

Competition Guidelines & Rules

WESTCHESTER PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY, INC. (Revised September 2024)

PURPOSE: The purpose of our competitions is to provide a friendly competitive environment where members can publicly share their work and receive an objective and constructive evaluation, from qualified judges. Most importantly, it is the instructive feedback that helps us develop as photographers. Scores are rendered, in the spirit of healthy competition, and may serve as an objective measure of achievement and/or progress.

1.0 ELIGIBILITY

Any member in good standing (current dues and fees paid) may enter a competition.

2.0 CATEGORIES

Competition is conducted in the following categories some with sublevels:

Competition Categories	Entries Permitted	B	A	Salon
Black & White Prints * <i>*Suspended</i>	2		B, A, Salon combined	
Color Prints <i>*Suspended</i>	2		B, A, Salon combined	
B&W Digital	2		B, A, Salon combined	
Color Digital	2	x	x	x
Open Mind Prints <i>*Suspended</i>	2		B, A, Salon combined	
Open Mind Digital	2		B, A, Salon combined	
Theme Assignment Digital	2		B, A, Salon combined	

Note: Color Digital, Black & White and Open Mind categories are globally referred to as “regular” competitions. Scoring is cumulative, working towards a final total score (High Point of the Year “HPY”). Each of these categories has an End of Year (EoY) competition.

Theme Assignment (TA) is a hybrid category. Members may compete in any TA competition independent of the others, or participate in all of the TAs, thereby working towards a total cumulative (HPY) score. There is no EoY competition for Theme Assignment.

3.0 TRADITIONAL vs. OPEN MIND

WPS has created a distinction between two basic competitions categories, they are the “Traditional” and the “Open Mind” categories. Competitions within the Traditional category include *Color Digital, Black & White Digital, Color Prints and Black & White Prints*. *Open Mind* is considered a non-traditional photographic art form. Below are descriptions that are meant to

help differentiate the two categories.

3.1 TRADITIONAL IMAGE CATEGORIES (Color / Black & White)

Traditional images have a fundamentally naturalistic appearance. This means that images do not have the appearance of being strongly manipulated, with any type of digital software. Nor should images have been subjected to in camera techniques that would result in a visual sense of altered reality.

Historically, cropping, adjusting tone, color, saturation, sharpening, for example, have been and continue to be acceptable so long as the "photographic truth" *(Addendum 3.1) of the scene has been maintained. In addition to these adjustments, other techniques such as blurring produced by depth of field (selective focus), panning with a moving subject, by slow shutter speeds with a moving subject, "vignetting" where the edges of an image are lightened or darkened, to a greater or lesser degree, "torn/frayed" or "altered edges" around the image are acceptable.

In the spirit of club etiquette (sportsmanship), makers are encouraged not to overwork images, in the Traditional categories. Elements may be replaced or altered so long as they appear to fit in naturally. Images that push the boundaries of manipulation and violate the sense of "photographic truth" would be more appropriately placed in the Open Mind category, where image-makers are granted greater liberties to use digital resources, techniques and manipulations to achieve their non-traditional vision.

3.2 TECHNIQUES NOT ALLOWED in the TRADITIONAL CATEGORIES

1. Use of techniques such as solarization, changing the color of part of an image to an "unnatural" color (such as an emerald sky, blue faces, cyan apples, etc.,).
2. Adding texture to an image, including but not limited to burlap, canvas, stone, bricks, glass, etc.
3. Images made to look like drawings, sketches, paintings, etc. or the use of posterization, Pointillism, outlined edges, etc.
4. Images in which the size relationships are altered (a cat pouncing on lower Manhattan, etc).
5. The use of collage, "double exposure" effects, duplicates of a single object in an image, surrealistic images that may make sense visually but are impossible in the real world.

Images that depart from a naturalistic look are considered more appropriate to be placed in the Open Mind category.

IMAGES ENTERED IN THE TRADITIONAL CATEGORIES THAT ARE VIEWED AS NOT BEING IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE SPECIFICATIONS OF THOSE CATEGORIES MAY BE CHALLENGED, BY THE MEMBERSHIP. IF THE CHALLENGE IS UPHOLD THEN THE IMAGE WILL BE DISQUALIFIED AND BE REASSIGNED A SCORE OF 70, REGARDLESS OF THE JUDGE'S SCORE. NO MAKEUP, FOR THAT IMAGE, WILL BE PERMITTED.

There is a gray area, such as with abstract images. An image may be straight out of the camera but captures only a small section of a structure or pattern, etc. In such a case, the final image may bear little resemblance with the original subject. This is an abstract. It is acceptable for the maker to submit such

abstract images into either Traditional or Open Mind categories.

** If you have a question about such image, you may consult with the Competition Chair before the competition. If approved, such images are not subject to challenge. If you want an image reviewed, send into the Competition Chair at least 72hrs before the competition submission date.*

3.3 COLOR DIGITAL IMAGES

Only color images may be submitted in this category. Images are required to maintain an overall “traditional” appearance and must display two or more colors, discernable to the naked eye. Images with a monochromatic tone must be placed in the Black & White category.

