Canadian Association for Photographic Art

Judges' Reference Manual

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Acknowledgements

CAPA wishes to acknowledge with sincere thanks, the dedication and service of those who have previously created and presented prior Judging courses in their various formats. Without those generous and steadfast people, CAPA would not have the experienced and well qualified judges it does today.

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Summary of Changes

Amendment # 2025-001

- Chapter 2 - CAPA Judging Methodology
  Ethics – Nature/Wildlife, Exploitation of People:
  Page 13 - Wording change to reflect updated policy on photographs of vulnerable people.

- Chapter 5 - Judging Process
  Point Scoring Methods
  Page 34 - Chart updated to reflect wording used in CAPA Competition Policy and Procedures

- Chapter 7 - Photographic Genres
  Street Photography
  Page 91 - Deleted note on vulnerable people.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

CAPA Judging Program

As a photographic society, one of CAPA's most important roles is to nurture and encourage photographers at all levels to increase their knowledge and expertise in the art of photography.

Historically, one of the very significant ways CAPA did this was to develop a course for judges so that not only would members receive evaluation from judges who were experienced photographers, but just as important, were also trained in good judging techniques. Originally created in western Canada, the CAPA judging course has evolved and grown to encompass new concepts, technology and techniques.

The initial judging course is only one part of the CAPA Judging Program. The three primary components are Judge Training, Monitoring and Support.

Judge Training
Judge Training, which is developed in coordination with the Education Committee, covers all subjects related to the judging process. It includes:

- *Basic Training for New Judges Course (BTNJ)*
  This course is open to anyone and is a pre-requisite for entering the Judge Certification Program. On completion, participants will be given a certificate recognizing their achievement.
- *Judge Certification Program*
  This is for CAPA members who wish to continue their training to become a CAPA Certified Judge. After completing the BTNJ course, individuals may apply to participate in this program. During this phase of their training, participants will be referred to as CAPA Apprentice (CA) Judges.
- *Refresher Training for CAPA Certified (CC) Judges*
  In order to maintain their certification, CAPA Certified judges are required to complete refresher training prior to the end of their certification period. This training is designed to confirm maintenance of judging skills and review trends and recent changes related to judging.
- *Supplemental/Advanced Courses and Seminars*
  These offerings are based on changing trends, expanding judging knowledge and skill, and other subjects relating to judging.

Monitoring
The monitoring program is a means of maintaining the Judging Standards and to provide ongoing improvement to the Judging Program by observing the judging process as it applies to CAPA competitions. The program is carried out in cooperation with the Director of Competitions and monitoring is conducted by the Director of the Judging Program or a named designate.

The monitoring program has three elements:

1. The Director of Competitions provides each judge of a CAPA competition with an analysis report on both the competition's results and judges' scoring, to assist them in self-evaluation of their judging performance. This analysis report will also go to the Director of the Judging Program.

2. The review of all CAPA competitions in order to ensure that Judging Standards are being maintained and to identify trends or anomalies in judging that may require a more in-depth review.

3. Conducting periodic evaluation of individual active judges to ensure that Judging Standards are being maintained, offer feedback to help individuals refine their judging skills, and identify training needs. These are conducted randomly or when a potential problem has been identified.

As and when warranted, individual CAPA Judges will be contacted by the Director of the Judging Program to discuss their judging performance, and whether or not they are reflecting an up-to-date awareness with the art and craft of photography today, are fully knowledgeable with CAPA Judging Standards, and are maintaining these standards.

Although poor performance can result from a judge failing to maintain their skills, it is more commonly due to inadequate training, lack of tools, or the working environment. Monitoring will often pinpoint the best area in which to address the issue.

Support
The supporting role is primarily met through maintaining and distributing the National Judges List. The list identifies CAPA Certified and CAPA Apprentice Judges by Zone, listing the genre(s) they are capable of judging, geographic area for in-person judging, contact information and spoken languages. It is updated quarterly and available online for download by CAPA Clubs and Active Judges.

Other support activities include:

- Providing judges with a venue for exchanging ideas and support of apprentice judges;
- Responding to judging related queries;
- Offering presentations to clubs on topics related to competition judging.

The Director of the Judging Program works closely with the Director of Education and the Director of Competitions to ensure a well-rounded program that supports CAPA's objectives.

Judging Program Documents

The following CAPA documents are part of the Judging Program. They provide information, standards, procedures, and guidance on all aspects of the program. Documents can be found under the Judging tab on the CAPA website or by request from the Director of the Judging Program.

- Judging Standards Policy
- Judges Reference Manual
- On-Line Judging Technical Viewing Requirements
- Judge Certification Guidelines
- Judge Certification Program Application Form
- Judge Information Form
- Judge Evaluation Form
- Judging related education resources

Additional documents specific to CAPA competitions can be found on the CAPA website:

- Rules for current competitions include:
    - Theme Definitions
    - Editing Criteria
    - Image Specifications
    - Judging Criteria
    - Eligibility Criteria
- CAPA Competition Policy and Procedures
- Competition News
- CAPA's Stance on Artificial Intelligence in Photo competitions
- Content Authentication – Photographs vs AI-Generative Images
- Judges AI Cue Documents

Judge Certification Process

The Judging Certification Program is designed to give CAPA Apprentice (CA) Judges a chance to hone their skills as a judge through practice exercises, judging for local camera clubs and as a 4th judge in CAPA competitions. The CA judge will be evaluated each time they judge a competition until they meet the criteria as specified in the CAPA Judging Standards Policy.

To enter the Judge Certification Program, a candidate must:

1. Be a current CAPA member and maintain their membership.
2. Have successfully completed the Basic Training for New Judges Course within the past two years.
3. Commit to being pro-active in meeting the requirements to become a Certified Judge within two years of entering the program.
4. Have an intermediate to advanced level of knowledge in several genres of photography.
5. Agree to abide by the CAPA Judging Standards Policy and other guiding documents related to the CAPA Judging Program.

Once accepted into the program, an individual training plan will be created for the candidate, and a training file set up to track their progress.

For detailed breakdown, see the CAPA Judge Certification Guidelines under the Judging tab on the CAPA Website.

Overview of Basic Training Course for New Judges (BTNJ)

Audience

The BTNJ course is for photographers wishing to learn how the judging process works either for their own benefit or to help decide if they want to become a CAPA Certified (CC) Judge. Completion of the BTNJ course is a prerequisite to being accepted into the CAPA Judge Certification Program.

This course does not teach photographic skills. Participants must already have a sound knowledge of both in-camera and post-processing photographic techniques and be able to identify the qualities of a great photographic image. It is recommended to take CAPA's Elevate Your Photography course before the BTNJ course.

Overview

The course will take place over several weeks and consists of two parts. Part 1 is knowledge-based information which will be presented as self-paced online learning. Participants will have a fixed period of time to complete this part of the course. Part 1 must be completed before taking Part 2.

When signing up for this course, participants must make sure they will be available on the date or dates for the instructor-led portion of the course.

Part 2 is skill-based training and will be instructor-led either online or in-person. Participants will receive tips on judging the various genres of photography and have an opportunity to practice judging.

For more details and course dates visit the CAPA Learning Centre on the CAPA website.

Chapter 2 - CAPA Judging Methodology

Philosophy on Judging

In support of CAPA's objective to encourage and promote participation in competitions and similar endeavors, judges play a leading role by the way they conduct themselves. It is CAPA's viewpoint that:

Evaluating another person's photography is a privilege and an honour not to be taken lightly. Why do photographers submit their work for evaluation? Most photographers, whether they are competitive or not, have a desire to keep improving their work. Feedback that is offered in a constructive spirit, will help to achieve this end.

There are no rules in photography, only guiding principles - For example, all images need not be 'sharp'. Indeed, many are better for not adhering to that sometimes-misapplied rule. Judging requires an open mind that seeks out what the photographer is trying to say. Only then can a judge decide if the message was delivered successfully or not. No set of principles, guidelines, or recommendations applies universally.

Judging must respect the maker's vision, even if it doesn't agree with the judge's own view. Many photographers have had the experience of their images being criticized in a clumsy or insensitive manner. It's not a good feeling. Whether the photograph is a less than excellent image by a very experienced photographer, or a first attempt by a beginner, it is important to respect their efforts and try to understand and appreciate the message being presented.

Judging practices need to educate and encourage – By their very nature, judges are educators who call upon their experience and pass it on by offering suggestions that help the photographer produce a better image next time. Enthusiasm and encouragement mean a lot to an individual whose image is being judged, so all feedback needs to be presented in a positive and encouraging manner.

Bias Avoidance - Every person grows up with different life experiences, education, religion, location, etc. We all have biases. It is critical that a judge knows what their biases are and is prepared to put them aside when evaluating other's images. A judge never tries to make the image into what they would do but tries to understand the maker's creative intent and bases their feedback on that.

CAPA Judging Standards Policy

CAPA is committed to maintaining high judging standards for all competitions judged by CAPA Certified Judges or CAPA Apprentice Judges. This policy outlines performance standards guidelines both for judges and the Director of the Judging Program.
The goal of the policy is to:

a) create consistency in the judging process,
b) support judges' growth, and
c) promote a positive environment.

The policy covers:

- Definitions
- Performance Standards
    - Compliance with Rules and Procedures
    - Judging Knowledge and Quality
    - Photographic Knowledge and Skill
    - Image Feedback
    - Adaptability and Flexibility
    - Professionalism and Respect
- Responsibilities
    - Judge Responsibilities
    - Director of the Judging Program Responsibilities
- Remedial Action
- Monitoring of Judging in CAPA Competitions

The Judging Standards Policy is published on the CAPA website.

Ethics – Nature/Wildlife, Exploitation of People

CAPA encourages an ethical approach to the photographing of mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and marine species such as amphibians and fish. To promote this, entrants in CAPA competitions:

- Must not do anything to injure or distress any animals or destroy their habitat in an attempt to secure an image.
- Must maintain an appropriate distance from an active nest or den, and in most cases, avoid them entirely.
- Must not bait. The baiting of wildlife should be avoided as it may have long-term negative impacts.
- Must not intentionally spook.
- Must not stress out wildlife by getting too close.
- Should learn about the species' behaviour and the ecology of the area.
- Use appropriate lenses and techniques that minimize stress.
- Should be a naturalist as well as a nature photographer
- Should be especially careful and respectful when photographing species-at-risk, and consider avoiding the photography of threatened species.

Note: In all Canadian National Park & Historic Sites feeding wildlife is illegal, and drones are prohibited. Drones disturb wildlife, disrupting their natural behaviour and risking injury. In both cases, violators may be charged under the Canada National Parks Act and face steep fines.

The Government of Canada's website, under Environment and Natural Resources, contains extensive information related to species at risk, including fact sheets, statistics and a public registry to name a few. The Act also outlines that it is an offence to kill, harm or harass a "species-at risk".

https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/wildlife-plants-species/species-risk.html

Another good reference webpage is the Audubon's Guide To Ethical Bird Photography.

CAPA also encourages an ethical approach to photographing vulnerable people. Such subjects are acceptable only when photographed responsibly and ethically, with respect for consent, dignity, privacy, and safety, especially for vulnerable individuals.

We encourage photographers to address social issues in creative ways that do not exploit personal suffering and to approach any such imagery with empathy, respect, and care.

It is important to note that not all organizations hold the same ethical view as CAPA. When judging for other organizations, you may find their rules have guidelines either more or less stringent than those outlined by CAPA.

AI-Generated Images in CAPA Photo Competitions

This chapter is only meant to provide an overview. Because of the rapid changes in AI technology, the Director of Competitions regularly publishes updates on the CAPA website. It is highly recommended that active judges check the website regularly to ensure they have the most up to date information regarding AI-generated images in CAPA competitions.

Position on AI-Generated Images

Photography is entering a transformative era with the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) technology. To protect the integrity of traditional photography while acknowledging technological advancement, CAPA has established comprehensive guidelines regarding the use of AI in our competitions.

An AI Info option which is included in the Competitions dropdown menu. Additional information is detailed on the CAPA Eligibility Criteria webpage and our individual competition rule sets.

In these, clear distinctions are made between:

- Traditional photography skills and techniques that form the foundation of our craft;
- Permitted AI enhancement tools that preserve original photographic elements; and
- Prohibited generative AI functionality tools that modify existing images by adding new elements drawn from external AI trained datasets.

The document **Balancing Innovation and Stability - CAPA's Strategic Response to AI** outlines CAPA's updated strategy for managing the changes in AI technology as it relates to use in CAPA competitions.
Our CAPA Eligibility Criteria and competition editing guidelines have evolved to address advances in AI-generative technology through a systematic updated framework that balances technological responsiveness with competitive stability.

The document **CAPA Photography Competitions: New AI Authentication Standards** goes into detail with respect to:

- The Canadian Association for Photographic Art (CAPA) has implemented new Artificial Image Verification standards to address the challenges AI tools present in photography competitions.
- This document outlines the use of Content Credentials to provide reliable competition image verification.

Identifying AI Generated or Enhanced Images

To maintain the integrity of our photographic competitions, it is crucial that judges possess a general understanding of artificial intelligence (AI) and its applications in image creation and manipulation. This knowledge will enable each judge to recognize AI-generated or AI-enhanced images and identify the telltale signs of such alterations.

A good place for active judges to start is with the document **Content Authentication – Photographs vs AI-Generate Images.** This gives a good introduction and overview to the use of AI and how to recognize it.

As AI technology rapidly evolves, we are committed to keeping our judges informed about the latest developments in generative AI (Gen-AI) and its impact on image manipulation and enhancement. To this end, the Director of Competitions provides a **Judges AI Clue Document** to all CAPA judges prior to the commencement of each competition they will be adjudicating.

While we do not expect our judges to become AI detection experts, we strongly encourage them to familiarize themselves with this technology and remain vigilant about its potential inclusion in submitted images. Some key areas to be aware of include:

a. Inconsistencies in image quality and resolution
b. Unnatural blending of elements or textures
c. Peculiarities in lighting, shadows, or reflections
d. Unusual or physically impossible details

We recommend that judges approach each image with a critical eye, considering both its artistic merit and its adherence to competition rules regarding image manipulation. If a judge suspects the use of AI in an image that violates competition guidelines, we ask that the respective judge advise the Director of Competitions. The image will then be analyzed, and the results will be reported back to each of the respective judging team members. The Director of Competitions will be responsible for determining the image's eligibility and providing direction to the judges with respect to scoring.

Chapter 3 - Characteristics of an Outstanding Photograph

"What makes a great photograph?" is a question that comes up again and again. There is no simple answer. There are, however, pure and simple facts of what comprises a great photograph.

The CAPA Education Committee offers courses and seminars dealing with the artistic and technical skills that go into making a great photographic image. These links are located under the Education tab on the CAPA website.

This chapter is not a lesson in creating outstanding images, rather, it serves as a reminder to judges of the characteristics they should look for when evaluating and scoring images.

There are some key issues judges should keep in mind:

- An outstanding image is different things to different people;
- We view images that are being judged through three different, inter-related "lenses": Technical, Composition, Artistry (Creative Intent);
- Artistry is generally more difficult to achieve than technical expertise;
- There is a tendency to be more subjective when evaluating the artistry or emotional elements of an image;
- A judge must be aware of their personal biases and not let these influence their subjectivity.

What makes an outstanding image?

- Good **Technical** choices and strong execution
- Good **Composition** (arrangement of elements)
- Good **Emotional** connection with the viewer
    - "Artistry" / "Wow!" factor
    - Connection can be positive or negative
    - "Universal Impact"



Art (Visual Art)

Art can be defined as a "*visual object or experience consciously created through an expression of skill or imagination*". The term art encompasses diverse media such as painting, sculpture, printmaking, drawing, decorative art, **photography**, and installation art.

Art is usually defined as the creator's "body of work". Photography can be used to create Visual Art; however, not all photographs would be considered as "art".

Craft and Trade
Crafts and Trades require specific sets of skills, knowledge and training.
In the context of photography it entails the mastery of:

- Camera, lenses, and other equipment used to capture the image
- Light / Lighting
- Composition
- Post-Processing software tools used to refine the captured image

Subjectivity
Certain aspects of a photograph can be evaluated objectively, however there is a strong subjective component that judges must learn to manage.

The level of expertise of the evaluator has some impact on their subjectivity on a particular topic. Personal tastes and prejudices can affect subjectivity.

The level of subjectivity (or opinion) increases as we move from the technical to the emotional (artistic) aspects of an image.

Technical

The Three P's of Photography
This refers to the physics, physiology and psychology of the human-equipment interface used to create a photograph.

Physics
1. Optics - lenses, aperture setting, focal length, etc.
2. Mechanics - the way the world around us works; gravity, air movement (wind), etc. This includes photographic equipment and Motion.
3. Electronics - camera sensor, data processing pipeline, image storage
4. Light - wavelength, photons, colour temperature, direction of light, etc.

Since light is so important to photography let's take a moment to consider colour temperature. Our colour spectrum originates from Black Body Radiation, the details of which we don't need to go into here. What is important is that it gives us the scale used to describe colour temperature for white balance choices.

When a camera's white balance is set to something other than the colour temperature in the scene, the image can take on an unnatural colour cast. This is particularly challenging in mixed lighting conditions.

In this image taken at golden hour, the warm highlights are < 5000K, while the cool shadow area is >15000K.



Temperature	Source
1700 K	Match flame, low pressure sodium lamps (LPS/SOX)
1850 K	Candle flame, sunset/sunrise
2400 K	Standard incandescent lamps
2550 K	Soft white incandescent lamps
2700 K	"Soft white" compact fluorescent and LED lamps
3000 K	Warm white compact fluorescent and LED lamps
3200 K	Studio lamps, photofloods, etc.
3350 K	Studio "CP" light
5000 K	Horizon daylight, Tubular fluorescent lamps or cool white/daylight compact fluorescent lamps (CFL)
5500–6000 K	Vertical daylight, electronic flash
6200 K	Xenon short-arc lamp[10]
6500 K	Daylight, overcast
6500–9500 K	LCD or CRT screen
15,000–27,000 K	Clear blue poleward sky

Image: Manfred Mueller

Physiology – How the Human Visual System Works
This includes the eyes, brain and connecting optic nerve.
The human visual system does not see like a camera! We are susceptible to tricks our eyes play on us and so we can't believe everything we see.

Our eyes are adept at chromatic adaptation, which creates a stable appearance of colours despite different colour temperatures.

The human eye is most sensitive to mid-tones, and less sensitive to highlight and shadow areas.
We notice:

- *Areas of brightness*
- *Areas of high contrast*
- *Areas of saturated colours*
- *Faces, especially eyes*

Psychology
Photography is strongly influenced by conscious and unconscious mental processes such as thought, feeling and motives. Because images portray information and stories, they evoke emotions and feelings. Photography allows us to explore the links between images and our emotions. It's a way for us to tell our own story and describe the world in which we live.

Psychology influences our choices regarding:

- Subjects,
- Mood being expressed,
- The choice of warm or cool tones,
- High or low-key lighting,
- Soothing versus dramatic lighting, and
- Our point of view.

Colour Versus Monochrome

In general, images can work in either genre. The choice should be an intentional one made by the photographer.

Why Choose Colour?

Colour works well when colour is an integral component of the featured subject. Colour is the natural way that humans see the world.
Colour is a defining characteristic of many things such as animals, flowers, product branding and so on.

The use of colour harmonies can create powerful images.

Why Choose Monochrome?

The choice of Monochrome is a personal preference. Some colour-blind photographers will use this genre.

Monochrome works well when the key direction of an image involves shapes, textures and contrast. Portraits and architecture can be well-presented in monochrome.
Monochrome can add a level of abstraction to an image. It can be used to simplify an image where colour would distract from the main subject or message.
Colour-casts and mixed lighting can be quickly controlled by converting the image to monochrome. This can add a "period look", providing context to historical subjects. Sepia Toning is sometimes used for "period look" images.

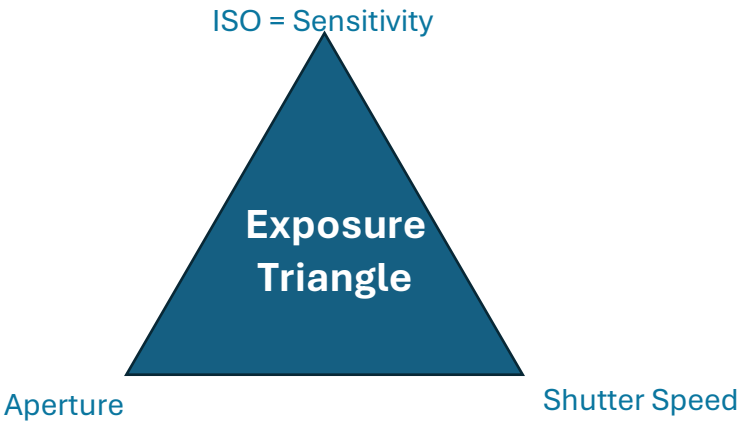
Properties of Light

There are three aspects of lighting that affect the mood and impact of an image.

1. Quality - Hard versus soft light (point source or diffused) will define what the shadows look like.
2. Quantity - Determines how brightly lit the scene is.
3. Direction - Where the light is coming from. High or low (length of shadows). Front, side, back or a combination affects the viewer's perception of the main subject.

Exposure Triangle

Appropriate aperture, shutter speed and ISO values are required to create a properly exposed image. When changing one value, another value must be changed by an equal amount to maintain the same exposure.



Side Effects:

- ISO changes can result is excessive noise
- Aperture impacts the depth-of-field
- Shutter speed impacts motion (freezing or blurring)

These side effects are often a point of confusion for novice photographers. Judges should be prepared to explain the exposure triangle and the relationship between the values.

Histogram

The histogram is a useful tool for photographers to identify clipped highlights and shadows, determining contrast range and identifying the balance of tones throughout the image. This makes it a useful tool for a judge to discuss issues around tonal range and exposure while offering suggestions for improvement in these areas. Judges, therefore, should be familiar with the histogram, both in-camera and in post-processing.

