How to make your photos stand out from the crowd

1 Know your camera
Understand how to use your camera and more importantly understand how camera settings will influence your final image . Learn to have more creative control rather than rely on automatic or program modes.
Try using Aperture Priority or even manual.

2 Evoke an emotion
From joy to sadness. From hope to despair. From peace to anger, and everything else in between.
If your image evokes emotion in those who view it, then it will stand out from the crowd.

3 Add some humour
Look for subject matter that viewers will find amusing.
An entertaining image will be one in which people will remember . . .
just think of all those emails that go around the internet with amusing images attached.
They evoke an emotion and people remember them.

4 Use colour effectively
Consider colour in your images, in particular primary colours.
Does the colour compliment the image?
Consider complimentary colours.

5 High contrast scenes
High contrast scenes have impact. Look at sunsets and silhouettes but make sure that you have a strong subject matter. A sunset without a strong centre point is just another sunset.

6 Find the right light
Photography is all about light.
Try to photograph early morning or late evening when the light is warmer and lighting is less harsh.
Try to avoid the harsh light of midday.

7 Simplify
Get in close, and then get in closer.
Remove all unwanted elements.
Use different lenses to change field of view.

8 Use framing
Use natural or manmade objects to frame your image, drawing your eye into the subject matter.
Consider using doors, arches or trees.

9 Crop . . . camera / computer
Remove any unwanted elements in your image that do not add anything.
Consider cropping sky, distraction elements, water.

10 Use depth in your image
When composing images, consider your foreground, subject matter and background.
Look at rolling hills where haze causes the hills to have progressively lighter tones.
This gives the image depth and draws your eye into the scene.

11 Try different perspectives
Don't just take your images front on, try different perspectives.
Try a low perspective, high perspective, move around and try taking it from a different angle.
You will be surprises how much a difference moving one step to the left or right can make.

12 Use leading lines
Use objects/features, patterns in your image to lead your eye into and through the scene.
Look for rivers, fences, roads or the natural forms of landscape.
Try to compose your image so that your eye is drawn into the image from the bottom left corner.

13 Rule of thirds
The "Rule of Thirds" is not a rule at all; it's a guideline, intended to help you when you are uncertain as to the placement of elements in a scene when you are framing the picture. By ignoring the rule, you may still have a great picture, depending on the content of the image and how well its elements are balanced.
It has been repeatedly shown that by placing objects over these intersections, a pleasing and balanced arrangement often results, whether the composition is horizontal or vertical.

14 Counter point
When an image's centre of interest is placed at an intersection of one of the thirds, balance in the picture can often be achieved by placing a secondary object, known as a "counterpoint", at the opposing intersection.

15 Patterns & repetition
Patterns and repetition exists everywhere we go, with nature be abundant with them.
Learn to see patterns and repetition and then learn to photograph it effectively.

16 Geometric shapes
Look for geometric shapes in your image or in the relationship of elements in your image.

17 Reflections
Look for reflections in water and in windows and pay particular attention in how normal scenes can be transformed. Consider just including the reflection only.

18 Watch your background
Make sure that there are no distracting elements in the background that draw your attention away from the main subject. Look out for poles and trees protruding out of the top of people's heads.
Look for bright colours or highlights in the background.

19 Use flash effectively
Use fill flash to assist in high contrast situations.
Remember it puts a catch light in eyes of people and animals.
Learn to control your flash and use it effectively.
The goal should be an image that doesn't look like it has been flashed.
It's one of the most difficult aspects of photography to master.

20 Work the subject
Take heaps of photographs – capturing them is cheap!
Be patient – take your time and wait for 'the moment'.
Explore different perspectives aswell as different camera settings.

21 Dynamic images/ Action
Don't just take static shots; try to include movement or action.
Timing is crucial. Shoot a sequence of shots. Learn to anticipate the action.

22 Tell a story
Try to captivate the viewer with a story. Try to ensure the viewer can relate to your story.

23 Try something new
Dare to be different, dare it be said . . . Break the accepted rules!

24 Tweak your images
If you want your photographs to stand out from the crowd, learn to enhance them through editing in your graphics program. Clone out any unwanted elements, reduce the highlights, desaturate the bright colours in any backgrounds and apply some creative techniques to enhance the image.

25 Be creative
If all else fails, try something creative.
First and foremost, be creative in your camera and then be creative in your editing.
Try not to just apply basic Photoshop filters and plug-ins. Some judges will expect more from an image than just a basic change.

26 Photography is Subjective.
We're all individuals and each of us will be attracted to different things in an image.
For an image to be interesting to viewers with no emotional ties to the subject or photographer, it must have properties that appeal to the viewer.
Always remember that photography should be fun.

Malcolm Fackender is an Australian award winning travel and commercial photographer who specialises in small group photographic tours to Asia and Africa. Malcolm has been involved with and successful at photography since a young teenager, winning a Gold Medal in 1985 at the age of seventeen.
Initially Malcolm had a strong interest in macro and bird photography, but more recently developed a strong interest in travel photography, where he has broadened his photographic interests to cover many other genres. He is particularly interested in South-East Asia where he has taken in excess of 250,000 images over the past seven years.

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