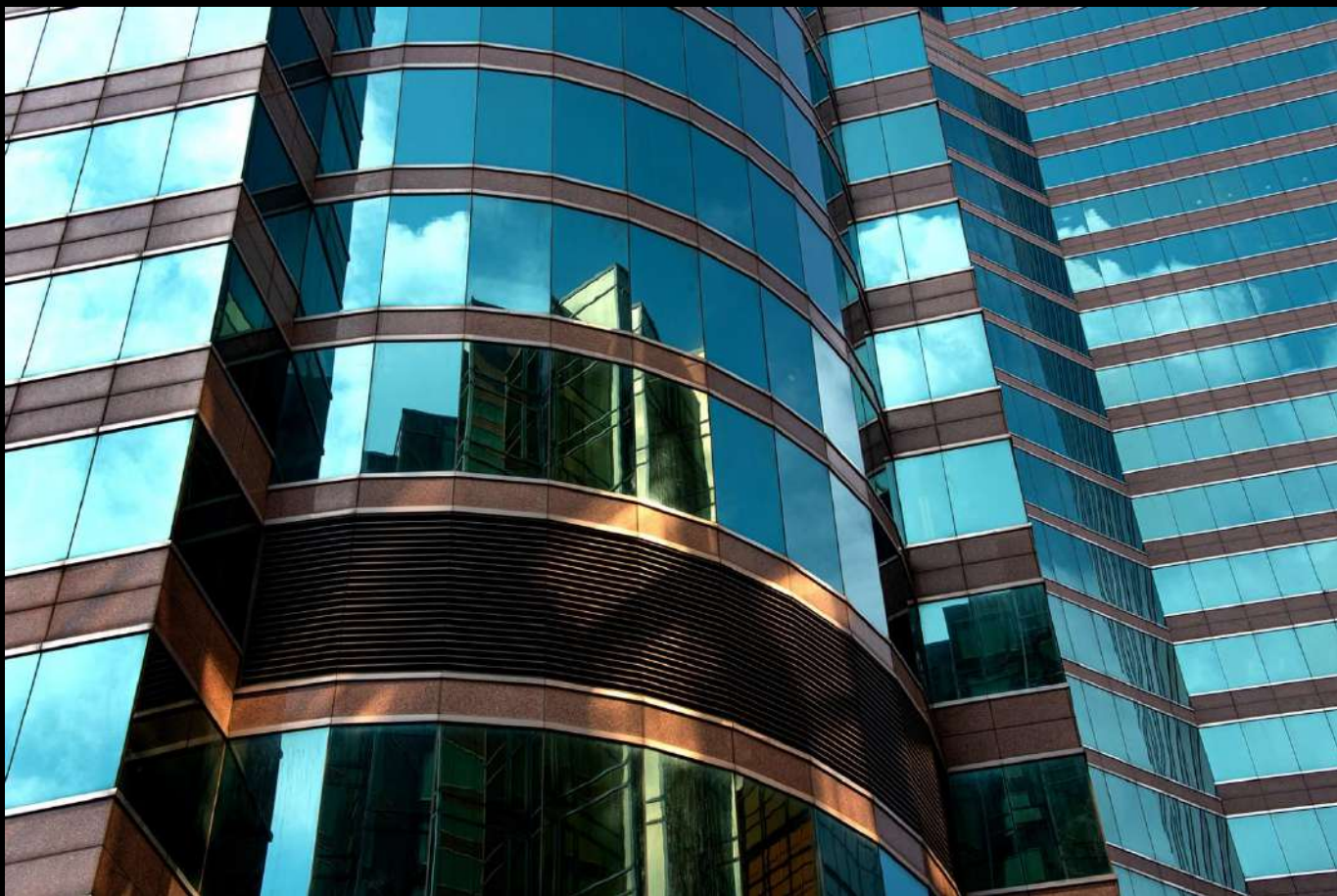
















## Best Rehashed 2023



Original



Rehashed

Peter Robertson

Lippanzaner Profile



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1. An Introduction to Judging
2. The pitfalls of judging
3. Getting the score right
4. How and what to say





