Cleveland Photographic Society

How to Compete Effectively

Updated: June 16, 2017
WELCOME!

- Photo Competition provides you with objective feedback from experienced photographers which can help you learn and grow in your craft.

- Whether you’re new to Competition or a seasoned veteran, this presentation is designed to help you better understand all the ins and outs in order to make the most of this wonderful learning experience.
What We’ll be Discussing

- Where Should I Compete?
- Selecting an Image
  - Categories and Classifications
  - Competition Frequency
- Preparing Your Image
  - Rules – and Unwritten Rules
  - Mounting & Matting
  - Naming & Labeling
  - Sizing for Projection
What Else We’ll be Discussing

- Competition Nights
  - Process and Procedures
  - Judging
  - Scoring
  - Accumulated Points
  - Year-End Competition

- Your Questions
Changes for 2017-18

Creative + Pictorial:
- July 7th - Any Creative Image (+ Pictorial)
- November 17th – Creative Through Processing only (+ Pictorial)
- March 16th – Creative Through the Lens only (+ Pictorial)

Nature + Pictorial:
- January 26th – Photos taken within the State of Ohio only (+ Pictorial)
Changes for 2017-18

Accumulated Points:

- A NEW Award will be presented to the photographer who earns the most TOTAL Accumulated Points across at least three categories

Year-End Winners:

- Plaques will now be presented to all Image of the Year and Special Award Winners
Competitions in a Nutshell

- 12 Regular Competition nights will be held between July, 2017 and March, 2018
- 4 ‘B’ Competition nights will be held
- 4 Photojournalism nights will be held
Competitions in a Nutshell

- 6 Regular Competition nights will be projection
- 6 will remain print nights
- 3 of the ‘B’ Competition nights will be for Printed images
- 1 ‘B’ Competition will be for Projected images
Competitions in a Nutshell

- EVERY regular Competition will be a Pictorial competition

- In addition to Pictorial, each competition will have the Category of the night (Creative, Nature, People or Black & White)
Competitions in a Nutshell

- Examples:
  - Pictorial + Creative
  - Pictorial + Nature
  - Pictorial + People
  - Pictorial + Black & White
Competitions in a Nutshell

- Each Category will continue to have three Competition nights
- Each Category will have at least one projection night
- For 2017-18, the breakdown will be as follows:
Competitions in a Nutshell

- Creative: 2 Print & 1 Projection
- Nature: 2 Print & 1 Projection
- People: 1 Print & 2 Projection
- B&W: 1 Print & 2 Projection

- The order will be reversed in alternate years
Competitions in a Nutshell

- For each Competition night, you can enter up to 2 images in the Category of the night

- You can ALSO enter at least 1 Pictorial image

- There is a THREE image limit per competition
Competitions in a Nutshell

- You can enter any combination of images per evening as long as you only enter a maximum of 2 images in the Category of the evening

- Examples:
  - 1 Category and 2 Pictorial
  - 2 Category and 1 Pictorial
  - 3 Pictorial
Competitions in a Nutshell

- On evenings where there are a large number of entries, we may choose not to have the judges comment on every image. This is at the Category Chair’s discretion.

- You will be asked to choose the image(s) on which you’d like to hear comments - but we’ll do our best to comment on as many as possible.
Where Should I Compete:

Regular or ‘B’ Competitions?
‘B’ Competitions

‘B’ can be thought of as standing for ‘Beginner’

- These competitions allow our student and newer members a chance to compete against their peers while obtaining objective and constructive feedback on their work.
- Members can choose to compete in EITHER the regular or the ‘B’ competitions, but not both.
- Let’s help you decide where you belong:
Differences and Similarities

- Regular Competitions have multiple categories (Nature, People, etc.)

- ‘B’ Competitions have a single (open) category to allow participants to concentrate on preparing and presenting their best images
Differences and Similarities

- Regular Competitions use outside judges
- ‘B’ Competitions use CPS member judges to enhance the learning experience
Differences and Similarities

- Regular Competitions sometimes limit the number of images upon which judges comment.
- Judges comment on ALL images submitted for ‘B’ Competitions
Similarities

- All competition entrants:
  - Receive helpful and objective critiques
  - Receive scores and awards
  - Receive Accumulated Points (explained later in this presentation)
  - Can participate in Year-End Competition
Who is Eligible for ‘B’ Competition?

