

# Create an emotional response in the viewer by photographing the 'magic' of the moment

*Keep in mind that the fewer people shown in a photograph, the greater involvement the reader feels with the subject*

"Always try to figure out what the magic is in a situation—what the essence is," says photographer Susan Reich (1735 N. Paulina, Chicago, IL 60622). "Try to capture that in your photograph."

"When illustrating what an event is like," says Reich, "be creative in your interpretation of what a good photo is." In photographing a fundraising event like a marathon race, for example, Reich questions the visual effectiveness of photographing something like a giant check. "Sometimes it's better just to talk about how much money was received," says Reich. "Maybe it's better to show one of the little kids at the race in a T-shirt down to her knees or a man in a wheelchair coming in at the end of the race—the stuff that life is made of."

Reich, a freelance writer/photographer, appreciates the difficulty involved in shooting pictures that get to the heart of things. Whenever possible, she will scout the location before an event to establish solutions to technical needs. Then, she says, she can get the "required" photo, relax, and then "look for the magic."

"The excitement of an educational program, for example, isn't shown by photographing students sitting in a classroom," says Reich. "Avoid the literal and interpret what's really going on among people."

"One thing I try to do whenever I can is reduce the number of people in a photo," Reich says. Almost like a readability gauge for text, Reich says the rule is: "The more people in a photo, the lower the response. Fewer people in a photograph create a more intimate bond and a higher response from the viewer."—Catherine Lange



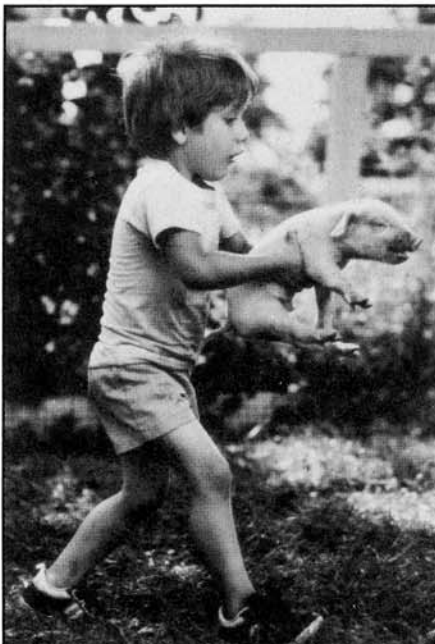
The event: A benefit party at an art gallery celebrating a new exhibit opening at Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo. Photographer Susan Reich says she knew the board member pictured above would see the fun in the setup she was creating and enlisted him to interact with the art at the gallery. Reich cautions that it takes some familiarity with the people you're shooting to know when an unusual approach might work best. The photo ran big—nine inches wide—on *Lincoln Park Zoo Review's* 11 1/2" by 15" page.



Photographer Susan Reich's assignment was to illustrate Lincoln Park Zoo's new signage for the zoo's annual report... She chose not to take a literal approach—for instance, taking a straight-on shot of a sign. Instead, she interpreted the importance of the signs by showing the one in use. After all, the zoo wants the readers of its publications to come see the signs—and the animals—for themselves.



Reich did a series of photos, published in several different zoo publications, of the sculptures found throughout the zoo. Rather than simply document pieces of sculpture, she concentrated on showing children interacting with the sculptures. In talking to the little boy in the photo at top left, Reich asked him what this sculpture was all about. While giving his explanation, he reached up as if to touch the bronze hand extended toward him. In the top photo, Reich catches the very different presence of one girl poised on the limestone lion (above) in contrast to the trio of boys clambering over it in the photo at the immediate left. The photos show more than what the objects look like—they show a reason why they're there.



This award-winning photo on the far left was used to promote Lincoln Park's Farm-in-the-Zoo. A set-up shot turned into a magical moment when Reich suggested to the child that he pick up the pig.

Most organizational photographers won't find camels among their subjects, but they can find shots like the one on the immediate left that captures a spontaneous response between two subjects. Reich relishes the hunt for the essence of a situation. Here, zookeeper and charge enjoy a small tug-of-war. The photo appeared in a promo for the Zoo's film festival, which included a film called