Portrait Photography

What makes an appealing photo of a person or people?
Subject Matter:
Familiar vs. Unfamiliar
Normal vs. Exotic
Alfred Stieglitz – O’Keeffe 34, 1922
Alfred Stieglitz – O’Keeffe, 1918
Diane Arbus – A young man at home with curlers on west 20th street, NYC, 1966.
Diane Arbus – Mexican dwarf in his hotel room in NYC, 1970.
Composition:

How is the subject arranged?
Roy DeCarava –
Woman Smiling, 1963.
Ralph Meatyard – Hands, 1958-60.
Setting:

Candid vs. posed
Roy DeCarava – Coltrane on Soprano, 1963.
Dorothea Lange –
Migrant Mother, 1936.
Camera Placement:

Close-up vs. Distant
Lothar Wolleh – Patriarch of Constanople.
Lighting:

Natural vs. Staged
Roy DeCarava – Romare Bearden, 1951.
Dorothea Lange – Migratory Cotton Picker, 1940.
Sally Mann – Candy Cigarette.