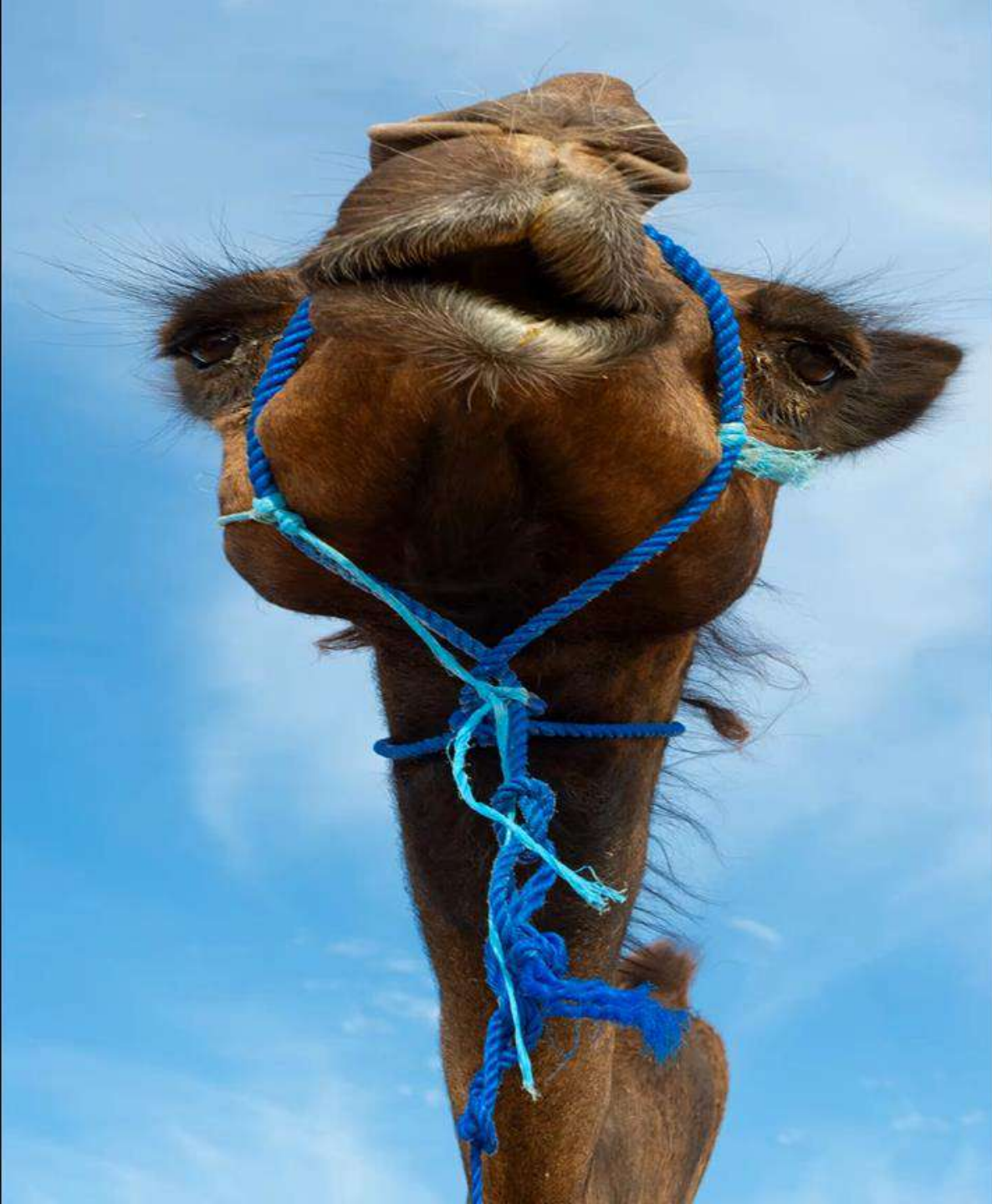
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## Hendrik Ferreira FPSSA On Judging and Evaluation

Through his commentary,  
this person is also an educator  
whose comments on a specific picture  
may influence the  
future work of several other learning  
and aspiring  
photographers in the audience.



A photograph is not GOOD  
just because you like it.



Nor is it BAD  
just because you don't like it.



A photograph is not GOOD  
just because you like it.

You judge the image,  
not the person or the place  
or the difficulty.

It doesn't matter what it is,  
you judge the image  
as presented.

Nor is it BAD  
just because you don't like it.

You judge the image,





# You judge the image,



# NOT the Exif Data



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Reading  
&  
Viewing



The important point about judging is that you need to have the knowledge and understanding of photography to have confidence in yourself.

Provided you are clear and confident in your judgement, and are able to support it, then you are on the right track.





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Reading  
&  
Viewing



The important point about judging is that you need to have the knowledge and understanding of photography to have confidence in yourself.

Provided you are clear and confident in your judgement, and are able to support it, then you are on the right track.

**BUT**

You do need to listen to others and be open to different viewpoints.



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Anyone who aspires to be a judge  
should have experienced photography  
at all levels.

