

Evaluation of “set subject” in a photographic competition or exhibition

The WAPJA considers that for the purpose of evaluation by a judge, set subject must be considered in one of the following ways.

- 1. Where the set subject defines a “Message”, it should be dealt with as the central criterion of the assessment process. Hence, where the subject definition requires the work to evoke a feeling, emotion or mood; convey a statement or story; or transmit an idea or thought, it should be judged on how successfully it transmits that message. Images that communicate a strong message closely related to the set subject would naturally score higher than those that don’t. An image that does not succeed in addressing the subject definition should be judged accordingly and the judge would not normally need to verify its eligibility with the Competition Director. Hence, the “closeness” and strength of the relationship is a subjective judgement to be made by the judge, and will influence the score given.*
- 2. Where the set subject defines an element of either “Content” (e.g. “low light”) or “Medium” (e.g. “monochrome”), an image is eligible if it complies with the definition. The judge should offer advice to the Competition Director when he or she considers it possible that an image does not meet the definition. The Competition Director, preferably, should make the decision on whether the image is eligible or not. However, that responsibility may be passed to the judge. If a doubtful image is ultimately deemed eligible, it should be judged as if it has fully complied with the definition. In essence, the “message” is “open” in such circumstances.*

Clubs are strongly urged to define their set subjects as carefully and precisely as possible, to avoid the possibility of an image, or images, being rejected. As well as an accurate description of what is required, it may be necessary in some circumstances to specify what will not be acceptable.