3.4 BLACK & WHITE DIGITAL IMAGES

Only B&W or monochromatic images may be submitted in this category. Images are required to maintain an overall “traditional” appearance and must present as either shades of gray or may be toned, with a single (monochromatic) color. No split-toning or multi-toned images, of any type, are permitted. Nether bringing back or painting in an accent color is permitted.

Artistic styles are generally admissible. High/Low Key images or B&W infrared imagery is permitted, so long as they maintain a general traditional appearance. (See Addendum 3.4a for Guidelines on Infrared photography)

4.0 OPEN MIND IMAGES

The term “Open Mind” is used by WPS to define images that have been creatively altered to assume an unreal appearance. This altered appearance may be subtle, in the form of pictorial changes, or may take on a bizarre appearance. Members are given considerable latitude in applying digital manipulations such as filters, or blending layers/multiple images together, or through the application of distinctive colorization, etc. An altered appearance may also be achieved by artistic “in-camera” techniques such as ICM, multiple exposures, zooming or similar lens/camera movement or any number of photographic techniques that result in the image having a non-traditional appearance. Open Mind is meant to be an open category allowing for liberal artistic expression. ANY type of stylistic presentation is allowed in this category.

It should be clear that, even with Open Mind images, the base of any image must start with a photograph or scan taken by the maker. If the member chooses to use someone else’s artwork, as the basis for their image, then the maker needs to understand that the expected bar of transformation will be set high. The changes made must be noticeably significant, to the casual observer.

See Guidelines #s 11.1 and 12.0 for clarification.

5.0 THEME ASSIGNMENT COMPETITIONS

Theme Assignments are an integral aspect of our competitions. Here the emphasis will be on creating images that are considered representative of the identified theme. (See Theme Assignments in the Category Description, on our web site) images used in Theme Assignment competitions may assume a traditional or non-traditional appearance. Presentation style is left up to the maker. All styles are acceptable.

****Special note:** Images used for any Theme Assignment, in a given year, are separate from submissions in any of the regular competition categories: Color Digital, B&W or Open Mind. An image entered into a TA competition may be used in any regular competition, in the same year. It may be reworked to fit the requirements of that category. Irrespective of TA competitions, all images submitted in any regular competition category will become subject to the one time per annum and related rules, described in 12.0a.*

6.0 USE OF DIGITAL SOFTWARE IN PROCESSING IMAGES

Members are permitted to utilize software, in their workflow, in order to achieve a more impactful and pleasing image, as per their intentions. This may include the digital alteration/removal of some elements and/or the addition of elements. These added elements may come from the maker's own stock or may be provided third party vendors. This may include pre-packaged skies or other AI creations, etc.

When processing images for the Traditional categories, the member is instructed to keep in mind that he/she is expected to maintain the "photographic truth" of the original capture. For example, a sky replacement that complements the scene and fits in "as if" it was part of the original capture would meet the standard of maintaining that principle.

Images where a sky, or other inserted element, appears distorted, discontinuous, out of place, or not a normal look, and would be viewed, by the average viewer, as being in violation of the principle of maintaining the "photographic truth", should not be submitted in any Traditional category. Such images would be better suited to be entered in our Open Mind category.

It is suggested that the maker approaches the use/incorporation of software enhancements with the philosophy that software alone does not make the image. Rather it is a tool that can be used to complement and enhance the existing strengths of the image.

6.1 USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

WPS has taken the position that the use of any generative artificial intelligence software is not allowed in any of our competition categories. There are many such programs: Midjourney, Adobe Firefly, DALL-E-2, to name just a few. The perspective is that the use of such programs violates the fundamental principal that all entries should be of the maker's creation. Therefore, images, in whole or in part, that are generated by a computer are automatically disqualified from all competitions.

The gray area to the use of such technologies is that software may be used, on a limited basis, to clone out distracting/unwanted elements of the original image, without going so far as to violate the "photographic truth" of the image. Similarly, makers are allowed to swap skies, with either their own replacement or a pre-made sky so long as the maker is the one to place, scale, shift as opposed to AI based commands generating and/or adjusting the appearance of the sky or any other significant element of the image.

7.0 PHOTOGRAPHING ARCHITECTURE

As it pertains to Traditional competitions, WPS makes a distinction between architecture (as an art form) and "visual art" (painting, sculpture, photography, cinematography, videography etc.). In all competitions, a member is permitted to use any photograph, of their own making, that represents architecture in any form. This can include buildings or structures, new or old, single buildings, groups, or cities, etc. Images may depict either the exterior or interior of any structure.