Camera Position and Perspective

Most photographs are taken with the photographer in a standing position and the camera at eye level. A different position and/or angle often contributes to an outstanding image. It can be that "something" which makes that image different from all the other images of the same subject and the same location.

Keeping the camera level is important to keeping the implied horizon line straight. If so equipped, using an in-viewfinder grid or level can help to keep the implied horizon straight. On a tripod, a simple bubble level can also be effective. This is one of the easiest things to fix in post-process, but could result in loss of image space, so judges should be prepared to discuss the options when identifying this fault.

Perspective correction is something that is often overlooked, or poorly applied. Buildings generally appear more natural and easier to view when their vertical lines are true. The oblique lines that cause the building to lean back is caused by tilting the camera upwards (usually to get the entire building in the frame). This can be corrected by the use of a tilt-shift lens, or sometimes by turning the camera vertical and placing the building in the top half of the frame, making sure to hold the camera parallel to the ground. If enough space has been left around the building, it can also be corrected in post-processing.





PHOTOS: MANFRED MUELLER

Composition

It is common for photographers to talk about the Rules of Composition. Composition is too complex to be described by rules. When introducing novice photographers to the concept of composition, it is much more appropriate to discuss “guiding principles” rather than “rules”. Strong composition does not follow a “cookbook” approach.

It is better to consider what the human eyes are designed to notice.
Psychologists have determined that the human visual system is keyed to notice:

- Areas of extreme brightness
- Areas of high contrast
- Areas of saturated colours
- Faces / facial features - human and animal, especially the eyes.

Rather than following rules, consider the following guidelines when creating a photograph:

Colour Harmonies Format / Orientation Filling the frame Simplify Balance Symmetry / Asymmetry	Space for subject to look into or move into Framing – headroom, etc. Leading lines created through adjoining areas of dark and light Avoiding, minimizing or removing distractions

Creating a Strong Emotional Connection

"Photography is all about light, composition and, most importantly, emotion." - Larry Wilder
Creating a strong emotional connection is the most challenging aspect of photography.
It is something that most photographers are not able to achieve consistently.
An image with a strong emotional connection will:

- Immediately catch the viewer's attention
- Keep the viewer engaged
- Result in the viewer returning to study the image time after time.

In a strong image, this is a universal connection, rather than a personal connection.

An image with technical and compositional issues can still maintain a strong emotional impact.

A strong connection can be made through:

- Mood
- Impact
- Subject
- Imagination

Mood
Mood can be defined as a distinctive emotional quality or characteristic.
When asking if the image fires any emotional triggers, the answer should be "yes"!
However, the trigger should be universal, not just personal.

Types of emotions

- Joy, Happiness, Delight
- Sadness, Grief, Loss
- Anxiety, Confusion
- Fright, Fear

Impact
Impact is the force exerted by an idea, concept, technology, or ideology.

Made you look!

- Catches the viewer's attention and draws them to the image.

Subject
The subject of an image can be an object, person, scene, event, etc., chosen by the artist for representation in a photograph.

A subject that is unusual or compelling to look at often makes a stronger connection with the viewer.
Consider an unusual subject or unique way of presenting the subject:

- Extreme closeup or unusual perspective
- A familiar object that is presented differently
- Show them something they haven't seen before

Imagination
Imagination is the action or process of forming images or concepts.

Use of an approach that is innovative:

- Point of view, lighting, shooting position and other creative approaches.
- Most photographs are taken with the photographer in a standing position
    - Try something else!
- Look at the subject in a different way
    - Get closer
    - Enhance in post

Post Processing

Post-processing is often overlooked or considered a necessary evil; however, it is a key element to creating a strong and compelling image. Errors in post-processing can reduce the impact of an image.

Why post-processing?
Post-processing is needed to convert raw data into a refined image that matches the maker's vision. It is a method by which the photographer can make corrections to any issues or errors with the captured image file.

Post-processing is not something new or restricted to digital photography.
Ansel Adams would spend all day in the darkroom dodging and burning. He printed "Moonrise – Hernandez New Mexico" over 1300 times. He shot "Moonrise" in 1941 and was finally happy with his prints in the early 1970s, 30+ Years later!

Canadian photographer Yousuf Karsh's colour printmaker would take a full week to make a final print. The final print would take a full day in the darkroom to create.

Post Processing Steps:
There are three stages in post-processing:

- Step 1 – Global Adjustments
    - Sliders affecting the whole image
    - 1 – 2 minutes
    - Used by novice, intermediate and advanced photographers
- Step 2 – Area Adjustments
    - Rough selections of large areas of the image and local repairs
    - 3 – 5 minutes
    - Used by intermediate and advanced photographers
- Step 3 – Local Adjustments
    - Many minutes to hours to days (typically 90% - 95% of total time)
    - Mostly dodging and burning small areas – Local exposure adjustment
    - Used by advanced photographers

Effective retouching is essential to create a strong image. It allows the photographer to change the mood, focus and impact of the image.
A judge must be able to identify if the retouching is both appropriate and effective and supports the maker's creative intent.

Chapter 4 - Characteristics of a Great Judge

Characteristic of a Great Judge

1. Extensive experience and knowledge which allows them to be sympathetic to the beginner, while still offering good technical advice and well-founded positive feedback to photographers at all skill levels.

2. Understanding the characteristics of, and differences between genres. Although not necessarily being an expert in all of them, great judges have seen many examples of images in the genres they are judging and know the special characteristics that distinguish each category from the others. This allows them to provide feedback appropriate to the genre being judged.

3. Have extensive knowledge and experience of photographic equipment and techniques. Knowing the functions of modern cameras as well as post-processing software and techniques which allows judges to offer suggestions for improvement from in-camera right through to the final output. Knowledge of traditional photographic media such as prints, slides, colour/black & white and/or negative film, adds another dimension.

4. Avoiding personal bias. We all have personal bias that needs to be left behind before judging. Whether it is having just had a disagreement with another individual or seeing images of subjects that don't interest you, it is important to put your bias aside and judge the images on their merits without letting your bias influence you.

5. Always act in a professional and respectful manner. Showing respect for the photographer and the image being judged. This is shown in the judge's choice of words and encouraging comments.

6. Recognizing talent in all photographers, both novice and experienced. Even the most novice photographer has some talents. Good judges do not break the spirit of any photographer with unfounded and irritating criticism.

7. Do not try to make the image your own. Recognize that the image being judged is what the photographer wants to be seen. Adapt your comments to help the photographer reach their vision.

8. Score and comment to reward. Give the benefit of the doubt to the photographer. Don't deduct multiple points for a repeated error or other minor faults but rather stick to the one or two things that will result in the greatest improvement.

9. Identifying what is good about a photograph is the first priority. Even when there is little good to say about an image, a great judge finds something that works and uses that to encourage the photographer.

10. Frames feedback positively – identifying weak areas and providing ideas about what could be done to improve either the viewed image or what the photographer can do when a similar situation arises in the future.

Judging Style

Template Judging
Historically, many judges who have been nurtured in the typical camera club culture tend to judge according to a preconceived template. That template is firmly rooted in a well-established tradition of what a photograph ought to look like. In its most dogmatic application, among other things, the image must have a composition based on the Rule of Thirds, it must have a focal point, and it must have strong visual impact. The emphasis is on the blind application of compositional rules rather than aesthetic qualities or expressive interpretation of subject matter. And, not unreasonably, it must be technically competent, be perfectly exposed and have sufficient sharpness.

Anything that does not fit that template, no matter what other good qualities it may have, is considered to be inferior photography.

Intuitive Judging
CAPA strongly encourages an intuitive style of judging. Judges try to understand what the photographer's intention may have been. They try to establish what the photograph is about.

Yes, judges will also look critically at the technical aspects but will not insist on any particular division of space in terms of an over-used compositional formula but rather interpret a particular arrangement according to the demands of the subject matter.

They try to see photographs with an open mind against the background of an awareness of the larger world of photography and art beyond the limits of a club or society such as CAPA.

Your intuition should allow you to 'feel' the qualities in an image through your visual interpretation of the subject matter. The title, and even the presentation may impact the overall experience you will have while viewing it.

When first seeing an image, your knowledge of the photographic arts and perspective will instantly tell you whether or not it has special qualities.

Positive Evaluation Style

Encouraging: Emphasizes the positive aspects and suggests ways to improve

Balanced: Considers the mood, creativity, uniqueness as well as the technique

Respectful: Tries to understand the photographer's skill and motivation (intent)

Flexible: Is not bound by "rules"

Confident: Familiarity with techniques and styles lets the judge speak with confidence. Speaking clearly without hesitation reinforces that confidence. This will be reflected in their voice, which in turn gives the audience more confidence in the evaluation.

Negative Evaluation Style

You may still encounter some judges who fall into a negative style of giving their evaluation. Be aware of and avoid these negative traits:

Arrogant: Offering technical advice without considering the photographer's skill and intent, or implying that *your way is the only way, you know best*.

Rule-bound: Inflexible, recites rules (sometimes inaccurately) without consideration of appropriateness to the photograph in question.

Unbalanced: Concentrates only on one aspect, usually technique. Over-emphasizes small flaws (e.g., tiny little "hot spot")

Too nice: Emphasizes only positive aspects without offering constructive comments on any negative aspects.

Timid: Can't/won't commit to negative comments; lacking confidence

Chapter 5 - Judging Process

Judging Criteria

The following criteria is used in CAPA competitions and is a good practice in other competitions, unless superseded by that competition's judging criteria.

Judges will award their scoring primarily based on the image maker's creative intent. *Creative Intent* refers to the characteristics of originality, expressiveness and imagination in communicating a story or eliciting an emotional response that gives the image a strong and lasting impact.

Technical and Organizational factors, such as exposure, sharpness, focus, space, and composition, are to be considered solely to the degree to which they support or reinforce the creative intent. Images will not be penalized in evaluation for so-called technical rule infractions, if it is inconsequential to the image's creative intent.

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

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.

An image that is outstanding from others, sometimes referred to as having a "wow" factor, likely includes unusual viewpoints, unique subject matter, spectacular lighting, simple compositions, or imaginative use of colour or form.

The subject matter itself may add impact, and some photographers strive to show something new to the judges. Be well aware of unfamiliarity with, or your biases for or against certain subjects. Don't let these biases influence your assessment of the image.

Commonly Photographed Subjects

Do not score down an image solely because it is of a common location or subject.
If creativity is missing, you might (tactfully) comment that it had little impact for you because it is an often-photographed subject shown in a common way. The same is true of photographs of the Acropolis or Whistler Mountain or whatever area is popular at the time. Once you view a number of images of an area, you begin to recognize the outstanding shots from the average ones.

Manipulated Images

These use many techniques, in the camera, darkroom or computer. It is important to be familiar with not only the most common, but also some of the out-of- favour techniques that photographers use to enhance the message they are trying to convey. Base your score on how appropriately the manipulation supports the story or vision.

Techniques/Effects

Photographers often over-use or inappropriately use a technique. Always ask yourself if it seems to be appropriate to the photograph or do they appear to be using the technique for its own sake?

Photographers may be offended when you “guess wrong” at the technique. It is better to use terms like “appears to be…” or “the technique used…”. Don't guess if you are not sure of a technique you believe has been used.

Always keep in mind that you are evaluating the image that is in front of you. If it is diffused, posterized, solarized, toned, grainy or distorted, is the technique appropriate to the subject, mood, or message of the image? It doesn't matter if it was done in the camera, in the darkroom or in the computer. Don’t make assumptions. A photographer may have worked hard to get a creative “straight image”, and you should always credit the creativity.

Benefit of Doubt to the Photographer

If you are unsure if the techniques fall within the guidelines of the competition, score as if they do. If you have a concern, raise it with the competition coordinator and follow their direction.
If you are humming and hawing over ½ a point – give it to the photographer. Reward creativity.
Considering the disqualification of an image is a last resort, and only if it is in your jurisdiction to do so. Consult the competition director or club representative for clarification.

Structure and Flow

The terms Assessment, Evaluation and Judging are synonyms, so the terms are often used interchangeably. For our purposes, Judge, or Judging, refers to the entire process. We will use the term **Evaluation** (and its derivatives), to describe the process of studying an image to determine its strengths and weaknesses, taking into consideration the Creative Intent, Organizational and Technical components. **Scoring** is assigning a numerical value to your evaluation. **Feedback** is expressing your evaluation in words (oral or written), which would include not only strengths and weaknesses but also answer the questions Why and How.

There are three steps in judging a photographic competition:

1. **Evaluation*:** First the image needs to be evaluated to determine how well the image maker has brought together their idea or concept along with the organization and technical elements to tell a story or evoke an emotional response to the image.
2. **Scoring:** Only after evaluating the image, are you able to determine a score.
3. **Feedback:** If requested to do so, based on your evaluation, you will provide feedback by identifying what worked well and offering suggestions that could improve the image.

**You will often see the term "assessment" or "assess" used for this part of the judging process. Assessment and Evaluation have similar definitions.* Assessment is generally used when determining the level of performance of an individual, whereas evaluation is used when determining the degree to which goals are attained. It is felt that Evaluation is the more accurate term to describe what the judging process is about.

We'll look at each of these in detail.

Image Evaluation

Good judges are known for their reliability in consistently presenting a fair and open-minded evaluation, regardless of their personal biases or likes and dislikes.

One of the best ways to ensure consistency is to have a plan and stick to it. You can use the plan both for your initial evaluation of an image as well as for formulating the comments you will include when presenting your evaluation. Keep in mind, a plan does not restrict your ability to have an open mind, but rather it ensures you cover all the factors that make up a balanced assessment.

For an evaluation to be well balanced, the plan must include factors within these three areas:

- **Creative Intent:** Creative Intent refers to the characteristics of originality, expressiveness and imagination in communicating a story or eliciting an emotional response that gives the image a strong and lasting impact. Originality and

imagination are often considered part of expressiveness but are listed separately for clarity. Expressiveness is the quality of showing one's feelings or ideas clearly.

Common elements in images that have a strong and lasting impact may include, but are not limited to:

- Having the quality of something new rather than imitated.
- Managed as a way to circumvent conventional limits or perceptions.
- Changing the perspective in order to make a story more interesting or beautiful.
- Effectively communicates the maker's thoughts and ideas.

When an image is weak on the competition theme/topic, this is where you would deduct points, since part of the creative intent would be to have the image represent, or align with, the theme of the competition. For CAPA competitions 0.5 to 1.0 point can be deducted when an image is weak or off topic. Other organizations may allow more points to be deducted for weak or off topic images.

- **Organization** – Composition, light, use of space, distractions, supporting elements, and presentation

- **Technical Quality** – Exposure, sharpness, colour, and technique (both in-camera and post-processing)

The decision regarding which elements are listed under Organizational, and which are listed under Technical is based on whether they are more likely to be part of the design process, or part of the choice in equipment settings.

As an example, light and colour could fall under either category. Light is listed under Organizational because most often the questions you ask yourself are about how the photographer used the available lighting, whether natural or artificial (subject positioned in relation to the lighting, choice in time of day or incandescent versus natural light).

If, however, the issue with light or colour was due to inappropriate settings of a flash (e.g. overexposing and outdoor subject creating an unnatural look) or choosing camera settings not appropriate for the lighting conditions (e.g. inappropriate white balance setting), then your comments may fall under Technical.

The following represents the type of questions you should consider as you are evaluating an image.

Creative Intent:
Emotional Impact, Creativity & Story
Ask yourself:

- What do I feel when I view this image? Does the image generate an emotional response?
- Is there a clear story being conveyed by the artist?
- Is the image relatable?
- What was it about the image that caught my eye or makes it stand out from other images?
- If there is a theme to the competition, how well does the image speak to that theme?
- Does the image create a Wow factor, does it hold one's attention above all the other images?

Scoring and Evaluation of Organization & Technical factors is based solely on the extent to which they support or take away from the Creative Intent of the image.

Organization:
Composition, Design, Lighting & Presentation
Ask yourself:

- Does the lighting (artificial or natural, time of day, weather conditions) help set the mood or add to the impact?
- Are the elements in harmony and not competing for attention?
- Are all the elements in the image necessary to the story, or do some of them distract?
- Is the subject readily apparent or confusing and unclear?
- Are there distractions or too many points of interest?
- Has the space within the frame been used effectively?

- **Presentation**

  Projected (including any form of digital presentation)**:**
  - Has the image been correctly formatted (resolution and colour space)?
  - Does the subject of the image stand out from the background?
  - If a border was used, does it add or detract?

  Print:
  - Is the print large enough to be seen?
  - Is the print mounted squarely?
  - Is the print securely mounted?
  - Is the print and mat free of scuffs/marks?
  - Is the mat size and colour suitable for the image?

Technical Quality:
(Exposure Triangle, Sharpness, Techniques & Post-Processing)

Ask yourself:

- Does the choice of camera settings appear to be intentional?
- Do the technical decisions, including post processing decisions, help to tell the story or set the mood?

Exposure Triangle:

- Is the choice of exposure appropriate for the subject?
  Is the image over or under exposed?
- Is the tonal range appropriate – excessive clipping?
  Aperture:
  Is the depth of field appropriate for the subject?
  ISO:
  Is there noise due to a high ISO setting?
  Does the noise add or detract?
  Shutter Speed:
  Is there evidence of unintentional camera movement?
  Is the selected shutter speed effective in freezing or blurring motion?

Sharpness:

- Is what needs to be sharp, in focus?

In-Camera Techniques:

- Are the techniques or special effects appropriate for the subject?
- Are the techniques effectively applied?

Post Processing:

- Has the image received appropriate basic post-processing adjustments? (Exposure, contrast, sharpening, colour/tone, spot removal & similar adjustments)
- Has the image become pixelated due to excessive enlargement of a cropped area?
- Are the post-processing techniques appropriate for the subject matter? (HDR, Filters & similar)
- Have the post-processing techniques been effectively applied?

Point Scoring Methods

Scoring guidelines and options vary from organization to organization. Familiarize yourself with the scoring method used and make sure you are comfortable with it before the competition begins. When scoring at CAPA sanctioned events, use the CAPA System.

CAPA competitions have a minimum of three judges. Competitions with a large number of entries may have teams of judges to reduce the number of images each group has to judge. The scores of all three judges are added together to deliver a total score out of 30. Only the total score is announced.

CAPA Regular Competitions
Judges score using a 10-point system, in ½ point increments. In practice, the scores range from **4 to 10 points** for each image. Also, it is strongly suggested that scores of 4 are rarely used unless the image has multiple major faults, e.g., exposure and focus are far from standard. By the same token, do not hesitate to score an exceptional image 10.

Points	Based on These Considerations
4	Extremely poor, with multiple serious faults
5	Fair, possibly with major faults
6	Good - displays average technical qualities and average impact
7 - 8	Excellent image - above average in technical qualities and impact
9	Exceptionally good - very high technically qualities and high impact
10	Demonstrates the 'wow' factor - outstanding impact and technical aspects

(Definitions of “excellent” and “exceptionally good” are left to the evaluator.) (“Wow Factor” refers to an image that holds the observer's attention and admiration.)

When assigning a score to an image, remember that one of the objectives of CAPA is to encourage the members who are competing and not to discourage their efforts.

CAPA Salons

Salons use a different point scale. The scoring scale below is for general information only. When asked to judge a Salon, more detail on scoring and other judging criteria will be provided to judges prior to commencement of judging.

Judges score using a 9-point system.

Points	Based on These Considerations
1	Entry is inappropriate to the category or has serious flaws in its quality.
2 – 3	While a good entry, there are aspects that are less than high quality.
4 – 5	Here the entry is strong and is of high quality but only has some of the aspects described for higher scoring entries.
6 – 7	The entry is worthy of gaining an award, again with a strong impact, storytelling, compositional value and technically with little fault.
8 – 9	The Entry is worthy of winning the competition. This entry should have stand-out features, excellent storytelling, compositional value and technically without fault.

In salons, typically judges do not provide comments or other feedback on images.

Point Calculation Options

Most experienced judges internally assign a score without any calculation. They intuitively know which images will score low and which images will score high. After their initial reaction, they double- check the image for anything they may have missed and adjust their score accordingly before entering it. In some instances, such as large competitions, a judge has as little as five seconds to evaluate the image and assign a score.

In the final analysis it is up to you to find a system that you are comfortable with and that allows you to provide fair and consistent scoring.

Whatever scoring method you choose, it must be based on the following point distribution guideline for CAPA competitions:

Creative Intent	up to 4 points
Organization	up to 3 points
Technical	up to 3 points

The minimum score for CAPA competitions is 4 points.

Options:
Subtractive: Recommended Method
CAPA encourages the use of this method as it is less likely to produce unsupported low scores.

Each image starts as a 10 and then points are subtracted for major faults, minor faults, in each area of Creative Intent, Organization and Technical.

Mentally give each image the score of 10 and then subtract:

- 0.5 points for minor faults
- 1 – 1.5 points for each major element that is weak.
- 2 – 3 points (4 in Creative Intent) when the element is poorly handled or fails completely.

The subtractive method makes it much easier to justify your score in a logical manner as it tends to make you think about how significant each fault actually is to the overall story.

Additive Method:
With this method you are starting from zero points and adding points based on how well the maker has succeeded in each area of Creative Intent, Organization and Technical. Starting from zero points, add points:

- 0 – 0.5 points for an element that fails completely
- 1 – 2 points for each major element that is average or slightly better.
- 2.5 – 3 points (4 in Creative Intent) when the element is strong or well done.

Mid-Point Method:
The mid-point method is a little trickier for most people as you are choosing a number midway toward the maximum score as an "average", or your definition of "pleasing, but not memorable", or "fair", or "pretty good". Points are added for excellence and subtracted for weak elements. When using this method, you must remember that adding or subtracting points is based on the image starting with a score of 6 (or whatever the "average" score has been identified as by the competition organizer).

Not all organizations use a 10-point scoring system. When judging for an organization whose scoring system you are unfamiliar with, be sure to take time to learn their system and ask questions of the competition coordinator if you need clarification.

