



# The Photographic Society of South Africa

JAP  
Workshops



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



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

## 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.







The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

Ken Holland ARPS, DPAGB  
Looking at Photographs

In my opinion a good judge does not pass judgement. He/she should regard judging as appraisal, assessment and analysis.

In other words judging should be evaluative, not judgemental.

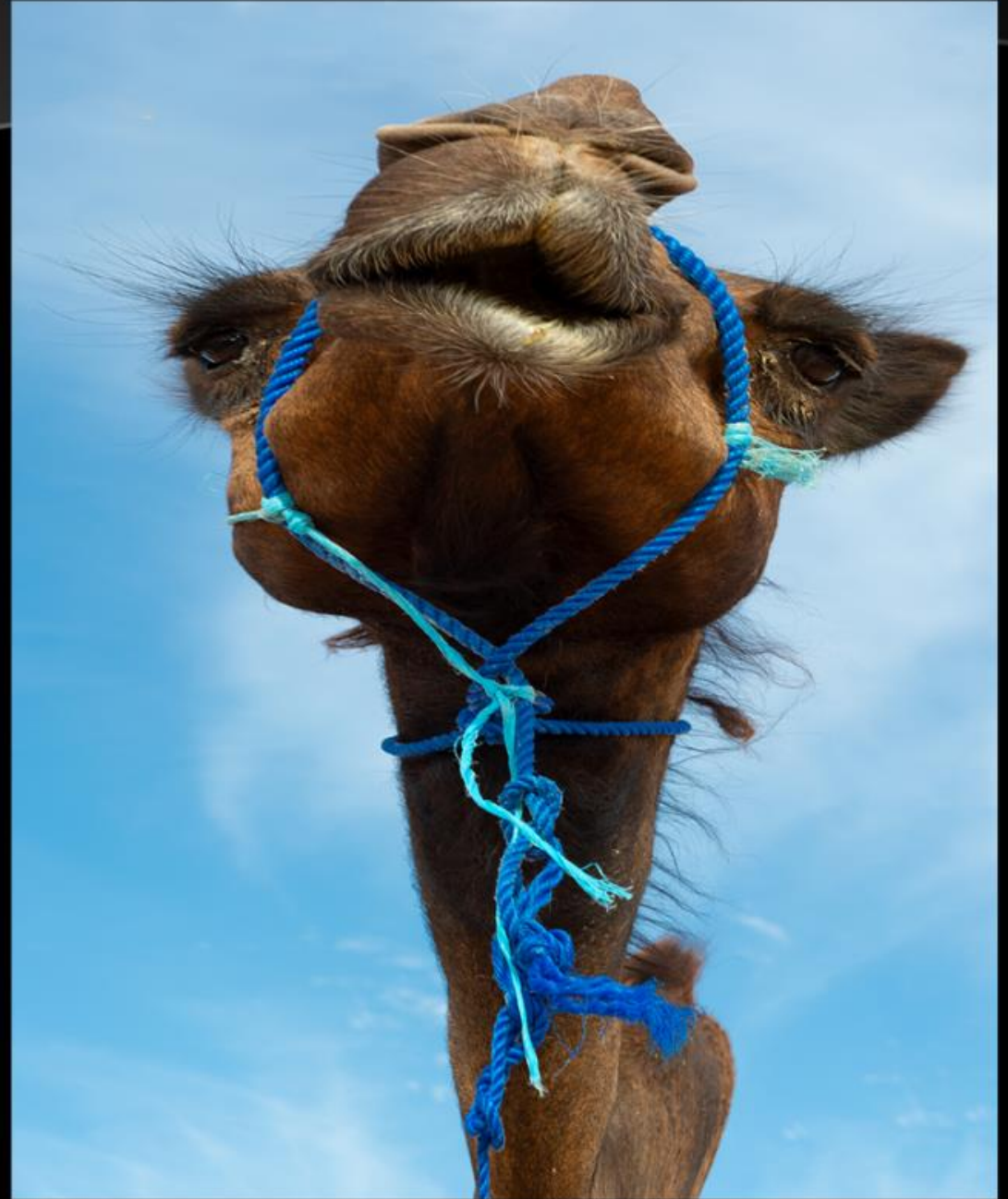




The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

A photograph is not GOOD  
just because you like it.

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





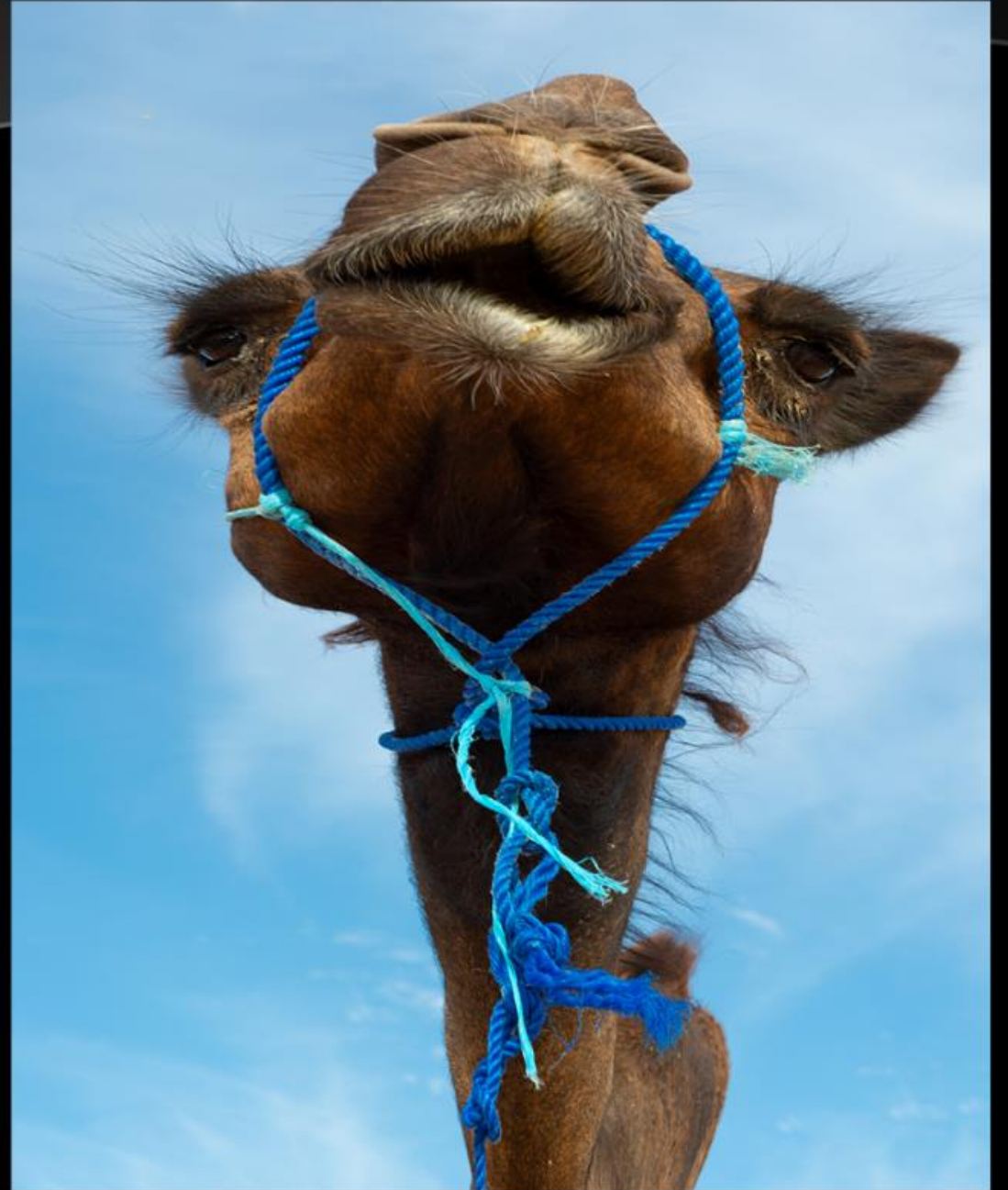


The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

A photograph is not GOOD  
just because you like it.

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

BUT – PERSONAL OPINIONS AND EXPERIENCES WILL  
ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE





The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

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.

