



Southern Counties Photographic Federation

# Clubs Judging Seminar

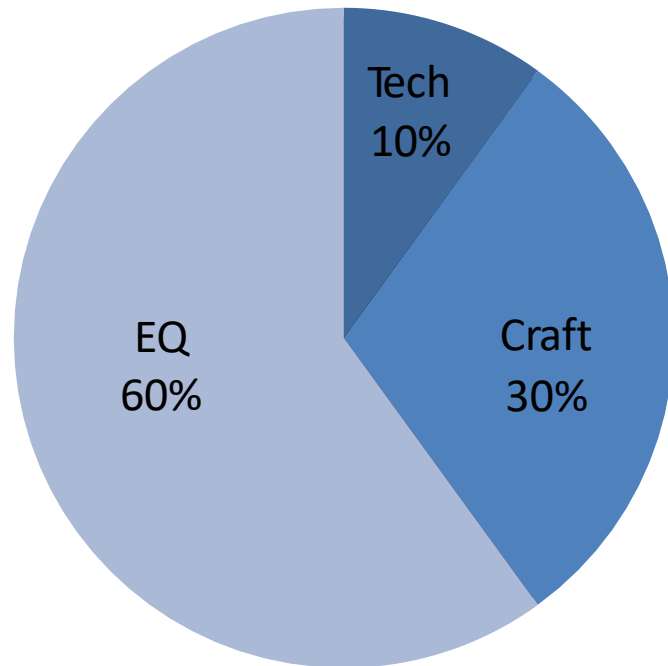
3<sup>rd</sup> February 2019

# Questions

1. What aspects should appraisers take into account when assessing our images?



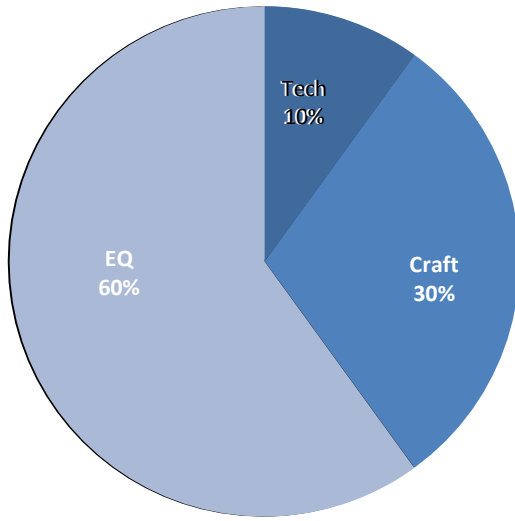
# Appraisal Structure and Balance



◉ What weights of importance would you give to:

- Technical?
- Craft and Content?
- Expressive Quality?

