

Annual Forum Print Judging

November 9, 2004

Potpourri House, Tyler

If you've never participated in a formal print "judging" on the state, regional, or national level, then you need to pay close attention to how it is done. This is NOT like our monthly "competition" but is designed to introduce our members to the state level competition with Texas PPA.

The attached pages will give you specific information about your print entries.... size, type of mounting, number of entries, categories, etc. YOU are responsible for following these rules. Failure to do so may result in disqualification of your print entries, so please read these rules carefully. If you have further questions, you may contact Bill Hedrick at 903-983-1612 or go to our website at www.theforum.com.

Unlike the monthly competition, the annual print "judging" will have several changes:

- *Up to 4 entries per member
- *Size are 16x20 and mounted (see thickness requirements)
- *Panel of Judges will "score" these prints one at a time
- *Prints SHOULD be delivered in a print case or sturdy box with lid (ask if you are not sure)
- *Prints MUST be delivered no later than 4:30pm on judging day
- *Audience will observe the judging/scoring process
- *Trophies and Ribbons will be presented at the end

HINTS: If you've never attended a state, regional, or national judging, there are some helpful hints that may help increase your score. So, you may want to tell your lab that you need "competition" prints and they will do a few things that you may not be doing with your normal display prints or those you sell to your clients, such as...

***Print Density/Color Saturation** - Since the prints will be viewed under daylight corrected spot lights, sometimes it is necessary to make sure there is adequate density in the printing. Some prints appear "washed out" under bright lights. Your lab should be familiar with this. If they don't know what you are talking about, find another lab.

***Gloss Finish Recommended** - A "high gloss" finish will add "snap" to your image and is suggested. Prints with matte finishes may appear flat under the lighting conditions of judging

***Other Things** - Some other things that will help your score are: technical quality, creativity, correct composition, good lighting, good printing, good title that "tells a story", good posing, and correct color balance. The images should also have good "impact" and should get the attention of the judges.

You are competing with YOURSELF! Participating in print judging events like this can be a valuable learning experience but too many professional photographers fail to grasp the significance of this and never bother. Often, these are the ones who continue to produce "average" work. Those who enter will see their work improve with each competition. Judges may critique or comment on prints during the judging process and are available for personal critique afterwards.

Another good point to remember is that this event is FREE to Forum members!! There is usually a "print case entry fee" when doing this on the state, regional, or national level, but the Forum is doing this for our members at no charge. Every member, regardless of your level of expertise, is highly encouraged to participate in this event. Just remember that NOW is the time to get those images printed so that they will be ready in time.

So, PLEASE READ & FOLLOW the rules on the next few pages. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask. We want every Forum member to participate in this event.

Yearly Print Judging Official Rules

Unlike the monthly print competition where members who are present simply vote on their favorite print in given categories, the Yearly Print Judging will be conducted similar to state/regional judgments with a panel of judges who will actually “score” the images one at a time. Also, prints **MUST** be size **16x20 overall** (including matte) and must be **mounted** on matte board or similar material at least **1/8 inch to 3/8 inch thick**.

I. Categories of Entries

Portrait - This can be typical subject matter, including portraits of families, children, pets, brides, couples made in the studio or on location.

Wedding - Any photograph taken on the wedding day other than a formal portrait. It can be a picture of the bride, the groom, the bride and groom, a group or an activity such as cutting the cake, dancing, tossing the bouquet. Formal *portraits* of anyone should be entered in the portrait category.

Commercial - This is a photograph of a commercial nature taken on assignment for client or for the photographer's portfolio. A standard photograph of any image creatively altered through applications such as Photoshop is eligible.

Unclassified (Illustrative) - This is designed for prints that do not fit in one of the other categories. It might be an abstract, it might be a landscape, or it might be a still-life.

