



HIGH DESERT PHOTOGRAPHERS

High Desert Photography Club

Back to the Basics

Happy New Year!

- Welcome to the High Desert Photographers Club!
- We are starting 2015 with a focus on “Back to the Basics” or the underlying elements of our photography club
- 2015 Club Officers:
 - Carl Ball, President
 - Angie Roach, Vice President
 - Stacey Scott, Treasurer
 - Farrel Downs, Secretary
 - Shannon Bowen, Director
 - Grant Hunsaker, Director
 - Linda Milam, Director
 - Maria Rizzi Grandi, Director
 - Steve Ridges, Director
 - Roger Wood, Critique Coordinator
 - Debby Tate, Web Site
 - Ernie Tate, Newsletter
 - Steve Ridges, Special Technical Assistant

Trivia - Ever wonder where this photo came from?



Silhouette – Bob Seidel

Photo by Greg Langley

HIGH DESERT PHOTOGRAPHERS

- Formed ~ 8 years ago
- Members have a wide variety of skills & experience
- Annual dues: \$20/person or \$30/family
- Meetings every 2nd and 4th Thursdays
- Meeting location - Perfect Light Store on 17th Street
- Meeting Time: 7:00-9:00 p.m.
- Club by-laws - accessible from our web site
- www.highdesertphotographers.com
- <https://www.flickr.com/groups/highdesertphotographers/>
- Officer elections are held every December

Club Dynamics

- We use many opportunities to learn, discuss, and practice all aspects of good picture taking:
 - Guest speakers and subject matter experts
 - Educational practice shoots
 - Photographic field trips
 - Image sharing
 - Other activities
- Suggested monthly **Photo Themes** are used to encourage club members to take new pictures.
- **Photo Critiques** are used to help you produce better pictures.
- We welcome both those who just bought their first camera, and seasoned professionals.
- All that is required for membership is a desire to become a better photographer and a willingness to share your experience and knowledge with other members.
- Dues are used to pay for the annual Christmas party, misc. door prizes, etc.



Monthly Photo Themes

- Each month club members are encouraged to produce images based upon a suggested photo assignment or Theme. The images are shared during the 2nd meeting of the month (4th Thursday) where they can be critiqued by club members.
- We believe that working with themes is a great way to practice and improve your photographic skills. *Theme assignments are designed to move you out of your comfort zone to try something new.*
- Some themes are selected to be relatively easy while others are more challenging and may require special equipment or computer software.
- Ideally, members should bring contest quality theme photos to club meetings, but quality is less important than demonstrating you have made the effort to take on the challenge of the monthly themes.
- Each month three images are randomly selected to appear on our club web site for the public to see.



Monthly Photo Critique

- For the 2nd meeting of the month, each photographer sends 3 images to webmaster@highdesertphotographers.com no later than the night before the meeting.
- At least one image must be representative of the monthly theme
- All images are open for comment by club members unless the photographer states the image was submitted for interest only – i.e. no comments please!
- If an image is displayed and the photographer is silent, the club is welcome to comment and critique the photo.
- The Photographer is encouraged to talk about the photo including their experience taking the shot, post-processing, settings used, etc.
- Images that have been shown previously are not eligible for resubmission.
- *Being able to look at a photo objectively to give a detailed assessment is an invaluable resource. It is helpful to those who are seeking direction to develop their skills.*



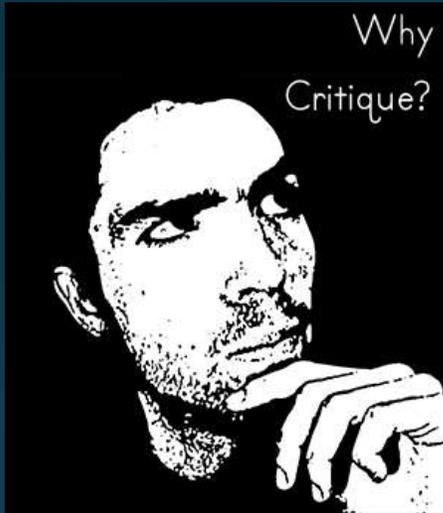
Critique Etiquette



- While there is no right or wrong way to give critique, it is important to know that most photographers would like to receive feedback that they can take back home and add to their learning.
- Critiquing not only helps the person who's image is being critiqued, it helps you produce better photos.
- Please don't just say that you like a picture, it may make the photographer feel good but it doesn't help them take a better picture.
- Giving critique is indeed the art of giving advice. Being able to look into things objectively to give a detailed assessment of an image is an invaluable resource. It is helpful to those who are seeking direction to develop their skills