# Technical Quality

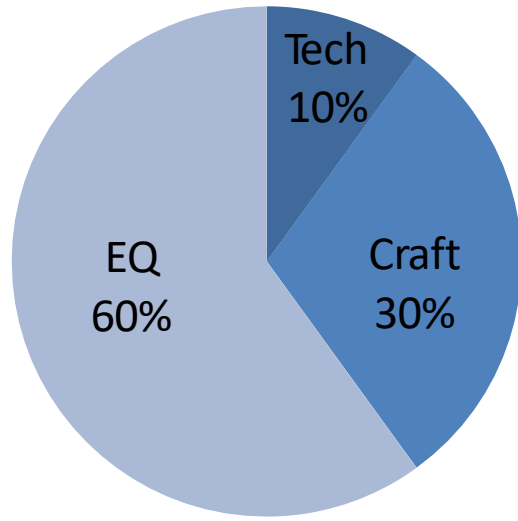


*“There is nothing worse than a sharp image of a fuzzy concept!”*

**Ansel Adams**

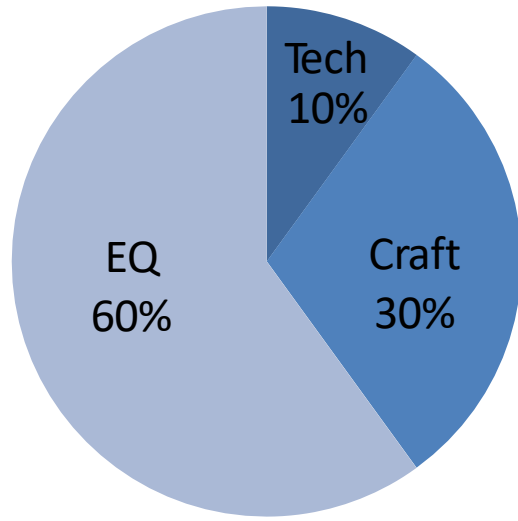
- 10-15% - Objective
- How well has the image been produced?
  - Tonal range and colour saturation
  - Exposure and contrast
  - Sharpness
  - Handling of digital production
    - noise / compression / sharpening / cloning / layering / ...
  - Quality of printing

# Content / Craft



- **30-35% - Subjective**
- How has technique contributed to the overall effect of the image?
  - Composition, design and balance
  - Choice and control of lighting
  - Use of lenses / POV and perspective
  - DoF / focus point
  - Timing / 'the decisive moment'
  - Use of colour ... or monochrome
  - Appropriate use of styles, treatments and effects
  - Format - portrait or landscape
  - Presentation

# Expressive Quality – “It Speaks to Me”



*“A photograph is usually looked at -  
seldom looked into.”*

**Ansel Adams**

- 55-60% - Highly subjective
- How does the image engage you?
  - Does it engage you emotionally?
  - Does it invoke a strong reaction positive or negative?
  - Does it show individuality / originality / photographer input?
  - Is it especially beautiful / ugly / subtle / dramatic
  - Does it convey an idea or information?
  - Does it keep your interest?
  - Does it ask questions / create intrigue or curiosity?
  - Does it show relationships?
  - Does it make you think?

## The Bottom Line

*If an image really speaks, the technicalities will hardly be noticed*

*If you have to talk primarily about craft and technicality, chances are the image doesn't have high expressive quality*



Top: Robert Capa's 1944 image of landings on Omaha Beach, Normandy

Bottom: Nick Ut's Pulitzer Prize-winning image of children fleeing a napalm attack, Vietnam, 1972

# Variations by Genre

Dr. Sethna's "weights" might vary by genre



## ⦿ Abstracts

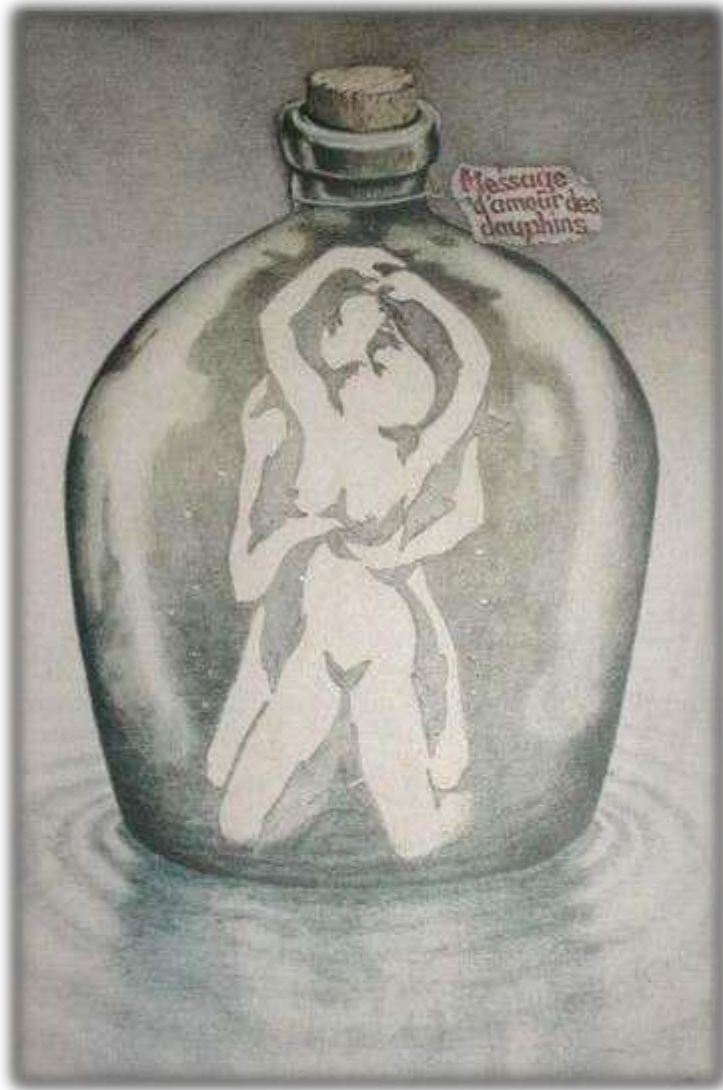
- Highly expressive in an artistic way
- Highly subjective
- More dependent on message and interpretation