7.1 PHOTOGRAPING VISUAL ART (Artwork of Others)

WPS does not prohibit but does place some conditions on the use of visual artwork, as the

primary element, in your image. The primary message is that the photographer should not walk up to something that is considered a work of art (is in a gallery, park, identified as artwork – identified artist, title, write-up or dedication, etc) and take what is essentially a record shot – no matter how well executed. See Addendum 7.0 and 7.1 for expanded explanations.

The maker is required to do something creative that will constitute an apparent attempt to transform the image. In the traditional categories, this may be achieved by taking the shot in such a manner that the capture is not a straightforward “record shot” or “representational image” but something that is unique and represents the maker’s individualistic interpretation. This expectation will pertain to art sculptures of any medium (stone, metal, glass, plastic, etc.), painting (any form of paint on any firm surface, including graffiti on walls, trees or other surfaces), and the use of any projected image or any subject matter that another person has created as their expression of art. Pictures of people are exempt. Again, this is not to be viewed as a prohibition against photographing works of art but as an expectation that the maker will show evident signs of attempting to render it in their own uniquely creative way. You are expected to demonstrate creative intent in transforming someone else’s art into your own.

Members are allowed to utilize/incorporate works of visual art, as the primary element, in Open Mind. It is necessary that the starting point is an original capture by the maker. In addition, if the main element is someone else's artwork, then it is necessary for the maker to alter the image, either in the capture phase or post-processing phase, so that the end product appears significantly different from the original. The maker is expected to show evident creative intent in their attempt to transform someone else's work of art, into their own unique creation. These expectations will also apply to images entered in Theme Assignment completions.

*See Addendum 7.1, for examples.

8.0 USE OF IMAGES CAPTURED AT WORKSHOPS

Images taken in the "Photo Opts" area of the NECCC conference, at Amherst, MA are not allowed. In this venue, the NECCC organizers have created idealized set-ups. Everything is pre-arranged. The primary subject matter and supporting props are provided, lighting is provided with members being instructed to utilize specific exposure settings, and there is no real opportunity to change your PoV. This is considered a complete setup; all the photographer has to do is plug in and take their three shots. There is very little opportunity for the photographers to substantially alter the capture, in order to make the image a work of their own creative interpretation.

There may be other conference-sponsored and/or private workshops where all the key elements pre-arranged. Images taken in such settings are similarly prohibited. In short, images taken in pre-arranged settings where all, or the majority, of critical elements are provided and pre-determined are not allowed to be submitted, in our competitions. The maker is on the honor system to determine if he/she has had sufficient influence on the critical variables to justify that the capture is truly their unique and independent capture.

*See Addendum 8.0 for further clarification.

9.0 ASSIGNMENT OF LEVEL FOR THE COLOR DIGITAL CATEGORY

The Color Digital category is divided into three levels: B–Beginner, A-Advanced and Salon. As with the other competition categories, a member is eligible to compete in Color Digital, at any time, with the following understanding. The default placement for a new member will be in the B-Beginner group. If this placement is acceptable to the member, then no action is required.

However, if the member feels his/her work is reflective of a higher initial ranking then that member will be required to submit 20 color images to the review committee. This committee is comprised of three seasoned WPS members. They will make recommendations to the Competition Chair for placement in the level that is currently seen as most appropriate for that competitor. The new competitor wanting to request advance placement should (1) email the competition chair who will provide any additional instructions and give a heads up to the placement committee members; (2) upon instruction the member will submit the requisite images by email to: dennist@wpsphoto.com and webmaster@wpsphoto.org, using the heading "Color Digital Assignment." Images should be submitted at least a month before the date of the first competition to ensure that the competitor will be eligible to participate at the start of the year, or by the next competition. Members may initiate participation in the Color Digital category at any point in the year, providing they have completed the process described above.

* It is important to act in a timely manner as once the competition season starts then no changes in level placement will be allowed. Any such considerations will be deferred to the following season.

*Note: A new member may not be sure of how their current skill level matches with other

members of this club. You are strongly encouraged to review images in the competition catalog which follows the scores for each posted competition. New members may submit 10-20 images for informal assessment and feedback. Evaluation for advance placement will require the process described above with the requisite 20 images. If you have any additional questions, you are encouraged to reach out to the competition chair.

10.0 REASSIGNMENT OF COMPETITION LEVEL FOR COLOR DIGITAL COMPETITION

Annually, the Selection Committee will review the performance of competitors, in the Color Digital category. Individuals who the Selection Committee evaluates as meeting the general criteria for promotion will be presented to the Board for consideration. Upon approval, by the Board, the individual will be informed of this opportunity. The competitor has a one-time “right of refusal” and may choose to remain in their current level.

Criteria for “consideration for promotion” from a lower level to a higher one, e.g., from B to A, or A to Salon will be based upon consistent and exceptional performance in the Color Digital category. Over successive years, the competitor has maintained a high ranking i.e., 1st, 2nd. Individuals who the Selection Committee feel have displayed exceptional performance, over several years, albeit not being in the top ranking may also be put forth for consideration. Ranking within a given category will be considered relative to the total number of competitors, in said group.