Artist - This category is open to photographic artists or photographers who either by hand or with digital techniques alter or improve an original image. It can include, but not be limited to print enhancement (such as removing blemishes, creating new backgrounds, removing people), creative (such multiple images, matting, abstract coloring) or restoration (repairing damage, restoring color). Anyone entering the artist category must include a “BEFORE” print that is indicative of the original print. This “BEFORE” print must be apx. 8x10 and must accompany the artist entry. It must also be mounted on artboard.

II. Number of Entries

A maximum of FOUR total entries per person is allowed. Each print must be classified in any one of the above classifications, according to the above rules. Yes, you may have more than one print per category, but no more than 4 total prints.

III. Size/Thickness of Entries

Each entry must be 16x20 overall and mounted on a sturdy artboard **no thinner than 1/8 inch** and **no thicker than 3/8 inch**. The actual size of the image must be no smaller than 11x14 and no larger than 16x20 but **MUST** be mounted on a 16x20 artboard. **NO FRAMES** will be allowed.

IV. Identification of Entries

A **PRINT LABEL** must be attached to the top-back-center of each entry. These labels **MUST** include the **TITLE** of the print, the **NAME** of the maker, and which **CATEGORY** in which the print is being entered.

V. Eligibility

All Forum members with current paid dues are eligible to enter the Yearly Print Judging.

VI. Deadline for Entries

Entries must be turned in to the Print Chairman **no later than 4:30pm** on the day of the judging. Entries received after 4:30pm will **NOT** be eligible.

VII. Container for Prints

We are a bit more lenient at the Forum about what your prints should be delivered in. If you enter on the state (TPPA) level, you will be required to deliver your 16x20 prints in an appropriate “fiber-base” shipping case. However, for the Forum competition, you may deliver your prints in a sturdy cardboard box WITH A LID (not a folding box) such as a Kodak paper box or similar item. The purpose of this is to “protect” your prints as much as possible and to facilitate the sorting process for print room workers. We will judge prints even if they are delivered in bags or sacks but this is NOT recommended. We suggest that you consider purchasing a good print case so that you can start entering prints on the state level and continue your valuable learning experience.

VIII. Judging Procedure

A panel of 3 judges (usually from outside our group, usually Master Photographers who are familiar with the process) will view each print one at a time and will score each print from 0 to 100. All judges’ scores will be averaged for the final score. If there is more than 10 points spread between any two judges, there will be an automatic “challenge” where each judge must state his/her score and tell why he/she scored the image and argue for a higher or lower score. The print will then be re-scored. Any judge may also “challenge” the average score if he/she feels the score is too low or too high and the same procedure will take place and the print will be re-scored.

The point system is used with scores from 100 to 0 as follows.

Exceptional:	100 - 95
Superior:	94 - 90
Excellent:	89 - 85
Deserving of a Merit:	84 - 80
Above Average:	79 - 76
Average:	75 - 74
Acceptable:	73 - 70
Unacceptable:	69 - 0

VIII. Awards

(Prints receiving a score of 80 or above will be eligible for Ribbons and Trophies)

Distinguished Print Ribbons: One distinguished print ribbon may be given in each category. The decision whether to award a distinguished print ribbon or not will be left up to the judges.

Best of Category Trophy: One trophy may be given in each category. The decision to award this trophy or not will be left up to the judges.

Judges Choice Ribbon: Each judge will be given a Judge’s Choice Ribbon and he may present it to the print of his choice.

Highest Total Combined Scores Trophy will be awarded to the photographer with the highest combined scores of all prints entered. Those entering one, two or three prints will not be able to contend for top score with those entering four prints, so everyone is urged to enter four prints.

Photographer of the Year Award: This award will be presented to the Forum Member who has earned the most “print-related” points toward his or her Forum Degree during that calendar year.

Note: Each member is responsible for documenting these points (which are noted by the “*” on the master degree form maintained by the Forum Secretary. If those points have not been documented prior to the annual print judging, they will NOT be counted, regardless of whether or not they have been earned. For more information, please refer to the list of items from which degree points are earned.