Feedback

Organize Your Thoughts:
Take a few seconds to organize your thoughts before you start speaking, i.e. don't speak until you have something to say. However, remember that time is often limited in order to get through evaluations in the allotted time, and hesitating might suggest you are not organized or do not know how to evaluate the image you are looking at.

Comment on the Image Presented:
When you are being asked to comment on an image that is presented to you, before you speak, be mindful to respect the maker of the image. Recognize that what you are seeing is their art, what they meant to show you, and that is a privilege.

Speak Clearly and Loud Enough to be Heard:
Speak in a loud, clear, confident voice so that your audience will take you seriously. Use a microphone if one is available. Unheard comments are not constructive. Be familiar with and use the universal words and phrases that all photographers understand as listed later in this chapter.

Do not "upspeak" (end a sentence with a higher tone which almost suggests a question as in saying "It looks a little washed out?".) Learn to drop your voice at the end of a statement like radio announcers do to suggest confidence and finality.

Start with the Good:
Identify the main strength of the image (in your opinion).
What were you first drawn to when seeing the image?

Even if you are struggling to find something positive to say, come up with at least one good thing before moving on to what could be improved.

Always State Why:
It is not enough to just say what is right or wrong, make sure you **say why**. Instead of "The sky is too bright", use "The sky is too bright, drawing attention away from the main subject."

Comments Benefit Everyone:
Remember that everyone listening is benefiting from your comments, not just the maker of the photograph. Since most audiences will have a wide range of skill and experience, choose words that everyone will understand.

Be Specific:
Don't describe what you are looking at – the people present can see the image for themselves. This is a tactic often seen when a judge can't decide what to say and starts filling the silence by rambling on about what is obvious.

Cut to the chase – don't waste time talking in generalities. Instead of. "The image needs cleaning up" use "There are a number of distracting elements around the edge of the frame, such as the protruding branch on the top, consider…".

Don't Compare Images:
Do not compare with previous images. Each image must be judged on its own merit. (To save time, however, it is acceptable to refer back to comments made on a similar prior image).

Avoid Bias:
Using the words "I like" or "I don't like" immediately suggests a personal bias, so they must be avoided. Instead of saying "I like the colours because they are soft and enhance the mood", simply say, "The soft colours enhance the mood".

While use of statements like "I would recommend" reflect a personal investment in providing helpful suggestions, adopting a less personal tone aligns better with the professional standard of impartiality.

Not saying "I" is difficult, so practice saying things like, "One might consider less sky in this image because it would help to balance the image", rather than using "I might consider…" or "I suggest…". This is a small but subtle difference that shows your professionalism.

Phrases to Encourage and to Avoid

Encourage
Here are some suggestions to use when rewarding or encouraging a photographer. Just remember, these words will have been heard many times before, so use them as part of your own way of speaking, or better yet, develop your own library of words to be used. Use words that you are comfortable with, while ensuring they fit the image you are referring to.

- A compelling image because…
- A difficult shot, well handled
- A pleasing sense of… (rhythm, balance, composition)
- A very creative choice of (composition, angle, viewpoint)
- A well-chosen time of day
- A well-trained eye caught this….
- An excellent sense of mood
- Composition of the overall image is quite well handled

- Good attention to detail
- Good effort
- Good sense of timing
- Light was dramatically used to strengthen this image
- Notice the technique that was used
- Patience has produced this image
- Please take more of these
- The author's message is extremely clear
- The photographer has handled this situation nicely
- This image demonstrates a high degree of technical expertise
- This is a nice treatment for the subject
- We can see the strength that light has played in this image

Phrases to Avoid

Avoid these & similar phrases	Instead consider these or similar phrases
Bizarre / weird	Intriguing
Busy	There are many potential images in this photo
Common / cliché / overdone	Classic / Proven / tried & true / solid / often used
Gimmicky / pretentious	Technique may be more appropriate to a different subject
I don't like…	A challenging shot…
I don't understand…	It would be Interesting to find out…
I have one just like it	Many people enjoy shooting similar subjects
I prefer…	*(Do not use – examine your biases)*
I would have…	If possible….It could have been stronger if….
If only…	(Avoid this! Judge what's there)
I'm waiting to see what's coming	(Do not hold back scores)
Incorrect / wrong / improper	Unusual / different
Mundane / boring	Impact may have been increased by…
Needs a red canoe	The main subject is not clear
No main subject	This image seems to be about…
Poor image	Good effort
Poor lighting	Challenging conditions
Snapshot / Grab shot	With a little more time…
Strange choice of subject	Unusual subject
Substandard / disappointing	Technique may have suffered because of…
The previous image…	(Do not compare)
Wrong lens / composition / angle	A better choice may have been…

Judging Vocabulary & Useful Terms

IMPACT:

Brilliance	Lead-lines	Perspective	Structure
Centre-of-interest	Focal point	Highlights	Shadows
Clear	Framing	Rim lighting	Creative
Disturbing	Compression	Expansion	Rich colours
Dynamic	Heavy	Hard-edge	Imaginative
Panning	Zooming	Emphasis	Contrast
Relationship	Concentrations	Mirror-image	Isolation
Strength	Tension	Saturation	Focus

MOOD:

Balance	Sensitivity	Atmosphere	Calmness
Blending	Lightness	Tones	Appeal
Suggestive	Flowing	Ethereal	Tranquil
Soft focus	Harmony	Diffusion	Selective focus

TECHNICAL / GENERAL TERMS:

Cropping	Grouping	Masking	Enhanced
Dilution (colour)	Sharpness	Detail	Proportions
Exposure	Washed out	Exposure range	Viewpoint
Field of view	Filtration	Camera position	Format
Foreground	Background	Subject plane	Texture
Journalistic	Statement	Pleasing	Wide Angle
Rule-of-thirds	Ratio (colour, tone)	Accents	Abstract
Sheen	Directional lighting	Subtle	Documentary
Weakness	Colour balance	Control	Organization

Chapter 6 - Guidelines for Judges

General Guidelines

Renumeration:
CAPA Judges are not paid or allowed to charge a fee for judging. At the organization's discretion, travel expenses may be covered. Some organizations offer a modest honorarium usually in the form of a gift card or cash (often by e-transfer).

Be Prepared:
This begins when you are first asked to judge. Review the genres/themes for the competition as well as the rules and definitions given to the entrants plus guidelines for judging.

If you do not feel comfortable judging one or more of the genres, politely decline indicating that you would be happy to judge a different genre at another time.

Conflict of Interest:
Avoid judging a competition in which you have images entered. This will remove any conflict of interest that may be perceived by the other entrants.

There may be times when it is unavoidable, and in this case, excuse yourself from evaluating/scoring your own images. In most cases, the scores of the other two judges will be averaged to come up with the third score.

This also holds true if you recognize an image as one you have coached the photographer about, to prepare the image for competitions. This is not uncommon if you are part of a critique group in your local club.

Know the Competition Rules:
Every organization has their own set of rules, which may vary from competition to competition. Make sure you are familiar with the rules, definition of the theme and what post-processing is permitted. You may come across things such as allowing extensive editing in a genre that usually limits editing, varying judging standards for beginner levels, consideration (or lack of) for matting of prints, and many more.

Ask for a written copy of the competition rules. It is not uncommon to be told that the club follows CAPA's rules, then subsequently find out there are some significant differences.

Scoring:
Do not let your scoring be influenced by the other judges or the audience! That includes "oohs", sighs, groans, and comments.

After scores are announced, do not adjust your score downwards. On rare occasions, after

comments from the other judges, you may ask the competition coordinator to change your score to a higher one.

If you find yourself scoring either too high or too low after several images, continue as you started. Unless you are able to go back and rescore the images, adjusting your scoring part way through will be unfair to some of the entrants.

When scoring is not announced or comments not required, be sure to avoid the tendency to put less thought into your score. Use a balanced assessment of each image so you can justify your score if called on to do so.

Use the full scale of points permitted by the competition. (Don't give everything a 6 or 7, however; a score of less than 5 should rarely be assigned). One of the worst things a judge can do is try to "Play it Safe" by giving all scores in the 6-8 range. There are usually 5's and 9 & 10's in every competition. Also do not inflate scores to be invited back or please club members. Be realistic and fair with each image, the maker deserves it.

Don't "hold back" scores (e.g., not give a 10 because a better image might come along). If judges never awarded a 10, no points past 27 would be possible in a competition.

There may be no "perfect" photograph, but consider giving a 10 if it has impact, creativity, originality, and/or a Wow Factor where your attention to the image is held, and if you could find very little or nothing to suggest that would improve it.

More than one image in a competition may deserve an 8, 9 or 10. It is acceptable to have several high scored images in any competition.

You may find it helpful to mentally analyze/defend your score first. What would you say if asked to comment? If you can only think of good things, why give it a 6? If you have mostly suggestions for improvement, don't score an 8.

Image Titles:
Not all clubs announce titles but pay attention to titles when they are given as they generally deliver a message from the photographer about their creative intent.

CAPA Competitions

CAPA Competition Policy and Procedures

The Director of Competitions has created this document to ensure fair, transparent, and consistent processes for all Association competitions.

The policy and procedures outlined in this document apply to all competitions and salons managed by the Association, whether judging occurs live or remotely.
The document covers:

- Photographer's Copyright Protection and Rights
- Conflict of Interest
- Infractions of Competition Rules
- Procedures for Competition Planning and Administration
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Pre-Screening
- Competition Scoring Values
- Selecting & Managing Competition Judges
- Allocation of Awards

It is highly recommended that judges become familiar with this document to gain a good understanding of how CAPA competitions are managed. It is available at any time on the CAPA website under the Members tab> Resources.

Here are a few key points from Selecting & Managing Competition Judges
(for a complete list, view the online document):

- Assemble judging teams with a minimum of three (3) judges: two (2) senior level judges and optionally one (1) junior level judge. A fourth judge may be included for training purposes.
- Limiting each judging team's evaluation and scoring to no more than 450 images per competition, ensuring a manageable workload.
- Providing 5 to 6 days for judges to complete the initial scoring of images.
- Striving to distribute images for scoring as evenly as possible across multiple judging teams.
- Allowing image disqualification with the agreement of two or more judges, reserving disqualification for exceptional cases.
- Prohibiting entrants from appealing judges' scores and comments, making all evaluations final.
- Requiring re-evaluation of an original score if the judges' scores vary by 3.0 or more points, without an obligation to change the original score.
- Providing the judges with a copy of the final competition report and the judging summary spreadsheet.

Judging Process for CAPA Competitions

The Director of Competitions has created a document that outlines the details of CAPA's competition judging process, including the criteria for evaluation, the scoring system, and the measures in place to ensure fairness and consistency. It aims to provide transparency in how judges are selected, how scores are calculated, and how discrepancies in scoring are handled.

By fostering an understanding of these processes, we aim to enhance the credibility of our competitions and build trust among participants and judges.

CAPA Judges need to be familiar with this document. It can be found on the CAPA website.

CAPA Competition Rules

Rules for each competition will vary depending on a number of things such as:

- the purpose of the competition,
- theme,
- association's policy on ethics,
- association's policy on the use of AI for creating or editing an image

The rules for upcoming competitions can be found on the CAPA website under the Competitions tab> Current Competitions.

Judges must familiarize themselves with the rules of a competition before commencing judging.

CAPA Competition Judging Criteria

The judging criteria for CAPA competitions is determined by the Director of Competitions in consultation with the Director of the Judging Program.

The current judging criterion for all competitions is:

- *Judges will assign scores primarily based on the Creative Intent of the image maker. Creative Intent refers to the characteristics of originality, expressiveness and imagination in communicating a story or eliciting an emotional response that gives the image a strong and lasting impact.*
- *Judges will also take into consideration in their scoring the degree to which the Organizational and Technical Components contribute to or support the Creative Intent.*
    - *Organizational Component refers to composition/design, use of space, balancing of elements, use of lighting, and presentation of the image.*

- *Technical Component refers to the exposure triangle (aperture, ISO, shutter speed), sharpness, in-camera and post-processing techniques such as intentional camera movement, use of colour, monochrome, duo and multi-tone, HDR, focus stacking, or any other technique permitted by the competition rules.*

- *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.*

For many photographers, achieving technical competence is the easiest skill to master followed by organizational skills. Making use of those skills to turn the maker's idea or concept into an outstanding image, often proves to be the most difficult part of the photographic process.

Image titles can clarify the creative intent of the photographer, add humour or meaning to the image, or in some cases create confusion about the image. Don't hesitate to take the image title into consideration, but it should not vary the score by more than plus or minus 0.5 points.

Where competition rules specify titling restrictions, consult with the competition coordinator if you feel a title does not meet the criteria. The competition coordinator will provide guidance on scoring.

Guidelines for Judging CAPA Competitions

Pre-Screening of Images
While all submissions have undergone preliminary screening to confirm they meet the competition's Scope and Definitions, correct theme selection remains the entrants' responsibility. The Pre-screening Committee may occasionally miss a questionable image because of the sheer volume of images being reviewed.

When an image is deemed to be in the 'grey-area' of compliance within the Scope of Competition then the entrant will be given the 'benefit-of-the doubt' and the image will advance to the judging process.

Judges' Responsibilities
CAPA's priorities are maintaining competition integrity, fostering learning opportunities for entrants, and providing proper guidance.

For images that a judge feels have been entered into an incorrect theme, 0.5 to 1.0 point may be deducted, rather than disqualifying them outright. Disqualification is reserved for exceptional cases provided that two or more judges agree after consultation with the Director of Competitions.

When there is doubt about whether an image meets the editing criteria, the benefit of doubt should be given to the image maker and scored assuming it meets the criteria. A note may be put in the comments to identify the concern. Before awards are presented, winning images may undergo further analysis by the competition coordinator to confirm they meet the editing criteria.

Anytime there are concerns or questions about specific images, contact the Director of Competitions, who will review the image in question. The results of the analysis will then be shared with the judging team members for their information. Judging teams are not obligated to agree with the analysis or recommendations.

During the judging process, CAPA aims for fair evaluations without overly penalizing entrants. At the completion of the initial scoring, if a significant score variance occurs, judges are encouraged to re-assess and discuss the image with fellow panel members. This process fosters consistency across judgements, though judges are not obligated to alter their original scores.

Adapting to Different Competition Rules and Judging Guidelines

As a CAPA judge you will have opportunities to judge at local club or inter-club competitions, events such as fall fairs and competitions held by other organizations.

When invited to judge for a CAPA club, or any organization, the best way you can support their needs is to bring your knowledge and skill as a CAPA judge but also be flexible and able to adapt to the criteria used by that organization.

Every organization has its own set of rules and judging guidelines which may be similar to CAPA's, or very different. They may have a different point system in place or philosophy on how scoring is to be done. At some competitions, you will be the sole judge, or you may be part of a larger panel with three or more judges, all of whom will score, and who will, in turn, comment on an image. You might be able to make your comments as long and involved as you wish but, in most cases, you have limited time or a restricted character count for written comments.

You will discover that clubs and other organizations create a judging method that best suits their needs, and you must be sure to understand their requirements prior to commencing judging. If you have not received information about their methodology, don't hesitate to ask.

Regarding image disqualification, you will encounter different views depending on the organization's goals. In some competitions, no disqualifications will be allowed, and in others, disqualification is at the sole discretion of the judge, or judges. Before considering

disqualifying an image, make sure you are clear on the criteria and procedure used by the competition organizer.

If you are not clear on how to score an image that does not appear to comply with the competition rules, ask the competition coordinator for clarification.

On-line Judging

Competitions judged online, generally allow several days (typically 7 – 10) to review & score images.

CAPA and many CAPA clubs use an online judging system that allows you to view and score images by logging into a website. Some clubs will send you the images and a score sheet.

CAPA Online Judging – Technical Summary

The following are the minimum technical viewing standards established by CAPA for on-line judging:

- Minimum display size is 17”
- High Gamut monitor capable of showing 100% sRGB colour space Minimum resolution of 1024x768 or the stated resolution for the competition. For CAPA Zone and National competitions, the minimum resolution is 1400x1050.
- Viewing distance should be a distance greater than twice the diagonal size of the screen image – not Screen size, Image size (image size on screen 10” viewing distance should be no less than 20” from monitor). Avoid leaning in on some images and not others.
- The monitor must have been calibrated within 1 week (or less) using a quality calibration device.
- Lighting in the viewing room should be dark as when one did the screen calibration or as would be in a projected environment.
- Refrain from zooming into images as one would not be able to do if in a projected competition.
- Try to evaluate each category of the competition at one sitting whenever possible.

- Give yourself time for your eyes to adjust when going from a bright image to a dark image and vice versa .
- Check the competition requirements as to Colour Space and Resolution for submitted images and make sure you are working in the same environment. You need to correctly see what the maker has submitted for evaluation.

If you do not have the equipment to properly view images in a calibrated 100% sRGB environment, please do not accept on-line judging assignments in fairness to the image makers.

In-Person Judging

Number of Judges:
Normally there are three judges. CAPA encourages clubs to ensure at least one is CAPA Certified. Some competitions use only CAPA Certified judges. As part of the Judges Certification Program, at times, there may be a fourth judge who is working on their certification. That judge's scores are not counted and are used only as part of their training. For very large competitions, there may be teams of judges. This allows the organizers to reduce the number of images required to be judged by each group of judges. It allows the process to go faster and reduces the risk of judges burning out partway through.

Controlled Environment:
In-person judging takes place in a controlled environment where the room is darkened, a calibrated projector is used, judges are sitting a set distance from screen or light box. In the case of print judging, a judge should never leave their seat to look at an image – all are judged from a set distance.

Scoring:
Scoring is usually done using a keypad to enter scores. The equipment operation varies, so be sure to ask for instruction if you are not sure how to use it. When comments are requested, typically someone manually records them on a laptop, so it is important to speak clearly, slowly, and loud enough.

Etiquette:
Judges do not talk unless it is to ask for clarification and if requested provide feedback after the scoring of an image has been completed. No comments should be made by scoring team members or any audience member.

Judges may have to break ties or pick those that best fit the special awards. They are free to discuss the images between themselves. Often the organizers will ask that the judges speak loud enough that the audience can hear the process.

Live Judging via Video Conference

Some clubs use video conferencing for judging their competitions. In this lesson we will cover some of the variations you may come across and offer a few tips for you to prepare.

There are two common scenarios.

1. In the first, you receive the images and score sheet in advance with time to judge the images. You then attend a video conference on a club meeting night to present your scores and comments to the club members.

   In this scenario, it is very much like online judging. The big difference is that you will have the opportunity to give your feedback verbally. Like in-person judging, this tends to create more of a connection with the audience. Because the scoring has already been done and the comments formulated, it may allow for slightly more in-depth observations and suggestions to be made.

   A good tip is to refamiliarize yourself with the images along with your scores and comments just before the meeting to ensure a smoother presentation. Also make sure you are in a quiet room, using a quality microphone so that your comments will be clearly heard.

2. The second scenario is typically used for year-end competitions where the objective is to pick the best images from all of the award-winning images submitted that year.

   You will usually receive the images in advance, giving you time to identify images that you feel would be worthy of top awards, then scoring takes place during a video conference with just the competition coordinator, one or two observers and the judges.

   Because the images have been judged earlier in the year, clubs will often use an in-out judging approach. Typically, during the video conference, each judge will say “In” or “Out” as each image is shown. This will be repeated until only the top few images are left. The judges will then have a discussion to decide the order of the top images, typically 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Honourable mention.

Chapter 7 - Photographic Genre Definitions & Judging Guidelines

Introduction

In popular usage, a photographic genre is a category of photography described by a particular style, form, or content. Often, photographic works fit into multiple genres by way of borrowing and recombining these conventions.

There is no universally accepted breakdown of photographic genre or sub-categories. In this section, we cover the genres that a judge should be familiar with as they are common themes in competitions from club level through to international.

International organizations such as the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP), Photographic society of America (PSA), International Association of Art Photographers (IAAP), Global Photographic Union (GPU) and other photography-oriented organizations define genre as they relate to their competitions, exhibitions and salons. Many international organizations have agreed upon common restrictions and guidelines for some genre as they relate to competition.

Because every organization has its own set of genre definitions and rules, it is extremely important that you become familiar with the rules for every competition before you begin judging.

If an organization has not provided detailed definitions or judging criteria for a specific genre, then the information provided here is a good guideline to follow.

If asked to judge a genre you are not familiar with, take time to learn about its commonly identifiable features and idiosyncrasies. If you are not comfortable judging a particular genre, politely decline the offer to judge.

The following descriptions, judging criteria and tips, are based on CAPA competitions or widely accepted practices by photographic organizations and clubs. For the purpose of training, they have been grouped based on similar judging criteria.

THE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTIONS ARE A GUIDELINE ONLY.

BASE YOUR JUDGING, FIRST AND FOREMOST, ON THE RULES, EDITING CRITERIA AND JUDGING CRITERIA SPECIFIC TO THE COMPETITION YOU ARE JUDGING.

Common Judging Elements

Regardless of the genre being judged, there are common things judges look for when they are evaluating an image. What changes is the emphasis that is put on some of those elements as you move from one genre to another.

For all genres, ensure a balanced evaluation by always considering all of the following:

Creative Intent:	Organization:	Technical Quality:
• Emotional Impact • Story • Expressiveness • Imagination	• Lighting • Composition • Design • Presentation	• Exposure • Sharpness • Techniques • Post-Processing

Remember that judges should always put the most emphasis on the maker's Creative Intent. Evaluation and scoring of Organization and Technical factors are based solely on the extent to which they support the Creative Intent of the image maker.

These common elements are evaluated in all genres. As we study each genre, focus will be on the additional characteristics that should be taken into consideration for that genre.

Competitions with Open or Pictorial Themes

A competition with an Open theme, sometimes called Pictorial, can be more challenging than judging a specific theme or genre. The images you are judging may cover the full ranges of genres. One image may be a delicate pastel floral, while the next a bold bright abstract. Make sure you give yourself time for your mind to adjust to such radical subject changes.

It is important to become familiar with the entry criteria as some competitions restrict what can be entered in an open category, while others have no restrictions. This is also true of editing criteria. For example, a wildlife subject entered in an open category normally would not have the same editing restrictions it would have if entered in a Nature/Wildlife category.