11.0 NUMBER OF ENTRIES

Each member may submit two images into each category per competition. This limit pertains to all categories, Traditional, Open Mind and Theme Assignment competitions. In the Color Digital category, makers are allowed to submit images only in their assigned level.

A competitor may submit a maximum of four (4) images, in a single competition event providing she/he has that many outstanding make-ups. Make-ups cannot be entered in advance. As no make-ups are allowed in Theme Assignment competitions, here, the maximum number of entries, per competition will always be two.

11.1 QUALIFYING IMAGES

All images must have been captured with a camera or digitally scanned and must have been made by the competitor. Images in all categories must be viewed as representative of the maker’s vision and not rely on the reproduction of someone else’s artwork. Blended images may appear in a submitted entry, as in a diptych, triptych, or Open-Mind creation.

Digitally captured, manipulated, and enhanced images are allowed in all categories. *Again, all images must be of human creation, not AI generated.* Metadata is to be left attached to all images submitted.

12.0 IMAGES CONSIDERED NOT ACCEPTABLE AND MAY BE CHALLENGED

- a. Images submitted in one category may not be submitted in another category (i.e., Color Digital to B&W, or Color Digital / B& W to Open Mind, in the same competition year.
- b. No image, close facsimile, or sequential images may be resubmitted into the same category or any other category or level, in the same competition year.
(See Addendum 12.0 b)

The singular exception, to this rule, will be for the one-time reuse of images submitted in a Theme Assignment competition. See 5.0 Theme Assignments

- c. Photographs of prints, digital images or unaltered art, created by other people.

- d. Photographs of images from clip art, copyrighted or not copyrighted, and flat art in books, magazines and other printed material, other than being incorporated into an Open Mind image, of the maker's creation.
- e. Images that are unaltered captures from commercial CDs, the Internet or any other Telecommunication medium.
- f. The use of layered textures is not allowed in any Traditional category but may be incorporated into Open Mind imagery and Theme Assignment competitions.
- g. Objects (sculptures), or visual presentation (paintings, photographs, cinema, graffiti,) that would broadly fall under the category of "visual art" may not be used unless the artwork has been transformed into a unique creative work by the maker. (See Addendum: Use /Incorporation of visual/fine art.)
- h. Images taken at any workshop and/or photo opportunity event where all/the majority of essential elements have been pre-determined. (See 8.0, and Addendum 8.0)
- i. Images must be submitted in their appropriate categories. Only color images may be submitted in Color Digital and only images that are either B&W (shades of gray) or monochromatic may be entered in Black and White Digital. The same restrictions will apply to any similar Print competitions.
- j. Prints that are manipulations or handcrafted distortions of the photographic material and do not contain a photographic image (e.g., picture scratched on emulsion coating, picture painted on printing with developer).
**See 3.2 Techniques Not Allowed in Traditional Category for additional clarification*

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13.0 CHALLENGING AN IMAGE

During a competition, members are to maintain respectful decorum and are not to shout out challenges or make other comments. If a member wants to challenge, an image presented in the current competition, then that member needs to email the Competition Chair within 48 hrs. after the competition. It will be most helpful for the challenger to do their best to clearly identify the image in question and the reason a challenge is being submitted. An example of an ideal challenge might be: "Image # 14. Blue flower in level A, image over worked – should be in OM".

The exception to this 48-hr. challenge timeline will be if the challenge pertains to the reuse of an image and/or submission of a close facsimile, or sequential image. For this situation, a challenge can be submitted within 72 hrs of the images being posted, in the WPS competition catalogue.

* The catalog, for each competition is located on the WPS website. Under the Top Banner look for "What We Do", go down to "Scores" and across to "Catalog", for the appropriate competition.

****Important note: The name of the challenger will remain known, only to the Competition Chair.***

Upon receipt of a challenge, the Chairperson will determine who the photographer was and discuss the nature of the challenge with the submitting member. If a violation is

acknowledged, then the Chairperson can independently determine the disposition of the circumstance. If the submitting maker disagrees with the challenge, then the Chairperson shall assemble a group of 3 members to review the nature of the challenge and reference the relevant rule. The submitting member will be required to provide the Competition Chair/Committee, an unaltered copy of the original file(s). Non-compliance with this request is likely to result in the reviewers being inclined to uphold the challenge.

The chairperson will inform the submitting member of the determination of the reviewers. If the member does not agree with this finding, then he/she may submit an appeal, via email, to the Chairperson, within 48 hrs of being informed. An appeal review will be conducted with the full Board. That determination will be final.

The Competition Chair will inform the membership of the challenge, the image in question, and the nature of the challenge and the decision, emphasizing the educational aspects of the process.

*If a challenge is determined to be valid, the score originally received in the competition will be reduced to 60, no makeup, for this image, will be allowed.