Learning How to Critique

- Giving critique is a skill in itself. No one in the club is a critiquing expert – please don't be intimidated. Join in.
- Critiquing is how the image speaks to You!



- Is it just about shapes and lines or is it telling a story?
 - What is the subject of the photograph?
 - Where does your eye start and stop when viewing the photo?
 - If there are multiple subjects, does that make the photograph more interesting or do they create a distraction?
 - Did the photographer follow compositional conventions like using the rule of thirds? If not, were the rules broken successfully?
 - Do the elements like contrast, leading lines and diagonals take the eye around the whole image, or is there wasted space?
- Taking pictures is like writing an essay. You want it to tell a story in such a way that it's understandable to the general public. Like a writer, a photographer is a story teller.

How to Critique – 1 & 2



- 1. Take a few moments to examine the photograph.** Note your first impression upon visually taking the entire photo in, then study all of the details of the photo, being sure to view every component both singularly and in relation to the overall composition.
- 2. Decipher what you like and dislike about the photograph.** A photo critique generally begins with a basic impression of what you feel works for the photo and doesn't work for the photo. You don't have to share these perceptions; they are, rather starting points for further analysis.

How to Critique - 3

3. **Describe the photograph in terms of your general feeling or impression.** This is a subjective part of critiquing photography, and is necessary to relaying the aesthetic impact of the photo to the photographer. For example, this shot of cute little dolls on a red bench may generate the following: *"This portrait evokes a soft and intimate feeling of warmth, and gives a sense of a child's innocence."*



How to Critique - 4

4. **Address the technical components.** Try to be as objective as possible when covering the technical elements of a photograph.
- **Focus.** Determine whether the photo is properly focused, or if it is unintentionally blurred by way of technical error. Common examples of unwanted blur to cite in your photo critique are: focus on the wrong element of the composition, action blur and zoom blur.
 - **Dust and other technical distractions.** If the photographer captured unwanted dust or glare in the photo, then you should point it out in your photography critique.
 - **Color.** Not all photos need to represent colors as they would appear to the unaided eye, but the photograph's use of color should be intentional and relevant to the photo. Faded, dull or ruddy color tones may be the product of technical error.
 - **Lighting.** Too much or too little lighting may result in a number of technically sub-par photography results.
 - **Exposure.** This pertains to the length of time the camera was enabled to take in the image and affects the lighting and contrast. A higher exposure allows more light to filter in, and may result in too-white highlights, while a lower exposure may result in a too-dark photo with muddled contrast lines.



How to Critique - 5

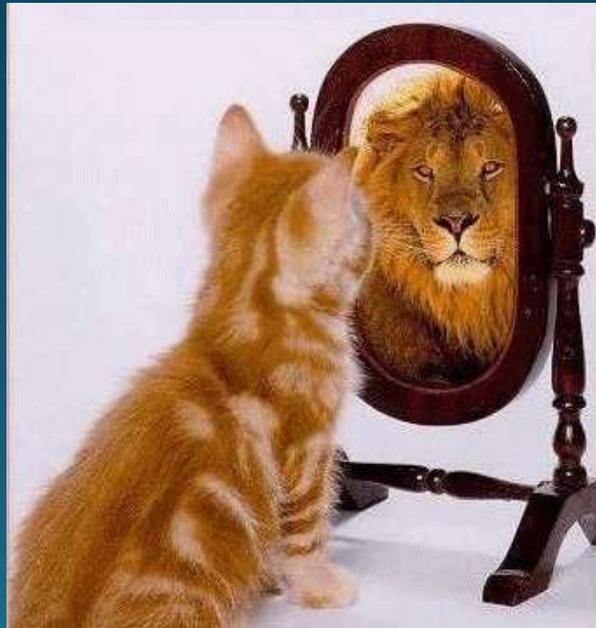
5. **Assess the artistic elements of the photo.** Cover each of the following elements when critiquing photography:
- **Subject matter.** Note the photographer's choice of image, and determine whether or not it seems to be purposeful, or haphazardly chosen. For example, a photo of a busy street market is more artistically interesting when it depicts a single vendor in negotiations with customers, as opposed to the less interesting composition of a congested crowd of people with no focal point.
 - **Color.** In addition to the technical execution of color, a photography critique should also address the artistic effect of the photographer's chosen color scheme. Determine if the colors add to or detract from the feeling of the photograph, and if a black and white treatment would be more or less effective.
 - **Composition.** Note the content and layout of the photograph in regards to subject positioning, symmetry, clutter, sparseness and cropping. Moreover, determine if the photograph is directed in a way that best highlights its intended subject, feeling and message.