As always, if the rules and criteria are unclear, ask the competition coordinator for clarification.

Nature and Wildlife photography

The following are included in this genre:

- Nature (including Botany, Landscape & Celestial in Nature category)
- Wildlife

There is one hard and fast rule, whose spirit must be observed at all times: ***The welfare of the subject is more important than the photograph*.**

Nature Ethics Defined

To promote responsible photographing of species, entrants:

- Must not do anything to injure or distress any animals or destroy their habitat in an attempt to secure an image.
- Must maintain an appropriate distance from an active nest or den, and in most cases, avoid them entirely.
- Must not bait. The baiting of wildlife should be avoided as it may have long-term impacts.
- Must not intentionally spook.
- Must not stress out wildlife by getting too close.
- Should learn about the species' behaviour and the ecology of the area.
- Use appropriate lenses and techniques that minimize stress.
- Should be a naturalist as well as a nature photographer
- Should be especially careful and respectful when photographing "species-at-risk" and threatened species. Consider avoiding the photography of "**species-at-risk**".

For your information, CAPA's definition for Nature images included in this manual, is a reaffirmation of our strong belief in the responsibility of photographers to treat their subjects with respect and consideration.

Nature competitions have very strict rules about what is or isn't allowed. The rules for any specific competition are generally supplied by the host club to the entrants, who are required to comply with the regulations. You should ensure that you are familiar with the rules for any specific competition before commencing judging.

Many wildlife competitions, including CAPA's require the maker to provide a RAW file to evaluate winning images for compliance to the rules.

Nature Definition
CAPA's Nature Definition is in line with both FIAP and PSA:

- Nature Photography is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archeology, in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject material and certify its honest presentation.

- The story telling value of a photograph must be weighed more than the pictorial quality while maintaining high technical quality.

- Human elements must not be present, except where those human elements are integral parts of the nature story such as nature subjects, like barn owls or storks, adapted to an environment modified by humans, or where those human elements are in situations depicting natural forces, like hurricanes or tidal waves.

- Photographs of human created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domestic animals, or mounted specimens are ineligible. Scientific bands, scientific tags or radio collars on wild animals are permissible

- No techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are permitted.

- Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content, or without altering the content of the original scene, are permitted including HDR, focus stacking and dodging/burning. This also includes removal of elements added by the camera, such as dust spots, digital noise, and film scratches,

- Stitched images are not permitted.

- Colour images can be converted to greyscale/monochrome.

- Infrared images, either direct-captures or derivations, are not allowed.

- Images entered in Nature sections meeting the Nature Photography Definition above can have landscapes, geologic formations, weather phenomena, and extant organisms as the primary subject matter. This includes images taken with subjects in controlled conditions, such as zoos, game farms, botanical gardens, aquariums and any enclosure where the subjects are totally dependent on man for food.

Landscape and Astrophotography in the Nature competition category

Natural Landscape
In a Nature competition with a landscape category (sometimes referred to as a natural landscape) the rules typically exclude any evidence of human activity. This includes, but is not limited to, fences, roads, buildings, farm crops, domestic animals, people, contrails (condensation trails left by jets) and night sky glow from artificial lights.

Astrophotography
Most nature competitions indicate that the image should look natural. Today's camera sensors can capture more than the eye sees. Take milky way images for example, what we typically see in competition is a faithful reproduction of a natural phenomenon more so than a faithful reproduction of what the eyes can see. You will have to decide whether the post-processing has been taken too far.

Another challenge with astrophotography is conveying a nature story. We have a good idea what a nature story means for plants and animals - things like habitat and the environment, behaviour, relationships etc., but what does it mean for astrophotography?

See **Landscape and Travel** later in the chapter for more information on judging Landscape and Astrophotography genres.

Wildlife Definition
Where exhibitions or competitions have a Wildlife section or are awarding a Wildlife medal the following applies:

- Images entered in Wildlife sections meeting the Nature Photography Definition mentioned above are further defined as one or more extant zoological or botanical organisms free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat.

- Wildlife is not limited to mammals, birds and insects. Marine subjects and botanical subjects (including fungi and algae) photographed in the wild are suitable wildlife subjects, as are carcasses of extant species.

- Landscapes, geologic formations, photographs of zoo or game farm animals, or of any extant zoological or botanical species taken under controlled conditions are not eligible in Wildlife sections.

- Wildlife images may be shown in either 'Open' or 'Nature' competitions, both of which have widely differing criteria.

Judging Tips for Nature/Wildlife Photography

Be aware of competition restrictions on subject matter. If in doubt, score assuming the image meets the criteria and then advise the competition coordinator of your concern. If you agree to judge nature/wildlife, be as informed as possible. If in doubt, politely decline when asked to judge.

Creative Intent:
The story telling and depiction of the natural environment should weigh higher than a static portrait of the animal. An animal engaged in a typical activity creates a stronger photograph than a standing pose.

Landscape images in the Nature Category typically do not allow any evidence of human activity (hand of man).

Botany shots showing different stages of development should be given credit.

Although you may find an image unpleasant, judge it by the same standards as any other photograph. (Do not be biased by subject matter).

Do not be influenced by any perceived difficulties in making the image. You are judging the image before you and not the effort needed to create it.

The rarity of the subject should not be assumed or be given extra credit.

Be aware that some competitions require animal life to be “wild” (not in captivity). A commonly seen subject (such as a squirrel) may still possess excellent qualities.

Organization:
A creative or unusual approach to the theme should be given credit, as should composition and qualities such as lighting, which should appear natural and be adequate to clearly show the subject.

Positioning and framing of the subject should be appropriate and effective. A good nature shot will often show the whole subject, or enough so that it can be identified. This applies also to the use and suitability of backgrounds that look natural and unobtrusive or contribute to the story-telling theme (e.g. habitat).

Where eyes are seen (especially with birds and mammals) a catch-light is often considered an asset to the image, but images should not be penalized simply for not having catch-lights.

Be aware of animals unnaturally placed in positions or areas they would never put themselves into. While there is no need to be a species expert, you need a basic knowledge of animal behaviour.

It is expected that scientific or accepted common-name titles should be given, where possible. Comment on weak titles such as “pretty flower”, suggesting that the title does not deliver a message telling us what the photographer intended.

Technical Quality:
Techniques that tend to obscure the essential story should be discouraged.

Subjects should be well exposed, sharp where needed and with good definition in body details.

Close-ups of small plants are often the most effective but require close attention to focus and depth-of-field. Understanding the difference between focus and depth of field is important for these types of images.

Landscape and Travel

The following are included in this genre:

- Landscape (includes Cityscape & Seascape)
- Celestial (Astrophotography)
- Travel

Landscape Photography

Landscape Photography is a genre that captures the beauty of natural and urban environments, showcasing vast scenes, atmospheric conditions, and the interplay of light and land. It aims to evoke emotion, an appreciation for the location, and a sense of place through composition and visual storytelling.

More than just capturing scenery, landscape photography conveys emotion, highlights environmental beauty, and invites viewers to connect with the world through a photographer's perspective.

Types of Landscape Photography

- *Classic Landscapes* – Wide-angle views of mountains, forests, plains, oceans, and deserts.
- *Seascapes* – Capturing the movement of water, waves, and coastal scenes.
- *Urban Landscapes* – City skylines, architecture and human-made environments.
- *Aerial and Drone Landscapes* – Unique perspectives from above.
- *Nightscapes* – Capturing landscapes under the stars, moonlight, or auroras.
- *Imaginative* – Interpreting common objects as landscape subjects.

Approaches and Styles:

1.1 Documentary style: natural environment and design is captured in its randomness as well as landforms etched by the elements or natural forces can be recognized.

1.2 Interpretative style: concern for the beauty of the landscape. It can be impressionistic (via natural or artificial means) and where there is a reaction to emotive forces and generally deals with aesthetics. Interpretation is important to give visual and emotional stimulation to the landscape. This style is also used to turn common objects such as a lamp, a wall, or even the human body into an interpretive landscape.

Competitions: Generally guided by international FIAP definitions but there are exceptions to this - judges must follow guidelines supplied by the competition organizers.

Images striving to attain 'pure' unsullied landscapes, are normally devoid of human

influence, using instead subjects such as strongly defined landforms, weather, and ambient light. These are considered Natural Landscapes and normally found in (but not limited to) Nature competitions.

Traditionally landscape paintings were quite restrictive, whereas today the term in photography is very broad. As a result, there is no pure or absolute definition of "landscape" in photography. It has become a very broad term, encompassing urban, industrial, macro and nature themes. A beach full of parasols and sunbathers can be a landscape photograph, but so can the view through an electron microscope, which shows a different type of landscape.

Waterfalls and mountains are especially popular in classic landscape photography. Regardless of the subject, the choice of season, time of day, lighting and weather conditions all play a role in creating the most memorable landscape images.

Key Elements

- *Scenic Beauty* – Captures the grandeur of nature, including mountains, forests, plains, deserts, oceans, and skies.
- *Composition and Depth* – Balance, leading lines, foreground, mid-ground, and background should all create depth.
- *Lighting and Atmosphere* – Emphasis on natural lighting conditions such as the golden hour, blue hour, or dramatic weather effects. Images will depict the changing moods of nature through weather, lighting, and seasonal variations.
- *Sharpness and Clarity* – Fine details should be crisp, especially in foreground elements.
- *Use of Leading Lines and Framing* – Natural lines such as rivers, roads, and mountain contours should guide the viewer's eye.
- *Colour and Tonal Balance* – Natural or enhanced colours should complement the scene.
- *Minimal Human Presence* – Although small elements can add scale, these images primarily focus on untouched natural environments.

Judging Tips for Landscape Photography

- Be familiar with composition guidelines and visual design (such as rule of thirds, golden ratio, Fibonacci spiral, etc.)
- Be familiar with the concept of negative space and its use.

- Be familiar with the colour theory and the variations of natural light (time of day, time of year, weather conditions.
- Be familiar with post-processing techniques.

Creative Intent:

- Does the image evoke a strong emotional response (awe, serenity, mystery, grandeur, etc.)?
- Does the scene convey a mood or atmosphere that enhances its impact?
- Does the photograph convey a sense of place, time, or atmosphere?
- Does the image offer a fresh or original perspective on a familiar landscape?
- Does the composition and editing reflect the photographer's creative intent and style?
- Does the photograph present a fresh perspective or unique interpretation of the landscape?
- Has the photographer taken creative risks, such as using unconventional angles, compositions, or lighting conditions?
- Does it stand out from typical or overly familiar landscape imagery?
- How well does the photographer use colour, light, and weather conditions to enhance the artistic vision?
- Has the image been intentionally composed to guide the viewer's eye in a meaningful way?
- If the image includes elements like mist, reflections, or human presence, do they add depth to the story?
- Does the image feel personal, as if the photographer had a deep connection to the location?

Organization:

COMPOSITION & VISUAL DESIGN

- Are elements like composition guidelines, leading lines, and framing used effectively?
- Does the image create a strong sense of depth, guiding the viewer's eye through the scene?
- Is natural or artificial light used effectively to enhance contrast and mood?
- Are colours well-balanced and used to enhance the overall impact of the image?
- Does the image have visual harmony, or does asymmetry add to its dynamism?
- Are background and foreground elements used effectively to create a layered composition?

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

- Is the focus well-executed, with the appropriate depth of field for the scene?
- Are highlights and shadows well-managed without losing important details?

- Is there excessive noise, or does noise contribute to the atmosphere?
- Has the image been edited tastefully without over-processing?
- Does the focal length and angle enhance the composition?

If applicable, does the use of long exposure (e.g., smooth water, light trails) enhance the scene?

Celestial - Astrophotography

(Also see Astrophotography under Nature genre earlier in this chapter)

Astrophotography is a specialized genre of photography focusing on capturing celestial objects, astronomical events, and the night sky. This includes stars, planets, galaxies, nebulae, the moon, and phenomena like eclipses, meteor showers, and the Milky Way. It can also extend to deep-sky photography, which requires telescopes and long-exposure techniques to reveal distant cosmic structures.

This genre demands technical expertise, as it involves working with low light conditions, long exposure times, and specialized equipment such as star trackers, telescopes, and modified cameras. Post-processing plays a crucial role in enhancing details, reducing noise, and bringing out faint celestial elements that are not easily visible to the naked eye.

Beyond its scientific applications, astrophotography has a strong artistic appeal, evoking wonder, scale, and the mysteries of the universe. It blends technical precision with creative vision, transforming the unseen cosmos into breathtaking visual art.

Types of Astrophotography:

- *Deep-Sky Photography* – Captures distant objects like galaxies and nebulae.
- *Planetary and Lunar Photography* – Focuses on planets, the Moon, and their details.
- *Wide-Field and Landscape Astrophotography* – Combines terrestrial elements with the night sky (e.g., Milky Way over mountains).
- *Time-Lapse and Star Trails* – Shows movement over time, capturing the Earth's rotation or meteor showers.
- *Solar and Lunar Photography* – Highlights details of the Sun and Moon, often using specialized filters for safety and clarity.
- *Aurora and Atmospheric Phenomena* – Captures natural light displays like the Northern and Southern Lights.
- *ISS and Satellite Tracking* – Follows man-made objects in space, requiring precise timing and tracking methods.

Key Elements:

- *Scientific and Emotional Impact* – Astrophotography blends technical precision with artistic expression, evoking a sense of scale, wonder, and our connection to the universe.
- *Low-Light Mastery* – Astrophotography relies on capturing faint celestial objects in minimal light conditions, often requiring long exposures and high ISO settings.
- *Long Exposure Techniques* – Whether for deep-sky imaging, star trails, or auroras, long exposure is essential for revealing details invisible to the naked eye.
- *Precision and Stability* – The use of tripods, equatorial mounts, and star trackers is crucial to prevent motion blur and capture sharp images.
- *Post-Processing and Stacking* – Image-stacking and noise reduction techniques help enhance details and improve clarity, especially for deep-sky and planetary photography.
- *Celestial Motion Awareness* – Understanding the Earth's rotation and tracking celestial objects is necessary to avoid star trails (unless intentionally desired).
- *Light Pollution Management* – Selecting dark sky locations or using filters to minimize artificial light interference is key to achieving high-quality images.
- *Optical Equipment and Adaptation* – Different types of astrophotography require specialized lenses, telescopes, or filters to enhance visibility and clarity.
- *Artistic Composition* – Elements like foreground integration, framing, and leading lines can create a more immersive and visually compelling astro photograph.
- *Colour and Contrast Control* – Many celestial objects emit unique wavelengths of light, requiring careful white balance adjustments to bring out accurate or artistic colours.

Judging Tips for Astrophotography

- Be familiar with the technical aspects of astrophotography, including exposure stacking, dark frame subtraction, noise reduction, and tracking methods to ensure high-quality images.
- Be aware of the differences between various astrophotography types (e.g. deep-sky, planetary, wide-field, time-lapse) and the specific challenges associated with each.
- Be familiar with the effects of atmospheric conditions (e.g. seeing, light pollution, airglow) and how they influence image clarity, contrast, and colour accuracy.
- Be aware of the role of post-processing techniques, such as histogram stretching, colour calibration, and deconvolution, while ensuring that enhancements remain scientifically accurate and visually compelling.

- Be familiar with the use of specialized equipment like equatorial mounts, auto guiders, narrowband filters, cooled cameras, and how they impact image quality.
- Be open to creative approaches that blend astrophotography with artistic composition, such as nightscapes that integrate terrestrial elements with celestial phenomena.
- Be aware of ethical considerations in astrophotography, including the disclosure of composite images, digital manipulations, and colour alterations that may affect scientific accuracy.

Creative Intent:
Emotional Impact and Storytelling – Does the image evoke a sense of wonder, mystery, or vastness? Does the photograph capture a rare celestial event or a unique perspective on the night sky? Is there a strong connection between the celestial subject and the viewer's emotions? Does the image tell a compelling story about the universe or humanity's relationship with space?
Creativity and Artistic Vision – Does the image capture a rare celestial event, unique alignment or perspective? Has the photographer taken a creative approach that sets the image apart from standard astrophotography? Does the image push the boundaries of astrophotography techniques in an innovative way?

Organization:
Composition and Visual Design – Does the framing and positioning of celestial objects create a visually balanced image? If the image includes foreground elements (e.g. landscapes, observatories, etc.), do they enhance the composition without overpowering the astronomical subject? Does the contrast between dark sky and luminous celestial bodies create depth and impact?

Technical Quality:
Scientific Accuracy and Technical Execution – Is the celestial subject accurately represented in terms of colours, details, and scale? Has the photographer properly controlled factors like noise, hot pixels, and light pollution? Are deep-sky objects, planetary details, or star clusters sharp and well-defined? Are the stars pinpoint-sharp, or is there trailing due to insufficient tracking? Has the appropriate exposure time been used to reveal details without overexposing highlights?

Use of Specialized Techniques and Equipment – Was the correct choice of telescope, lens, or tracking mount used for the subject? Has image stacking been effectively applied for noise reduction and clarity? Are narrowband or broadband filters used effectively to enhance visibility of celestial features? If high dynamic range (HDR) techniques are used, do they maintain a natural appearance?

POST-PROCESSING AND COLOUR FIDELITY – Are colours well-balanced, avoiding over-saturation or unnatural hues? Has the processing enhanced details without introducing artifacts or over-sharpening? If false colour or composite imaging is used, is it clearly indicated and effectively applied?

Travel Photography

A strong travel photograph goes beyond simple sightseeing snapshots; it conveys emotion, cultural depth, and narrative. It may showcase iconic landmarks, hidden gems, local traditions, or spontaneous moments that define a place.

Unlike street photography, which often focuses on candid urban life, travel photography is broader, encompassing diverse subjects and settings, from remote landscapes to bustling city streets. It aims to inspire curiosity and wanderlust while preserving authentic representations of the people and places encountered.

Some criteria can be quite strict as illustrated in this PSA definition. Keep in mind that many clubs will use a much less restrictive definition.

Photo Travel Definition (PSA)
CAPA does not have a fixed definition for the Travel genre. As a guide, the following is how the Photographic Society of America defines Photo Travel.

A Photo Travel image is a portrayal of the real world we live in, as it is found naturally. There are no geographic limitations.
Content guidance:

1. If the image is predominantly or exclusively a land-, sea- or cityscape, these "scapes" must include characteristic, distinctive and recognizable physical features, although it is not necessary that the image identify the exact location;
2. Images that predominantly or exclusively depict people and their activities must illustrate a distinctive culture of a country, region, or continent;
3. Images that predominantly or exclusively depict animal populations are allowed, if the animals are in their native environment and are characteristic of that country, region, or continent;
4. Portraits or other close-ups of people or objects, in addition to meeting the above paragraphs as applicable, must include elements depicting some of the surrounding environment to make it obvious that the image was not taken in a studio setting;
5. Images from events or activities arranged for photography, or of subjects directed or hired for photography, are **NOT** allowed.
6. Time exposures are allowed, if they do not dominate the image as a special effect (star trails, for example, are a dominating effect).
   Highly distorted images such as those produced by fisheye lenses are **NOT** allowed.

Judging Tips for Travel Photography

- Be familiar with the principles of cultural sensitivity and ethical storytelling, ensuring that images respect local traditions, people, and environments.

- Be aware of the significance of authenticity in travel photography—images should capture the essence of a place without excessive staging or manipulation.
- Be familiar with the impact of light and weather conditions on travel photography, as different times of day and atmospheric conditions can dramatically alter a scene's mood.
- Be familiar with the balance between human presence and landscapes in travel photography, recognizing how people can add scale, emotion, or narrative to an image.
- Be open to diverse styles of travel photography, from documentary-style realism to more artistic or abstract interpretations of a destination.
- Be familiar with post-processing techniques commonly used in travel photography, ensuring that enhancements maintain realism and do not misrepresent the subject.

Creative Intent:
Emotional Impact and Storytelling –Does the image evoke a strong sense of place, culture, or adventure? Does the photograph tell a compelling story about the destination or the people in it? Does the image create an emotional connection that makes the viewer want to explore the location? Does the scene capture an authentic moment that represents the essence of the place? Is there a sense of curiosity, wonder, or nostalgia in the photograph?
Creativity and Artistic Vision – Does the photographer present a fresh perspective on a well-known destination? Are unique visual elements, such as reflections, light, or framing, used effectively? Does the image go beyond a typical postcard shot to offer a deeper or unexpected viewpoint? How well does the photographer use creativity in capturing cultural, natural, or urban elements? Does the image strike a balance between artistic expression and realism, or does it rely too heavily on digital enhancements?

Organization:
Composition and Visual Design – Is the composition balanced and visually engaging? Are leading lines, symmetry, or framing used to guide the viewer's eye through the scene? Is the background free of distractions that might take away from the main subject? Does the image have a strong focal point that draws the viewer's attention? How well does the composition enhance the storytelling aspect of the photograph?

Technical Quality:
Is the image sharp, well-exposed, and free of technical flaws such as noise or motion blur? Does the lighting enhance the mood and depth of the scene? Is the colour balance natural and appealing, or does it feel overly processed? How well does the photographer handle challenging lighting conditions, such as sunsets, night scenes, or harsh daylight? If people or wildlife are included, are they captured clearly and naturally without excessive blur?

Architectural Photography

Architectural Definition:
Architectural photography is the capture by means of photography of the activity of designing and constructing buildings and other physical structures by a person or a machine.
A wider definition often includes the design of the total build environment, from the macro level of how a building integrates with its surrounding man-made landscape to the micro level of architectural or construction details and, sometimes, furniture. Statues, doors, windows & ornamentation are acceptable subjects on their own or as the center of interest.

There is also a trend to show architecture in an abstract or artistic form rather than a realistic representation. This opens up many creative possibilities for this genre.

It is important to verify the specific definition used by the competition committee.