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PSSA Senior Club Competition Winner June 2024

Kim Stevens from CTPS is our June winner! Kim, congratulations on your winning image – Offshore. Click on the image for more details.



PSSA Junior Club Competition Winner June 2024

Betzi Pierce from Fish Hoek Photographic Society is our June winner! Betzi, congratulations on your winning image – Anchored in tradition. Click on the image for more details.



PSSA Website Competition Winner June 2024

Eric Bosman from Kriel Fotoklub is our June winner! Eric, congratulations on your winning image – Ou Tande. Click on the image for more details.





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Although not necessarily having produced all categories of photography, or being expert in them, a judge should have seen many examples.



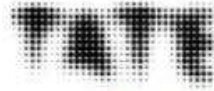
FIAP BIENNIALS [www.fiap.net](http://www.fiap.net)





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Some background knowledge of art can empower a judge to identify and understand artistic styles, concepts and ideas.



Search

Shop

BECOME A  
MEMBER



John Singer Sargent  
*Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*  
1885-6



Wassily Kandinsky  
*Cossacks*  
1910-1



Henri Matisse  
*The Snail*  
1953



Salvador Dalí  
*Lobster Telephone*  
1936





Reading  
&  
Viewing





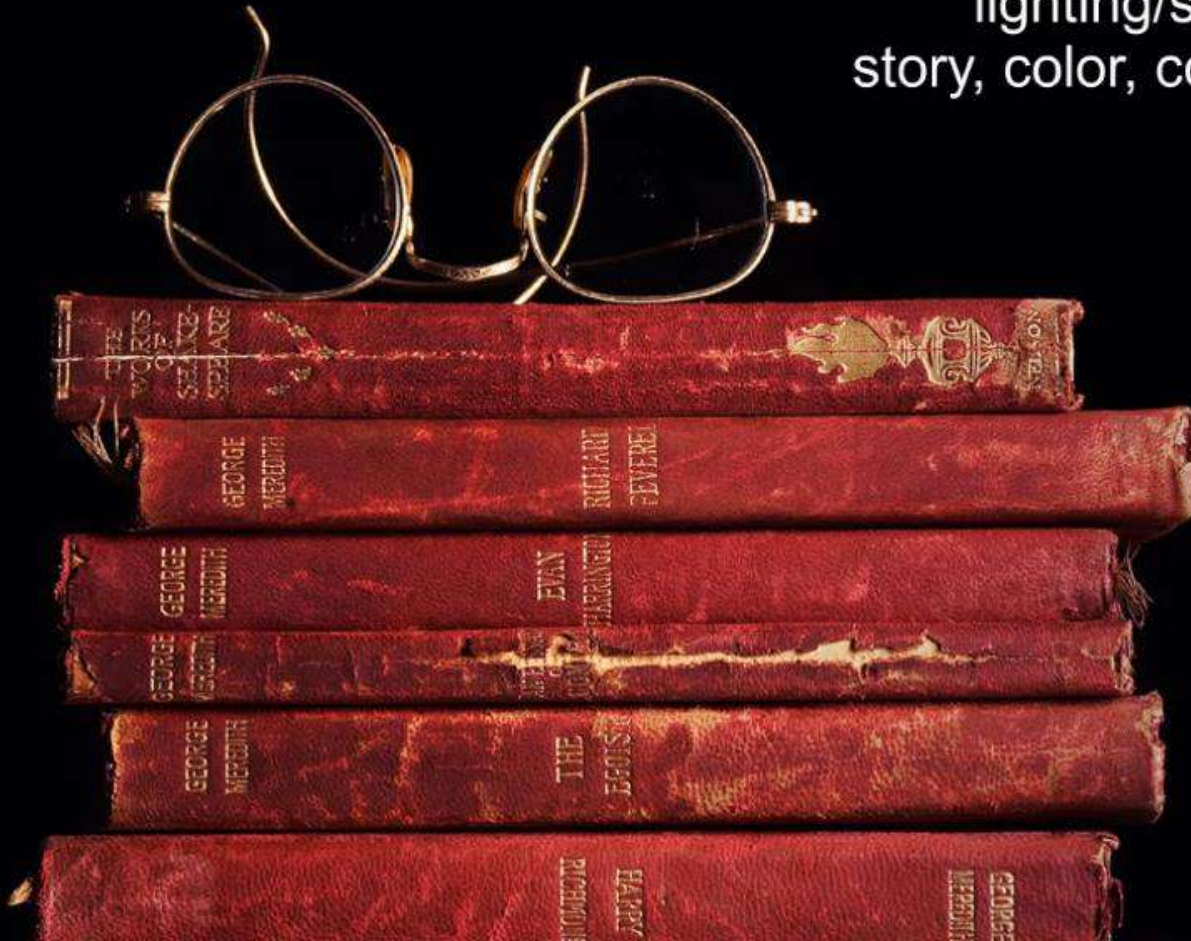
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## Richard Lynch Good Photography