Challenges regarding the use/incorporation or visual art will be handled slightly differently. The challenge and review process will be as described. Because the criteria for what constitutes "art", a "record shot" and "significant transformation" may be highly subjective the maker's first upheld challenge will only result in a warning coupled with an explanation for why the review committee felt the working of the image did not meet the expected bar of creative alteration/interpretation. If a second challenge (separate image) is issued to the same maker, in the same competition year, and that challenge is upheld then that image will be disqualified and rescored, as described above.

The membership is asked to appreciate that all photographers starting out take "record shots" of whatever they see, including artwork. This is how we acquire the skills of composition, exposure, perspective and image content. Only with the acquisition of a basic skill set does the neophyte photographer begin to see and capture in more creative ways. With this understanding, newer members should be granted more latitude with an emphasis on education and support.

13.1 COMPETITION CHAIR INTERSESSION

On the whole, the competition chair acts as a moderator and facilitator and does not intercede and/or initiate a challenge. The exception to this position will be related to the identification of images that have the appearance of being generated by AI. The competition chair has a greater ability to critically view a submitted image. If the excessive use of AI is perceived then the competition chair can/will initiate the challenge procedure.

14.0 PRINTING AND PROCESSING (* *Print competitions have been suspended*)

Prints (black-and-white or color) and digital projector images may be edited, printed and processed by the photographer or by a commercial laboratory.

14.1 PRINT SIZE

Prints (excluding mat or mounting board) must be **no smaller than 8"x 10"**. Prints and/or mount boards must be no larger than 20" vertically and 48" horizontally.

14.2 PRINT PREPARATION

Prints must be mounted securely, (matting is optional) and marked for entry with WPS Competition labels, as described in our "Print-Marking Guide". They must not be framed. The maker's name and title of the print must not be visible on the front of a

print. (Competition labels may be downloaded from the WPS website.)

14.3 PRINT TITLES

Competitors must assign the competition date, title, or a description to each print, as prescribed in the marking guides, in order to help us keep track of all works. However, no titles or descriptions may be disclosed to the judge, either orally or visually during the competition. Titles, descriptions and the maker's name should be covered if they appear on the front of the print. Submissions to the Digital Projector category must comply with the filename format described in the *Guidelines for Digital Projector Submissions*.

15.0 PRINT COMPETITIONWPS (*Currently Print Competitions have been suspended*)

To enter prints in a competition, please first submit jpeg versions of your prints into the appropriate contest on the Photo Contest Pro Website (link is below) by 12:00 a.m. Midnight on the Sunday night before the competition. The jpegs are to be prepared the same, as they would be for digital contests. Prints are then to be submitted by 7:30 p.m. on the actual night of the print competition. Submissions must be made to the appropriate category.

16.0 SUBMISSION TO DIGITAL COMPETITIONS

To enter pictures in a digital competition, please submit jpeg files into the appropriate contest on the PhotoContestPro Website (link is below). All entries must be uploaded by the deadlines for digital entries as posted on the WPS Competition Schedule. Unless otherwise noted, the deadlines are currently 12 o'clock Sunday night, prior to the Friday of the competition.

Submissions to the Digital category must comply with the pixel dimensions described in the Guidelines for Digital Submissions found on the WPS website at <http://wpsphoto.org/DigitalProjectorEntriesGuide1.htm> Metadata is to be left attached to all submitted images.

17.0 MISPLACED ENTRIES

It is the competitor's responsibility to submit their entries into the correct categories and /or levels for competition. Any entry submitted into the wrong category or level will not be counted towards the members total category scores, even if the judge has scored it. The entry may be re-submitted into a future competition, as a make-up, if the competitor has any make-ups still available and if there are remaining competitions scheduled. Please refer to Rule 19.0 for submitting make-ups.

18.0 WITHDRAWAL

A member who withdraws an accepted entry will forfeit eligibility to resubmit or make-up that month's missed competition in that category. This includes failure to submit an actual print after the digital version of the picture has been submitted. (See rule 19.0)

19.0 MISSED COMPETITIONS AND MAKE-UPS

For any competition / category each competitor will be granted only two make-up images, per category, per year. It is suggested that no more than one make-up may be submitted in any competition. Make-ups cannot be submitted in advance.

19.1 EXCESSIVE SUBMISSIONS

If a member submits more the allotted number of images, for a competition, either by submitting an excessive number of make-ups or and excessive number of images when no additional make-ups are allowed, then the highest score(s) will be discounted, until the allotted number of images has been reached.

19.2 COMPETITION CANCELATION

If a competition is canceled because of the weather or other adverse circumstances, the following competition will maintain its original number. There will be no make-ups for the canceled competition.

20.0 SECOND SUBMISSION

Regular competition images may be resubmitted in Special Competitions. Similarly, Special Competition images may be resubmitted in Regular Competitions. This is separate from the

Theme Assignment category and may include a special event competition, membership critiques or any other sharing activity.

21.0 JUDGING

Except for special circumstances, judges will be secured from outside of the club. Judges and membership will have the benefit of a run-through, for each competition / category. A partial run-through is not allowed.