Official Entry Form

Please fill out the following information and enclose top portion of this form in your print case (or box). Please make sure you have followed all of the rules... you can have up to 4 total prints, from any of the applicable categories, mounted the appropriate thickness, titled, etc. Use the labels at the bottom of this page to attach to the backs of each print you are entering.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

*I am participating in the Forum Degree Program: __Yes __No

Title of Print #1 _____

Category: _____

Title of Print #2 _____

Category: _____

Title of Print #3 _____

Category: _____

Title of Print #4 _____

Category: _____

NOTE: *Forum Degree Points from THIS print judging will automatically be added to your existing prints on the master list for your degree points. But any points not entered by the start of judging will NOT be counted later. No exceptions!*

(Attach one of these labels to the back-top-center of each print entry. Yes, each print must have a title.)

Title of Entry: _____

Photographer: _____

Category: Portrait Wedding
(Check One)
 Commercial Unclassified
 Artist (Artist Entry must be accompanied by
a "BEFORE" print. See rules.)

Attach this to the back of your print. Size of entry may not exceed 16x20, including matte, and must be mounted on sturdy artboard. If you are entering the Artist category, you must include a "Before" print (size 8x10 or larger) representing the image before any artwork was done. This only applies to artist entries and not to other categories.

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Elements of Good Competition Prints

One of the most exciting and rewarding events a photographer can participate in is the print competition. First of all, participating in print competition is a great way to sharpen your skills and to improve your photography. Secondly, it is a way to gain attention in your profession and your community by winning awards and trophies. The "Print Rules" are designed to closely match those on the state, regional, and national level so that prints you enter at the Forum Print Judging will be eligible for judging there.

So, pay close attention to the rules. Then, read the following information...

Make Sure Your Prints Have...

Impact - Is there something about the print that catches a judge's eye as soon as it is shown? Does it have an element of excitement? Critical points can be earned up front if the print has good impact and "breaks the boredom" for the judges.

Creativity - The concept as well as the print itself should demonstrate creativity on your part. The image should show that you did more than just copy some other photographer's style.

Unique & Interesting Style - This goes along with the initial impact. Does your print reflect a style of photography that is interesting and unique?

Correct Composition - A dead-centered, static-looking print will never fly. Utilize the "rule of thirds" when composing your image. The viewer's eye should naturally be drawn to the center of attention.

Good Color Balance - Colors should be realistic and lifelike. White areas should be white but should have detail, and black areas should be black and have detail. Colors should harmonize and not clash.

Correct Lighting - Basic lighting principles should be followed. If a subject needs short lighting, it should be used. If a subject needs broad lighting, then it should be used. The light used for "modeling" should be properly placed and should show you have a firm command of correct lighting technique.

Outstanding Subject Matter - Judges see tons of prints of women and children and brides because those seem to be the most popular types of subject matter photographed and entered. So, if you photograph something that a lot of other people are using, try to find a subject that is really extraordinary and that stands out among all the rest.

Exceptional Print Quality - If your lab is unfamiliar with printing competition prints, find one that is! Remember that a good print starts with a good negative (or digital file). It must be properly exposed before the lab can do the best job of printing. You should view your prints under lighting conditions similar to those at the print judging itself to make sure it will not "wash out" under the bright judging lights. Also, avoid the traditional flat matte finish. Consider a very high gloss finish. It will give your image that extra "snap."

Make a Statement or Tell a Story - A print that tells a story or makes a statement is more exciting and interesting than just a nice print of a nice looking person. The image should stir the emotions and imagination of the judges. Therefore, the title can often be as important as the print itself. Be as creative as possible when coming up with a title. Make sure it goes with the image.

Center of Attention - The judges' eyes should naturally be drawn to a center of attention which is the main subject matter. Any leading lines should lead to that point without making the judges' eyes jump back and forth around the image.

Watch Out For - Watch out for poor subject matter, poorly posed hands, cropping that is too close, poor clothing selections, obvious artwork and titles that don't match the image.

Most Importantly - Follow the rules to the letter!