- In General:
  - Current School of Photography students
  - ‘Newer’ CPS members
  - Longer-term members who have not previously competed or who have competed minimally
Who is NOT Eligible

- Seasoned photographers, regardless of their student status or length of membership
- Current members who have been successful in regular competitions
Eligibility - Continued

- At the end of each competition year, some ‘B’ competitors will be moved to regular competitions based on their scores and awards in the ‘B’ competitions.

- Members are also free to move themselves to regular competitions at the end of any competition year.
Eligibility - Continued

- No one can participate in both regular competitions AND ‘B’ competitions in the same year
- Any movement between competition groups MUST take place between competition years
- **EXCEPT:** Those who receive a perfect score in ‘B’ competition will be immediately moved to regular competition
Selecting An Image for Competition
Competition Categories

- **Black & White** – any monochromatic image
  - ALL image subjects fit – open category
  - True Black & White or single-toned (ex: sepia) images qualify
  - ANY spot color disqualifies an image from this category
Competition Categories

- **Creative** – anything beyond the ordinary:
  - Filters and/or Specialty Lenses
  - Technique – multiple exposures, etc.
  - Photoshop Creations
  - Substantial Mergers
  - Obvious HDR
Competition Categories

- **Nature – Keeping to the ‘Truth’ of What You Saw**
  - No ‘hand of man / evidence of man’ except scientific banding on wild animals
  - Domesticated flowers or animals ARE permitted
  - Naturally-occurring dark and black backgrounds are permitted (including those induced by flash)
Competition Categories

- Nature – continued
  - Minimal Photoshop:
    - Levels, Brightness/Contrast, slight Hue/Saturation, slight Dodging/Burning, Sharpening, etc. are permitted
    - Heavy adjustments of any kind (cloning, layer-masking, obvious HDR) are prohibited
Competition Categories

- **People** – Any Photo Where the Primary Subject is a Person (actual or implied)
  - People
  - People Parts
  - Evidence of People (footprints, snow angels, etc.)
  - No distinction between Candid, Portrait or Studio images, although judges may hold studio images to a higher standard
Competition Categories

- **Pictorial – Wide Open Category**
  - ALL images fit – even those from other categories

- **NOTE: ALL ‘B’ Competitions use the Pictorial category**
Preparing Your Image for Competition
Competition Frequency

- Held throughout each club year
- Print Competitions held 6 times per year across Categories
- Projection Competitions are held 6 times per year across Categories
- ‘B’ Competitions are held 4 times each year (3 Print and 1 Projection)
Image Rules

- Limit of 3 images per competition

- Any combination of the Evening’s Category and Pictorial – BUT:

- Maximum of two for the Evening’s Category (i.e. Nature)
Image Rules

Print Competitions:

- Minimum size 8 x 10 (80 square inches)
- Maximum size 11 x 17 (~187 square inches)
- “Standard” size = 11 x 14, but don’t limit yourself creatively
- Sizes refer to the print itself, not including the mat
“Unwritten” Image Rules

- DON’T imprint your name or watermark on any competition image
- DON’T enter images with the date printed in the lower right corner (or anywhere!)
- DON’T ‘soak’ your winners by entering a slightly altered version again - EVER
Printing

- Commercial or Self-Printed
- Glossy, Matte or Luster finish

- Where you print is up to you
- The paper and finish you choose should fit the image subject and can have a positive or negative impact on your score.
Mounting and Matting Options

- **Mounting** = Image attached to a backing board
  - Less expensive
  - Picture more subject to scratching during handling
Mounting and Matting Options

- **Matting** = Image attached from behind to a mat board with a cut-out
  - Slightly more expensive
  - Protects from scratching
  - **NOTE:** Mats reduce visible image size by ¼ inch on both dimensions
Mounting and Matting Options