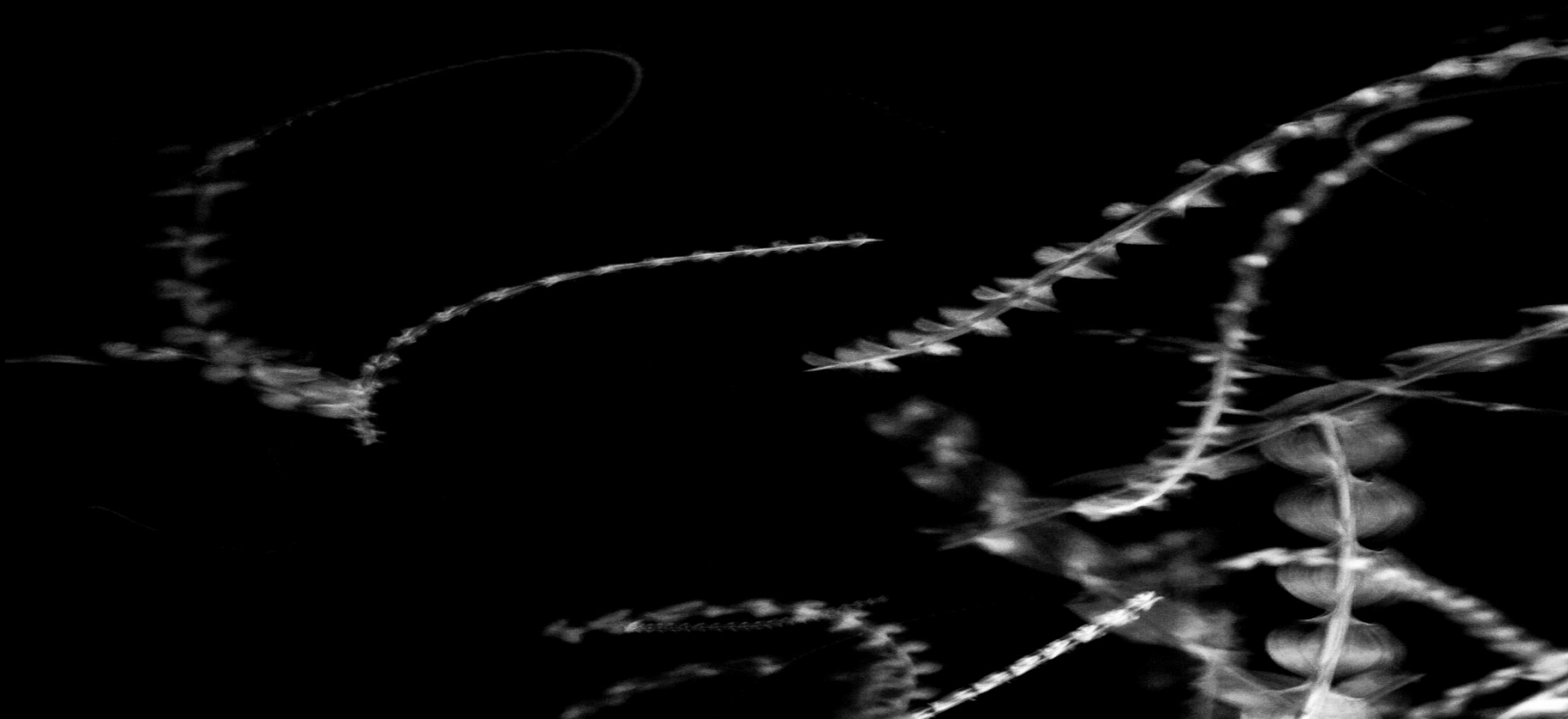






# The Photographic Society of South Africa

Appreciation of all art, including photography,  
is an emotional exercise





The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

Appreciation of all art, including photography,  
is an emotional exercise  
which may be  
pleasurable, depressing, moving ...

The importance of judging/evaluating/assessing cannot be denied.





The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

Appreciation of all art, including photography,  
is an emotional exercise  
which may be  
pleasurable, depressing, moving ...

The importance of judging/evaluating/assessing cannot be denied.

And yet judges are so often the subject of criticism  
and seldom of praise  
so much so that you wonder why anyone is willing to judge.



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

Appreciation of all art, including photography,  
is an emotional exercise  
which may be  
pleasurable, depressing, moving ...

The importance of judging/evaluating/assessing cannot be denied.

And yet judges are so often the subject of criticism  
and seldom of praise  
so much so that you wonder why anyone is willing to judge.

The subject never fails to arouse great passion and controversy.





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



Weak	7-8	-----	4
Average	9-10	-----	14
Good	11-13	-----	9
Excellent	14-15	-----	1

an infinite variety of  
perception, interpretation and execution."





Weak	7-8	-----	4
Average	9-10	-----	14
Good	11-13	-----	9
Excellent	14-15	-----	1

an infinite variety of  
perception, interpretation and execution."

8 - Background noisy with sunlight additionally detracting from the bird. Bird is not totally dark or in full silhouette. Image does not work as is. Suggested to crop the image to retain focus on the bird.

14 - Beautiful moody/atmospheric image with a story



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# So then - WHY JUDGE?

## CLUB - To Teach

A good photo is always  
the one about to be taken

and it can be better from what was learned and put into practise  
from comments made by the judges.



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

You have scored the images

now comes the difficult part

**HOW and WHAT to SAY**





The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# IDENTIFY the GOOD



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# IDENTIFY the GOOD

it is the feelings, emotions and mood that a picture conveys  
which form the basis of evaluation.



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# IDENTIFY the GOOD

it is the feelings, emotions and mood that a picture conveys  
which form the basis of evaluation.







The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# IDENTIFY the BAD

what doesn't work in the picture - art or craft -  
composition, focus, exposure, post processing etc.





The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# IDENTIFY the BAD

what doesn't work in the picture - art or craft -  
composition, focus, exposure, post processing etc.

SUGGEST

how it could be improved







The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# IDENTIFY the BAD

what doesn't work in the picture - art or craft -  
composition, focus, exposure, post processing etc.



SUGGEST

how it could be improved







The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# IDENTIFY the BAD

what doesn't work in the picture - art or craft -  
composition, focus, exposure, post processing etc.



BE CAREFUL however  
of creating a whole new image  
Is that what the photographer wanted?





# The Photographic Society of South Africa



If everything works, do you have to Identify the bad and suggest how to improve it?





# The Photographic Society of South Africa



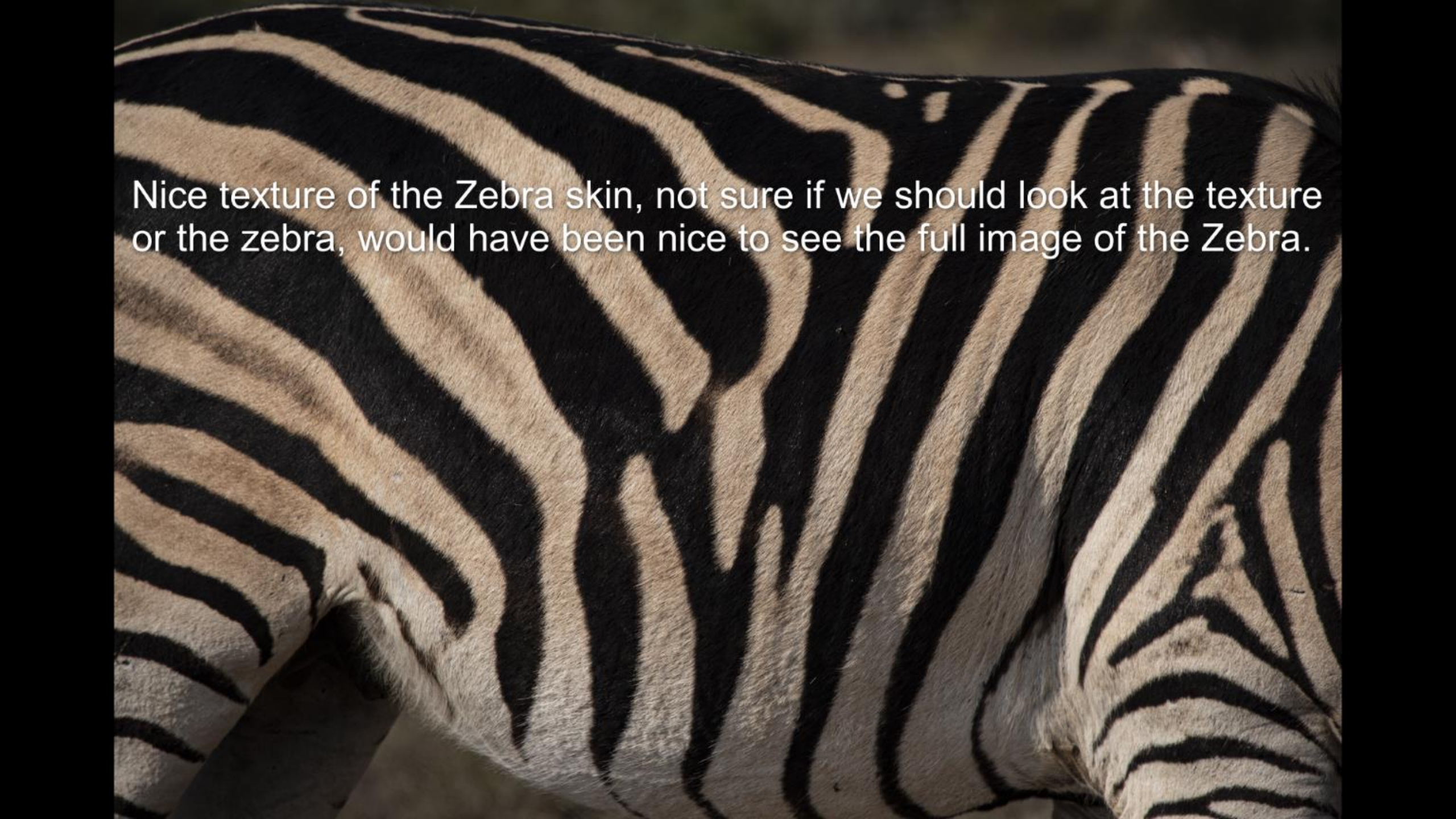
If everything works, do you have to Identify the bad and suggest how to improve it?

Even if you haven't given it a score of 15?



