Audio Visual Competition
General Judging Comments
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What is an Audio Visual (Diaporama)

Any AV is often defined as a sequence of still images where the storyline or theme, sound, transitions and images are interdependent. Small inclusions of Full motion video are allowed on the AV timeline for effect. In the main modern Audio-Visual sequences are edited and produced using digital computer software. The appeal of any AV sequence depends greatly on effective combinations of Visuals & Sounds using transitions, fades and animations etc.

Any high quality AV sequence will have unity of its 3 parts :- the conception, the visuals and the sound (Effectively combining both Music and Sound effects SFX or comments). Generally, these 3 elements should reinforce each other.

Adequate conception involves an idea with a suitable introduction, an interesting development of the idea or storyline and an appropriate close. The conception is often Judged for "Audience Appeal" also.

Spoken Narrative or Overlay text description may be employed but is not mandatory.

Time limits, Grades, Subject matter and Image Quality

The maximum allowable duration of AV sequences is usually seven (7) minutes, 4-5 minutes may be more enjoyable. Mini-10 AVs will be shorter again usually. Normal Club rules allow for Mini-10, Novice, Open & Graded categories of competition.

Any subject matter can be used, from normal Club Photographic Genres, Personal memories and records, to a personal favourite of mine which are Travel Trip AVs. (a step above photobooks for travel memories – these are much longer !)

Always make sure that the AV Images you use are well post produced in image editing software such as Photoshop. Also important to match the resolution of AV images to the output resolution of the AV sequence you are making., which is controlled by the resolution of your display device, eg. Digital projector, computer monitor, large screen TV.

Production Recommendations

In my opinion, it is almost mandatory for any AV maker from Novice to A-Grade, to include the following elements of good production for maximum audience appeal in the storyline being told.

Always START and END AV sequences with a Black-frame of about 2s-3s screen time and simple fade transition. This is before and after any necessary START-END Titles.

Maintain a constant FRAME resolution and format ratio, such as 1920px x 1080px FHD, throughout the sequence. Any images which do not conform to this Resolution and Format can then be placed onto and within this constant frame, with perhaps a backgound that is a blurred and darkened image – VERY effective, and avoids audience eye-strain. Multiple images on a common background is also useful with simple borders or drop shadows.

Minimize dramatic over-the-top Transition effects and Animations, such as spins and 3D rolls which can make the viewer sea-sick !!   Good use can be made of both vertical and horizontal Larger image format slow-scrolls (pans) across the normal format background frame.   Also Image effects such as Zooming , unless appropriate for subject matter, should be minimised.
An old but good AV adage is the comment – A simple fade is a good fade !.

SOUND – just like in the movies, is vital to an AV. An effective Sound-Scape involves multi-track editing combinations of background music and sound effects SFX, which match perfectly with the image visuals to tell the complete story.

Too often AV makers only use background music and forget the importance of background sounds such as water, wind in the trees, meadow sounds and traffic noises. Appropriate SFX should fade-in before and fade-out after the related images are on-screen.   If microphone voice recording is used it should be very clear and well delivered. Quite often a simple overlay text comment is better and faster for the audience than badly recorded voice narrative.

Acknowledgement of other Included Works

An AV sequence may contain music, sound effects, artwork designs, photographic images and video clips not the work of the AV author. In such cases full credit must be acknowledged within the sequence, usually in a credit slide at the end.

It is expected that AV still images will predominantly be the original work of the AV maker.

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Favourite Production Editing software and website assistance …

Adobe Photoshop   for major Image editing
Audacity   for major Sound multitrack editing, free & open source
WnSoft Pictures to Exe - PTE AV Studio 10Pro   for AV Production & editing   (The Photoshop of the
                                                                                                                                              AV world)

SFX On-line Generator – **Ambient Mixer** @ https://www.ambient-mixer.com/