

Photography Critique

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Students must bring two printed photograph to the class. The photos must be, at least, 8" x 10". Students are not to put their name or anything else on the photograph that could identify them. They will hand the photograph to the teacher upon entering the classroom, and they should not share their photograph with any of the other students beforehand.

Students must bring a supply of paper to the class so that they can write their answers to the following questions for each photograph on a separate piece of paper. They will be given 15 minutes to answer the questions at the beginning of the class. This is not a great deal of time, so think about how you would answer these questions for your own photograph prior to coming to class. The individual pieces of paper will be handed back to the teacher before the critique session begins. Students are not to put their names or anything else on the paper that could identify them.

Student Supplies: Students will need pen and paper to complete in class assignment and to take notes. They should bring two printed photographs with them. They must be, at least, 8" x 10" in size. Also, students will need an e-mail address.

Questions for students offering their critique:

Emotional Impact: Describe the work emotionally using three different words.

General Subject Meaning: Describe what you think the photographer intended to communicate in the work.

Memory and Context: Describe the connections you experienced while viewing the photograph – what or who you are reminded of, etc. Include the elements in the image that you have a personal or emotional connection to.

Strengths and Improvements: Describe three strengths you notice when viewing this work. State three “actions” that could improve the work.

Technical Execution: Describe the technical execution of this photo and, suggest ways it might be executed differently.

For the Photographer:

Picture maker leads off reading from their **pre-class prepared written notes** with a

brief talk about the work and technical information – including why they chose a particular technique. When writing what the work is about, the maker must keep in mind that the subject is not what the photo is about nor is the subject what the image is saying. Technical comments might reference tonality, color, distance from subject, shapes, framing, etc. In addition, the maker's comments must include intent – why did they make the photo. The answer could be as simple as they are testing a new piece of equipment, but there must be a why. Or, the answer could be that the maker is working on a series or project. They should state why they took on this project – what interests them about it. They could even ask for help if they are struggling with a block or technical problem.

Examples of questions about technique might go something like this. “I wanted to show the elegant lines of the subject (a piece of furniture, for example). Did my lightening work?”

“I made an engagement photo of two of my friends. I wanted to show how in love they are. Does my posing work?”

Questions must be specific.

Process:

The class sits in a circle. The first student reads the answer on the paper they've been handed by the teacher to the “Emotional Impact” question above (This may or may not be their answer to the question.). This is discussed. Then, the next student reads the answer to the “General Subject Meaning” question. This is discussed. And, so forth. The photograph's maker cannot interrupt or defend. Students are to keep in mind that insights are to be shared respectfully. Negative remarks must be made respectfully and with integrity.

Once all five questions have been answered the discussion is opened up to any additional comments or questions.

Then, the maker may ask for additional feedback, but cannot defend. The questions must be specific, not just a call for comments. For example, does the maker's use of depth-of field work, or does the lightening work?

This process will continue for each photograph.

Finally, the written comments are given to the maker.