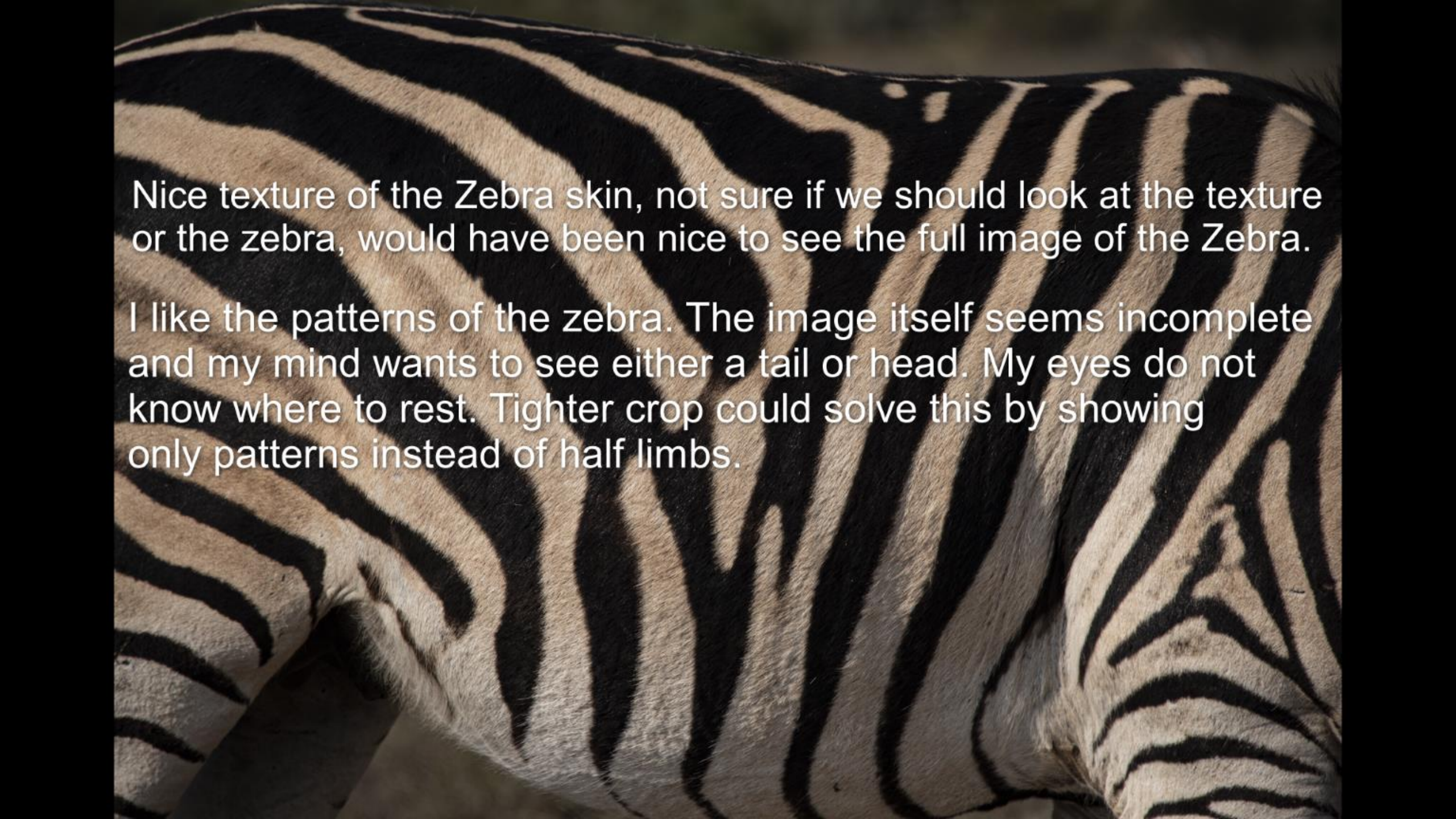




A close-up photograph of a zebra's skin, showing the intricate pattern of black and white stripes. The stripes are thick and wavy, running diagonally across the frame. The texture of the fur is clearly visible, with individual hairs appearing as fine lines within the stripes. The lighting is soft, highlighting the contrast between the dark and light areas of the skin.

Nice texture of the Zebra skin, not sure if we should look at the texture or the zebra, would have been nice to see the full image of the Zebra.



A close-up photograph of a zebra's body, focusing on the intricate black and white striped pattern of its skin. The stripes vary in width and direction, creating a complex, wavy texture. The lighting is soft, highlighting the fine details of the fur.

Nice texture of the Zebra skin, not sure if we should look at the texture or the zebra, would have been nice to see the full image of the Zebra.

I like the patterns of the zebra. The image itself seems incomplete and my mind wants to see either a tail or head. My eyes do not know where to rest. Tighter crop could solve this by showing only patterns instead of half limbs.





The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

Be careful in what you say  
and how you say it  
Just as images are interpreted so  
too are our comments







# The Photographic Society of South Africa



I am a little concerned about your comments regarding the white lily, as I don't recall sharpening it at all (I try not to with flowers and animals). The final image is a stack of about 8 RAW files, and those all get my standard 15% texture and 15% clarify adjustment when I import into Lightroom. When I look at the image on my monitor it looks fine, so maybe it's time for another calibration!

Anyway, even though I like it too, I won't use it - it's not worth the risk!





The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

Be careful in what you say and how you say it

Just as images are interpreted so too are our comments

Remember that an image belongs to someone and  
he or she has feelings about that image and for most  
of us a criticism of an image feels like a criticism  
of ourselves.



# The Photographic Society of South Africa



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.





# The Photographic Society of South Africa



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

Don't try to show how much you know!





The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

## Ken Holland ARPS, DPAGB Looking at Photographs

*"Don't produce weighty criticism's based on your own personal opinion:  
we all work in different ways, and, because a picture is very different  
from the sort of approach which you, personally, would use, you  
should not criticise it."*

