

12 Days of P52: Day Three

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Don

My Critique Style and Why I Think It Works.

I am not a blustering academic who takes delight in running down student works. We know the type.

“I cannot believe this drivel was turned in. The photograph is a jumble of terrible east coast aesthetic mixed with a terribly underexposed base. The photographer should have done this, then this, then that over there shouldn’t be there... I think that as a photographer, this person would make an excellent gardener.”

— actual critique overheard at Art Center. Pasadena.

We do not do that in this class. It may be interesting to many of you to know that there actually is NOT one way to do something and that no critic anywhere should have a definitive say over your work.

I see my job as to be the director leading you to find your own voice, your own style, and your own vision. There are some things technically and aesthetically that are givens in the world of commercial photography. But there is no dominant way of doing anything – from still life to fashion.

I am not an aggressively ‘angry’ critique giver – and quite often look for something in the image to praise before giving a more exacting and deliberate critique.

And some things you may do will be simply be wrong. Like leaving no room for the type, or shooting a vertical when a horizontal was assigned. As commercial photographers we many times have lots of ‘rules’ to apply to our images because we are working with an art director, designer, or editor that also has rules to apply. Perhaps we are shooting a CD cover (square) – and it HAS to be square. Nothing else will work. Or a panorama or double-truck (two page spread) that is shot vertical and cannot be used.

Pay attention to the assignments, they are exactly like the ones you will be getting as a commercial photographer no matter where you are.

Do not be fooled by the less than heavy hand I use to critique though. I am absolutely bound to making you a better photographer and we will do anything short of humiliation and degradation to achieve that growth.

ARTICLES ON CRITIC and the CRITIQUING PROCESS

What About Critics

How to Get, Give, and Take Photographic Criticism