Common Subjects

- *Modern Architecture* – Focusing on sleek lines, glass facades, and innovative design features in contemporary buildings.
- *Historical & Classical Architecture* – Capturing the grandeur, symmetry, and intricacies of classical buildings, palaces, churches, etc.
- *Interior Architecture* – Featuring the interiors of buildings, such as the layout, design, lighting, and materials used inside spaces.
- *Urban Photography* – Capturing the relationship between buildings, streets, bridges, and the overall cityscape, showing how buildings contribute to the urban environment.

Judging Tips for Architectural Photography

- Be familiar with the various common subjects of architectural photography, including the documentary (real estate, historical preservation) and artistic styles (abstract perspectives).
- Be familiar with lighting techniques, reflections, and perspective distortions.
- Be familiar with the importance of perspective (symmetry, lines, and forms), which is central to architectural design.
- Be familiar with the use of wide-angle lenses and vertical or horizontal framing to capture the grandeur of structures or smaller architectural details.

Creative Intent:
Has the purpose and meaning of the building been captured?
High-rises, churches, and historic mansions are all approached with a different attitude. Properly handled, they are portraits of the building's character and will generate an emotional impact.

Organization:
Where the subject is suitable, including people in architectural views may give life and activity, and show scale; however, if the photo appears to primarily show the structure of the building in a graphic style, it may not be an advantage (perhaps even a distraction) to include people.

The use of light and shade in areas in a composition can create dramatic effect but must be carefully positioned in the frame. Has the angle and quality of light been used to show texture?

Shadows and strong lines can add dimension – as can the use of colour and repetition.

Reflections should show patterns and shapes or reflect nearby buildings.
Tall, slender structures usually call for vertical presentations – especially when shooting from ground level. Ground-hugging buildings are often better presented in a horizontal format.

Unusual viewpoints, or placement of centers of interest, should be commented on.

Selecting a significant line or surface to place centrally in the frame creates a "dominant vertical" to act as a visual center line to help balance the composition.

Perspective is a strong consideration. It may provide a feeling of size and depth, when used effectively. Do not feel that all slanting verticals should be straightened. For example, a shot of a tall building from below looking up is characteristically distorted by perspective. This is the way things actually look in reality and trying to correct that may result in an unnatural look.

Ask yourself: Has the unnatural backwards lean (keystoning/perspective convergence) of a structure caused by camera/lens position been corrected? If not, is it being used effectively to create a sense of size or a different perspective?

Technical Quality:
Are all parts of the architecture in clear focus?
Are textures and structural details sharp and prominent?
Is editing used to enhance rather than distort?
Is the image free from distortion or over-editing?
Does the editing maintain the integrity of the architectural design?

People

The following are included in this genre:

1. Portrait and its sub-categories (Classic/Studio, Environmental, Candid)
2. Fashion
3. Boudoir

Portrait Photography

Also known as portraiture, portrait photography captures the essence, personality, and emotion of a subject. It can be posed or candid, traditional or experimental, but always aims to create a connection between the viewer and the subject. Portraiture focuses on capturing people's expressions, personalities, and emotions.

A portrait is not a snapshot, but a composed image of a person, usually in a still position. Even for candid portraits, there should be evidence of planning.

Types of Portraits:

- *Classic/Studio Portraits* –Controlled lighting, neutral or styled backgrounds.
- *Environmental Portraits* –Subject in a meaningful setting (e.g., workplace, home).
- *Candid/Lifestyle Portraits* – Natural expressions, often in everyday life situations.
- *Fine Art & Conceptual Portraits* – Creative, surreal, or storytelling elements.
- *Black & White Portraits* – Emphasizing contrast, textures, and mood.

Key Elements:

- *Creative Vision* – May include unique poses, settings, or post-processing effects that amplify the subject's narrative.
- *Focus on Subject* – Focuses on a subject's face and expression. Can be formal (studio-lit, posed) or candid (natural, spontaneous).
- *Expression & Emotion* – Showcases genuine emotion, from joy to contemplation. Captures or reveals the essence, personality, and mood of an individual or group or tells a story.
- *Lighting Mastery* – Natural or artificial lighting is used to enhance the subject's features. Lighting is crucial—soft lighting for flattering effects or dramatic lighting for depth.
- *Composition* – Framing often focuses on the subject's face or upper body. Background control helps isolate the subject and reduce distractions.

Judging Tips for Portrait Photography

- Be familiar with lighting techniques such as natural lighting, high-key or low-key lighting, back-lighting, direct front lighting, side lighting, short or narrow lighting and the use of reflectors.
- Be familiar with posing techniques (shoulder turn, head turn, head tilt, position of the arms and hands, etc.).
- Be familiar with other key elements of portraiture such as clothing, use of colours, use of black and white.
- Be familiar with the impact of changing the perspective (low or high).

Creative Intent:
Does the portrait evoke or capture emotion or tell a compelling story about the subject?

Is there a clear connection between subject and viewer?

Does the image capture the subject's likeness, personality, emotion, attitude, skills, beauty?

Facial expression and body language are the two extremely important things to look for in a portrait. Too often judges overlook them and concentrate on composition (according to a formula) and lighting – both are of secondary importance.

Were innovative techniques used to capture the subject in an original way?

Organization:
Is the subject well-positioned, and does the composition enhance the mood or message?

Is the lighting flattering and enhancing the subject?

Watch for inappropriate cropping of body parts. Cutting off at an elbow or wrist is not usually advisable but there can be exceptions. It is not necessarily wrong for a photographer to cut off the top of the head in a portrait. It could even be acceptable for one whole side of a face to be cut off.

The pose should be suited to the person(s) portrayed, or the situation shown. A candid shot should appear relaxed, not over-posed. Facial expressions and body attitudes are important. A less relaxed pose may be appropriate to some types of figure studies or fashion photography.

The background in environmental portraits is part of the story and may not always be as

clean and simple as in other genres of photography. It would be nit-picking to comment that the background is too busy, if it is appropriate for the portrait.

Technical Quality:
Do focus and colour enhance the portrait's story, even if not technically perfect?

Are the subject's eyes in focus? Is the depth of field well-controlled and used effectively?
Having the eyes, nose and mouth all in focus is not necessarily the case for all portraits. An extremely shallow depth of field can be used to help set the mood or draw your attention to a specific feature.

When the overall tonal range is leaning toward high-key or low-key, does the choice suit the subject?

Are shadows used effectively? Are skin tones natural? Has retouching improved the image without over-processing?

Fashion Photography

Fashion photography is a genre of photography that is about capturing clothing, accessories and style through creative images. The styles can range from street photography to high-fashion studio shoots, each with a unique look. Each style targets different audiences, and focuses on things like lifestyle, luxury, or product details.

Fashion Photography is often used by brands and magazines to showcase the latest trends and inspire people with new looks. Although not a common theme for club competitions, you may come across it in competitions run by the fashion industry. For example, the British fashion industry runs an annual Fashion Photography Competition through the British Photography Awards group.

Good lighting, angles, and storytelling are the key elements when looking for an image that stands out.

Key Elements:

- *Artistic Direction & Concept* – Fashion photography frequently involves a narrative or concept that reflects current trends or tells a story.
- *Clothing & Accessories* – The primary focus is on fashion, highlighting the details, cuts, fabrics, and style of the clothing.
- *Model & Posing* – The model's pose, expression, and interaction with the environment are crucial in conveying the desired message.

- *Styling & Set Design* – Fashion photography often involves carefully curated styling, props, and settings that enhance the clothing and convey a specific mood or theme.
- *Post-Processing*: Heavy editing to enhance colours, textures, and atmosphere is typical.

Judging Tips for Fashion Photography

- Be familiar with the history and evolution of fashion photography, including the work of influential photographers such as Richard Avedon, Helmut Newton, and Annie Leibovitz.
- Be familiar with the role of fashion photography in branding and advertising, understanding how images communicate identity and style.
- Be aware of how lighting techniques, both natural and artificial, affect fabric textures, skin tones, and the overall mood of an image.
- Be familiar with posing and body language, recognizing how different poses convey attitude, elegance, or movement while highlighting the clothing.
- Be aware of the importance of styling, including wardrobe selection, accessories, and makeup, in creating a cohesive visual statement.
- Be familiar with composition techniques such as framing, leading lines, negative space, and dynamic angles that enhance the impact of fashion imagery.
- Be familiar with colour theory and contrast, understanding how colour palettes influence mood and visual storytelling in fashion photography.
- Be aware of the role of post-processing and retouching, ensuring that editing enhances the image without distorting realism or over-manipulating the model's features.
- Be familiar with the use of movement in fashion photography, such as flowing fabrics, dynamic poses, or wind effects, to create energy and drama.
- Be aware of cultural and ethical considerations, including diversity, representation, and body positivity in fashion imagery.
- Be open to experimental and conceptual fashion photography, where unconventional ideas, surreal elements, or avant-garde aesthetics push creative boundaries.

Creative Intent:
Emotional Impact & Storytelling – Does the image convey a strong mood, theme, or narrative beyond just showcasing clothing? Does the subject's pose, expression, and styling evoke an emotional response? Does the setting and background contribute to the overall story or concept? Does the image create a connection between the viewer and the fashion being presented? Is there a sense of confidence, elegance, or attitude that enhances the storytelling?
Creativity & Artistic Vision – Does the photographer bring a unique or innovative approach to fashion photography? Is there a fresh perspective in styling, set design, or model direction? Does the lighting, colour scheme, or post-processing enhance the artistic vision? Does the image successfully blend fashion with artistic expression? Are the photographer's creative choices bold and intentional rather than generic?

Organization:
Composition & Visual Design – Is the model well-placed within the frame to draw attention to key fashion details? Are leading lines, symmetry, or framing techniques used effectively? Does the background complement the fashion without overwhelming the subject? Is there a sense of balance and proportion in the image? Does the photograph make effective use of colour, texture, and contrast?

Technical Quality:
Is the focus sharp, particularly on key elements such as fabric details and accessories? Is the exposure well-balanced, ensuring that highlights and shadows enhance the mood? Has lighting been used effectively to create depth and dimension? Is the depth of field appropriate, ensuring that attention remains on the subject? Is post-processing used tastefully, enhancing the image without over-editing?

Boudoir Photography

The term “boudoir” is French for a woman’s private dressing room. While typically geared towards women, anyone can enjoy it regardless of gender.

Boudoir photography combines glamour, fashion, and portrait-style photography to create unique photos for each model.

Sexually explicit portraiture, sexual voyeurism or highlighting genitalia (pornography) are not acceptable subjects for Boudoir photography and will not be accepted in CAPA competitions.

CAPA will not accept boudoir photographs of models under the age of 19.

Boudoir photography can be divided into several categories, however the two most common are:

1. An intimate portrait usually of a person who is over the age of 19, capturing them in a private, often sensual setting. Women are often featured in lingerie or other elegant, often understated clothing, and are characterized by their focus on mood, lighting, and flattering angles/poses. Men are often featured in stylish or minimal clothing, such as underwear, robes, or tailored garments, and often use lighting and posing to emphasize the subject’s physique and personality.

2. An intimate portrait of a pregnant person who is over the age of 19 that celebrates the beauty and elegance of the expectant person. In these portraits, the subject might be photographed in lingerie, draped fabrics, gowns, or posed nude to accentuate their changing body. The aim is to capture the grace and strength of the pregnant person, highlighting their confidence and the beauty of the pregnancy journey.

Unlike fashion photography (which focuses on clothing and trends), or fine art nude photography (which explores form and abstraction), boudoir photography is deeply personal. It is often commissioned as a gift for a partner or as a confidence-boosting experience for the subject. The photographer’s role is to create a comfortable, empowering environment that allows for natural expression and authentic emotion, ensuring each image reflects the subject’s unique personality and charm.

Key Elements:

- *Emotional Connection* – Capturing confidence, vulnerability, empowerment, or sensuality through natural expressions and body language.
- *Lighting Mastery* – Soft, flattering light enhances skin texture, while shadows add depth and drama.
- *Composition and Framing* – Thoughtful use of angles, close-ups, negative space, and cropping to create intimate, engaging images.
- *Pose and Body Language* – Subtle posing that flatters the subject while maintaining authenticity and comfort.
- *Texture and Fabric Play* – Silk, lace, or sheer fabrics with backgrounds that complement the mood and elegance of the image.

Judging tips for Boudoir Photography

- Be familiar with the principles of lighting in boudoir photography, including soft, flattering light (natural or artificial), chiaroscuro effects, and how shadows can enhance mood and dimension.
- Be aware of the importance of posing and body language in creating elegant, sensual, and empowering images while ensuring that the subject feels comfortable and confident.
- Be familiar with composition techniques that highlight intimacy and emotion, such as close cropping, selective focus, and negative space to draw attention to the subject.
- Be aware of the balance between artistic expression and sensitivity, ensuring that images remain tasteful, respectful, and aligned with the subject's intent, rather than crossing into exploitative or overly suggestive territory.
- Be open to different styles of boudoir photography, from classic black-and-white film aesthetics to contemporary, high-fashion-inspired images or more candid, lifestyle-oriented approaches.
- Be familiar with post-processing techniques used in boudoir photography, including skin retouching, colour grading, and tonal adjustments that enhance mood while maintaining a natural and authentic look.
- Be aware of the role of storytelling in boudoir photography, considering how an image conveys personality, confidence, vulnerability, or sensuality beyond just physical appearance.

Creative Intent:
Emotional Impact and Storytelling – Does the image evoke a sense of confidence, sensuality, intimacy, or empowerment? Is there a clear emotional connection between the subject and the viewer? Does the photograph tell a story about the subject's personality, mood, or emotions? How well does the image balance vulnerability and strength in its portrayal of the subject? Does the photograph create an atmosphere that enhances the storytelling aspect?
Creativity and Artistic Vision – Does the image present a unique or fresh approach to boudoir photography? How effectively does the photographer use light, shadows, or reflections to add artistic depth? Does the styling (wardrobe, makeup, setting) enhance the artistic vision of the photograph? Is there a strong use of mood and ambiance that enhances the overall impact of the image? Does the photographer experiment with unconventional poses, angles, or compositions while maintaining elegance?

Organization:
Composition and Visual Design – Is the composition flattering to the subject's body and features? Are leading lines, framing, and positioning used effectively to enhance the subject? Is the background complementary to the subject without being distracting? How well does the negative space contribute to the overall aesthetic of the image? Does the photographer use depth of field creatively to draw attention to the subject?

Technical Quality:
Is the image sharp and well-focused, particularly on key facial features? How well does the lighting manage to highlight the subject's form while avoiding harsh shadows? Are skin tones natural and well-balanced without excessive retouching or artificial effects? Does the choice of black-and-white or colour enhance the mood of the image? Are any post-processing techniques used tastefully and without over-editing?

Photographic Art

The following are included in this genre:

1. Fine Art
2. Still Life
3. Figure Studies/Nudes

Fine Art Photography

Sometimes called "photographic art", “visual art photography” or "artistic photography", the term “fine art photography” has no FIAP definition, but a number of national photographic associations, art schools, art museums, and the U.S. Library of Congress have issued one. Each embraces the idea of visual work created in accordance with a photographer’s creative vision. The notion embodies a photographer producing a personal, typically evocative, or atmospheric impression. The Royal Photographic Society (RPS) defines Fine Art as “photography which communicates a creative vision.” This contrasts with the ‘document’ or ‘representational’ optic characteristic of standard nature, wildlife, landscape, or photojournalism photography; a visual report, recording the scene without significant ‘artistic’ influence or intent.

CAPA defines fine art photography as “an image produced with the intention to portray a creative vision based primarily on an aesthetic and emotional thrust”.

The divergence between fine art and the other photographic genres lies in the ‘intent’ of the photographer. It strives to express the feelings and vision of the photographer and visibly reveal through post-production processing techniques that the work was created with an “artistic” purpose. For example, even classical landscape painters did not paint exactly what they saw in front of them. Many subtly included, or excluded, elements to underpin their message or, like Claude Monet, worked with light and colour to convey a mood. Fine art photographers work in the same manner, using photography as the vehicle instead of paint and brush.

Fine art photography often involves meticulous planning, from pre-visualization to execution, ensuring that every element aligns with the intended message. Post-processing plays a significant role, allowing the artist to refine colours, textures, and contrasts to enhance the final image.

The fine art genre ‘overlaps’ others, such as portrait, nature, landscape, travel, and still life, in that the subject of the underlying image can be from almost any genre. In its inception fine art photography was usually associated with still life imagery. In the 21st century it expanded, and now virtually any photograph with an evident artistic intent is often considered to some degree to be fine art.

Unlike commercial or documentary photography, which serves external purposes, fine art photography is primarily personal and expressive, often exhibited in galleries or sold as limited-edition prints. It invites viewers to engage with the photographer's perspective, evoking emotions and deeper contemplation.

Judging Tips for Fine Art Photography

Creative Intent:
There are many possible 'meanings' in fine art photography. Look for the following qualities or combinations:

- Purely representational – made for visual appeal, with no deeper objective.
- Art that tells a story or evokes a specific emotion.
- Art that makes a statement.
- Art that is an allegory or metaphor – this is art that may contain more than one meaning, and possibly several.
- Does it make the viewer reflect on its deeper meaning?

Superior fine art photography either explores new subjects, or old subjects in a way that hasn't been done before.

Most importantly, fine art photography needs to be understandable, in that it arouses a reaction in you, although it may have made you think in ways you never expected to.

Organization:
The organizational elements should be considered not in terms of whether they conform to the so-called "rules", but rather do they provide reinforcement or at least support the vision or message.

Do the organizational elements show thought and planning?

Ultimately, good fine art photography gets its strength from how skillfully it was made, or in how it treated its subject.

Technical Quality:
Evaluating technical skill is a highly challenging aspect of art.

In evaluating the technical aspects of the work, it is best to focus on whether or not the technique supports the image's meaning or message.

Does the image demonstrate something special that shows an 'advanced' application of technical skills by the photographer.

Still Life Photography

Still life photography involves capturing inanimate objects arranged to tell a story, convey emotion, or highlight specific details. Still life art depicts mostly inanimate objects, whether natural or man-made. Subjects are carefully arranged to create visually pleasing images. Objects often symbolize ideas, emotions, or historical context. This genre demands excellent composition, lighting, and attention to detail, giving the photographer complete control over the scene for a deliberate artistic process. Common themes for still life photography are food photography, product photography, fine art arrangements.

This genre allows considerable flexibility in arranging design elements, but, as the name suggests, it should depict little or no motion and can range from minimalist to highly detailed compositions. The defining features of the subject and its context are essential. Still life images should be clean, sharp, and flawlessly lit as shadows and highlights add depth and texture. Every aspect is under the photographer's control and must be meticulously crafted.

Types of Still Life Photography

- *Food* – Arrangements of fruits, vegetables, desserts, or beverages. Often used for their rich textures, shapes, and colours.
- *Objects & Artifacts* – Everyday items like books, watches, vases, antiques, glasses, jewelry, or keepsakes arranged to evoke memory or personal connection.
- *Floral Still Life* – Capturing flowers in vases or artistic arrangements.

Key Elements

- *Focus on Subject* – Still life photography involves photographing inanimate objects arranged in a controlled setting.
- *Lighting*: Proper lighting is crucial in this genre to highlight details, create texture, and evoke mood.
- *Composition & Arrangement* – The objects in a still life image are intentionally arranged, often with careful attention to balance, symmetry, lines, and visual flow.
- *Textures & Details* **–** The textures of objects—whether it's the smooth surface of fruit, the roughness of a stone, or the glossiness of glass—are emphasized in still life photography. Close-up shots or macro photography techniques may be employed to capture intricate details.
- *Background & Props* – The background and additional props play an important role in still life photography, helping to complement or contrast the objects in the frame.
- *Colour & Mood* – The colour palette of the still life can significantly impact the mood of the image.

Judging Tips for Still Life Photography

- Be familiar with lighting techniques such as natural lighting, high-key or low-key lighting, back-lit, direct front lighting, side lighting, short or narrow lighting and the use of softboxes and studio lighting.
- Be familiar with close-up shots and macro photography techniques.
- Be familiar with other key elements of still life such as the use of colours and the theory of colours.

Creative Intent:
Are everyday objects transformed through unique perspectives or techniques?

Does the image offer a fresh perspective, unique concept, or a strong visual impression?

What is the image's purpose – record a 'product' for advertising, or is it a study of things such as light, forms or shapes? Is the image successful in its purpose?

Organization:
Because the photographer has full control over the setup and lighting, a high level of proficiency is expected in lighting, composition and design. Has the photographer shown good attention to detail?

Is the arrangement harmonious, and does it guide the viewer's eye effectively?

Are objects arranged in a visually appealing way?

Is the balance of the composition effective without any elements feeling overcrowded or disconnected?

Does the composition feel intentional and well thought-out?

Are lighting, depth of field, and colour used purposefully to enhance the artistic intent?

Is the lighting effectively used to create depth, highlight textures, shapes, and the overall mood of the scene?

Does the colour palette complement the subject?

Is the colour palette well-chosen to evoke a specific mood or emotion?

Does the choice of colour or monochrome contribute to the overall impact of the photograph?

Technical Quality:
Because still life is shot in-studio or at least under controlled conditions, even minor technical flaws should be corrected at the time of shooting or in post processing.

Are textures and edges clear and well-defined? Are the objects captured with excellent clarity and focus? Are fine textures and details, such as reflections, highlights, and textures, sharp and visible? Are the textures of the objects clearly visible and engaging? Does the image make effective use of close-ups or macro techniques to highlight fine details?

Fine Art Nude/Figure Study Photography

An intimate portrait captured in a style that focuses on the aesthetic and sculptural aspects of the body, blending the intimate nature of boudoir photography with the principles of artistic expression.
Fine Art Nude: This approach highlights the beauty and form of the nude body with a focus on artistic composition, lighting, and perspective. The intention is to present the body in a way that emphasizes its natural elegance and form, often using classical or contemporary art techniques to create a visually striking and tasteful image.
Body Scape: In a body scape portrait, the human body is treated as a canvas or landscape, with a focus on the abstract shapes, lines, and textures created by the body. The composition often explores the body's curves and contours in a way that highlights its artistic and sculptural qualities.