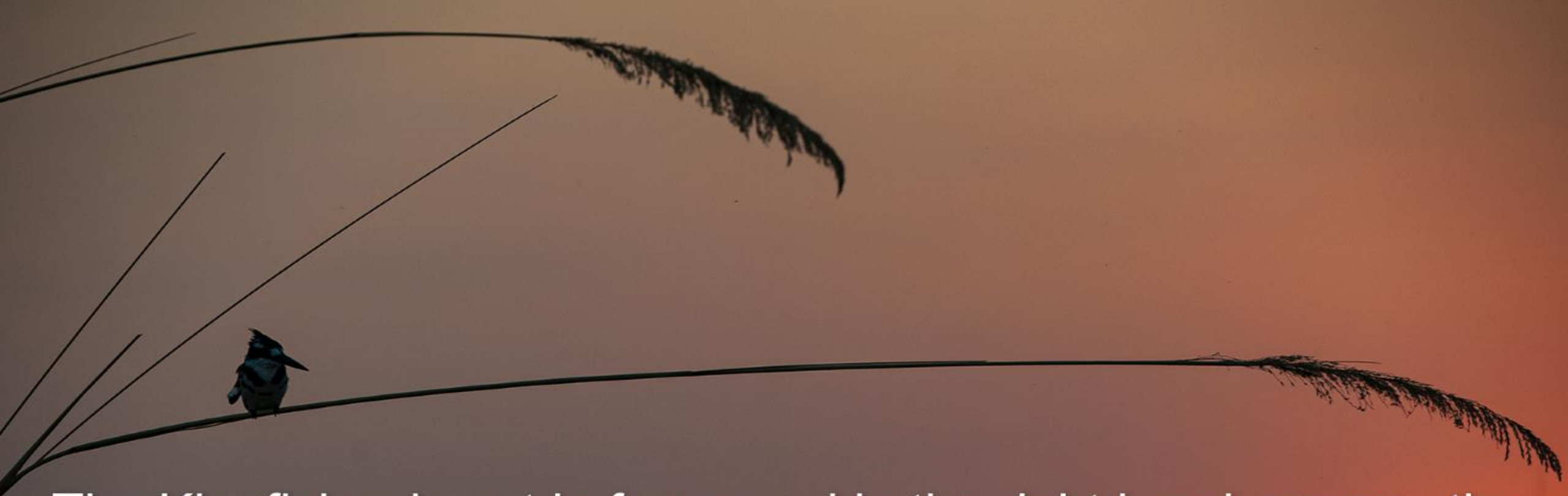


The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

## Ken Holland ARPS, DPAGB Looking at Photographs

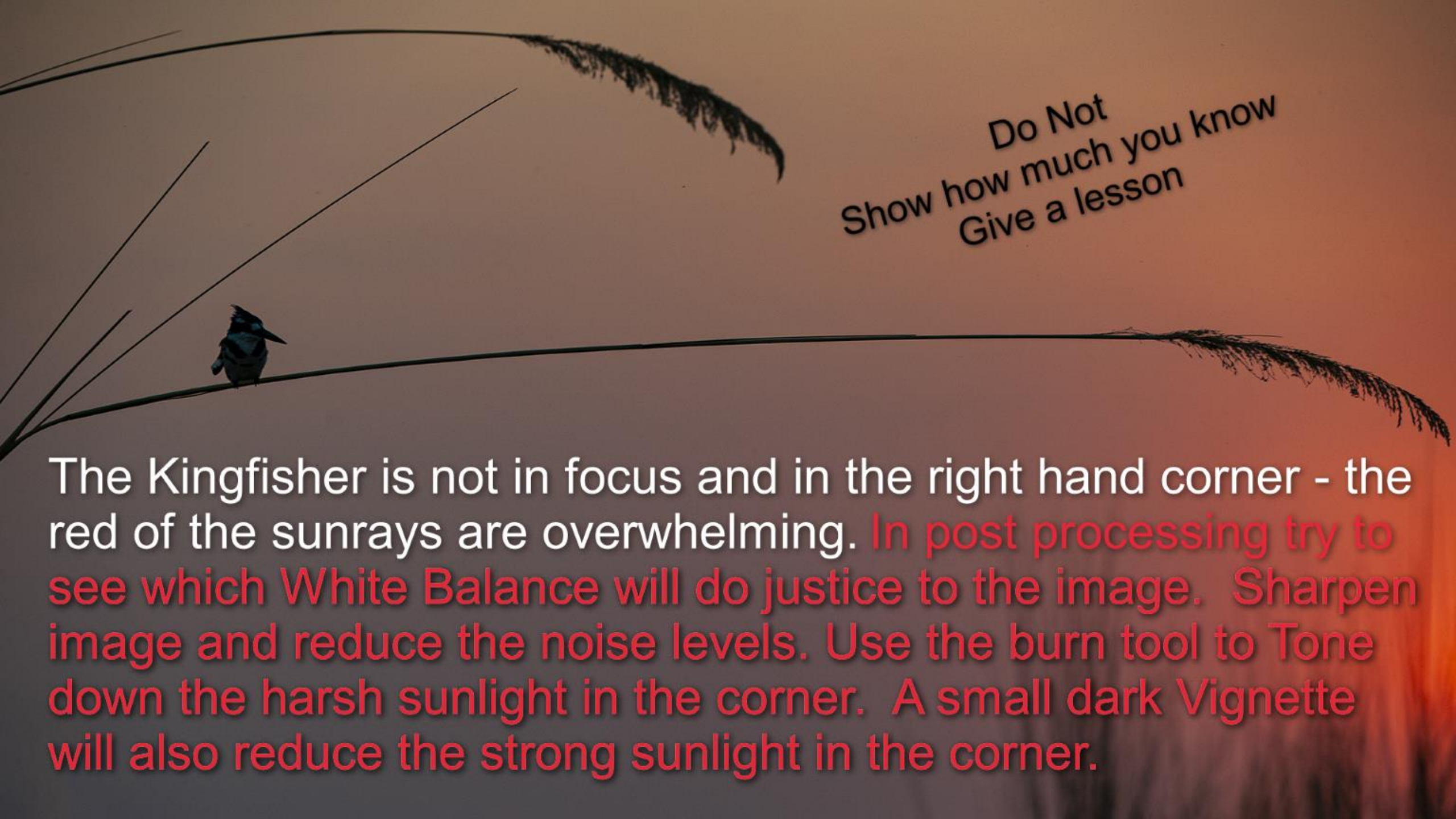
*"Don't produce weighty criticism's based on your own personal opinion: we all work in different ways, and, because a picture is very different from the sort of approach which you, personally, would use, you should not criticise it."*

*If you cannot appreciate another photographer's work do not assume that it is his/her fault. It may just be that you missed the point of the photograph. And all judges can be guilty of this."*



The Kingfisher is not in focus and in the right hand corner - the red of the sunrays are overwhelming. In post processing try to see which White Balance will do justice to the image. Sharpen image and reduce the noise levels. Use the burn tool to Tone down the harsh sunlight in the corner. A small dark Vignette will also reduce the strong sunlight in the corner.



A photograph of a kingfisher perched on a thin branch. The background is a warm, orange-hued sunset sky. Several reeds are visible, some in the foreground and some in the background. The kingfisher is positioned on the left side of the frame, facing right. The overall composition is simple and focuses on the bird and the natural setting.

Do Not  
Show how much you know  
Give a lesson

The Kingfisher is not in focus and in the right hand corner - the red of the sunrays are overwhelming. In post processing try to see which White Balance will do justice to the image. Sharpen image and reduce the noise levels. Use the burn tool to Tone down the harsh sunlight in the corner. A small dark Vignette will also reduce the strong sunlight in the corner.



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# Do NOT

Describe the scene

Use cliches

Nit pick

Show how much you know

Give a lesson

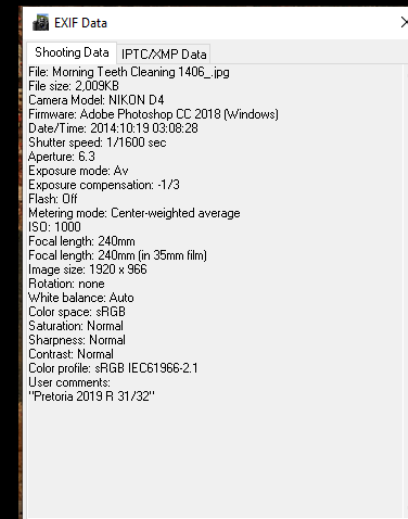




The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# Do NOT

# JUDGE THE EXIF DATA







The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# Do NOT JUDGE THE EXIF DATA



EXIF Data

Shooting Data IPTC/XMP Data

File: Morning Teeth Cleaning 1406\_.jpg  
File size: 2.009KB  
Camera Model: NIKON D4  
Firmware: Adobe Photoshop CC 2018 (Windows)  
Date/Time: 2014:10:19 03:08:28  
Shutter speed: 1/1600 sec  
Aperture: f/6.3  
Exposure mode: Av  
Exposure compensation: -1/3  
Flash: Off  
Metering mode: Center-weighted average  
ISO: 1000  
Focal length: 240mm  
Focal length: 240mm (in 35mm film)  
Image size: 1920 x 966  
Rotation: none  
White balance: Auto  
Color space: sRGB  
Saturation: Normal  
Sharpness: Normal  
Contrast: Normal  
Color profile: sRGB IEC61966-2.1  
User comments:  
"Pretoria 2013 R 31/32"



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

Do



Be  
Positive  
Honest  
Confident







The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

Do

Be  
Positive  
Honest  
Confident

If you don't know - say so.  
None of us know everything.



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

Do

Be  
Positive  
Honest  
Confident

If you don't know - say so.  
None of us know everything.