Good photography takes into account many things:  
lighting/shadow, composition, exposure, subject,  
story, color, contrasts, sharpness, depth of field, and more

- often intangible -

Lectures







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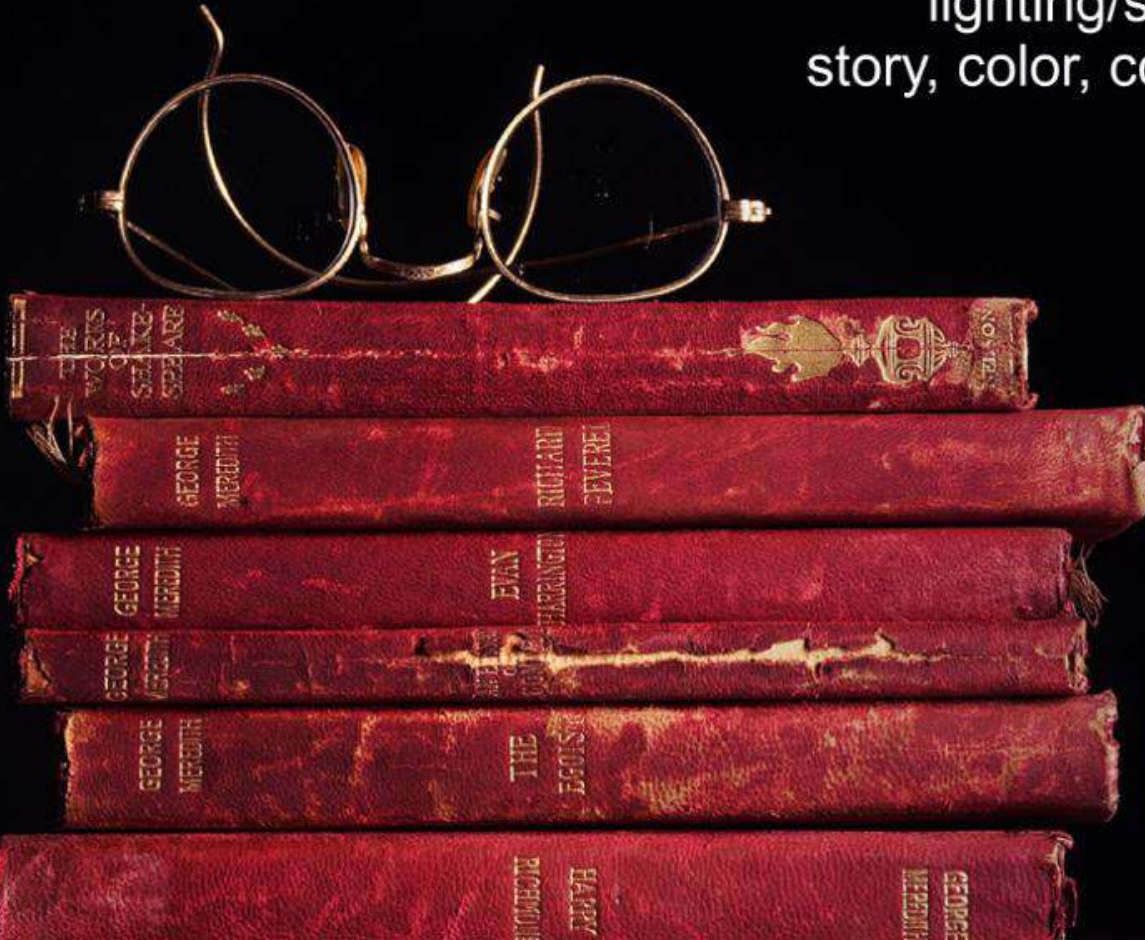
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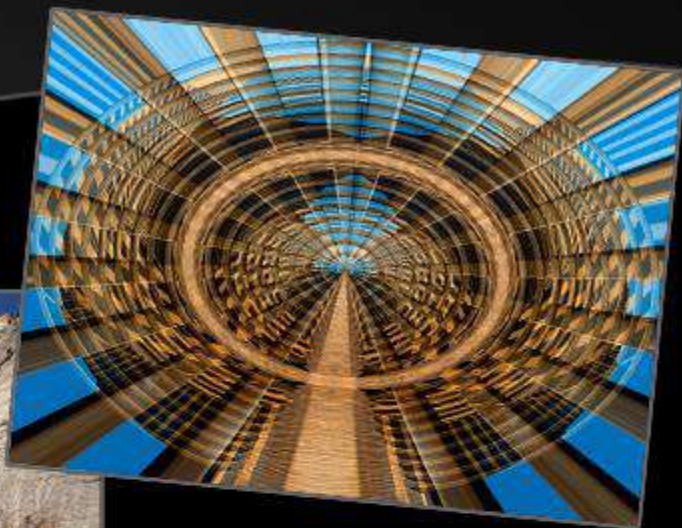
The important point about  
judging is that you need to  
have the knowledge and  
understanding of photography  
to have confidence in yourself.