22.0 SCORING AND AWARDS

All submissions will be evaluated by the judge and given a point score ranging from 70 through 100.

Competitors with the highest scores, for each competition, will receive rankings of First, Second, Third or Honorable Mention. There will be no bonus points. The judge will not resolve ties. Members are responsible for noting errors in recording scores as they are entered into the computer. Call out if an erroneous score is entered. Once the score is entered, goes unchallenged it becomes the only record of the score. Competition results will be reported on the WPS website after each competition. Any discrepancies with the scores should be reported, by email, as soon as possible to the Competition Chair, for resolution.

23.0 NUMBER OF AWARDS

The number of awards is based on the number of entries in a particular category or competition

1. If four or more people have entered two images each, the full complement of awards will be given.
2. If only three people have entered two images each in a competition, the awards will be first, second, and third.
3. Three (3) makers minimum per category are required for the competition to be judged. If a category is canceled, due to lack of submissions, those images may be resubmitted in a future competition.

24.0 DECORUM

During competition, members and visitors must refrain from making audible comments or identifying the maker of the work being evaluated, except to correct a problem. No smoking, food, or beverage is permitted in the competition room. Cell phones and other digital devices must be turned off or set to "vibrate." Any member holding a device that emits light must seat themselves in the rear of the room.

24.1 MEMBER / JUDGE INTERACTIONS

Because the reputation of our club is critical, it is necessary to safeguard against member's behavior that might offend or alienate a judge and/or jeopardize the integrity of the competition process. To that end, WPS has adopted a "No Contact, No Comment & No Excuse" policy. This means that members are prohibited from attempting to communicate with judges, in regards to any competition related issues, particularly their judging. This includes emails, face time, messenger, phone call or any other method of communication. This also includes any postings on all forms of Social Media. If a judge notifies the Competition Chair of such actions and/or the Completion Chair becomes aware of such behavior the member will be summarily suspended, from participating in competitions, for a period of six months. After that time, the Competition Chair will review the incident with the Board to determine any further actions.

25.0 HANDLING AND RETURN OF PRINTS

The Competition Committee will exercise care in handling the prints entrusted to them. However, WPS assumes no responsibility for any damage to the submitted materials. Prints will normally be returned promptly unless temporarily held with the maker's permission by WPS for exhibition, or other competition needs.

26.0 HIGH-POINT-OF-YEAR (HPY) WINNERS

Monthly scores accumulate through the entire competition year. These points are totaled, for the year, in each category/competition. The high scorers for the year are awarded First, Second, Third, or Honorable Mention prizes, in each of the specific competitions or categories. The winners are published in the WPS newsletter and awards, for these winners, will be presented at the Annual Dinner.

27.0 END-OF-YEAR (EoY) COMPETITION

This competition is held after completion of the monthly competitions. Entries in the EoY competitions are limited to unaltered entries that were submitted in any of the monthly "regular" competitions, for that year. Prints must retain the original scored monthly competition label. These entries need not have been winners. Entries from Theme Assignment Competitions alone are not eligible for the EOY competition. They must have also been submitted into one of the three other regular monthly competition categories, for that year.

To be eligible to submit images into any EoY category, a competitor must have submitted **and received scores for at least 6 entries** in that category, during the regular competition year. Competitors may submit up to three images, of their choosing, in each of the EoY categories, providing they have met the criteria described above.

** Example: To submit images into the Color Digital EoY competition the competitor must have had 6 or more scored entries, in Color Digital, during the current year. Any of those entries, scored in Color Digital, are eligible for the Color EoY competition. This qualification rule also applies to Black & White and the Open Mind categories.*

No retouching or any other changes may be made to an image, digital or print, for the EOY competition. The judge(s) will not critique the entries. Awards will be given for First, Second, Third place, and Honorable Mention, in each category. Winners will be published in the WPS Newsletter, and these awards will be distributed at the Annual Dinner.

28.0 SPECIAL COMPETITIONS

Rules for essay, sequence, assignment, handcrafted, video, motion picture, audiovisual, and other Special Competitions will be announced prior to the competition. Points or any other accolades from these Special Competitions will not be added to those from the monthly competitions.

29.0 ANNUAL DINNER

The Annual Dinner is usually held in November, at which time awards are presented for High Points of the Year and End-Of-Year Competitions. Special awards may also be presented.

30.0 ASSISTANCE

Competitions are a part of our club activities. They function on the basis of membership participation both in terms of submitting images and being willing to provide assistance and support. Members are encouraged to volunteer to contribute to the running of our competitions.

To this end, competitors are asked to observe and learn our procedures so they might assist and make our competitions more enjoyable for all.

31.0 CLEANUP

We are required to clean up after ourselves and leave the room in a clean and orderly condition.

32.0 DECISIONS

In all disputes involving competition, the decision of the Competition Chair or his/her delegate is final.

