

## Critique Guidelines

**Focus/impact area** - An effective focus/impact area makes the difference between a picture and a work of art. The impact area gives the viewer direction and establishes a sense of priority for all the other elements. A focus/impact area means that the artist has been able to capture what in real life is selective seeing - we can only focus on one thing at a time, the rest is seen through peripheral vision. Does the work have such an area?

**Mood/feeling** - Does the work convey a mood? Decide if it is merely rendering of parts or if there is a sense of interpretation and feeling.

**Creativity** - What has been done better, or differently, from the ordinary? Was creativity used in the selection of subject and/or use of materials?

**Composition - Design** - Are there interesting shapes - both positive and negative? Is there a variety of shape sizes? Are the picture elements arranged in a dominant design scheme - for example with rectangular or diagonal emphasis? Is the design based on one or several geometric forms and, if several, do they work together? Does the design work with, or against, the subject? Does it attract attention to itself (i.e. the arrangement takes over the subject)? Is the composition balanced?

**Composition - Counterpoint** - Evaluate the complexity of the subject and the selection of shapes used. Look for a dominant element, sub-elements and repetition of elements. Is there variety/counterpoint? In general, the more complex the better, without going over the top, remember the rule - diversity within unity.

**Unity** - Unity is what holds all parts together. Has color, pattern or technique been used to establish unity?

**Value** - How has tonal value been used to convey mood, depth, dimension, and impact/focus? Look at the composition of general tonal areas.

**Color** - How has color been used to convey mood, harmony, and depth? Does the color scheme fit the subject? Has color been used to establish a focus/impact area? Check for the use of color fundamentals like complementary or analogous color.

**Other fundamentals** - Evaluate the use of other fundamentals (besides color and value) such as perspective, edges, and style. How does perspective help to convey depth? Is perspective used creatively? Are hard edges used to pull elements forward and soft edges used to integrate elements in the scene? How is style used to promote the intent/mood?

**Craftsmanship** - This is where the technical skills such as drawing and the handling of materials are assessed.

**Readability/flow** - Can the viewer's eye move easily into the work? How has the artist used shape, line, value, color, perspective, etc to guide you to the focus/impact area, to/from sub-themes and away from exit areas?

**Technical inaccuracy** - Does inaccurate drawing make elements work against the logic or intent of the composition? For example, shadows that fall in the wrong direction, a sloping horizon, errors in perspective.

**Lack of imagination** - Poor selection of subject and approach. A dull subject rendered in a dull way.

**Lack of originality** - Presenting a trite subject that has been painted a thousand times before.

**Content discrepancy** - An element that is not in character with the logic or intent of the work. For example: the artist intends to make a realistic wildlife painting but shows the animal in the wrong environment.

**Style discrepancy** - Inconsistent styles within the same work, or the obvious influence of another artist's style in parts.

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