- Mounting board to protect back and present stiffened image
  
  PLUS

- Mat board in front to protect against scratching and present a professional appearance

- This is the recommended format
Mounting and Matting

- No size restrictions on mats, but retain proportions
- Mat color is important:
  - Competition matting uses either white or black mats
  - Judges WILL comment unfavorably on colored mats
Naming

- Image names are not read during the judging round and will not impact your score.
- Keep names simple and SHORT.
- Nature Titles should be as specific as possible – don’t go for cute.
- NEVER use ‘Untitled’.
Naming for Nature

- **Good:**
  - “Swan”

- **Better:**
  - “Mute Swan”

- **NEVER:**
  - “Pretty Birdy”
Naming for Nature

- Flora and Fauna:
  - Latin name NOT required
  - Try to be as accurate as possible
    - (Trillium is better than ‘white flower’)
  - Get it right!
    - (a Peony is not a Dahlia)
Labels

- **Best choice:**
  - Download the label blank from the Competitions page of the CPS website onto Avery blank # 5164

- 2\(^{nd}\) Best choice:
  - Download from web to plain paper

- Last choice:
  - Get label the night of competition
Labels

- Fill out completely:
  - Your name
  - Image name – short, PLEASE
  - Circle the Category (Nature, B & W, etc.)
- Date
- Please don’t cover the bottom portion of the label with tape (we need to write there)
Cleveland Photographic Society Competition Entry Form

Date:  
Name:

Title:

CIRCLE ONE CATEGORY:

Pictorial  B&W  Creative

Nature  People

Special:  ‘B’ Competition  Photojournalism

Entry Number  Score  Place
Labels

Labels go in the UPPER LEFT corner as you look at the back – this tells us the orientation of the image when we place it on the easel.

If you re-use a mounting board, either cross off an old label or place the new one on top of it.
Final Thoughts on Presentation

- Be mindful of your image:
- Never mount or mat your image in a way that could damage another print!
- Poorly mounted images CAN AND WILL BE disqualified
Let’s Take a Break!
Preparing for Projection Competitions

- Upload your images to the club website by the stated deadline
- Upload link and instructions will be furnished by email to current members and students only
Preparing for Projection Competitions (cont.)

- The upload deadline is typically 9:00 pm on Wednesday, 10 days before the competition.

- When you upload, you’ll be asked which image you’d like the judges to comment upon. On busy evenings, judges’ comments per photographer may be limited (except ‘B’ competitions)
Preparing for Projection Competitions

- **Sizing:**
  - You do **NOT** need to size your images if you don’t know how or don’t want to
  - **BUT** – sizing your own images can reduce upload time and ensure your image projects as you want it to
Preparing for Projection Competitions

- **Sizing:**
  - 1024 pixels wide by 768 pixels high fills the screen
  - Anything more than 72 dpi resolution is wasted and takes longer to upload
Preparing for Projection Competitions

❖ Sizing:

❖ Photoshop and Elements can be used (Image > Resize)

❖ Many other editing programs can also be used to resize your image
Preparing for Projection Competitions

- Sizing for PC Users Only (Vista and above)
  - Type [http://www.bricelam.net/ImageResizer/](http://www.bricelam.net/ImageResizer/) into your web browser.
  - Download and Run the application (it’s a very small file size)
Preparing for Projection Competitions

Sizing for PC Users Only (continued):

- To Resize an image (or multiple images), right click once with your mouse.