Look before you leap - think before you comment





The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# Do NOT

Describe the scene

Use cliches

Nit pick

Show how much you know

Give a lesson

Criticise the author

Make a whole new picture

Suggest changes that couldn't be done

Make assumptions



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# Do NOT Make assumptions







The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

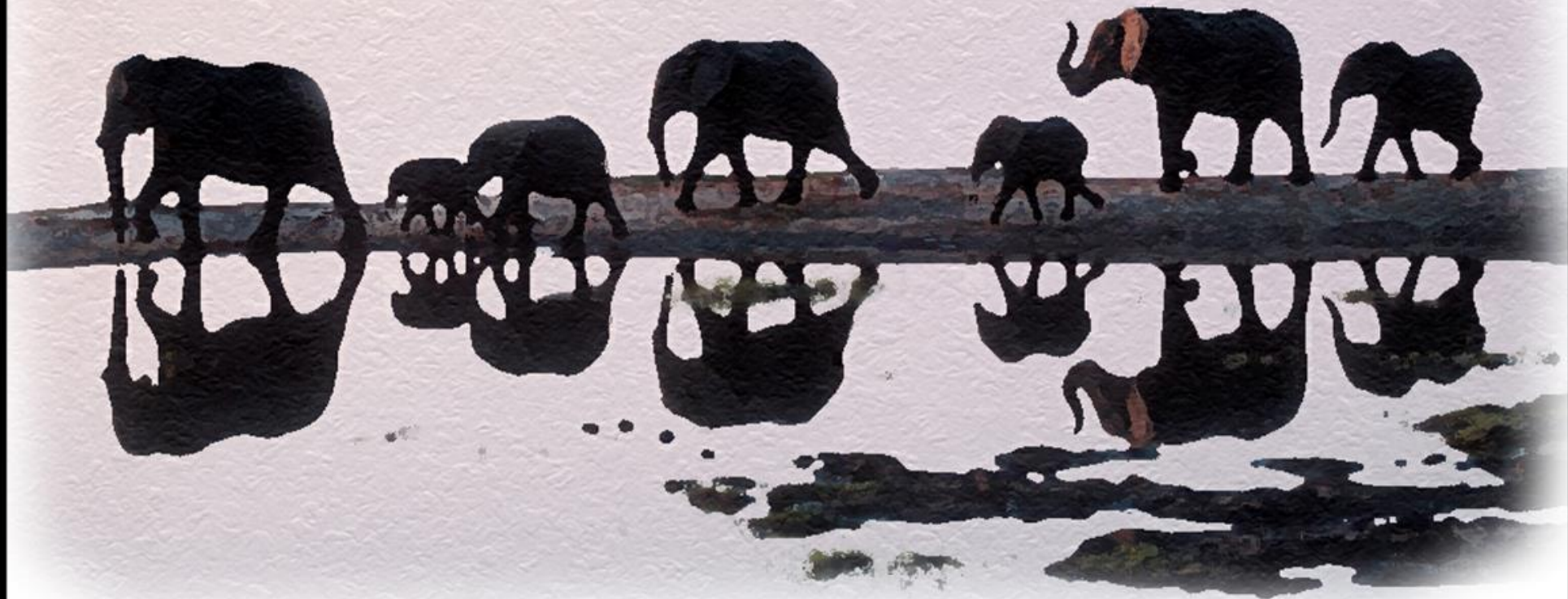
# Do NOT

# Assume – Ass u me



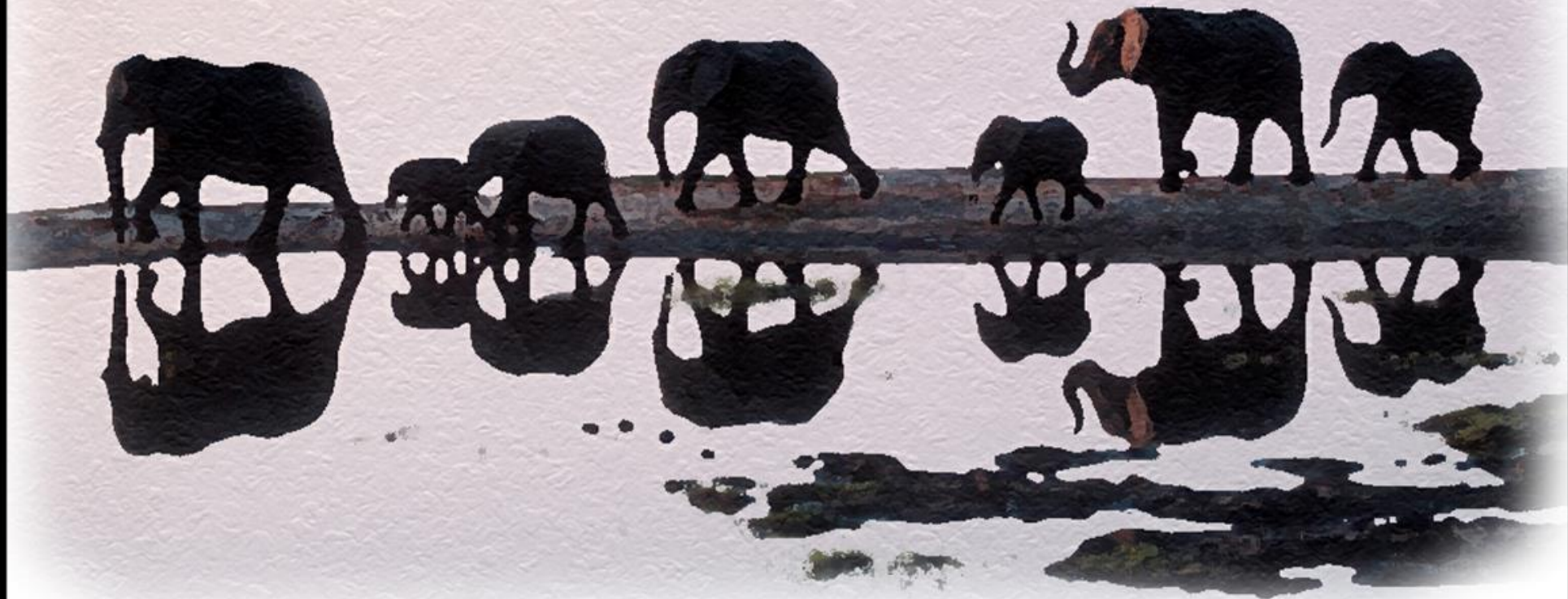


Disqualified		-----	2
Weak	7-8	-----	10
Average	9-10	-----	9
Good	11-13	-----	5
Excellent	14-15	-----	0





Disqualified  
Image of a water colour painting.  
Image of another Authors work.





Disqualified  
Image of a water colour painting.  
Image of another Authors work.





## The Photographic Society of South Africa

Do Not  
Make assumptions  
Criticise



Correcting bad picture.  
This looks like an attempt to make  
something out of a bad photograph.  
Looks like photoshop was used to  
turn it into an oil painting or similar filter.





Picture is soft on the eyes, could be enhanced if the exposure on the bird was a bit darker to form a silhouette.

The top leaf is a bit distracting. Spots must be removed. It would be nice if the angle could be changed to have a bit more of the red sky in the picture.

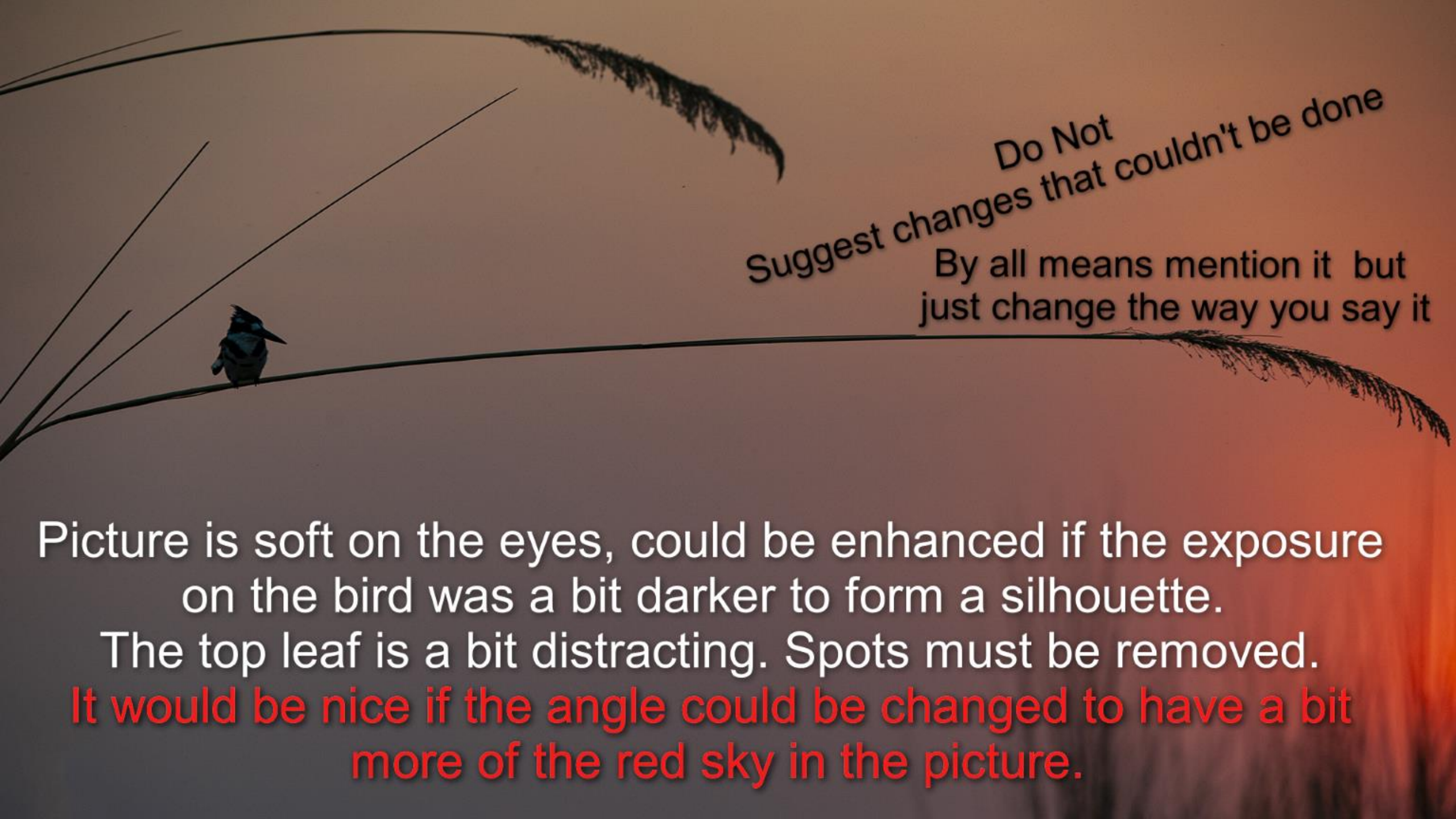




Picture is soft on the eyes, could be enhanced if the exposure on the bird was a bit darker to form a silhouette.

The top leaf is a bit distracting. Spots must be removed.

It would be nice if the angle could be changed to have a bit more of the red sky in the picture.



Do Not  
Suggest changes that couldn't be done  
By all means mention it but  
just change the way you say it

Picture is soft on the eyes, could be enhanced if the exposure on the bird was a bit darker to form a silhouette.

The top leaf is a bit distracting. Spots must be removed.

It would be nice if the angle could be changed to have a bit more of the red sky in the picture.