## ⦿ Nature / Documentary

- Highly expressive in an informative way
- More Objective
- More dependent on technical quality



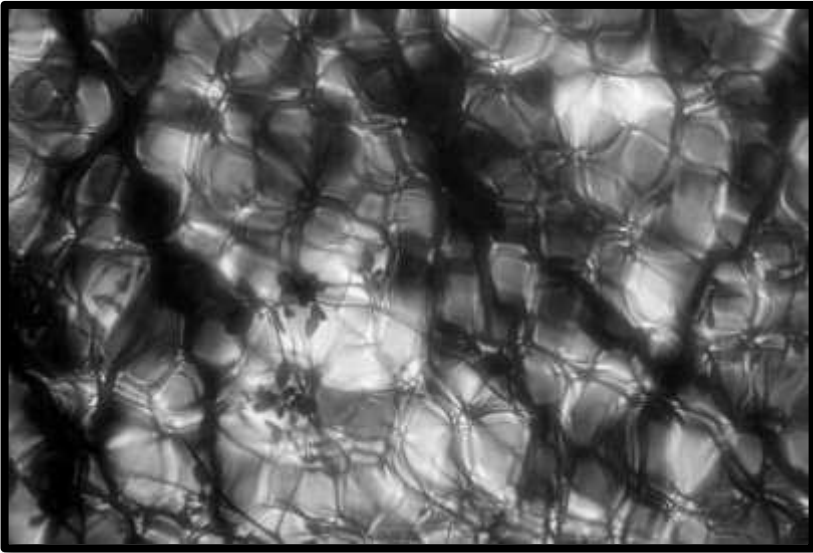


Original image by Sandro Del-Prete

# About Subjectivity

- What we see (or not) is conditioned by our values, experiences and priorities
- Expressive quality in a photograph exists differently in the mind of every viewer
- It is important to seek the photographer's intent but not to find it; it is your personal response that matters most
- Objectivity is impossible

# The Complete Appraisal



Empathise

Own your opinions

Be respectful

Motivate - 3:1 positives

- Consider what you're seeing
  - The image as a whole
  - What is the image about?
- What does it say to you?
  - How do you feel about it?
- Discuss the image
  - How do you feel?
  - What does it communicate to you?
  - Look under the surface
  - Is EQ enhanced or hindered by craft and technical quality?
- Suggest improvements
  - Be specific
  - How to use craft to enhance the EQ, not to make a different image
- Finish on a positive note ...