Sexually explicit portraiture, sexual voyeurism or highlighting genitalia (pornography) are not acceptable subjects in the Photographic Art genre and will not be accepted in CAPA Competitions.

CAPA will not accept nude photographs of models under the age of 19.

Judging Tips for Fine Art Nude/Figure Study Photography

Creative Intent:
Does the story or the emotional impact of the image focus on the aesthetic and sculptural qualities of the body?

Organizational & Technical Quality:
Use the same guidelines as for Boudoir Photography

Creative

The following are included in this genre:

1. Creative Photography
2. Abstract Photography
3. Altered Reality Photography

Creative Photography

Creative Photography is difficult to define. It has no universally agreed description or precise dividing line that separates the genre from all others. The real usage of the term is confused and overlaps with other genres and are numerous.

Creative photography is an extension of conventional photography into creative art. Its purpose is to stimulate creative thoughts and encourage experimentation with new ideas going beyond a simple photograph. There should be significant photographic content, and inclusion of mixed media of any kind (photocopy, paint, transfer, digital etc.) is welcome. It can be a composite, a collage, or a montage. The final result must be all the photographer's own work, including the original image.

Creative photography contains an extra element (or elements) that is intentionally used to improve a photo from its original state into a new and higher or more artistic plane.

Extra Elements lie outside of the normal photographic process and are open to interpretation. This is where being so called "creative" comes into play. Elements can involve a simple workflow that a photographer used to capture a unique look of a photo. Or they can be a complex post-processing technique that was used to bring out the mood and textures in an image. The key here is that the extra elements have to be outside of the normal photography workflow for it to be classed as creative photography.

Creative images can be created in camera and/or through post processing techniques. The source image must have been made by the photographer. All images must be original and may not incorporate elements produced by anyone else. Original images must be altered only by the maker; however, artwork or computer graphics generated by the entrant may be incorporated, if the original photographic content prevails.

Images may not be constructed entirely within a computer. It is necessary that the image's core content be identifiable.

Creative photography includes the sub-genres of Abstract Photography and Altered Reality. When you are asked to judge any of these genres, make sure to check the competition rules to determine how the club or organization has defined the category.

Abstract Photography

Abstract art is a style of art where colour and form make up the subject of the image rather than representing tangible objects or people.

Note that Abstracts also include images that were “abstracted” or “extracted” from a larger image, as in a close-up or part of a shape or shadow.

An abstracted image, in comparison to an abstract, is one in which the subject is simplified or reduced to its essential forms, but where the viewer can 'interpret' it as having been derived from something 'real'.

If a piece of abstract art is to have significance for anyone other than the artist, it needs to have something that retains the viewer's attention, draws them in, keeps them looking, and generates an emotional response.

Altered Reality Photography

The source image must have been made by the photographer. All images must be original and may not incorporate elements produced by anyone else. Original images must be altered only by the maker; however, artwork or computer graphics generated by the entrant may be incorporated, if the original photographic content prevails.
Any subject matter is acceptable as long as the Altered Reality guidelines are apparent, meaning, the image must obviously display a change in natural colour, form, shape, or any combination of the three.

High Dynamic Range (HDR) images without further changes are not considered "altered reality."

A good example of Altered Reality is by David Trautrimas. This Habitat Machines and Industrial Parkland series uses everyday housewares – from pots and pans, to faucets and fans – in fantastical Steampunk-esque cityscapes. This is Altered Reality at its finest.





Judging Tips for Creative, Abstract & Altered Reality Photography

These categories are not easy to evaluate. Judges should take more time to review this kind of photography, possibly also even allow limited discussion to assist the audience with understanding this relatively new art form.

Many practiced judges have experienced difficulty recognizing a Creative image when confronted by an excellent abstract image and often award a mediocre or low score. Others have been totally bamboozled by altered reality pictures that, because of their novelty and apparent sophistication, have received high awards for what amounts to the result of clicking a couple of software filter buttons.

Experience and a strong understanding of the genre will assist you in achieving fair and professional commentary and scoring.

Slapping a starburst filter on the lens, in itself is not a particularly creative thing to do; nor is over-sharpening, over saturation or swirl effects. To be effective, they need to support an idea that has some kind of meaning or aesthetic reason.

Judging Tips for Creative

Creative Intent:
Look for good ideas, imagination, sensitivity, vision beyond the ordinary and a certain degree of honesty.

Creative photographs can convey a mood, a feeling, a beautiful arrangement of elements; they could be expressive and can be aesthetically pleasing like a piece of visual music so to speak. They can be accessed through an emotional response to the shapes, lines and colours.

Creative images often retain a strong bond with reality but present the subject in an imaginative way.

Organization:
Look for good design and balanced composition.

Technical Quality:
The traditional understanding of creativity in photography is that it involves unusual techniques, but this interpretation is rather superficial. Slapping a starburst filter on the lens was never a particularly creative thing to do; nor is over-sharpening, over saturation, swirl effects and so on.

Whatever techniques have been applied, they need to deliver a result that has some kind of meaning, impact, or aesthetic reason.

Judging Tips for Abstract

There are few standards or guidelines to help us evaluate abstract subject photographs. Even the rather vague art world definitions don't seem to suit all photographic applications. For our purposes, any abstract we are asked to judge must have originated from a photograph.

Abstract photography is possibly the most difficult to appreciate for anyone nurtured in a purely factual approach. Most people who struggle, do so because they are trying to interpret the shapes and colours in terms of identifying recognizable objects instead of looking for the way different parts of them relate to each other and create a special feeling or don't, in terms of visual design, as the case may be.

Creative Intent:

Avoid awarding a low score for an image you don't understand; rather rely more on an emotional and/or aesthetic response.

Avoid trying to figure out what it looks like or represents, rather allow something to emerge from what you are viewing

Allow yourself enough time to make a connection with the image

Does it evoke emotion, imagination or reaction?

Organization:

Traditional approaches to composition (structure, balance, center of interest, etc.) may not be relevant or be apparent at first viewing. Recognizable subjects might be treated in unconventional ways.

Look for how well the elements, colours, and textures interact with each other and do they support the Creative Intent

Does the title of the image help to clarify the meaning and how is this influencing what I see?

Does the image seem to be carefully planned, or just a lucky shot?

Technical Quality:

Reaction to, and assessment of abstracts may be subjective, to a degree, depending on the experience and attitudes of the viewer.

Assess the techniques involved – are they appropriate?

Judging Tips for Altered Reality

Altered Reality images, the awe-inspiring ones at least, are much more than a few software clicks. They can become very complex, intricate works of art that still maintain their roots in photography.

Creative Intent:

Creativity and an Imaginative concept or approach are the things to be looking for.

Does the image truly represent an altered reality or state, as opposed to techniques that have added an artistic flair to an otherwise photo-realistic image?

Is there a clear story, message or emotion? Altered Reality images can create emotions ranging from light and humorous to dark and foreboding.

Organization:

Because most altered reality images are composites using multiple layers, check carefully to see how well the layers have been merged. Poorly assembled composites will detract from the Creative Intent.

Getting the lighting accurate across multiple layers can be difficult. Check that the direction of light and shadow makes sense. Are shadows missing where they should exist?

Technical Quality:

How effectively were layers and other elements added to the image? Do they look like they have just been pasted onto the image instead of being part of the image?

How effectively were shadows and simulated lighting applied? Are the direction, strength, and angle consistent and appropriate?

Social Comment

The following are included in this genre:

1. Photojournalism
2. Street Photography
3. Photo Documentary

Photojournalism

Photojournalism is a genre of photography that documents real-life events, people, and social issues with the goal of informing and engaging the public. It is rooted in truth, authenticity, and storytelling, often used in news media to capture historical moments, human struggles, and cultural shifts.

A key aspect of photojournalism is its candid and unposed nature, ensuring accuracy and integrity in visual reporting. The best images evoke strong emotions, provide context, and tell compelling stories in a single frame. Timing, often referred to as the decisive moment, is crucial in capturing impactful and meaningful scenes.

Photojournalism spans various subgenres, including war photography, political coverage, sports journalism, and human-interest stories. It serves as a powerful tool for social change, shedding light on untold stories and giving a voice to marginalized communities. More than just taking pictures, it is about witnessing and documenting reality with honesty and purpose.

While photojournalism and street photography both capture real-life moments, their purpose and approach differ. Photojournalism focuses on documenting newsworthy events, social issues, or historical moments with the goal of informing the public, adhering to strict ethical guidelines to ensure accuracy. In contrast, street photography is more artistic and interpretive, capturing candid moments of everyday life without the need for factual reporting. While both rely on spontaneity and the decisive moment, photojournalism tells structured, news-driven stories, whereas street photography emphasizes personal vision, aesthetics, and the beauty of the ordinary.

Common Themes:

- *Breaking News* – Natural disasters, protests, accidents, and other immediate events.
- *Political & Social Issues* – Elections, human rights, and cultural movements.
- *Conflict & Crisis* – War, refugees, and humanitarian crises.
- *Everyday Life* – People's lives, struggles, and triumphs within the larger societal context.

Key Elements:

- *Emotion & Impact* – The photo should evoke a strong emotional reaction, whether it's a sense of urgency, empathy, or shock. Often depicts raw human emotions, struggles, triumphs, or societal commentary. Prioritizes impact and urgency over aesthetic perfection.
- *Storytelling* – A photojournalistic image should tell a story or represent a larger context of an event, often capturing the essence of an unfolding narrative. A single image often tells a complete story or highlights an issue.
- *Objectivity & Accuracy* – Photojournalism should convey facts without distortion, focusing on the truth of the moment, without sensationalism or bias. No manipulation or staging situations and events; images must reflect reality as it is.
- *Timeliness & Relevance* – The image must be relevant to current events, capturing a moment that is newsworthy or impactful. Captures newsworthy moments, from social issues and conflicts to everyday life stories. Captures real-life events and breaking news.
- *Ethical Considerations* – Photos should be authentic and avoid staging or manipulation of situations or events. Photojournalists are bound by a code of ethics regarding accuracy and impartiality.

Judging Tips for Photojournalism

- For the most part, conventional analysis of images does not apply to Photojournalism. Photojournalism is not meant to be pretty, structured, or artistic. It is meant to be the record of a moment in time and should not be altered from the original, except for minor cropping and adjustment.
- Be familiar with ethical considerations (truthfulness and accuracy, minimal editing, sensitivity and impact).
- Look for storytelling aspects (newsworthy, socially relevant, strong narrative, etc.).
- Photojournalism tells a story. On television, or in the press, it is accompanied by a story that fills in missing detail which may not be immediately obvious. In competitions, we see only the image (and sometimes the title) and must decide whether or not the photographer has been successful in giving us sufficient information to receive the intended message. The photograph must supply answers to some of these questions, Who, What, When, Where and Why.

Creative Intent:
Is it timely and newsworthy?
Does it document a significant event or moment?
Does the image tell a clear, powerful story?
Is the subject significant or impactful?

Does it evoke a reaction or show raw emotion?
Was it captured at the peak of action?
Does it evoke a strong emotional or intellectual response?
Is the approach to documenting the event unique or thought-provoking?
Is the image responsibly taken and presented?
Does the image remain true to the event or subject?
Is there any apparent manipulation or bias?

Organization:
Inappropriate to judge too harshly on things such as lighting or composition.
As many must capture action at the right moment, the finer points of photographic design [e.g. less than ideal cropping, etc.] are not as important as is the factual information & the pictorial or other creative factors.
Is the subject framed in a way that enhances the story's impact?
Is the subject clear despite possibly chaotic surroundings?
Does the framing highlight key elements while minimizing distraction?
Does the image create a sense of place and immersion?

Technical Quality:
The journalistic (story-telling) value of the image receives priority over pictorial quality.
Is the image technically sound, with appropriate focus, exposure, and sharpness?

Street Photography

Street Photography is a genre telling a story of the human experience, caught in the moment, unrehearsed & spontaneous. In other words, candidly photographing life and human nature. It focuses on spontaneous human interactions, urban environments, and fleeting details, highlighting the beauty in the ordinary. Unlike documentary photography, it does not follow a structured narrative but instead offers a personal interpretation of the world.

A key aspect of street photography is its authenticity—subjects are often unaware of being photographed, preserving natural expressions and emotions. While urban settings like streets, markets, and public transport are common, any public space can serve as a backdrop. Timing, often called the decisive moment, is crucial, capturing gestures, juxtapositions, or expressions that tell a compelling visual story.
Composition plays a vital role, using elements such as light, shadows, reflections, and geometry. Traditionally shot in black and white for its emphasis on contrast and mood, modern street photography also embraces colour for added depth. More than just taking photos in the streets, this genre is about keen observation, revealing hidden narratives and the poetry of everyday life through a lens.

Key Elements

- *Candid and Unposed* - Captures spontaneous human interactions, emotions, moods, energy. Captures everyday life scenes in public spaces where the subjects are unaware of the photographer.
- *Raw and Unfiltered* – Showing the authenticity and randomness of street life.
- *Dynamic Compositions* – Use of leading lines, framing, reflections, patterns, and juxtapositions within the urban environment.
- *Narrative Depth* – Each image tells a story about people, culture, or social conditions.
- *Monochrome or Colour* – Both are common, with black-and-white often emphasizing emotion, while colour highlights vibrancy.
- *Light & Shadow Play* – Dramatic contrasts, silhouettes, or reflections enhance depth.
- *Social Commentary* – Can highlight cultural, political, or humorous aspects of urban life.

Judging Tips for Street Photography

- Be familiar with street photography approaches and techniques
- Be familiar with principles of ethics and respect
- Recognize that technical imperfections may sometimes enhance the mood or story.
- Recognize quick reflexes and keen observation.

Creative Intent:

- Does the image evoke curiosity, empathy, humor, or social reflection?
- Does it tell a compelling moment, emotion, or unique human interaction?
- Is it emotionally engaging? Does the image tell a story or reflect everyday life?
- Does the image capture a fleeting, meaningful instant?
- Does it capture an impactful, meaningful, unexpected or fleeting moment?
- Was there creativity in finding beauty, humor, or tension in everyday life?
- Is there originality in the timing, framing, or subject matter?
- Does it offer a fresh, interesting or original perspective or creative framing?

Organization:

- Does the image have a strong and intentional composition that guides the viewer's eye effectively?
- Did the photographer use natural or artificial light to create depth, contrast, or mood?
- Was the photo taken at the perfect moment to maximize impact and meaning?
- Does the chosen angle enhance the subject and add depth or intrigue to the scene?

- Do visual elements like reflections, geometry, or patterns contribute to the composition?
- If in colour, do the hues add to the mood and impact? If black and white, does contrast and tonal range enhance the subject?

TECHNICAL ASPECTS:

- Is the main subject clear, or does intentional blur contribute to the image's storytelling?
- Is the image properly exposed, with well-managed highlights and shadows?
- Does the level of noise or grain enhance or detract from the image?
- Has the photographer used post-processing tastefully without over-manipulating the scene?
- Is the image true to the spirit of street photography, avoiding excessive staging or digital alterations?

Photo Documentary

The photographer attempts to produce a story of a particular subject, most often using photographs of people. The photos usually depict a certain perspective of the photographer and can be thought of as a social investigation.

Documentary photography has many purposes: to record, reveal or preserve, to persuade or promote, to analyze or interrogate and to express. Documentary photography is often done as an essay in the form of a series of photos taken over a period of time, studying a person or people or situation or place.

Documentary photography seems to work best when the photographer comes in with a specific perspective. This is, after all, what gives life to a documentary - that the photographer takes a position that gives coherence to the photographs, rather than ending up with a random set of images.

Judging Tips for Photo Documentary

- It is more than a random set of images
- It probes the subject in some depth rather than a quickly done set of snapshots
- It provides the essential ingredient of information such as recording details, depicting behaviors or capturing decisive moments.

Creative Intent:
Is it clearly telling a story?
Does it document a significant event or moment?
Does the image tell a clear, powerful story?
Is the subject significant or impactful?

Does it evoke a reaction or show raw emotion?
Was it captured at the peak of action?
Does it evoke a strong emotional or intellectual response?
Is the approach to documenting the event unique or thought-provoking?
Is the image responsibly taken and presented?
Does the image remain true to the event or subject?
Is there any apparent manipulation or bias?

Organization:
Like photojournalism, it is inappropriate to judge too harshly on things such as lighting or composition.
As many must capture action at the right moment, the finer points of photographic design [e.g. less than ideal cropping, etc.] are not as important as is the factual information & the pictorial or other creative factors.
Is the subject clear despite possibly chaotic surroundings?
Does the framing highlight key elements minimizing distractions?
In a series of images, do they all contribute to the story?

Technical Quality:
Manipulation is acceptable only to the extent that it does not alter the truth of the image.
Is the image technically sound, with appropriate focus, exposure, and sharpness?

Macro/Close-up Photography

Macro photography is a genre that captures extreme close-up details of small subjects at a magnification on the sensor of 1:1 or greater. This often reveals textures, patterns, and structures that are invisible to the naked eye. When the magnification is less than 1:1, this is generally referred to as Close-up photography. Macro & Close-up are commonly used for photographing insects, flowers, water droplets, and everyday objects at a higher magnification than we typically perceive them.

This genre is widely used in nature, science, and fine art photography, offering a unique perspective on the intricate beauty of the miniature world. It allows viewers to appreciate the hidden complexity of textures, structures, and life forms often overlooked in everyday life.

Key Elements:

- *Creative Subjects* – Everyday objects can become fascinating when viewed up close.
- *Extreme Close-Up Detail* – The main characteristic of macro photography is the ability to photograph subjects at life-sized or greater magnification (1:1 or more). This can include insects, flowers, droplets, or any small object with intricate features.
- *Focus on Texture & Patterns* – Macro photography often emphasizes fine details like textures, colours, and patterns that are invisible to the naked eye, revealing the hidden beauty of the subject.
- *Shallow Depth of Field* – Due to the close proximity to the subject, macro images typically have a very shallow depth of field, with the area in focus being limited to small details.
- *Composition & Framing* – Effective framing is crucial in macro photography to highlight the subject's most interesting features while minimizing distractions from the background.
- *Lighting & Contrast* – Proper lighting is essential for macro photography, as small subjects often require enhanced lighting to bring out their details, avoid shadows, and prevent overexposure.

Judging tips for Macro/Close-up Photography

- Be familiar with macro photography techniques such as magnification and scale, sharpness and focus, depth of field control, focus stacking, lighting, and exposure and colour accuracy.
- Be familiar with macro lenses, extension tubes and close-up filters, ring lights and diffused flash, tripods and stabilization, and manual focus.
- Be aware of ethical considerations like respect for living subjects and authenticity (post-processing).

Creative Intent:
Does the image evoke curiosity, fascination, or an emotional response from the viewer?
Does the photograph reveal a hidden or overlooked aspect of the subject that enhances its story?
Does the image encourage viewers to see the ordinary in an extraordinary way?
Has the photographer captured the subject in an original or unexpected way? Does the image stand out from typical macro photographs of similar subjects?

Organization:
Is the subject well-placed within the frame for visual impact?
Does the background complement the subject without distracting?
Are patterns, textures, and shapes emphasized in a way that enhances visual interest?
Is there a clear focal point that immediately draws the viewer's eye?

Technical Quality:
Is the subject in sharp focus, particularly in the key areas of interest?
Has depth of field been controlled effectively to maintain necessary details?
If focus stacking is used, is it executed seamlessly to improve clarity and depth?

Lifestyle

The following are included in this genre:

1. Sports
2. Dance
3. Concert
4. Event

Sport Photography

Sport Photography is a genre dedicated to capturing the energy, motion, and emotion of athletic events. It focuses on freezing decisive moments, whether it's a sprinter crossing the finish line, a soccer player scoring a goal, or an intense expression of determination on an athlete's face. This genre requires quick reflexes, technical precision, and an understanding of the sport to anticipate and capture peak action.

Beyond action shots, sport photography also captures the emotions, drama, and atmosphere of an event—celebrations, defeats, and the connection between athletes and fans. It is widely used in journalism, commercial photography, and editorial storytelling, bringing audiences closer to the excitement and intensity of competitive sports.

Common Sports Categories:

- *Team Sports* – Football, basketball, rugby, etc., focusing on group dynamics and interactions.
- *Individual Sports* – Tennis, athletics, gymnastics, etc., highlighting the concentration and emotion of individual athletes.
- *Extreme Sports* – Surfing, skateboarding, skiing, etc., capturing adrenaline-fueled action in dramatic environments.
- *Close-up Action Shots* – Images that isolate a key moment with a single player or athlete, often with a dramatic expression or pose.

Key Elements:

- *Emotion & Drama* – Emphasizing the intensity of the moment, including the emotions of the athletes, coaches, and spectators.
- *Action & Movement* – The focus is on freezing action, whether it's a fast ball, a sprinting athlete, or an intense play.
- *Timing & Moment* – Capturing decisive moments that encapsulate the spirit of the game, such as a goal, a victory, or a crucial mistake.
- *Composition & Framing* – Effective composition to showcase the subject's movement and the context of the sport, often using the surrounding environment (stadium, crowd, equipment) for dramatic impact.
- *Lighting & Exposure* – Proper lighting, especially in challenging environments like outdoor stadiums or indoor arenas, is essential to ensure that the athletes are visible and the action is crisp.

Judging Tips for Sport Photography

- Be familiar with the concept of the decisive moment, where capturing peak action or emotion defines a powerful sports image.
- Be aware of the different sports disciplines and their unique photographic challenges.
- Be open to unconventional angles and perspectives, such as low-angle shots, extreme close-ups, or aerial views, that bring a fresh look to sports photography.
- Be familiar with shutter speed techniques and with the use of telephoto lenses for close-up action shots and wide-angle lenses for environmental storytelling.
- Be aware of the challenges of lighting conditions and how they affect image quality.
- Be familiar with how facial expressions and body language contribute to storytelling, capturing raw emotions like determination, exhaustion, or triumph.
- Be open to images that go beyond just the action, incorporating sports culture, fan engagement, or behind-the-scenes moments that add depth to the story.
- Be aware of ethical considerations, ensuring that the image truthfully represents the moment without excessive digital manipulation.