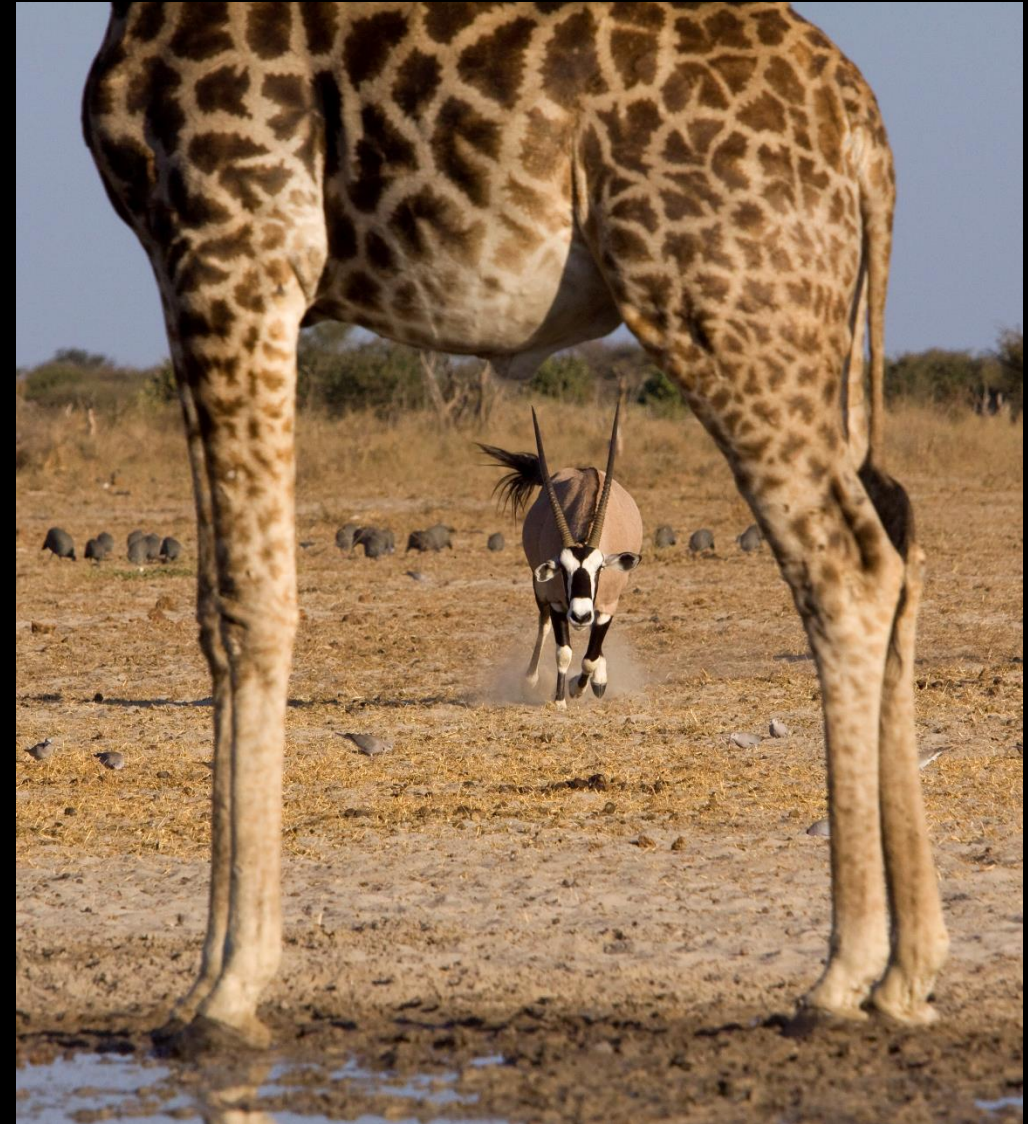




# The Photographic Society of South Africa

Judge what you see and don't make assumptions

– you can always query something afterwards privately.





The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# Do NOT

Make assumptions  
Repeat yourself  
Tell your own story  
Use should





# The Photographic Society of South Africa



It's a nice picture but



## The Photographic Society of South Africa



I am struggling to keep my eyes from going to the little boat at the back every time I look at the image. For the small boat to be included the image should be cropped at the gap between the front boats otherwise the little boat should be removed to keep viewer's eyes focussed on front subjects.





# The Photographic Society of South Africa

Could not Should



I am struggling to keep my eyes from going to the little boat at the back every time I look at the image. For the small boat to be included the image **should** be cropped at the gap between the front boats otherwise the little boat **should** be removed to keep viewer's eyes focussed on front subjects.



# The Photographic Society of South Africa



Don't get too taken up with one little point that you ignore/forget the rest.





The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# The use of



use it in context - I like the image  
but don't be dogmatic



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# The use of



Say "The Image" rather than "I"

it takes out the personal opinion  
and concentrates on the image rather than the judge



Halving the image  
to exclude the 2nd  
baby will make the  
image stronger.



Halving the image  
to exclude the 2nd  
baby will make the  
image stronger.

Will it?





Halving the image  
to exclude the 2nd  
baby will make the  
image stronger.

Will it?

Look before  
you leap



Halving the image  
to exclude the 2nd  
baby <sup>could</sup> will make the  
image stronger.

Will it?

Look before  
you leap





Incoherent composite image.

None of subject in focus - composite doesn't work



Incoherent composite image.

None of subject in focus - composite doesn't work



Are these comments teaching anyone anything?







The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# Do

JUDGE what you SEE

COMMENT what you KNOW



# The Photographic Society of South Africa

JAP



As part of the discussion last Sunday (2nd session) we were discussing images with subjects moving into and out of frame and what constituted a good composition relating to that. Particularly, the notion that the subject always has to be looking or be perceived to be moving into space to constitute a good composition.

My view is that this is not always the case, as a composition contrary to those guidelines can still constitute a good image and be quite dynamic, depending of course on the image.

And as a judge, one should not automatically mark down unconventional composition.

Alan Nixon





# The Photographic Society of South Africa

JAP



A good example where walking out of the frame works as the leading lines are very strong and support the direction that the subjects are moving in. Thus constituting a creative composition.



# The Photographic Society of South Africa

JAP



With such a strong diagonal structure on the right, in this instance the subject walking out of frame on the left balances that diagonal structure on the right. The white background behind the subject also provides a good space to highlight the subject.





# The Photographic Society of South Africa

JAP



Because of the slope of the walk way which is tilting away from the camera and the dynamic leading lines following the same direction, the subject is perfectly placed and is comfortably balanced with her back to the viewer.



# The Photographic Society of South Africa

JAP



An extraordinary image where the subject is far right moving out of frame to the right but because she is looking back into the image it's well balanced and creates a dynamic composition





# The Photographic Society of South Africa

JAP



Everything says this image is incorrectly composed, but it has an impact which compels the viewer to look longer and ponder the reason why. A great piece of art. The brickwork pattern is also very strong in the image which helps balance the composition. A good example where the placement of the couple is neither right nor wrong, it just is.



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

Do

Be  
Positive  
Honest  
Confident

If you don't know - say so.  
None of us know everything.





