



12 ELEMENTS OF A MERIT IMAGE

1. IMPACT

Compelling images evoke emotion - laughter, sadness, anger, pride.

2. TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE

The quality of the actual image as presented for viewing. Aspects such as retouching, sharpness, printing, color, and exposure should be spot on.

3. CREATIVITY

The image is original, fresh, and an external expression of the maker's imagination.

4. STYLE

The subject matter meshes with the presentation. Style can also include the characteristic ways that an artist applies his or her specific lighting, posing, or compositional style to underscore the desired impact.

5. COMPOSITION

The visual elements of an image come together to express intent, whether it's to please the viewer or otherwise. The viewer's attention is captured and directed where the artist plans it to be.

6. PRESENTATION

The way an image is showcased gives it a finished look. Everything in the presentation - mats, borders, color choices - should work to enhance the image.

7. COLOR BALANCE

Colors work together to evoke feelings in the viewer. For example, it can bring harmony to an image and enhance the emotional appeal. It can also be incongruous to arouse diverse feelings.

8. CENTER OF INTEREST

This is where an image's creator wants a viewer's attention focused. There may be primary and secondary centers of interest. Sometimes all the elements in an image work together to create the center of interest.

9. LIGHTING

The image demonstrates excellence in the use and control of light, whether natural or additive. Light informs dimensions and shape, sets tone and mood, and enhances the image.

10. SUBJECT MATTER

The subject matter is central to the story being told, so the subject should sync with the story.

11. TECHNIQUE

The approaches used to create the image - lighting, posing, capture, presentation - work together to be effective.

12. STORYTELLING

The image evokes the viewer's imagination. While the act of creating is a personal thing, so too is the act of viewing. Each image is a story, and the one it tells a viewer may be unique to that person.