

# Communication and Comprehension

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If I experience frustration dealing with a jury, it's generally attributable to a comprehension problem - mine - not the jury's. This is partly due to the competitive exhibiting critique system. The critique is not designed for immediate two way communication - nor should it be as we'd never get finished. Nor does the jury have time to discuss any exhibit in detail, everyone in the room needs feedback.

It's the exhibitor's job to build an exhibit within published guidelines, according to our view of the subject and to make clear the intent of what we're showing. Judges interpret how well exhibitors comply with those same guidelines. It's the jury's job to point out unclear intent, according to their view of the subject, and their responsibility to suggest possible improvements. Now the rub. Have you listened to comments during a critique and some are clear and some are nebulous at best? The foggy bits are usually my brain filtering jury feedback and not being able to deal with it immediately. What I'm hearing may simply not fit my current mindset and/or view of my exhibit.

Jury members discussed aspects of the exhibit among themselves to reach a consensus. Not hearing that discussion, I often need a more detailed clarification of some comments. Time to review the impact of those comments is also key as some comments are important and others are less so. That's why I make notes and chew on things in a less active setting than at the critique. Occasionally, two different jurors may even be saying the same thing, but for some reason, it doesn't register until I hear it a specific way. There are certain jurors who speak my language, so to speak, and I get the picture much quicker when listening to them. That doesn't mean other jurors aren't just as knowledgeable or experienced, it simply means I'm more attuned to some. A review at the frames and speaking with more than one judge works for me; the material is on display and the judges are commenting specifically. I need only invest my time and listen well to garner the most information with the least effort. Once I find a judge communicating on my wavelength, I listen even more carefully. They don't say what I want to hear, but that's why I'm listening.

So, gentlemen and ladies of the jury, please continue to have patience with those of us with furrowed brows. Try explaining what you mean with different words or, call over another judge who might provide a different perspective.

With work, critiques result in improved exhibits, proving perhaps that we are listening after all! Thank you to all the judges having extended this effort in the past, it's appreciated.