NEW Opportunity

The State Fair 4-H Photography judges wish to introduce a new category to the Photo Competition at the State Fair: Creative Framing. In years past, framing a print was not acceptable. The judges recognize, however, that adding a frame to certain images truly makes for spectacular work. The product becomes greater than the sum of all its parts.

The Creative Framing category will serve to level the playing field by giving everyone an opportunity to submit their work for judging, rather than having some of the best photographs relegated to display only.

Each exhibitor may include one image in the Creative Framing category.

“Youth/Adult Partnerships

Technology students at G. Ray Bodley High School in Fulton, New York helped create this brochure as part of their requirements in the Communication Systems and Photography classes. The first step was to identify the need for such a brochure. Students next brainstormed ideas for content. A photo-shoot was set up in class to capture part of the team in action. The content was sent to Mitchell Printing and Mailing in Oswego, New York. There, a graphic artist created a proof which in turn was shared with the Tech students, with the State Fair judges as well as with 4-H Youth Development Program Specialists at Cornell University. All feedback was reviewed. A PDF file was created for electronic distribution to Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H educators, volunteer leaders and youth across New York State. Additionally, some of the Technology Department students participated in an educational field trip to Mitchell Printing where they gained further knowledge about the printing industry and about printing related careers in general.

Creativity

“Composition can be defined as the pleasing arrangement of elements within a picture.”

Exhibiting your photographs at the great New York State Fair provides unique challenges as your work is scrutinized for technical worthiness, composition and overall presentation. Professional photographers will evaluate your images, provide feedback and select the top prize winners. Use this brochure to get inside the mind of the evaluators and develop an understanding of how to best exhibit your finished product.
Making great pictures

Judges will first want to know about your equipment so be sure to provide great detail when completing your E.I.S card (Exhibitor Information Statement) regarding what type of camera you’re using as well the types of settings such as manual or automatic. Be sure to specify your experience with photography as well as how your final image was produced. It’s safe to say that you can not provide too much information!

Before you complete the E.I.S. card, sketch out answers to the following key points:
- WHO shot the photo
- WHAT were you trying to communicate
- WHEN was the picture taken
- WHERE was the picture taken
- WHY did you select this particular image
- HOW was your image produced

Equipment

Technical Skills

The art and science of photography

Exhibiting at the State Fair requires not only good ideas on how to submit, mount and present photos but also good technical skills. Step one should be for you to shoot a lot of pictures, to the extent that your time and budget allow. In other words, don’t think that you’ll capture that perfect shot in one take. While there is such a thing as beginner’s luck, winning photographs are the result of time and effort. Shoot your instincts but then pause and apply the principles of photography to create a photo that will capture the eye of the judges.

Exposure

Winning entries must be properly exposed yet this does not mean that images can’t be dark and moody. The calm before the storm may well be more appealing than a scene at the beach. When dealing with technical issues such as color, contrast and exposure be sure to ask yourself how the finished copy makes you feel. Share your potential entries with relatives and friends and seek out their opinions. In the end, select the picture that most accurately reflects what you, as the photographer, were feeling when you shot the photo.

Composition

State Fair Photography evaluators will want to see evidence of strong composition. The photographs you choose to exhibit should be easily understandable for those who view them in terms of what is the main subject, what is your photograph saying to the viewer and perhaps most importantly, what makes a person want to keep looking at this image. Well composed photographs consider rules of composition yet breaking those rules often results in the more powerful image.

Rules of composition

- Keep horizons off center
- Tell a story
- Shoot close up for impact
- Keep it simple
- Human interest
- Use leading lines
- Vary format - vertical/horizontal
- Use props
- Avoid mergers

Presentation

Presenting your work in a strong and determined way is the key to having it survive the rigors of the judging process. Put some thought into where your pictures will travel, who might be handling them, what the weather during the State Fair might be like. Ask yourself, “Will my image survive?” Obviously, at the state level, your work should be meticulous and not suffer from spots, scratches and streaks.

Mounting

When mounting your images be sure to use mounting materials that are sturdy and that won’t curl into a ball on a humid day. If matting your pictures be sure to make all surfaces secure. Put every effort into doing your very best work as you prepare your work for the exhibition. Avoid fingerprints.

“Shoot what you’re feeling, then shoot again and apply some rules of composition to make for a stronger visual image”