33.0 ENJOY, LEARN and DEVELOP!

ADDENDUM CLARIFICATION OF GUIDELINES AND RULES

- 3.1 a** For our purposes the term “photographic truth” will be used to convey an understanding that the main elements, in the original capture, have not been altered to such a degree that if the average observer were to see the original capture and final image side-by-side that person would have an appreciation for the maintenance of continuity between the two. This would contrast with the observer remarking that the final image displayed significant departures, from the original, as to evoke a sense of discontinuity.
- 3.1 b** For example, imagine that the original capture was a scenic consisting of a pond with ducks in the water. If the maker were to dodge and burn, crop or do other “standard” adjustments, the observer would still perceive it as an image of a pond with ducks.

If the maker were to use content-aware-fill, or similar tools, to eliminate a couple of ducks or cloned a few ducks to fill a visual gap, in the open water of the pond, the viewer would still fundamentally see a scenic with ducks in a pond. There would be no inherent violation of the “photographic truth” of the image.

However, if the maker were to remove most or all of the ducks and put something else in their place, then the viewer would be likely to remark that the maker had transformed the image significantly to evoke a perception of discontinuity between the original and final images. That could be considered a violation of the “photographic truth” of the image.

3.4a Infrared Photography

Images taken or processed as Infrared may be entered in any category, providing they meet the admission criteria for said category. Images processed to be clearly Black and White or monochromatic may be entered in that category. An Infrared image which has been processed as a colored image may be entered into the Color category, so long as the image maintains a “traditional appearance.” If the color image looks altered or

surreal then it would more appropriate to place it in the Open Mind category. Infrared images, processed in any manner, may be entered into the Theme Assignment category, assuming the maker feels the image complements the assigned theme.

At the end of section 7.0

*ADD to end of 7.0 * See Addendum 7.0 for explanation of the use of visual/fine art as the primary element

*See Addendum 7.0a Use of visual/fine art in competition images – examples

7.0 Use of Visual/Fine Art as the Primary Element The Principles of the “99 Others” and “Creative Intent”

Members are asked to appreciate that each photographer sees the world in their own unique way. The purpose of our Guidelines is to create an agreed upon framework within which we can try to fundamentally be on the same page as to what types of images are appropriate, in what category, and what types of images and/or processing are not acceptable, within the parameters of specific categories.

When it comes to the incorporation of “artwork,” the onus is on the maker to present a final image that is viewed as unique and reflective of a creative process, not just an artful presentation of the subject.

Remember, by choosing to use someone else’s artwork, as the primary element of your image, you are assuming the additional task of transforming it from someone else’s work of art into your own. *Taking an “artist” “record shot” of a work of art is not sufficient.* You need to change it, during your capture or in post-processing, in such a manner and to such a degree that the majority of your fellow members will acknowledge an acceptable degree of success in your creative intent.

There are two basic pathways for incorporating artwork, so your final product will be in accordance with our Guidelines. The first is during the capture phase and the second is during the post-processing phase. The creative capture approach may be more applicable for images in the traditional categories, while the post-processing approach may be more likely utilized for Open Mind images. In both scenarios, the maker is given considerable latitude but not unbridled liberty. The objective is to apply “creative intent” to transform your image from a “record shot,” that is just representational, into something that reflects your individual interpretation of the subject matter, in this case someone else’s artwork. In both instances, you may consider applying the “99 Others” concept.

When capturing the image, imagine that you are 1 of 100 people standing at that spot, at that moment. If you were to show your image to the 99 others, a week or so later, how would they respond to the question, “Did I capture the artwork in a unique and interpretative manner?” If the majority of the 99 would fundamentally respond, “It looks the way I remember it,” or any other comment that would be reflective that the image bears a strong resemblance to the original, then you may not have met the bar of a creative and individually interpretative capture. It still looks like an “artful” representational “record shot.”

In the post-processing approach, the maker has considerable latitude in utilizing software to transform the look of their image, from the original capture into something that is unique and

divergent from the starting image. The member is encouraged to again apply the 99 others concept. "If I were to show the 99 others my original and my finished images, side-by-side, would the majority remark that there is a strong resemblance, or would the consensus be that there is a significant creative departure from the starting point?" Remarks such as, "That's really different" or "You really changed it," etc. can be seen as confirming you have been successful. Statements like, "It looks similar" or "It looks nice but it's easily recognizable" may prompt you to rethink submitting the image.

When evaluating images for compliance to the Guidelines one is asked to reflect if the image displays notable signs of "creative intent." That is, regardless of how effective or not the maker has been with the final product, does it appear that the maker was trying to do something creative by either (1) attempting to capture the artwork in a notably unique manner as to record it as something other than a "record shot" or (2) employed artistic post-processing techniques in order to transform the shot into something that conveys maker's unique imprint on the final product. Given that it takes time and practice to develop a creative eye, evaluators may give greater latitude with less experienced members.

*Note: The requirement of altering and/or transforming an image, from the original, only pertains when the maker has decided to use works of art as a major component of their image.