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Lectures







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## What is judging all about?

Looking for the message that a picture is trying to convey  
Analysing the picture content and treatment  
Considering the technical aspects  
Delivering it in a constructive package





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And we are all different!





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**And we are all different!**

It is not about promoting your own ideas,  
neither being over critical or negative (looking for faults, something wrong).



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# PSQA

Although a judge may be able to contribute to club members' craft of photography, this is ultimately not their task at hand.

The main task of a PSQA (PSQ accredited judge) is to assist fellow photographers to develop as photographic artists.

Discussion





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What do you think about that statement?

Discussion



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**What do you think about that statement?**

Answer from one JAP participant follows:



Discussion





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# PSQA

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The main task of a PSQA (PSQ accredited judge) is to assist fellow photographers to develop as photographic artists.

## What do you think about that statement?



A photograph is the result of how something ordinary or extraordinary has been seen, interpreted and captured in a meaningful way.

We all interpret things differently and alternative interpretations or views from judges, especially with regard to lighting, composition, storytelling and emotion are valuable.

Valid comments and criticism broaden the reference base of the photographer to inform future interpretations, to create images with stronger impact to a broader audience.

The true photographic artist must use his own creativity and imagination to achieve the perfect composition to convey the correct vision or message, knowing what works through the eyes of others makes this easier!



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## Discussion

1. How does this image evoke emotion, feeling & mood?
2. What is the story?
3. Does the photographic craft support the image and how does it do so?
4. Considering each of these factors what score would you give this image?





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Discussion

1. How does this image evoke emotion, feeling & mood?
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What are your answers?



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Discussion

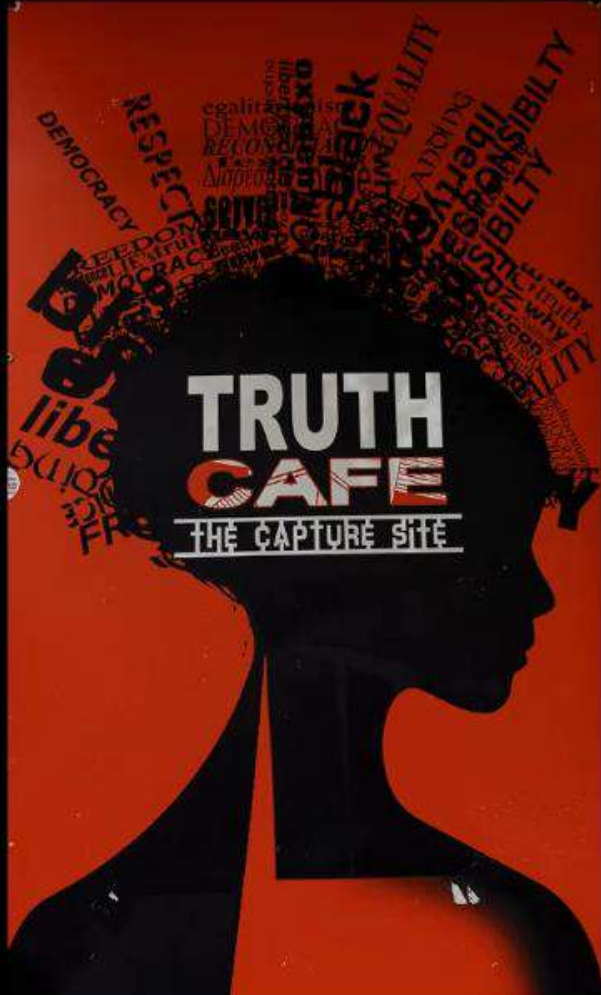
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What are your answers?





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## JAP

is an ongoing process -  
it does not end  
when you receive  
your accreditation.

There is always  
something more  
to learn.

