

GUIDANCE ON ENTERING CLUB ASSIGNMENT COMPETITIONS

It is always up to the photographer entering an assignment competition to interpret the assignment as he or she sees fit – making sure that the image, supported by an appropriate title, can be interpreted by a fair judge as being a valid response to the assignment.

The purpose of any assignment is to get us, the photographers, to work outside our comfort zone, tackle something new, look at something different – and by doing so, become better photographers. Personal development is more important than trying to second-guess a judge's taste.

You can't predict the outcome of an assignment.

'ARCHITECTURE' COMPETITION

What does the term 'architecture' mean to you? A conventional definition of architecture is 'any building designed by an architect', or, more broadly, 'any building which has been built with careful thought as to function and appearance.'

Great architectural photography goes beyond being a mere record. It should capture the spirit of the building, its designer or its relationship with its site. Lighting is especially important in photography of buildings, as modelling with sunlight, shade and shadow helps us to explore form, texture and space.

A judge could expect to see images of:

- whole buildings (in isolation, or in the context of their environment – streetscape, landscape)
- several buildings – especially where they have a designed relationship with each other
- partial views of a building
- details – a finial, a frieze, a doorway
- materials used in the building – how they are used, qualities, textures
- structural form – Doric column, Gothic vault, skeleton frame, space frame ...
- interiors – details or complete spaces, natural light, mixed light, artificial light
- night shots
- buildings in use – demonstrating their function
- vernacular architecture (traditional buildings, such as Manx farms and cottages)
- the use of public space, art (especially sculpture) and landscaping in relation to the building.

He/she would probably not expect to see images of civil engineering structures (bridges, silos, etc) unless these were photographed in a way that emphasised their architectural qualities.

Other interpretations are possible, and whilst not expected by a judge, should be assessed on how they express the assignment – so they could be of, for example, an architectural model, a set of architects' drawings, etc. Images such as these may not get the top mark, but, if well done, they may gain marks for imaginative interpretation.

A note on perspective – exaggerated converging verticals are much more acceptable than ones that are just off. We don't all have wide angle, but we can straighten images in Photoshop, within reason.



*Original, slightly
converging*



*exaggerated
perspective*



straightened

It's good practice to put together a long list of potential entries (perhaps 10 or more), look at them all together or in quick succession (an on-screen digital slide show helps), evaluate them in terms of technical quality and 'wow' factor, and then decide which six best represent the question asked by the assignment. Trust your own judgement.