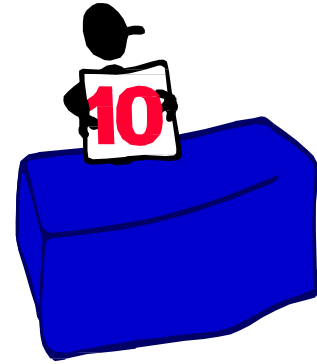
Variability / Polarised Images

# **MARKING DISCUSSION**

# Marking Schemes

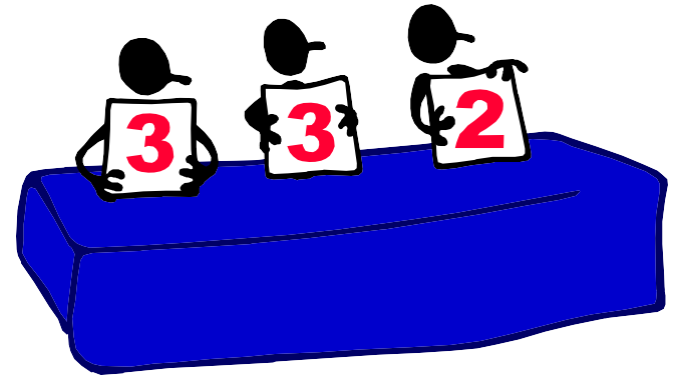
## ⦿ At Club Level

- Marks out of 10 / 20
- Gold / Silver / Bronze
- 1,2,3 and HCs
- Marks out of 5



## ⦿ Exhibitions and Championships

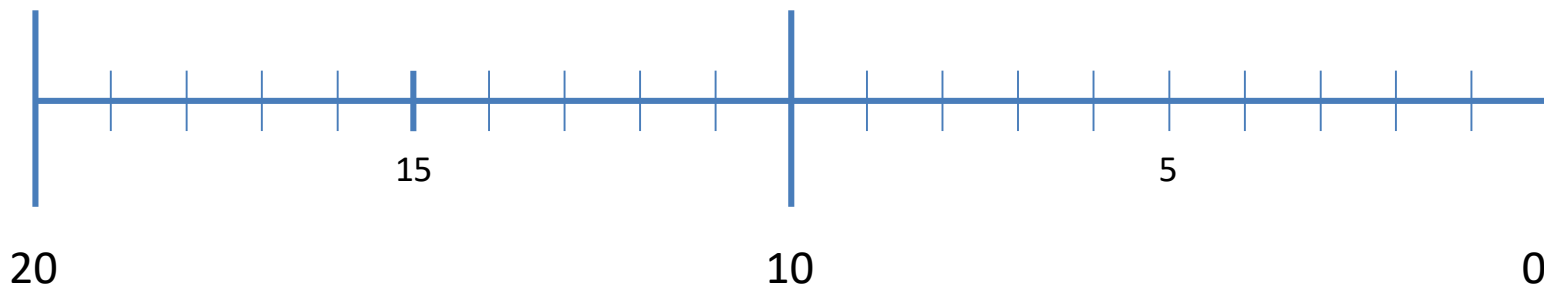
- Marks out of 5 (with two other judges)
- Winner plus HCs or ribbons from a large entry of high standard



# Marking

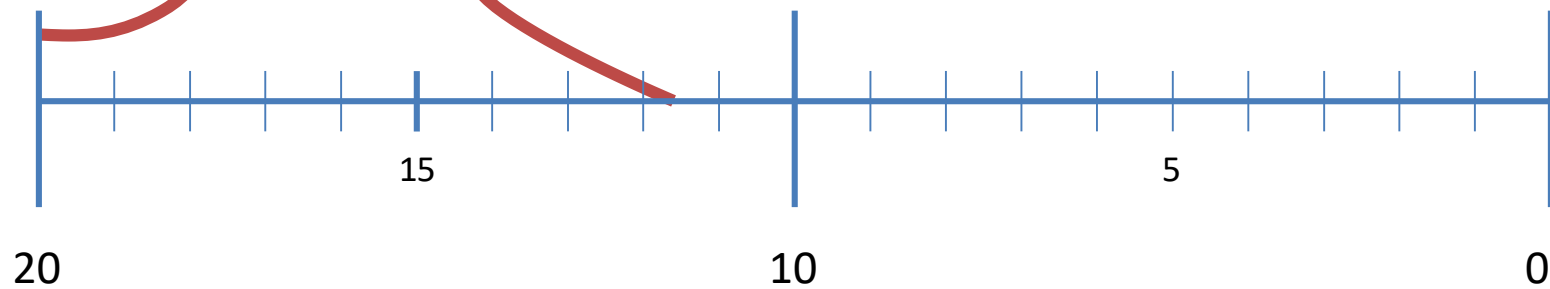


What is an appropriate range?