How to Critique – 6 & 7

- 6. Explain what you like about the photograph, and why.** A photo critique should point out a photo's strong points, as well as the technical and artistic aspects that contribute to those strengths, so you should be specific. For example, saying that you "like the lighting" is not nearly as helpful as saying, "I like the use of overhead lighting because it accentuates the shadows of the subject's face, lending to the intimate feeling."
- 7. Elaborate on elements of the photograph that could be improved upon.** Your goal is to provide the photographer with a thorough and accurate analysis of the photograph's effectiveness. Be specific, as in this example: "Adjusting the exposure time would create more crispness in the contrast, which would add to the raw grit of the photograph."

How to Critique - 8

8. **Summarize your general perception of the photograph.** Rather than repeat what you already said in your photography critique, provide a brief description of your overall feeling about the photograph, after taking into consideration its technical and artistic aspects, strength and weaknesses.



In Summary

- **Critique With the Intention to Help** - *There is no better way to critique than with good intentions. It is true that the truth can hurt and that negative feedback is necessary at times, but everyone is in the position to receive feedback that will help them get better.*
- **Give a "Why" When Commenting on Technique** - *While it's alright to comment on technique, be careful how to do it. Since some are more experienced than others, those on lower level skills can get lost in translation*
- **Avoid Personal Bias** - *Do you have your own biases? It is important to be aware of them to be more objective during critique. Your personal need may come in the way of effective photo critique.*
- **Avoid Altering the Message** - *Not all suggestions are helpful. Some can sometimes be confusing even if the intentions are good.*
- **Avoid Short Statements That Offer No Direction** - *Give the shooter a direction he can take by giving insight to why a photo works or why it doesn't.*



Online Photo Critiquing

- [Gurushots.com](https://www.gurushots.com)
- [Photocrit.com](https://www.photocrit.com)
- [Photographyreview.com](https://www.photographyreview.com)
- [Photocritique.net](https://www.photocritique.net)
- [Flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com)
- [AnthonyMorganti.com](https://www.anthonymorganti.com)

Let's Listen To An Example

Photo Critiques

Episode 2

Critiques@AnthonyMorganti.com

Now Let's Try It



1. Examine the Photo
2. What do you like or dislike?
3. General feeling or impression?
4. Technical components?
 - a) Focus
 - b) Dust
 - c) Color
 - d) Lighting
 - e) Exposure
5. Artistic elements?
 - a) Subject matter
 - b) Color
 - c) Composition

Discussion:

What do you like about the photo?
What would you improve?

And One More...



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January

- Theme – Christmas or Christmas Colors
- We are each of us individuals
- You interpret the theme - Interpretation is what gives each photographer his or her own style. It is the individual vision of a scene or event and it comes in many varieties

Take the iconic Ansel Adams image of the Snake River. Many people have stood in that same location and copied his photograph. Many others have stood there and instead looked outside the box and done something far different. Though Ansel Adams may have inspired them to be there, they didn't try to duplicate his work but used their own creative idea. They saw that scene differently than he did.



Now go out there and have fun!

Don't hesitate to contact other club members for a
group walk-about

See you January 22nd for our first critique night of the
year