Creative Intent:

Emotional Impact & Storytelling – Does the image capture a defining or decisive moment in the sport? Does it evoke strong emotions, such as triumph, defeat, determination, or tension? Does the photograph tell a compelling story beyond just the action, such as an athlete's struggle, teamwork, or fan reactions? Does the image provide context, helping the viewer understand the event or the significance of the moment? Is there a unique perspective that sets the image apart from typical sports photography?

Creativity & Artistic Vision – Has the photographer used an unconventional angle, framing, or perspective to enhance the impact of the shot? Does the image offer a fresh or unexpected take on a familiar sport? Has motion been captured in an interesting way, such as panning, slow shutter effects, or silhouettes? Does the use of light, shadow, or colour add to the artistic quality of the image? Is there a creative element that makes the photo more than just a documentation of the event?

Organization:
Composition & Visual Design – Is the subject well-placed within the frame to create a dynamic and balanced composition? Does the image use leading lines, symmetry, or framing to enhance visual impact? Is the background well-controlled, avoiding distractions that take away from the main action? Does the shot convey movement effectively, either through frozen motion or intentional blur? Is the image cropped effectively to focus on the action while maintaining context?

Technical Quality:
Is the image sharp and well-focused, particularly on key elements like the athlete's face or action point? Has the photographer managed motion blur effectively, either freezing the subject or using it artistically? Is the exposure well-balanced, maintaining detail in highlights and shadows despite challenging lighting conditions? Is the colour balance and contrast used effectively to enhance the scene? If taken in low-light conditions, is the noise level well-controlled without degrading image quality?

Dance Photography

Dance Photography is a genre that captures the movement, emotion, and artistry of dance. It requires a keen understanding of timing, composition, and lighting to freeze dynamic moments while conveying the energy and grace of the performers. This genre includes a variety of dance styles, from ballet and contemporary, to hip-hop, ballroom, and cultural performances.

Unlike street photography, which captures spontaneous everyday moments, dance photography often involves pre-planned compositions, working closely with dancers to achieve visually striking poses and expressions. For live performances, however, photographers must anticipate movements in real-time, requiring quick reflexes and a deep understanding of the dance form. Whether documenting performances or creating artistic dance portraits, this genre merges technical skill with an appreciation of movement, music, and storytelling.

Types of Portraits:

- *Stage Performance Photography* – Captures live dance performances, focusing on dramatic lighting, expressive gestures, and storytelling, which requires precise timing and an understanding of choreography.
- *Studio Dance Portraits* – Controlled environment with ideal lighting setups, emphasizing form, technique, and artistic poses. Often used for promotional or conceptual work.
- *Motion and Abstract Dance Photography* – Uses slow shutter speeds, multiple exposures, or intentional blur to convey movement and fluidity rather than freezing a single moment.

- *Cultural and Traditional Dance Photography* – Documents folk and ritual dances, often in outdoor or festival settings, capturing cultural heritage and authenticity.
- *Street and Urban Dance Photography* – Features spontaneous performances in public spaces, often emphasizing energy, raw emotion, and the connection between dancers and their surroundings.

Key Elements:

- *Emotion and Storytelling* – Expresses passion, struggle, joy, or intensity through facial expressions and body language.
- *Rhythm and Flow* – Compositions that lead the viewer's eye through the dancer's movements, emphasizing grace or power.
- *Lighting and Contrast* – Dramatic use of shadows and highlights to sculpt the dancer's form.
- *Framing and Perspective* – Low angles for grandeur, close-ups for emotion, or wide shots to capture interaction with space.
- *Timing and Precision* – Capturing peak movement to highlight strength and technique.

Judging Tips for Dance Photography

- Be familiar with the principles of movement photography, including how to freeze motion or use intentional blur to enhance the sense of energy and rhythm.
- Be aware of different dance styles (ballet, contemporary, jazz, hip-hop, ballroom, etc.) to assess whether the image accurately represents the form, technique, and expressive qualities, unique to each genre.
- Be familiar with composition techniques that enhance the fluidity and elegance of dance, such as leading lines, framing, and the rule of thirds, while ensuring the dancer and or dancers remain the focal point.
- Be aware of how lighting—both natural and artificial—affects the visual impact of dance photography, particularly in low-light stage environments where shadows and highlights play a crucial role.
- Be open to creative interpretations of dance, including abstract representations, experimental angles, and unconventional compositions that emphasize the emotion and storytelling behind the movement.

- Be familiar with the role of body alignment and positioning in dance, ensuring that captured movements appear natural, expressive, and technically sound rather than awkward or distorted.
- Be aware of post-processing techniques that can enhance the drama, contrast, and texture of dance images while maintaining authenticity and avoiding excessive manipulation that misrepresents the performance.

Creative Intent:
Emotional Impact and Storytelling – Does the image convey a strong emotional connection between the dancer and the audience? Is there a clear narrative or moment of intensity that engages the viewer? Does the dancer's expression, posture, or movement evoke a specific mood or theme? How well does the photograph capture the essence of the dance style and performance?
Creativity and Artistic Vision – Does the image present a unique perspective on dance, beyond standard performance shots? Is there an innovative use of lighting, colour, or motion to enhance the artistic expression? How effectively does the photographer capture the rhythm and energy of the dance? Does the composition create a sense of dynamism, movement, or elegance?

Organization:
Composition and Visual Design – Is the dancer well-placed within the frame? Does the image feel balanced and dynamic? Do leading lines, framing, or background elements enhance or distract from the subject? Does the photograph use contrast, symmetry, or negative space effectively? How well is movement translated into a still image without losing impact?

Technical Quality:
Is the focus sharp where it needs to be, particularly on the dancer's face or key movement points? Is the motion blur intentional and well-executed, or does it detract from the clarity? Are the exposure and lighting controlled, to highlight the dancer without losing details? Is the colour grading or black and white treatment enhancing the emotion and impact of the image?

Concert Photography

Concert photography is a dynamic genre focused on capturing the energy, emotion, and atmosphere of live music performances. It involves photographing musicians, bands and performers on stage, as well as the audience and the overall concert environment. Capturing this genre requires the ability to work in challenging lighting conditions, fast-paced movement, and unpredictable moments while maintaining strong composition and visual impact.

A successful concert photograph conveys the intensity of a performance, whether through dramatic lighting, expressive gestures or crowd interaction. Photographers often work with low-light settings, stage lights, and high contrast, all of which require a strong understanding of camera settings such as high ISO, fast shutter speeds, and wide apertures to freeze motion and maintain image clarity.

Unlike studio or posed music photography, concert photography is entirely candid, requiring quick reflexes and adaptability. It can range from close-up shots of artists immersed in their performance to wide-angle views showcasing the full stage setup and audience engagement. Beyond technical skill, a great concert photographer captures the essence of a live show, translating sound and emotion into a powerful visual narrative.

Types of Concert Photography:

- *Live Performance Photography* – Captures musicians in action on stage, emphasizing energy, movement, and stage lighting.
- *Backstage and Candid Photography* – Focuses on behind-the-scenes moments, artist preparations, and raw emotions before or after performances.
- *Crowd and Atmosphere Photography* – Highlights audience reactions, crowd interactions, and the overall ambiance of the event.
- *Portraits of Musicians* – Features close-up shots of artists, often dramatic and expressive, taken before, during, or after the concert.
- *Festival Photography* – Covers multi-stage events, often requiring a mix of performance, crowd, and environmental shots to tell a broader story.
- *Black & White Concert Photography* – Uses high contrast and shadows to emphasize mood, drama, and timelessness.

Key Elements:

- *Emotion and Energy* – Capturing the passion of performers and the excitement of the audience.
- *Storytelling* – Conveying the essence of the performance, from quiet emotional moments to high-energy action shots.
- *Lighting Adaptation* – Mastering low-light conditions, stage lighting effects, and silhouettes to create dynamic images.

- *Composition and Framing* – Utilizing angles, depth, and movement to highlight musicians and the stage environment.
- *Timing and Anticipation* – Capturing peak moments such as jumps, facial expressions, and crowd engagement.
- *Colour and Mood* – Enhancing the atmosphere through stage lighting hues or black-and-white processing for a dramatic effect.

Judging Tips for Concert Photography

- Be familiar with the challenges of low-light photography, including high ISO settings, fast lenses, and noise reduction techniques to assess image quality in difficult lighting conditions.
- Be aware of the importance of timing and anticipation in capturing peak moments, such as dramatic stage movements, emotional expressions, and crowd reactions.
- Be familiar with the impact of stage lighting, including coloured lights, strobes, and backlighting, and how they affect exposure, contrast, and mood in concert photography.
- Be aware of composition techniques that enhance dynamism, such as framing performers creatively, capturing silhouettes, or using the crowd as part of the scene.
- Be open to different photographic styles, from close-up intimate portraits of musicians to wide-angle shots that capture the atmosphere and scale of the event.
- Be familiar with motion blur and shutter speed control, recognizing when intentional blur enhances the sense of movement or when sharpness is necessary for impact.
- Be aware of the role of storytelling in concert photography, evaluating how an image conveys the energy, emotion, and essence of the performance beyond just a static shot of a musician.

Creative Intent:
Emotional Impact and Storytelling – Does the image capture the energy, passion, and atmosphere of the concert? Does the photograph evoke a strong emotional response from the viewer? Is there a clear connection between the performer and the audience in the image? Does the image tell a compelling story about the concert experience? How well does the photograph convey the intensity or intimacy of the performance?

Creativity and Artistic Vision – Does the image offer a unique perspective or creative interpretation of the concert? How effectively does the photographer use lighting,

shadows, and stage effects to enhance the artistic impact? Does the composition make the most of dramatic moments, such as a musician's expression or movement? Are silhouettes, reflections, or unusual angles used creatively? Does the image stand out from typical concert photography by offering an original artistic vision?

Organization:
Composition and Visual Design – Is the subject positioned in a way that enhances the composition? Does the image effectively use leading lines, framing, or depth of field to guide the viewer's eye? Is there a good balance between the performer(s), instruments, and stage elements? Are motion blur and light trails used purposefully to enhance the dynamism of the shot? How well does the background complement or contrast with the subject without being distracting?

Technical Quality:
Is the image sharp and well-focused despite the low-light conditions? How well is the exposure managed, particularly with extreme stage lighting and shadows? Are noise and grain controlled effectively without sacrificing detail? Does the image maintain natural colours, or are dramatic stage lighting effects used purposefully? Is the post-processing appropriate and not overly manipulated to the point of looking artificial?

Event Photography

Event Photography focuses on capturing key moments at planned gatherings such as weddings, concerts, corporate events, festivals, and private celebrations. The goal is to document the atmosphere, interactions, and emotions while ensuring high-quality images that serve as lasting memories or promotional material.

Unlike street photography, which thrives on spontaneity and often explores unplanned, everyday moments in public spaces, event photography is structured and focused on a specific occasion with clear subjects, theme, and intent.

Common Subjects:

- *Weddings* – Documenting the ceremony, reception, and candid moments of the couple and their guests.
- *Corporate Events* – Capturing speakers, networking moments, award ceremonies, or team-building activities.
- *Parties & Social Gatherings* – Photographing guests interacting, dancing, enjoying food and drinks.
- *Conferences & Conventions* – Documenting the keynote speakers, workshops, and attendees.
- *Festivals & Celebrations* – Capturing performances, festivities, parades, and the crowd's reactions.

Key Elements:

- *Emotions & Interaction* – Event photos often highlight human connection, such as a joyful hug, an engaging conversation, or a meaningful glance. The ability to capture *Candid Moments* – One of the hallmarks of event photography is the ability to capture spontaneous moments that reveal emotions, interactions, and the essence of the event. This could be a candid laugh, an emotional speech, or a special interaction between guests.
- *Environmental Context* – In event photography, it's not just about the people but also about setting the scene. The surroundings, decorations, lighting, and atmosphere of the event play a significant role in telling the story.
- Capturing genuine emotions is essential.
- *Group Shots & Portraits* – Event photography often requires taking formal group photos or portraits of guests, speakers, performers, or award recipients. The photographer must have a good sense of timing and composition for these shots.
- *Lighting Challenges* – Event photographers often work with challenging lighting conditions, especially in indoor venues or low-light settings. Mastery of flash May include unique poses, settings, or post-processing effects that amplify the subject's narrative.

Judging Tips for Event Photography

- Be familiar with the principles of event photography, including how to capture key moments, the flow of the event, and the interactions between people.
- Be familiar with the timing and anticipation required to capture spontaneous moments that define the essence of an event.
- Be aware of the difference between posed and candid moments, understanding how a well-timed candid shot can tell a deeper story than a static posed image.
- Be familiar with depth of field, how it isolates subjects from the background, and how different apertures can control focus and create mood.
- Be aware of how background elements can either enhance or distract from the subject, especially in event settings where the environment plays a crucial role in the scene.
- Be open to the photographer's artistic choices in framing, lighting, and composition that contribute to the narrative and emotional impact of the event.

- Be familiar with the ethical considerations in event photography, particularly in terms of capturing genuine moments without intruding on private or sensitive situations.

Creative Intent:
Emotional Impact & Storytelling – Does the image effectively capture the mood and energy of the event? Does it convey authentic emotions and meaningful interactions between subjects? Does the photograph tell a compelling story about the event, even without context? Does it highlight key moments that define the occasion? Does the image make the viewer feel as if they were present at the event?
Creativity & Artistic Vision – Does the photographer use a unique perspective or creative framing to elevate the image? Has the photographer captured moments that go beyond typical event coverage? Does the image stand out artistically while still being true to the essence of the event? Are light, colour, and composition used artistically to enhance the mood?

Organization:
Composition & Visual Design – Is the subject well-placed within the frame to guide the viewer's focus? Does the composition effectively use leading lines, framing, or symmetry? Is there a clear sense of depth, layering, or dynamic movement within the image? Does the background support the subject, or is it distracting? Are group shots well-organized, and do they maintain a natural, engaging feel?

Technical Quality:
Is the image sharp and well-exposed, given the often-challenging lighting conditions? Has the photographer effectively handled motion, ensuring clarity in action shots? Is the depth of field used effectively to isolate the subject or show the event's context? Are colours and lighting well-balanced, avoiding overexposure or excessive noise? Is post-processing used tastefully to enhance, rather than distort, the original scene?

Monochrome

More a ‘style’ or an ‘visual approach’ than a separate photographic genre itself – content covers a broad range, with subjects ranging from landscape, portraiture, architecture, through to wildlife, nature, etc.

Some competitions are themed as ‘exclusively’ a monochrome entry, others themed on “architecture” for example but allow both colour & monochrome entries.

The strength of monochrome is that colour can, and often does, interfere with the coherence of the image. Eliminating the colour helps to keep the viewers focused on the intended message.

Monochrome can be either:

- A **Black and White** work ranging from the very dark grey (black) to the very light grey (white) with varying shades (darker) and tints (lighter) of the greyscale.
  or
- A **work toned entirely in a single colour hue** ranging from the very dark to the very light with varying shades (darker) and tints (lighter) of the single hue. (Example: Sepia toned for a retro look or Blue toned winter scenes)

On the other hand, a black and white work, modified by a partial toning or by the addition of one colour becomes a colour work (polychrome) to stand in the colour category.

> *FIAP Definition:*
> *Monochrome definition: An image is considered to be Monochrome only if it gives the impression of having no colour (i.e. contains only shades of grey which can include pure black and pure white) OR it gives the impression of being a greyscale image that has been toned in one colour across the entire image. (For example, by Sepia, red, gold, etc.) A greyscale or multi-coloured image modified or giving the impression of having been modified by partial toning, multi-toning or by the inclusion of spot colouring does not meet the definition of monochrome and shall be classified as a Colour Work.*

Black and White images, sometimes referred to as Traditional Black and White may only contain shades of grey. Toned images are not considered black and white. Note that this is sometimes a point of confusion in competition rules. If in doubt about whether toned images are acceptable, clarify with the competition coordinator before judging commences.

Judging Tips for Monochrome

- Be familiar with concepts of tonal range and contrast.
- Be familiar with the proper use of light and shadows, and how they may contribute to storytelling and emotion.
- Be familiar with compositional techniques.
- Train yourself to identify the type of emotions photographers may wish to trigger – nostalgia, mystery, intensity, etc.

Creative Intent:
Has the choice of monochrome been used effectively to create a mood, an emotion and/or help the viewer to focus in on the story.
Does the monochrome format strengthen the message or feeling of the photograph?

Organization:
Do the organizational factors support or take away from the Creative Intent?

Technical Quality:
Tonal relationships are much more important than for colour images.

Except for some high-key or low-key images generally there should be a full range of tones between pure white & pure black – it should 'sparkle' with tonal variations.

Merely 'desaturating' a colour image in post-processing is usually insufficient to produce a good monochrome – it should have attention paid to significant enhanced contrast & usually lots of 'dodging & burning' in local adjustments.

If the competition allows toned images, is the colour hue used appropriate for the subject?

Note that some competitions labeled "Black and White" or "Monochrome" allow toned images, while others only allow shades of grey. If in doubt, check the competition organizer.

Digital AV Presentations

The term Audio-Visual (AV) refers to a multimedia presentation composed of photography, video, time lapse, music, narration, text or a combination thereof.
The emphasis of AV presentations is the blending of these components into a cohesive storyline. The transition between the images should flow harmoniously with the appropriate colour or tone complementing the selected themes and images.

The AV presentation should follow a theme or tell a story and may contain a wide range of topics such as, but not limited to, abstract, altered reality, aircraft, cityscape, flowers, landscape, machinery, nature, people, plants, seascape, still-life, tools, vessels, wildlife, a memorable event, travelogue of a recent trip or holiday, interviewing an interesting individual or presenting a topic of interest.

The rules for AV competitions can vary widely.
Here are a few examples:

- Generally, show length is limited (often in the 3-to-12-minute range).
- The amount of video or time lapse used may be limited or not permitted.
- Shows may need to fit a specific theme such as photo harmony, documentary, travel, etc.
- Only the maker's images may be permitted, or a certain percentage of images/illustrations produced by others may be permitted.
- AI generated images and/or narration may or may not be permitted.

As you can see from this list, it is important that judges become familiar with the rules and presentation requirements for each competition before judging commences.

Judging Tips for AV Presentations

A good presentation requires skillful artistry, using thematic images and audio to tell a story.

Review and assign a score based on the following categories:
Audience Appeal
– the impact and the maintenance of interest in the story, plus the originality/creativity
– the relevance of the images and video clips (if used) to the story
Audio/Text
– the sound quality – volume, consistency, and appropriateness of the music/narrative/sounds/text to the story and to the image/video chips
Production –
– the overall flow of the presentation including the balance between images, video or text
– the transitions and other effects – are they seamless and do they contribute to the flow of the presentation

Photography
– the technical quality (sharpness and exposure) of the images and any video clips (when used)

Scoring:
Scoring scales vary widely but typically scoring is out of either 50 points or 100 points.

Chapter 8 - Judging Prints

Judging prints is different from judging images that are projected on a screen. Some key differences are the need to assess the photographer's choice of paper, ink, and colour management – including greyscale.
Before we discuss judging of prints, let's first look at the paper and ink choices that can have a significant impact on the final print.

Paper

Each paper has its own quality, from sharpness to ink absorption. Paper quality and type is often overlooked in print development, but it is an essential part of the judging process.

Inkjet paper technology has developed over the years and opened the door to many creative opportunities for photographers. Some papers manage colour better than others, some are bright white, and others have more fibres and texture.
The colour of paper will impact how an image looks. Paper comes in different shades of white: some are cool, others are warmer, some have glossy looks while others are matte, with no gloss at all. For example, an image with lots of metal or other reflective content will show well on metallic or high gloss paper. However, these papers show image defects, poor retouching, including masking, banding, over processing and other imperfections.

Baryta paper is a modern favourite of many photographers, however these papers have various levels of warmth. For example, a Moab baryta is warmer and it has a yellow or ivory tone whereas Hahnemuhle baryta is a whiter paper with a slightly warmer tone. These differences are evident when you see the paper side by side. The judge will then need to decide if the paper selection enhances the photo.

Matte papers work well with images where a non - reflective surface is preferred and there is less contrast evident in the image. Matte paper can be smooth or textured (such as photo rag), or have no glossy finish, and is smooth, with excellent density and sharpness. While matte papers have a smaller colour gamut (they cannot produce the same range of colours) many of the higher quality papers do produce a very acceptable colour gamut. Many of these papers are labeled 'fine art' and used in black and white exhibitions. Not all images show well on matte paper and the judge will have to decide if this choice of paper works well for the image being viewed.

Paper Density or DMAX and DMIN
Good DMAX quality paper is desirable for black and white images, as it is considered to be able to display the deepest black and where the most detail can be seen.

A paper's DMAX is measured with tools such as a spectrophotometer, that can quantify the density of a printed image. Several factors, including paper texture, ink coverage, and

ink absorption can influence this. This information is often provided by a paper manufacturer rather than something that would be measured by the user.

For high quality matte papers this is about 1.7 and for glossy, semi-gloss or pearl, baryta and others it will be 2.0 or more.

DMIN is a term less well known and is the opposite of DMAX. This is the area where we can see white detail. Most papers are between 0.04 and 0.10, and this low DMIN allows the paper to produce deep, rich blacks.

Both DMAX and DMIN denote the dynamic range of the paper and printer. A judge will need to determine if the paper selected was the best choice for the image.

Ink

There are two types of ink for modern inkjet printers. Dye-based inks are deemed to provide a better range of colours at a lower cost per image. The downside is that the ink smudges easier and fades more quickly than pigment ink because it is water soluble.
Pigment ink was deemed to be more water resistant, and it had a longer life, but did not have the colour range of dye-based inks.
Technology has improved both inks to the point where there is little difference. Some photographers, particularly those who produce images in black and white, prefer pigment ink partially because of the ink's ability to produce images in broader tonal range and smooth gradation
There are two types of black ink - photo black used on glossy paper, pearl, or baryta, and matte black used to print on matte paper.