The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# Do

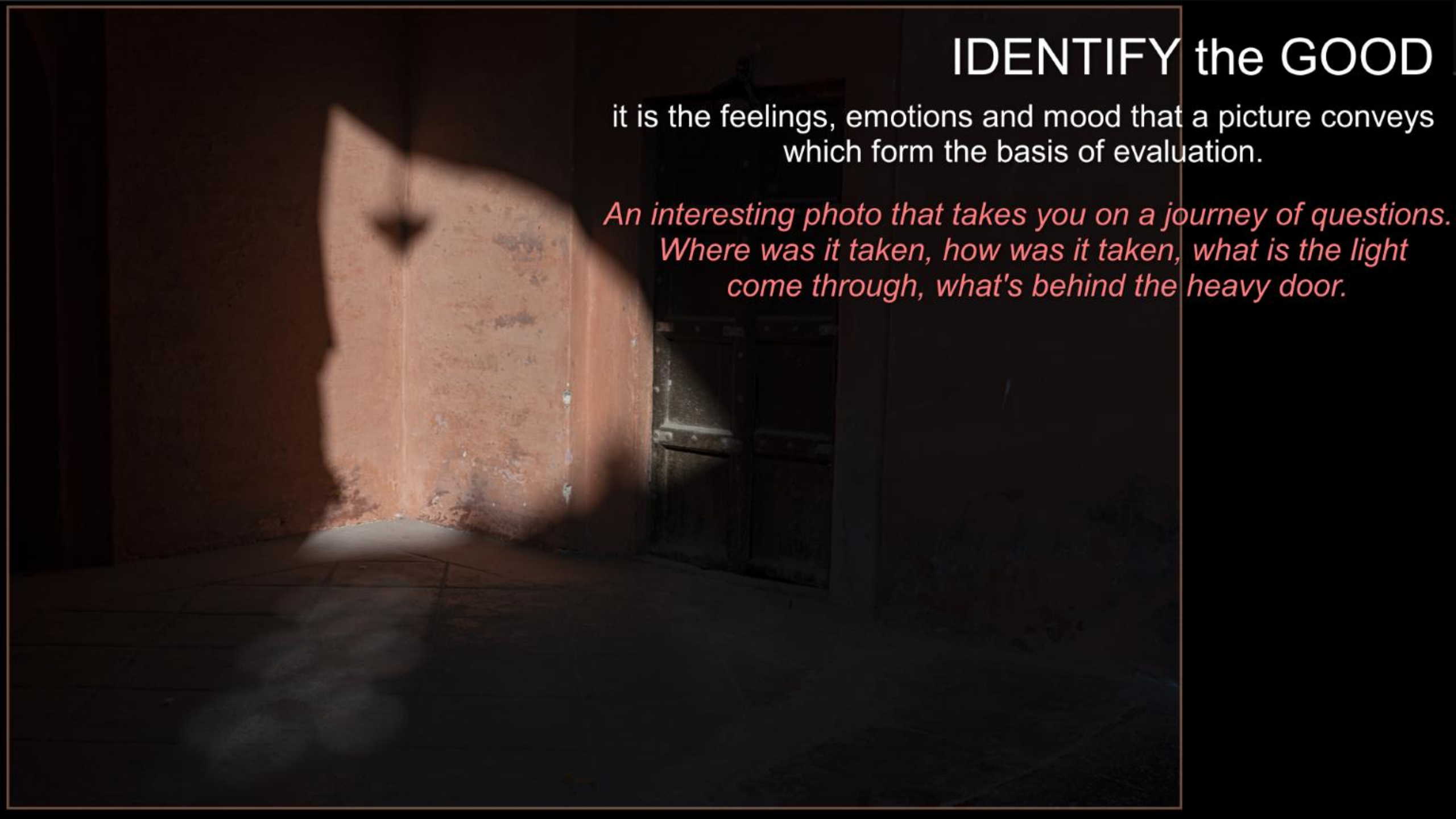
JUDGE what you SEE

COMMENT what you KNOW

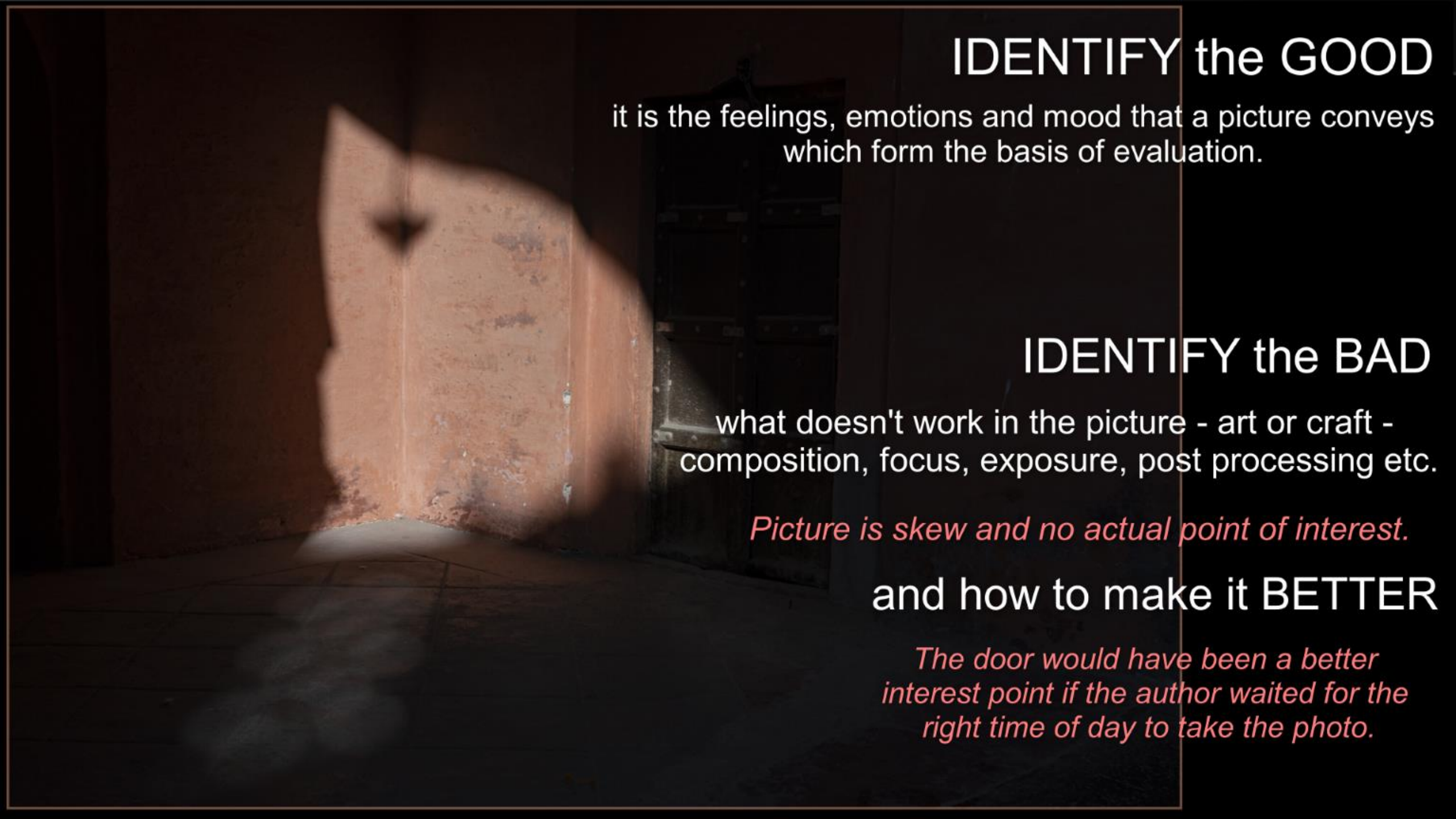
# IDENTIFY the GOOD

it is the feelings, emotions and mood that a picture conveys which form the basis of evaluation.

*An interesting photo that takes you on a journey of questions.  
Where was it taken, how was it taken, what is the light  
come through, what's behind the heavy door.*





A dark, atmospheric photograph of a narrow hallway. A heavy, dark door is partially open, revealing a bright light source. The light creates a strong, warm glow on the wall and floor, casting long, dark shadows. The overall mood is mysterious and dramatic.

# IDENTIFY the GOOD

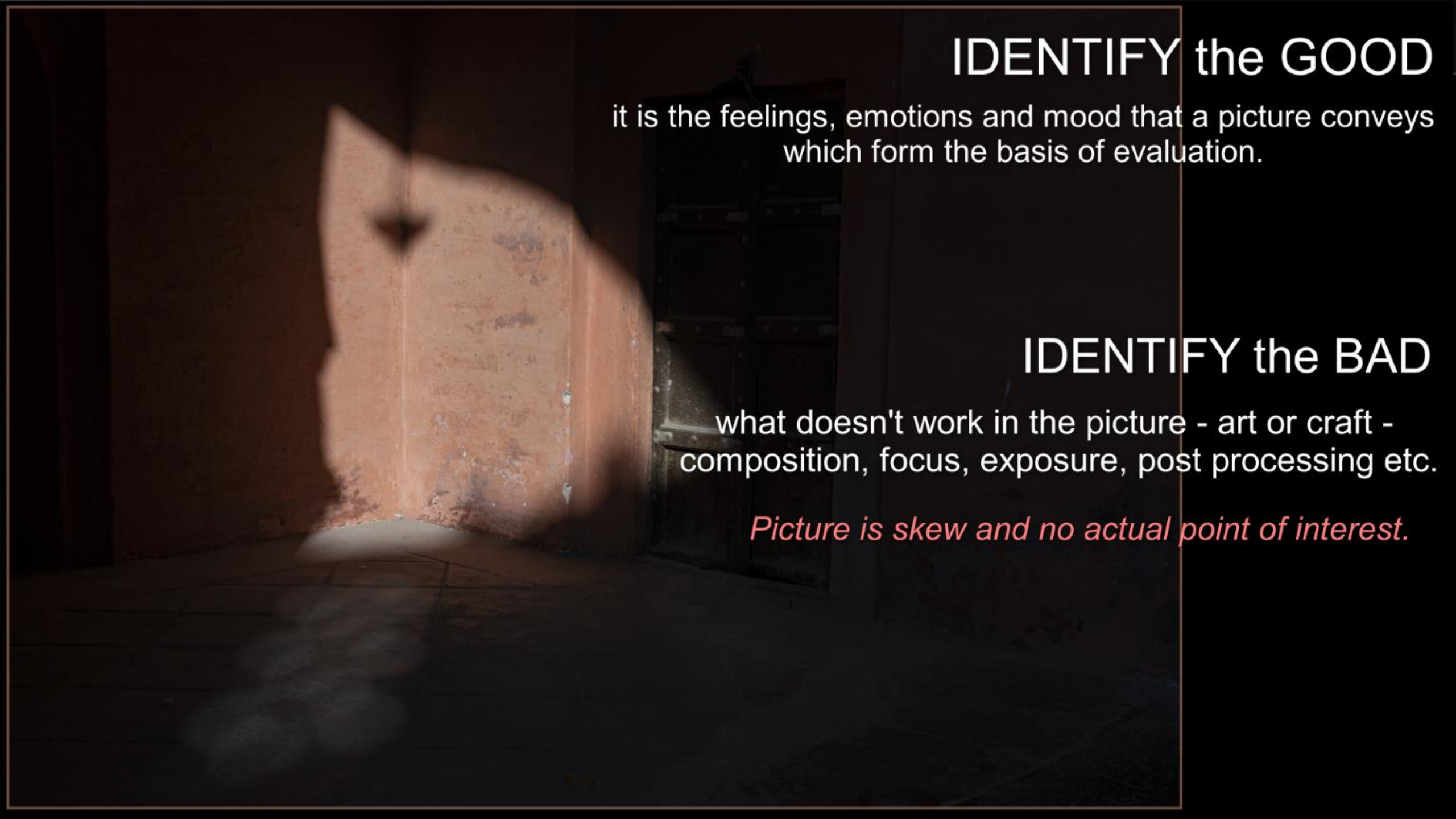
it is the feelings, emotions and mood that a picture conveys which form the basis of evaluation.

*An interesting photo that takes you on a journey of questions.  
Where was it taken, how was it taken, what is the light  
come through, what's behind the heavy door.*

# IDENTIFY the BAD

what doesn't work in the picture - art or craft -  
composition, focus, exposure, post processing etc.

*But what if I don't "get it"?*

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a stone archway. A bright light source from the left creates a strong silhouette of the arch and a large, soft lens flare that dominates the left side of the frame. The scene is dimly lit, with the stone walls and floor visible in the shadows.

