

2023 CAPA Survey - Suggested Improvement To Competitions

Competition Editing Criteria

2023 survey suggestions received:

- **current individual CAPA member survey (478 responses received):**
 - A. understand need for rules but the emphasis on complex rules can be stifling (3 respondents)
 - B. permit the use of filters in a competition (1 respondent)
 - C. CAPA should emphasize things like composition, light creativity and technical aspect that make great photo – bring these aspects forward so they become eligibility rules of competitions (1 respondent).
- **past individual CAPA member survey (138 responses received):**
 - D. The standardization of judging is great, but the criteria certainly seem to need overhauling (1 respondent),
- **current CAPA Camera Club survey (48 responses received):** no responses received on this topic.
- **past CAPA Camera Club survey (8 responses received):** no responses received on this topic.

My Response – Thanks for these suggestions, and we appreciate the opportunity to address each which are included in my responses below:

A. Structured CAPA Editing Criteria for CAPA Competitions

CAPA's competitions are configured to accommodate the distinct preferences of two specific groups of photographers:

1. **Traditional Photographers:** This group comprises photographers who prioritize capturing the finest image directly in-camera. They rely on their technical skills, expertise in composition, lighting, and camera settings to achieve their desired results without substantial reliance on post-processing. These photographers continually refine their photography skills and being well-prepared to seize the perfect moment. Traditional photographers aim to showcase their artistry through skillful and precise capture.

2. **Post Processing Dependent Photographers:** This group includes photographers who place importance on capturing technically proficient images but heavily rely on post-processing software to further enhance and manipulate their work. Often working with RAW format images, they enjoy the added flexibility that allows for extensive editing. These photographers dedicate significant time to post-processing as it is an integral part of their artistic process enabling them to craft their distinct vision and artistic expression.

For CAPA competitions, we offer competitions for both groups of photographers such as the following:

- **Traditional Photographers:** monochrome, minimal manipulation, nature/wildlife and photojournalism.
- **Post Processing Dependent Photographers:** all remaining CAPA competitions.

We understand that some survey respondents have raised questions about why our editing criteria appear to be limiting, rather than having completely open editing competitions. The rationale for having limited editing criteria is outlined below:

- **Fairness** – helps ensure a level playing field for all photographers. By having these restrictions, we aim to prevent some participants from gaining an unfair advantage through excessive post-processing or manipulation of their images.
- **Skill Evaluation** – with clear and precious editing criteria, judges can better assess the photographer's skills rather than their editing abilities. Consequently, the photographer must focus on the core elements of photography such as composition, lighting, subject selection, and creativity.
- **Originality and Authenticity** – competitions encourage photographers to focus on capturing impactful and authentic images in-camera and undertaking minor post processing to enhance features in the image.
- **Consistency** – judges know what to expect in terms of post processing and they then can apply their evaluations more consistently and fairly.
- **Efficiency** – it prevents judges from spending excessive time analyzing complex post processing images and allows them to focus on the essential aspects of each image.
- **Education** – can serve as a learning experience by encouraging photographers to improve their image captures and get more out of photography without relying heavily on post processing

While we understand that some photographers might prefer completely open editing competitions, our intention is to foster an environment that celebrates different aspects of photography and recognize the talents of photographers with various skill sets.

We value the feedback from our participants and continuously strive to improve our competitions to better accommodate the interests and preferences of our photographic community.

B. Filters

With regards to “**allowing filters in a CAPA competition**,” it’s important to clarify what is meant by the term “filter.” In the context of CAPA competitions, filters consist of three types:

1. **On-camera filters** are a physical accessory that is attached to the camera lens or to the camera. Examples include: close-up lens, neutral-density, polarizer and UV. These on-camera filters are used to alter the light entering the camera, adjust exposure, reduce glare, and achieve various effects during the image capture process.
2. **Software filters** are applied to the image after it has been captured. These filters are part of post processing applications and include various adjustments, artistic effects, blurs, distortions, and more.
3. **Post Processing pre-sets** are pre-defined sets of editing adjustments that can be applied to an image with a single click. They encompass a combination of different post-processing filters and settings, allowing photographers to achieve a specific look or style consistently across multiple images.

Regarding the use of software filters and pre-sets in a CAPA competition, the following conditions must be met:

- **Original Work** – all components of the submitted image must be the original work of the photographer, and the image should not contain elements created or captured by someone else. Here are two examples where a filters/pre-sets are NOT permitted:
 1. **Texture filter** which adds elements to an image which were not captured by the photographer
 2. **Photoshop shape brush is not** permitted because a shape has been added which the photographer did not capture. Whereas, a photoshop brush tip is permitted.

- **Compliance with Competition Rules** – some competitions may outline the use of certain filters, so it is crucial to carefully review the competition’s editing criteria to ensure compliance.

Our primary purpose is to promote fairness and authenticity in CAPA competitions, ensuring that every submitted image is a 100% creation of the talented photographer behind it.

By providing clarity on the types of filters and their conditions for usage, we empower photographers to participate with confidence, showcasing their best images.

C. Change Competition Rules To Emphasize Composition, Light Creativity & Technical Aspects

I believe it is unnecessary to emphasize specific rules for competitions, creativity, and technical aspects, as these points are fundamental for all photographic genres.

Our competitions already encompass the general description with themes and outlines what aspect the judging panel will be using to evaluate each image.

Below are a series of steps which all photographers should undertake when entering any type of photo competition to ensure their entry is strong and meets the competition requirements:

Part I – Should I Submit An Image Into A Competition?

Competition Specifications: carefully read and understand the competition requirements. Seek clarification from the competition coordinator when required.

Relevance to Theme: confirm that the image aligns with the theme’s definition. Seek clarification from the competition coordinator, if required.

Editing Criteria: does the image meet the competition’s editing criteria? Seek clarification from the competition coordinator, if required.

Image Specifications: naming of image requirements, file name & image dimensions.

Part II Factors Judges Consider

Creativity & Originality: Evaluate the emotional impact of the image. Does it evoke feelings or tell a compelling story? A powerful image can leave a lasting impression on the judges.

Image Title & Description: Review the title to ensure it adds context and meaning to the image.

Organization: consists of three components: Emotional (imagination, impact, subject, mood), Organizational (composition, distractions, space) and Technical (colour, exposure, light, sharpness technique).

Remember, it's not just about winning a CAPA Awards; it's about refining your photographic skills and challenging yourself to grow as a photographer.

To uphold the principles of promoting competitions, creativity, and technical excellence, CAPA has updated our judging criteria for all our competitions - emphasizing competition, creativity, and the technical excellence:

- *An Image's title may be used by the judges in evaluating a submission, so entrants should take care in selecting a title that complements or contributes to the vision or message being presented in the image.*
- *Judges will award their scoring primarily based on the **'emotional components of the image, that CAPA's places the primary importance in judging an image can be available to award on the 'creativity and emotional impact,' secondarily on the 'technical', and thirdly on the 'compositions.'***
- *Technical and Organizational factors, such as exposure, sharpness, focus, space, and composition, will be taken into account solely to the degree they do or do not support or reinforce the creative vision and storytelling. Images will not be penalized in scoring for so-called technical rule infractions, such as focus, if that is immaterial to the creative vision and storytelling.*

Likewise, judges take into consideration in their scoring the degree to which the entrant's use of techniques such as colour, monochrome, duo and multi-tone, contributes to or supports the creative vision and the story telling value of the image.

The bold text above has been incorporated into all our 2023-2024 competition webpages.

D. Confusing Competition Editing Criteria

For each of our 2023 – 2024 competitions, we have updated all our competition criteria to include more clarity and being more precise.