

Analyzing Your Image Submissions Before Your Submission

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1. When selecting images for your CPP Portfolio Review you should follow the following guidelines.
 - a. You should be super-critical with your image selections. Be ruthless in your selection! Do not put an image in just because you need one more. Be your strongest critic.
 - b. Remember, because an image is "cute" or "fun" that doesn't mean it is a "professional" quality image. You must learn to disassociate your personal likes and dislikes and evaluate an image on a professional level.
 - c. Also, just because the image is what the client "wanted" that doesn't make it a good image. So if the client wants something edgy or different and you deliver—great! But it may not be a good image for certification review.
 - d. Understand the difference between a snapshot (however good it may be) and great professional image.

2. Use good camera technique.
 - a. Make sure critical elements of your subject are in focus. Soft focus is important for many portraits, but as a rule something should be sharp.
 - b. While unusual camera angles can add an exciting element to an image, it should not be used as a crutch. An unusual camera angle should be tied to the impact and composition of the image.
 - c. Use appropriate depth of field. Understand when a shallow depth of field is important for an image.

3. Follow the standards of good lighting.
 - a. Trendy lighting techniques may be “hip”, but may not necessarily translate into good technique. Use carefully. Good lighting can be found outdoors or created in the studio. There are no requirements as to the number of lights used. Good lighting may be the result of one light.
 - b. Modeling, or shaping the subject with light, is an important part of a professional image. Flat lighting is not always wrong, but if used, use it wisely. If the flat lighting comes from an “on-camera flash” it stands a good chance of being rejected. On camera flash can be used as a fill light, but not very often as the main light.
 - c. Ratios do not need to be “high” or “low” but should complement the style and be consistent with the key and purpose of the image.
 - d. Be careful of the direction of the light. A main light or reflector that puts too much light "up" on the face should be used carefully. Light from low angles, where the “nose” shadow rises on the face is

usually considered poor lighting technique. (Note: if you get light up into the nostrils, the image has a strong probability of being rejected.)

- e. Lighting styles vary with the “key” of the image. Lighting can be low-key where the majority of tonal values are dark, high-key where the majority of the tonal values are light, or mid-key where most tonal values are of medium tones. So study the “keys.”
4. Demand critical exposure, contrast, saturation, and color balance.
 - a. Be very critical of the tonal values of the image. Make sure the exposure is dead on.
 - b. Do not blow out highlights. Just because something is very light or white that does not mean blown out.
 - c. High contrast images may be trendy and even great images, but be very critical of the final tonal values.
 - d. Remember, over saturation is not necessarily good. Be careful with saturation.
 - e. Examine your images for good color balance. As a good rule, don't photograph your images on “auto” white balance. Be critical of your lighting conditions and set your camera's WB appropriately. Examine your images in post processing. Use a monitor that has been color balanced to evaluate your images. Color balance is important!
 5. Demonstrate good posing and expression
 - a. “Posing” or “posed” are NOT bad words. Saying you did not want a “posed” shot, is generally interpreted to mean that you did not know how to do it right. Good posing does not mean artificial or stiff. Bad posing may!
 - b. Posing is a powerful, psychological element of a professional image. The subject's position and relationship to the camera is an extremely expressive part of the image. Don't leave this to accident. The photographer must know body language and its impact on the final image.
 - c. Subject expression does not mean big, cheesy smiles. Smiles can be tremendous; serious expression can be dynamic. Learn what works with the purpose of your image.
 6. Follow good composition.
 - a. Photography is a visual medium and as such the visual organization of the elements is extremely important. An effective image uses good composition.
 - b. Use the “rules” of good composition. Understanding the rules allow you to break them. It is then that they become “guidelines.”
 - c. These guidelines are founded in the art tradition by centuries of critical analysis. These guidelines were then adopted by photographers as the “rules of composition.” Therefore, they have

stood the test of time and should be valued. But it is only by understanding the guidelines that one knows when to “break the rules.”

- d. Picking up a camera and taking a snapshot does not demonstrate an understanding of composition—but luck does happen once in a while. However, being a professional means that you have skill in consistently producing great images.