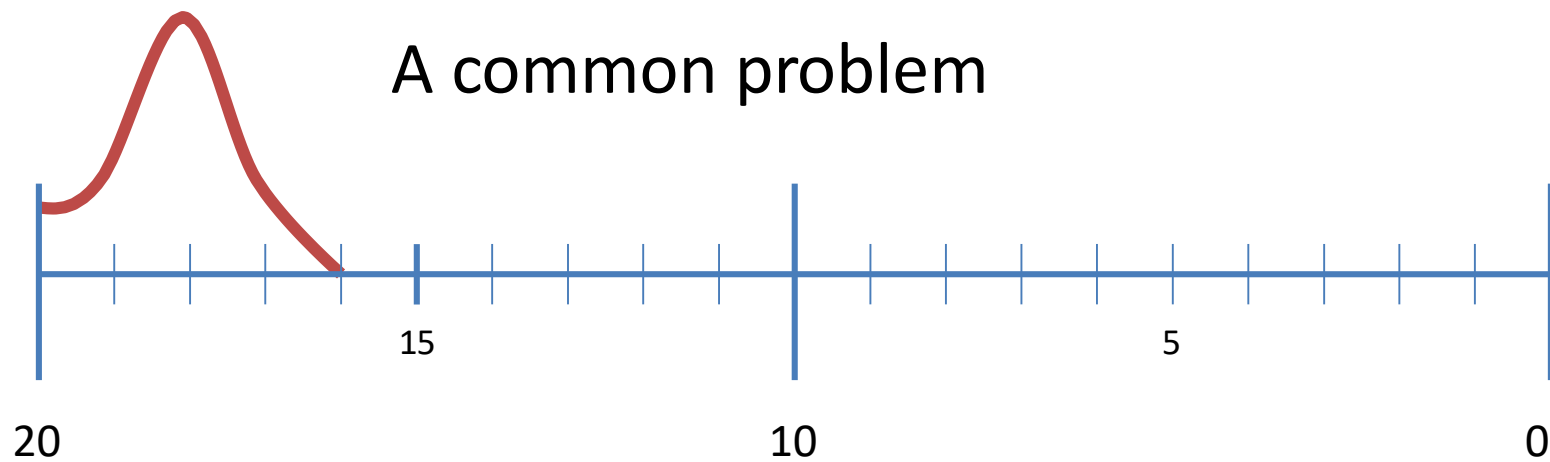


# Marking

A normal distribution  
16 average ...



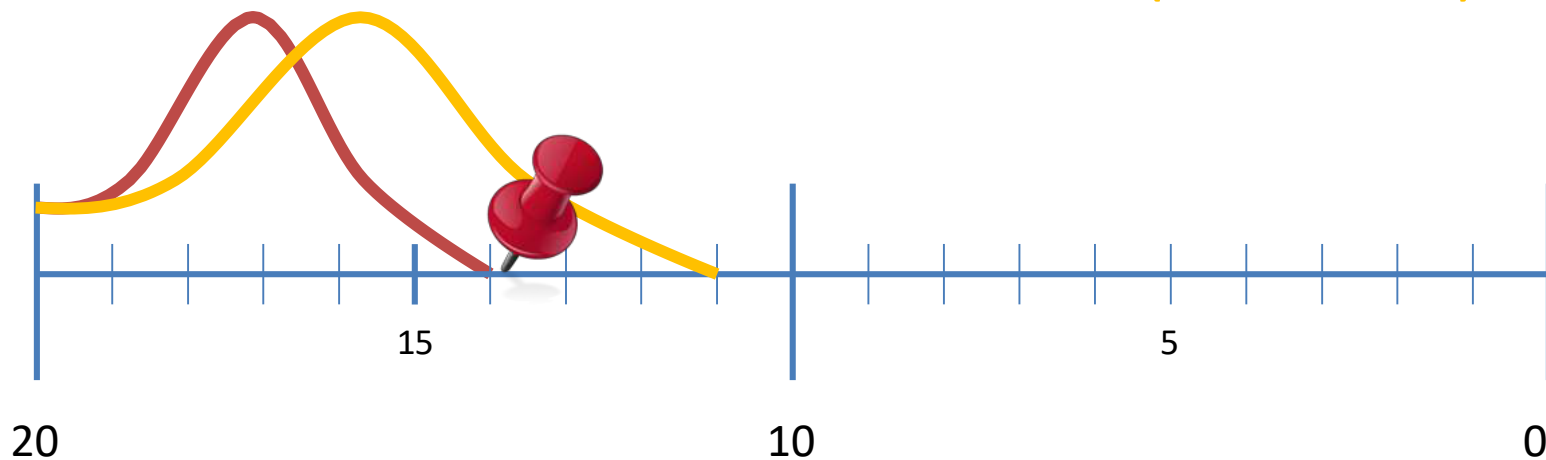
# Marking



# Ideal Marking Ranges

For beginners: 14-20 (ave 16-17)