# IDENTIFY the GOOD

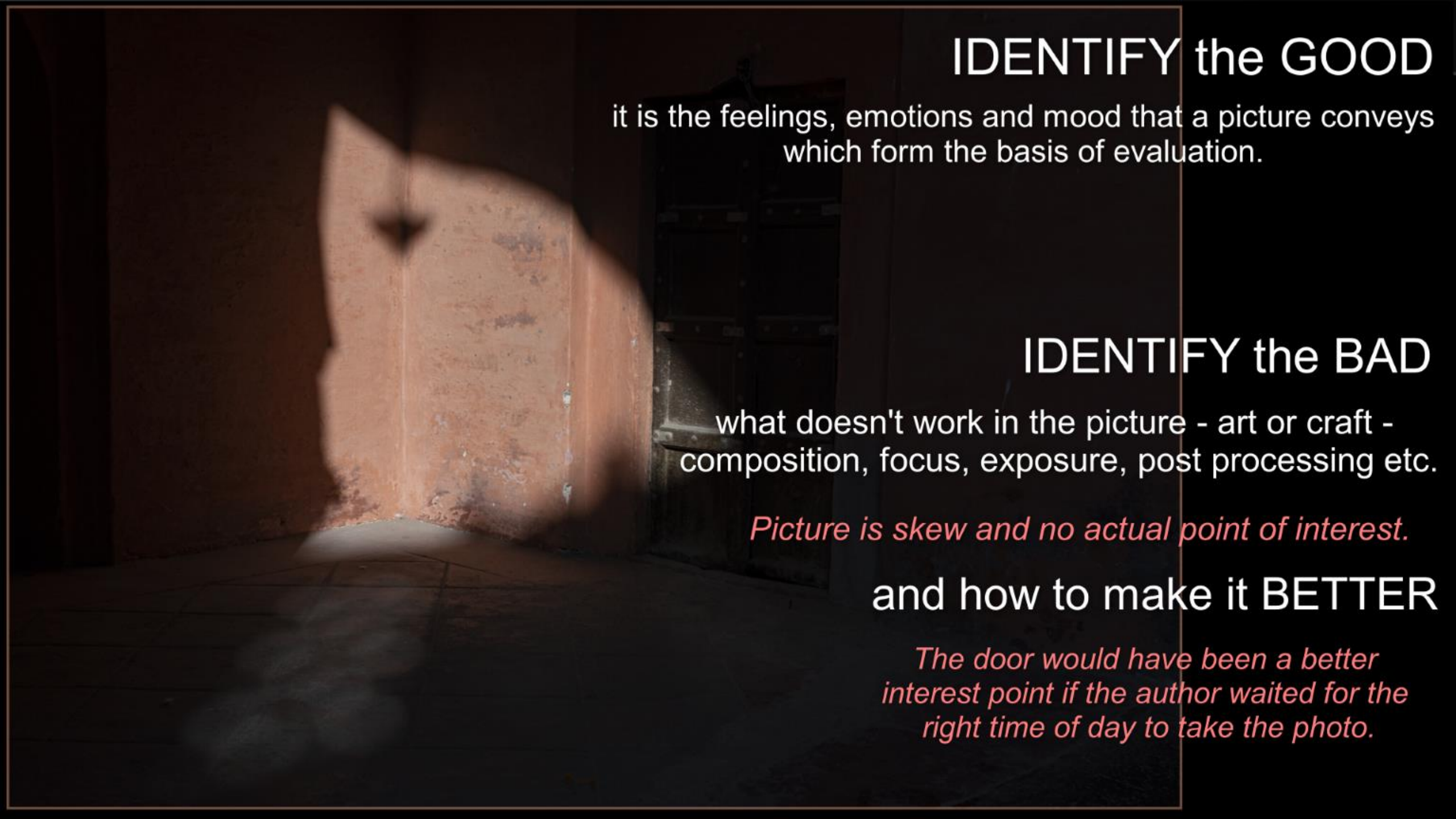
it is the feelings, emotions and mood that a picture conveys which form the basis of evaluation.

# IDENTIFY the BAD

what doesn't work in the picture - art or craft - composition, focus, exposure, post processing etc.

*Picture is skew and no actual point of interest.*





## IDENTIFY the GOOD

it is the feelings, emotions and mood that a picture conveys which form the basis of evaluation.

## IDENTIFY the BAD

what doesn't work in the picture - art or craft - composition, focus, exposure, post processing etc.

*Picture is skew and no actual point of interest.*

## and how to make it BETTER

*The door would have been a better interest point if the author waited for the right time of day to take the photo.*



## IDENTIFY the GOOD

it is the feelings, emotions and mood that a picture conveys which form the basis of evaluation.

## IDENTIFY the BAD

what doesn't work in the picture - art or craft - composition, focus, exposure, post processing etc.

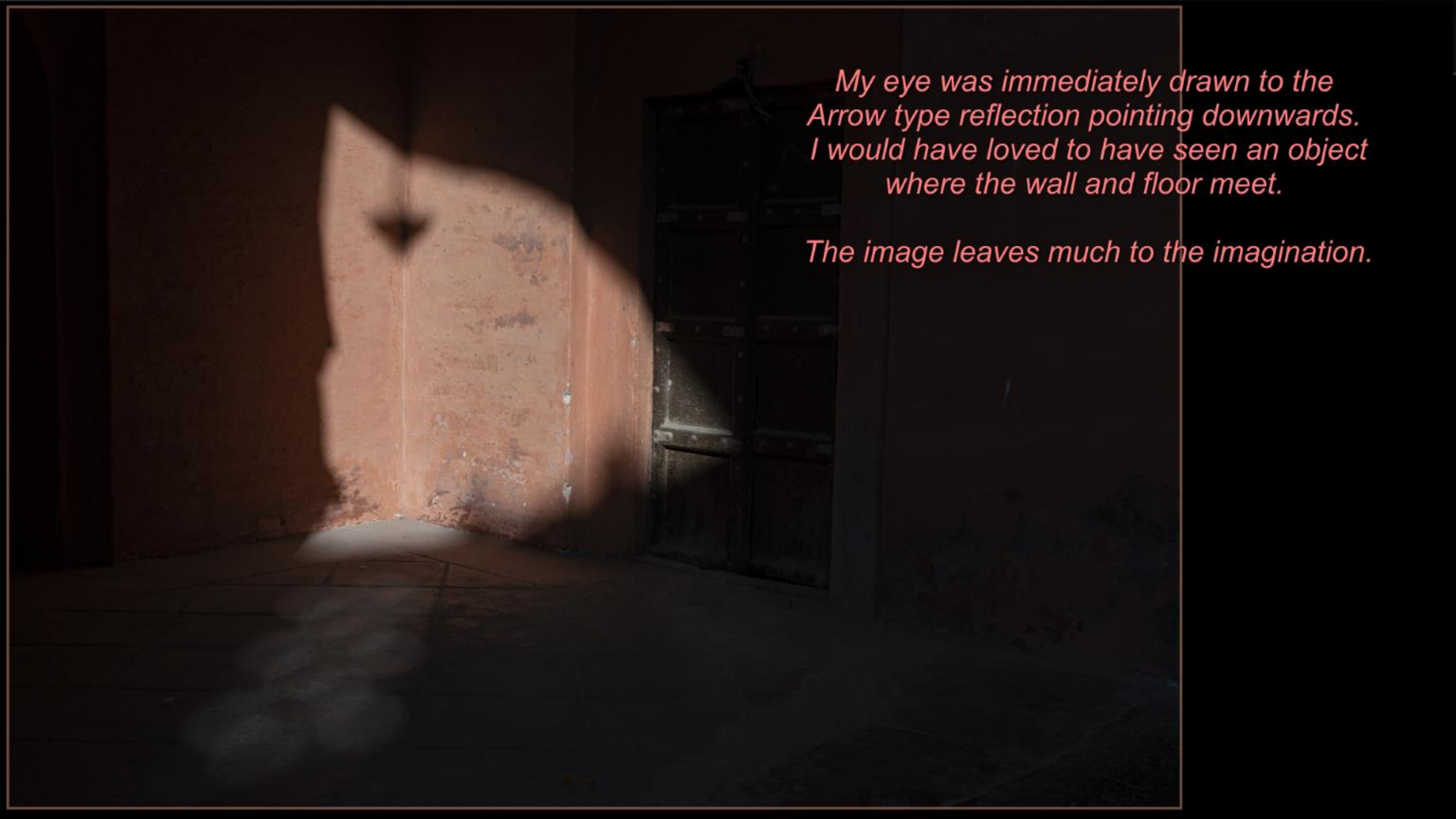
*Picture is skew and no actual point of interest.*

and how to make it BETTER

*The door would have been a better interest point if the author waited for the right time of day to take the photo.*

Do Not  
make a whole new picture



A photograph of a dark interior space, possibly a museum or gallery. A spotlight illuminates a corner where a wall and floor meet. On the wall, there is a shadow of an arrow pointing downwards. To the right, there is a dark, ornate door or cabinet. The floor is made of large, light-colored tiles.

*My eye was immediately drawn to the  
Arrow type reflection pointing downwards.  
I would have loved to have seen an object  
where the wall and floor meet.*

*The image leaves much to the imagination.*



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# So then - WHY JUDGE?

## CLUB - To Teach

A good photo is always  
the one about to be taken

and it can be better from what was learned and put into practise  
from comments made by the judges.





I am a bit confused with the judging and the score that I received with one of my images - Save the Rhino in danger.

The judge commented that she liked the image but that the buildings were distracting in the background.

But this is a metal sculpture on the Sea Point promenade, a landmark feature. To remove the buildings will not be an accurate account of what anybody can see at any time of the day or night when they visit the promenade.

In my opinion removing the buildings will not give context to the 3D sculpture created by the artist.

Therefore, do I remove the buildings, to get a higher score, and keep the image as an open category image?

If I was to enter this image as a street or photojournalism, with the buildings removed, it will receive criticism for altering the true image? Correct?





I am a bit confused with the judging and the score that I received with one of my images - Save the Rhino in danger.

The judge commented that she liked the image but that the buildings were distracting in the background.

To improve the image I would have possibly liked to have seen the rhino itself sharper, which you could have done by using a different f stop. Of course the problem then is that the background wouldn't be as blurred and the four posts in front of the rhino would become more distracting.

The bright areas around the circle and the blur you have on the whole image except the foreground subject is distracting.





But this is a metal sculpture on the Sea Point promenade, a landmark feature. To remove the buildings will not be an accurate account of what anybody can see at any time of the day or night when they visit the promenade.

In my opinion removing the buildings will not give context to the 3D sculpture created by the artist.

Therefore, do I remove the buildings, to get a higher score, and keep the image as an open category image?

If I was to enter this image as a **street or photojournalism**, with the buildings removed, it will receive criticism for altering the true image? Correct?

Or

do I change the title to "**Caught in the cross hairs inner city sculpture**" which means that the buildings need to be present to complete the story the artist is trying to convey?

















































The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

# So then - WHY JUDGE?

## CLUB - To Teach

and it can be better from what was learned and put into practise  
from comments made by the judges.

## Judge with care



The Photographic Society  
of South Africa

When a member leaves a meeting  
he most often remembers what the judge  
didn't do well.

It would be great if the opposite were true.

That should be your aim when judging.