- On the dropdown menu that appears, among the choices will be ‘Resize Pictures’.
Preparing for Projection Competitions

- Sizing for PC Users Only (continued):
  - Choose ‘Large’ or enter 1024x768
  - A reduced size copy of your image will be added to the same folder as the original with the word (large) added to the title
NEVER choose ‘Replace the Original’!
Final Thoughts on Projection Competition

- Judges score your images on their own computers prior to the competition night
- Landscape format fills the screen, but plenty of Portrait style images win
Competition Night

(Print Competitions Only)
Competition Night

- Arrive EARLY
- We arrive by 7:00, usually earlier
- ABSOLUTE deadline to enter is 7:30
- Arrive with your print ready to go
Competition Night

- If you need a label, they will be available on the Preparation table (but we recommend you print your labels in advance)

- Sequence:
  - Prep
  - Review by Chair
  - Submit
Judging
Judging

- 3 outside judges for objectivity (CPS members judge ‘B’ competitions)
- Scores: 5 to 9 points per judge
- Best possible score = 27
Judging

- 3 criteria (up to 3 points each per judge):
  - Technique
  - Composition
  - Impact
Things Judges Look For:

- Straight horizons
- ‘Rule’ of thirds
- Leading lines
- No distractions
- Be mindful of areas that are lighter than your subject that draw the eye
Judging

- Judges can be WRONG!
- Remember that they have seconds to review your image and must come up with something to say – it’s not easy!
- Take judges’ comments constructively but NOT as gospel
Scoring

- There is no set score to win
- Highest score of the evening is first, next highest is second, etc.
- Ties are NOT broken
- Winners go to the right side of the clubroom wall
Scoring

- 30% of images entered can win (30 images = 9 winners)
- Depending on scoring and number of images entered, all places may not always be awarded
Scoring

- On nights with lots of entries, multiple scores may be awarded Honorable Mention.

- Any image that doesn’t win can be entered ONE MORE TIME in any applicable classification (doesn’t have to be the same as the original classification).
Accumulated Points

❖ Points are awarded by Place:
❖ 1st = 5 points
❖ 2nd = 4 points
❖ 3rd = 3 points
❖ Honorable Mention = 2 points
Accumulated Points

- Points are tracked and updated, standings are posted on the web.
- At year-end, 1st place receives a medal, 2nd and 3rd receive ribbons.
- Ties are not broken.
- All the more reason to attend the Awards Banquet!
End-of-Year Competition

- Any image entered in regular competition can be entered in that year’s Year-End Competition

- It DID NOT have to win. (Repeat – DID NOT have to win)
End-of-Year Competition

- Up to three images per category can be entered in Year-End
- Use the same label and image name – no changes
End-of-Year Competition

- Images MUST be entered in the same category as originally entered
- If a non-winning image was entered again in a different category, it may be entered in either category for year-end but not a new one
End-of-Year Competition

- 3 judges are used for year-end
- Competition is closed
- No judges’ comments
- Ties are broken
End-of-Year Competition

- Winners are announced at the Awards Banquet (another reason to attend!)

- There are ALWAYS surprises – don’t hesitate to enter a photo YOU like
End-of-Year Competition Winners

- In each Category, one image is designated Photo of the Year and will hang on the Gathering Room wall for the entire club year.
End-of-Year Competition Winners

- Places are also awarded for First, Second and Third place in each category

- Winning photos are displayed at the Banquet and winners are presented ribbons
End-of-Year Competition

Winners

- In addition, seven Special Awards are presented in honor of individuals who have been important in CPS history.
- These winning images are also displayed on the Gathering Room wall for the entire year.
End-of-Year Competition Winners

- Special Awards are in specific categories – read the plaque in the club room to learn about them
End-of-Year Competition Winners

- Nothing is necessary on your part to become eligible for a Special Award except the Ruth Morrison Award:

- Write ‘Authentic’ on your entry label for consideration (see the Nature Rules for details)
In addition to our regular award categories, we also have a year-end-only category for Photojournalism.

Here’s how it works:
End-of-Year Competition
Photojournalism

- Enter your image at any Photojournalism night during the club year (these nights remain casual and un-judged)

- Be sure to log your image on that evening’s sign-in sheet

- Submit up to three qualifying Photojournalism images at Year-End
End-of-Year Competition
Photojournalism

- Images will be judged and winners selected for Third, Second and First Place ribbons
- One image will be designated as the Photojournalism Photo of the Year and hang in the Gathering Room with other Year-End winners!
You are now a seasoned competitor!

Enter often and take advantage of this wonderful learning experience
QUESTIONS???
Thank You!!!!