For advanced: 11-20 (ave 15-16)



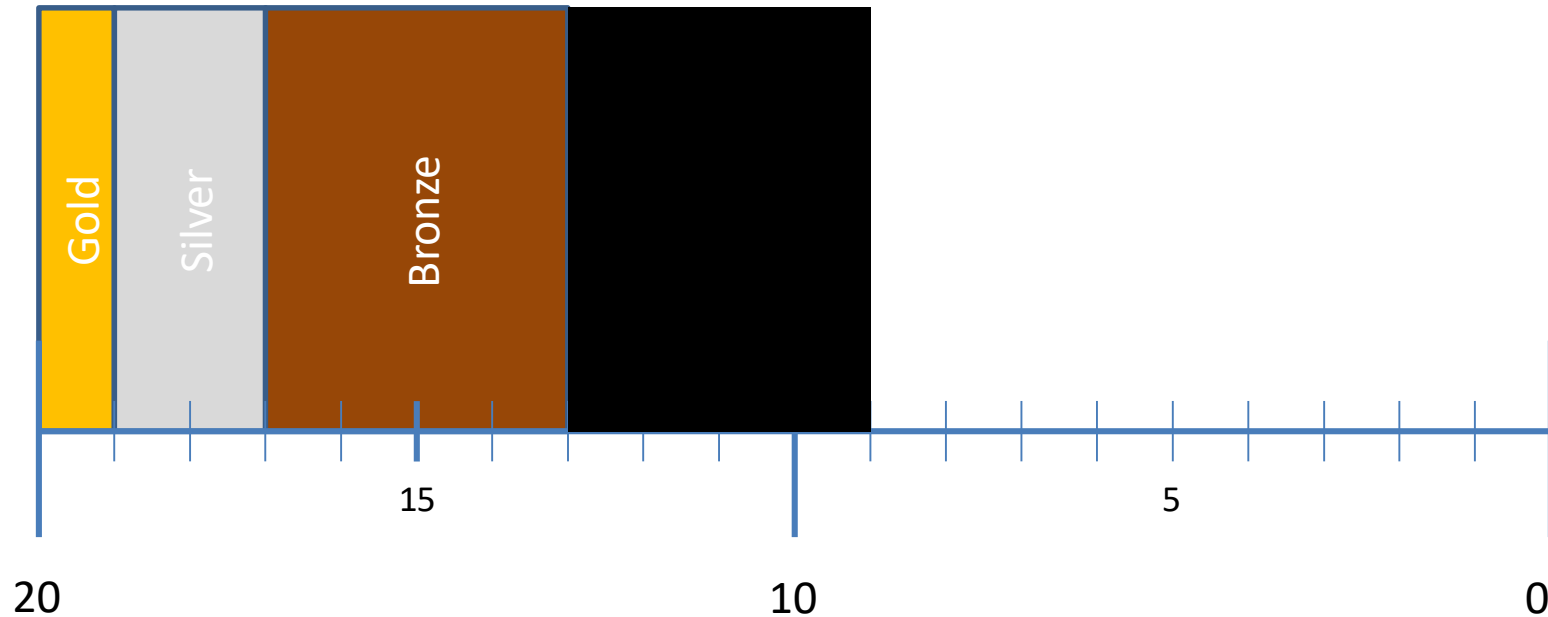
Tip: In your preview look at all the images  
to pin the lowest mark

Marking at club is typically Relative, not Absolute.

Therefore: use whole range, always the best image scores top mark.



# Comparisons



- ⦿ Gold
  - Excellent of its type, highly expressive, individual, technically-flawless
- ⦿ Silver
  - Very good quality, slightly lower in expressive quality or individuality, minor flaws only
- ⦿ Bronze
  - Low in expressive quality or individuality and / or some obvious technical flaws
- ⦿ Pass / Credit
  - Little or no expressive quality or individuality, and major technical flaws

# Finally

As appraisers we have a lot of power and a big responsibility.

If we do it well, photographers and club photography will  
grow;

We have the power to influence that for good

If we do it poorly, photographers might leave and not return,  
and club photography will be left behind;

We have the responsibility to make sure that never happens