Judging - Viewing Distance and Lighting

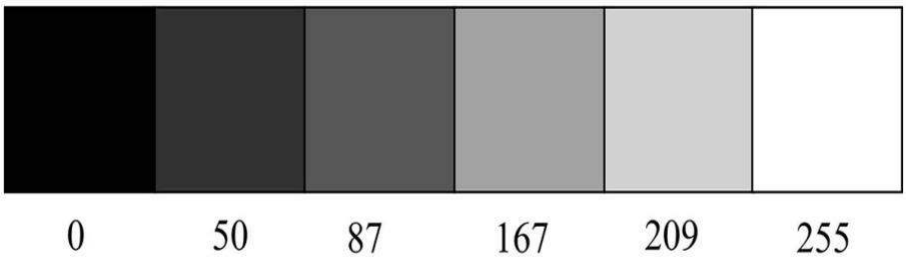
Lighting for print competitions is different from projected images as they rely on reflected light. Lights for viewing images will be about 5500 Kelvin, which is considered daylight temperatures and recommended by CAPA. The competition organizer is responsible for setting up a viewing stand with the correct lighting.

The viewing distance will vary depending on the maximum print size permitted in the competition. Many clubs allow images up to 16" x 20", so judging takes place from about 6-7 feet away. When a smaller print is presented, judges may wish to move a bit closer to the image. Check with the Competition coordinator to determine if judges are permitted to move forward to view a smaller print.

However, most competitions do not permit the judges to move closer and are required to sit at a specific distance during the viewing process to ensure consistency. Therefore, when a smaller image is presented, the entrant is running the risk of it having less of an impact because of its size.

Judging Black and White Prints

The greyscale is a tool that shows the blackest blacks at 0 and the whitest whites at 255. Blacks between 0-5 and whites between 250-255 show the least amount of detail. The graph below by Daniel Shiffman demonstrates the range. While not shown, mid grey is 128.



This tonal range delivers rich, brilliant images that allow a viewer to see the image shapes, tones, patterns, and textures captured by the photographer. When an image is well executed, edited, and printed on the right paper, the judge will see the photographer's creative intent and the wow effect.

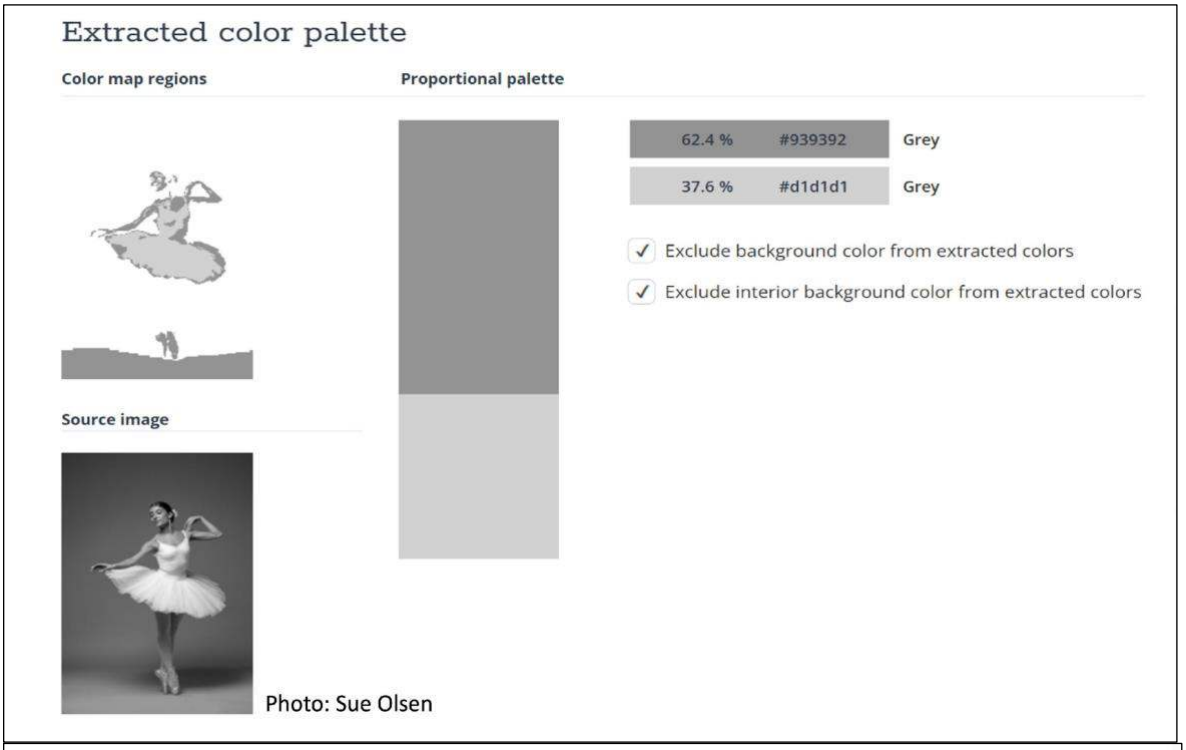
Post-production will usually include increasing contrast and the overall tonal range. It is important that the image is not over-processed adding too much contrast. Mid-tones are essential to black and white images and need to be evident in the print.

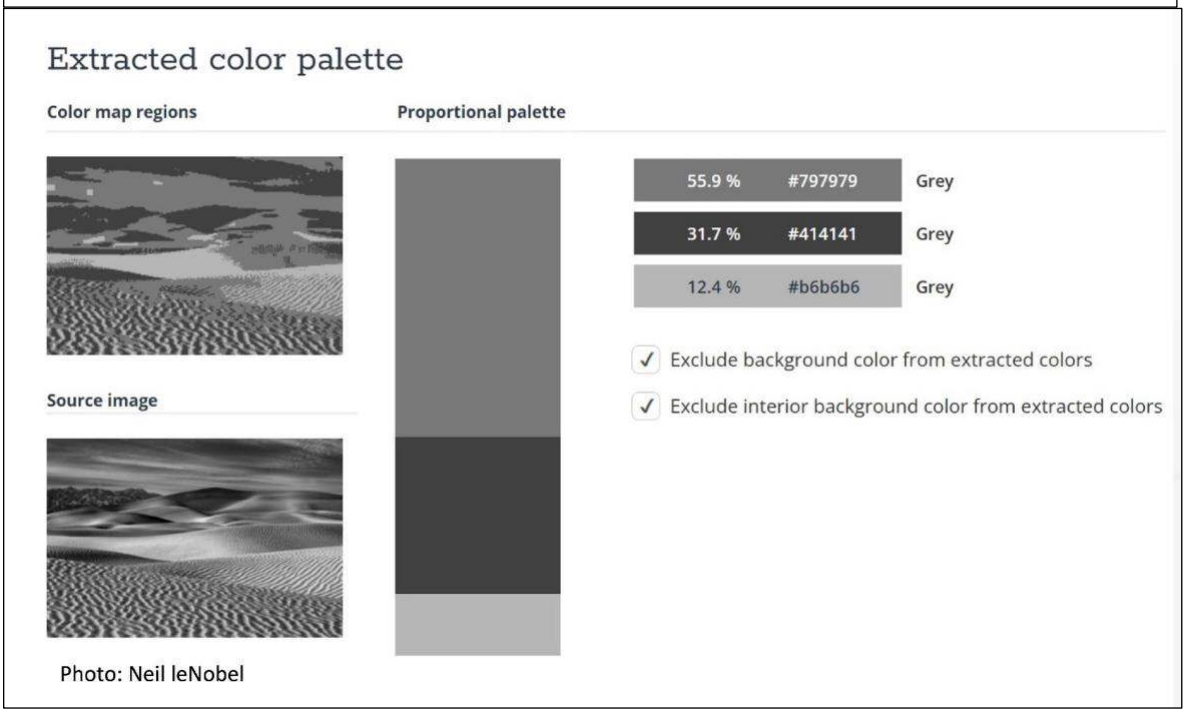
Keep in mind a photographer may have added creative elements - these must be technically accurate and creatively enhance the image. It is important not to overlook or subtract points for these deliberate effects. The judge is determining if it works with the subject.

Consider that a photographer may be inexperienced in working with black and white. Black and white photographers will often say the creator of the image needs to think in black and white.

As an example, the composition may seem off-balance because a photographer focused on strong colours prior to the black-and-white conversion. But when the image was printed in black and white, the image could appear flat, as colours with the same tone will look the same on the print. A judge could suggest the photographer use the monochrome filter in the camera, allowing the photographer to see the image in black and white prior to post-processing.

The image of the ballerina (shown below) is a good example of an image without a wide tonal range on the greyscale. However, the image of the desert shows a broader tonal range.





Both images were assessed using TinEye Colour Extraction Lab

Key points for Black and White Prints:

- Greyscale shows blackest blacks at 0 and no detail will be detected.
- Greyscale shows whitest whites at 255 and no detail will be detected.
- Midtones are essential to a black and white image, and a suggestion is to recommend that a photographer use the monochrome filter in-camera to achieve the correct tonal range.

Judging Colour Prints

Good colour management relies on a monitor calibrated to a printer, the proper printer profiles for the paper selection, and a well-executed file with the colour information. If these three elements are met, then the photographer should be rewarded with a print aligned with their intentions.

Colour prints exhibit well on several different papers, including inexpensive paper. Most print shops will use glossy or pearl paper with their own profiles. All papers have their own printer profiles, which is known as an International Colour Consortium or ICC profile. The ICC profile is a file specific to a paper type that will reliably produce accurate colour on a given paper when aligned with monitors and printers. Some photographers do not understand this step in printing, and when they receive their print, it might look different from what they envisioned, or what they saw on their own computer monitor.

As already discussed, overprocessed images, those with defects such as water spots on a lens or dirt on sensors will easily be seen on some standard papers. Banding on glossy papers will be evident on overprocessed images such as the one below.

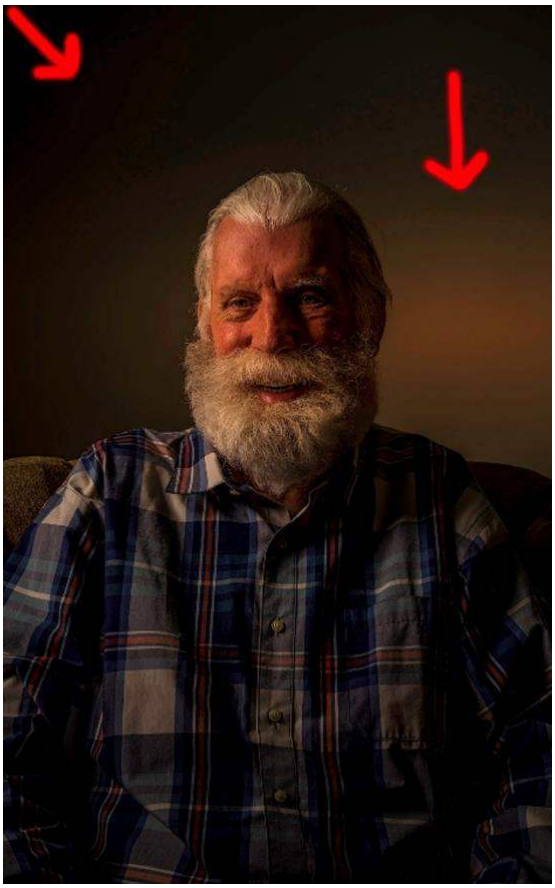


Image: Sue Olsen

The image below is well-composed and well-processed. The colours in the portrait are strong and are complemented by similar colours in the background.



Image: Urs Fricker

This image would be suitable for most papers, including a quality matte paper.

Key points for Colour Prints:

1. Colour management relies on a monitor calibrated to a printer.
2. Paper requires the proper printer profiles, and
3. The print requires a well-executed file with the correct colour profile.
4. Glossy papers will show a variety of defects in the print, and
5. Colour prints exhibit well on many different types and qualities of paper.

Printing Faults

Many mistakes are not always visible on a monitor, and technical faults, including poor editing, and sensor dust, show up on certain papers. Judges can expect the photographer to have checked for faults in their image.

These include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Mixing the wrong media setting with the paper (incorrect ICC profile);
2. Improper print size and resolution resulting in a loss of sharpness;
3. Poor quality ink or ink mismatched to a printer;
4. DMAX too low for the print – a couple of things could be causing this, the wrong paper selection, a clogged printer nozzle or dirty print head;
5. Paper faults - White specks showing through the paper – something has set on the paper, or the paper coating may have come off;
6. The monitor and printer are not calibrated, rendering the print colour off.

Judging Tips for Prints

Just as you should never zoom in on a digital image, do not get up for a 'closer' look when judging prints. View at a normal distance for the print size and specified illumination standard.

Creative Intent:
Creative intent is judged based on the theme or genre of the image.
Look for interesting subjects or treatment.

Organization:
Matting and presentation play a big part beyond the image itself – do they complement the print?
Watch for distraction caused by borders (e.g. very wide white, or non-complementary colour).

Technical Quality:
Does the printing bring out details in highlights and range of tones the subject requires?

Are creative elements technically accurate and do they creatively enhance the image?

Does the paper used complement the image's contrast?
Understand that 'glossy papers' appear to increase contrast, thus apparent sharpness, while pearl or matte paper appear to decrease these - they slightly diffuse light reflection.

Is there any evidence of over-processing resulting in banding or other defects?

Conclusion

Most Photographers do not print their own images, relying on professional printers and print labs.

Image printing is a technical skill, and it is gratifying to both the photographer and the judges to see an image skillfully representing the photographer's vision.

Regardless of whether a print has been made by the photographer or a commercial printing service, the judge must simply focus on how effective the print processing choices are at supporting the photographer's vision.

While an image that is thoughtfully printed will stand out and, in most cases, enhance the creative intent of a photographer, the judge must be cautious not to overlook the technical aspects of the image. It is important that the judge's approach is to assess the overall image, ensuring cohesion and consistency between the image, the paper and the printing.

Chapter 9 - International Exhibitions and Salons

Overview

Once an individual/group has decided to host an international exhibition/salon the Chair of that exhibition will likely seek recognition/patronage from one or more international and national photographic organizations. The Chair will seek recognition/patronage from these organizations to draw attention to their exhibition in the hope of attracting entrants that the exhibition would not otherwise reach. Individuals who see the exhibition will decide on whether or not to enter based on certain criteria, some of which are personal and some of which are universal. The universal criteria often has a lot to do with the distinctions that an individual may be trying to achieve. For this reason, individuals seeking a distinction from an international organization will be more likely to enter exhibitions that have obtained recognition/patronage from that organization. These international organizations include FIAP, PSA, IAAP, and GPU. It is common for an international exhibition to have recognition/patronage from one or more of these international organizations as well as one or more national organizations. Judging an international exhibition will require some familiarity with the rules and definitions used by each of the organizations that the Chair has obtained recognition/patronage from. Fortunately, there is agreement amongst international organizations on many of the rules and practices that must be included in the Conditions of Entry (COE) of an exhibition that must be adhered to by the participants and recognized by the judges.

When the Chair applies for recognition/patronage they must provide information about the proposed exhibition, including the judges' names, contact information and credentials. Currently, it is common to have a panel of 3 judges for international exhibitions held outside of Asia, while having 5 judges is not uncommon for international exhibitions held in Asia.

The approval process of the judges can vary depending on the international organization(s) that the Chair is seeking recognition/patronage from. For instance, if the exhibition is seeking FIAP patronage each of the three judges for each section in an on-line exhibition must be from a different country and at least one of the judges on each panel must have a FIAP Distinction. Similarly, if the exhibition is seeking PSA recognition, at least one of the judges must be from the host country, and all judges must be on the database of approved judges. If a proposed judge is not yet on the database but has a PSA Distinction, they will very likely be approved and placed on the approved list for future exhibitions. If the proposed judge has no PSA or FIAP Distinctions the Chair will need to provide a compelling reason for having them judge. The information that will help with this approval is the international exhibition history of the proposed judge.

Judge Selection and Timeframe

The Chair of an exhibition cannot obtain recognition/patronage from an international organization until the judges have been approved. Given that the final approval from an international organization can often take a month or longer, the Chair of an exhibition will likely want a quick response to a request to judge.

If you are asked to judge an international exhibition in Canada or the United States it is likely that you will be asked to judge two or three sections in the exhibition. If you are asked to judge an exhibition that is hosted outside of Canada or the United States it is likely that you will be asked to judge all of the sections. Given that an international exhibition may have 1,500 or more images per section, and you may be asked to judge 4 or 5 sections, you are being asked to make a serious time commitment.

Also, given that the judges are likely to be from different time zones, particularly if the exhibition is seeking FIAP patronage where all judges must be from different countries, consider that you may be asked to meet by zoom for the award session at a time that may not be ideal.

The Chair will have set a time frame for all the tasks that need to be performed to complete the exhibition. The standard time frame for completing all the judging is within 28 days of the closing date of the exhibition. Even though you may complete your judging much earlier than this the Chair will need to schedule an award session for each section that you have judged once all the judges have completed their judging. The award session will often take around 30 minutes depending on how many awards are offered and how many images have been disqualified given that it is common to review all of the disqualified images at the outset of the award session.

Before the Judging

Before judging the Chair will provide access to the exhibition software provider so that you may complete the first round of judging. It is likely that the Chair will also provide some instruction on how to score the images. The scoring suggestions will address what scores should be assigned to the images that you believe should be accepted into the exhibition or receive an award in the exhibition.

For example, you may be provided with this recommendation:

Violation of rules or ethics -	DQ
Non-compliance with section definition -	1
Not worthy for acceptance -	2 or 3
May be accepted -	4 or 5
Should be accepted -	6 or 7
May be awarded -	8
Definitely should be awarded -	9 or 10

Given that in most international salons the acceptance rate cannot be more than 30%, and the award rate cannot be more than 10% then using the scoring example above you should only use 6 or more for about 30% of the images and only about 10% of the images should receive a score of 9 and 10. It might be helpful if you recognize that you are being asked to not just give a number but to consider whether the image should be “in or out” of the exhibition.

Although an exhibition has many sections to choose from, the majority of international exhibitions seek entries for Open (colour), Monochrome, Nature, Photo Travel and Photojournalism. The Chair will likely provide some information on what to consider if you have been asked to judge a Nature, Photo Travel or Photojournalism section.

In addition, all sections will be defined in the COE. It is worthwhile looking at these as themes and will likely follow “star paths” for PSA distinctions, particularly if the exhibition has obtained PSA recognition, which means that each category outside of Nature, Photo Travel and Photojournalism will be classified as either “monochrome” or “colour”.

Judging

The images that you see will most certainly be in 1920 x 1080 format. Depending on your experience and location in Canada you will likely have had most of your experience in 1400 x 1050 format as most clubs in Canada as well as CAPA competitions, use this format.

While the requirements for judging an Exhibition are essentially the same as for any other competition, there can be significant differences. In some respects, exhibition judging is easier than club judging mainly because judges are not required to comment on the photographs. On the other hand, it can be demanding in terms of the need to get through thousands of photographs in a relatively short time. In this situation, impact reigns supreme and subtlety often loses out. Keeping a consistent standard from the first picture to the last can be difficult. One method to reduce any inconsistency is to review all of the images once they have been ‘scored’ by you. You may find yourself adding or subtracting a point or more from some of the images during this review.

Judging experience counts for a lot in this situation as does a clear understanding of the criteria and section definitions. Every Chair will have published these definitions in the COE that forms part of that exhibition program. Judges must be meticulous in applying the requirements of those definitions and disqualify an image that does not fit the section.

Being an exhibition judge is an awesome responsibility. Together with co-judges one is in a position to establish or maintain a standard for amateur photography either in Canada or internationally. To be invited to judge for an exhibition means that your peers respect your judgment and trust you to be scrupulously fair. Anyone with a particular bias should not judge an international exhibition or for that matter even at a club. It is too easy to dismiss some kinds of photography or styles that are unfamiliar because of inexperience on the part of the judge. Judges should affirm good international photography and not only the photographs that mimic local styles. Foreign entrants, and even local ones, can present a judge with a highly original and unconventional interpretation of a particular category that may be difficult to initially appreciate or evaluate. The best advice here is to take a second look and try to understand what the photographer's intention may have been. Bear in mind that international photography of a high standard that is exhibited is a very important positive influence on local styles and standards.

Differences

Many international organizations have agreed upon common restrictions and guidelines for many of the sections. This is the case for Open (colour), Monochrome, Nature, and Photojournalism. At the moment there are differences in the guidelines and common restrictions for the Photo Travel category. Exhibitions that have PSA recognition will require that the images entered in this category portray the real world that we live in, as it is found naturally. Images from situations specifically arranged for photography (also known as "staged" or "set-ups") cannot be entered in the Photo Travel category of exhibitions with PSA recognition. Judges should do their best to keep known set-ups out of Photo Travel. In contrast, exhibitions that have FIAP patronage are not restricted in the same way for entries in their "World in Focus" category. Given these differences it is important to spend some time focusing on the categories that you have been asked to judge.

Another important difference is that certain aspects of an image may have greater importance in an international exhibition than you may find at a club event. One example of this is that the nature definition in most international exhibitions will specify that ***"the most important part of a nature image is the nature story it tells"***. Every image that satisfies the Nature definition will tell a story, but judges will have to decide how strong and detailed the story is. Judges must look beyond the pictorial qualities of the image and consider what the image tells viewers about the subject.

The following guideline provides a **suggestion** of one way to assess the strength of nature stories when the subject in the image is a living creature. Certainly, the expression “bird on a stick” can be heard at club events as a description of a nature image with less-than-ideal qualities, but beyond this and other similar expressions you will need to assess how a nature image tells a story.

Level 1 – descriptive stories. Images in this category provide information about the subject.



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Level 2 – behaviour and life cycle stories. Images in this category depict typical behaviour of the subject or tell a story about part of the subject’s life cycle.



© David Laronde

Level 3 – same species interactions. Images in this category depict how subjects of the same species interact.



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Level 4 – different species interactions.



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Canadian Association for Photographic Art

Judges Reference Manual