7.1 Use of visual/fine art in competition images-Examples

These photographic examples are presented as a general guideline for interpreting WPS competitions rules regarding the incorporation and/or restrictions on the use of visual art, for images presented in "Traditional" categories, (i.e., Color Digital and Black & White).

This is not meant to be an exhaustive compendium of all possible scenarios. Competitors are encouraged to extrapolate based on the descriptions provided.

Consider the following question, as a guiding principle. "Have I substantially altered the presentation, of this work of art, in a manner that the majority of viewers would consider my image as transformative and unique, not just an artistic record shot?" If the answer is no or maybe not, then you might consider not submitting it in competition.

Premise for example images:

You travel to Washington, DC. As twilight comes on, you find yourself at the Lincoln Memorial. There you take the following images with the intention of entering them into competition. The question, is which one(s) will be considered acceptable entries and which one(s) will not be allowed and why?

1. The first image is taken from the bottom steps. You position yourself so the exterior features, on the steps, create a leading line to The Memorial. You can clearly see David C. French's creation (statue) as a distinctive feature in your photograph.

Acceptable: The image you have taken is basically a presentation of the building, The Memorial. This makes the photo an architectural shot more than a representation of the statue per se. Therefore, there is no conflict regarding the use of artwork.

2. The second image is taken from the top of the stairs. You focus on centering Abe's head in between the columns. This image emphasizes his face as the fluted Doric

columns frame it.

Acceptable: While this image does emphasize the head of the statue, the maker has altered the straightforward view, of the statue, by adding the columns in the composition. It doesn't matter that this image has been taken many times before. The maker has imprinted their own artistic interpretation by incorporating a secondary element, the columns.

3. The third image is taken inside the main chamber, where you endeavor to capture a wide-angle perspective of the entire 19 ft. tall statue. Considerable effort is taken to create a non-distorted perspective, the lighting renders the statue as three-dimensional, and sharpness is maintained throughout the image.

Unacceptable: Despite the effort to render this statue accurately, with pleasing lighting and sharp detail, the maker has not done anything substantive to alter the presentation or convey some transformative creative interpretation. It is a representational presentation.

Consider: If you were one of 100 people standing at that spot, at that time, and then showed your image to them a week later, if the majority of those viewers would basically remark, "That is how I remember it". Then you have not transformed that work of art in a sufficiently unique manner. It is fundamentally a record shot and therefore would not be considered acceptable.

4. The fourth image is taken from a similar perspective, in the chamber, as #3, but this time, while you keep the statue as the primary subject (prominent in the frame) you incorporate people in your image.

Acceptable: Just like in #2, the maker has added a second element (people), which transforms the image from a straightforward (representational) shot of the statue to a interior scenic, of your creation.

Consider: The image may be boring and uncreative, or it may be a touching story-telling image or something totally unique. It doesn't matter. The addition of a secondary element, of significance, transforms the image, via your artistic vision.

5. For the fifth image, you get creative by stepping over the rope barrier, climb up into Abe's lap where you take a picture just of Abe's head. It's taken at an oblique angle; the head fills the frame, and you consider it to be a unique point-of-view. You incorporate The Memorial lights in such a manner as to create a complementary background.

Gray area: The acceptability of this image would be dependent on the viewer's reaction. Does this oblique PoV truly constitute a transformative interpretation of the statue? If the 99 others would respond with "Ok it an odd angle but it's still just a picture of Abe's head" then it could be challenged and potentially disqualified.

Consider: While an interesting background may contribute to the artistic presentation, of any image, it may or may not be considered sufficient to transform the presentation, of the statue, from a record shot to a truly unique creation.

6. For the sixth image, you take out your zoom lens and capture an image that is just a select section of Abe's head. The image is lit in a Chiaroscuro manner as to accentuate texture and contour. The final product gives the appearance of a mottled stone abstract. With or without prior orienting information, you feel, it would be difficult, for the viewer, to discern the source of the image.

Likely Acceptable but possibly Light Gray: In this scenario the maker has not added something to transform the image but has subtracted an element, context. If successful, then the image presents mostly as an abstract that has little or no reference line to the statue. However, if most naïve viewers would remark, "Oh, that's a close-up of Abe's beard and wrinkled face, from the Lincoln Memorial" then it would be argued that the maker fell short in transforming the capture sufficiently to make it their own unique interpretation. If that was the general reaction, then the image could be challengeable.

7. The seventh image is created when you get back home. You pull up image #3, the wide-angle perspective shot and decide you want to change it some. You flip the image from the original color capture to Black & White. Have you transformed the image sufficiently as to substantiate the claim that this is a unique and substantial artistic interpretation?

Gray area and probably not acceptable, for this case: Yes, turning the original color capture into a B&W presentation is an artistic interpretation. However, if the majority of viewers would argue that there already was a strong monochromatic base presentation to the statue then changing it to B&W does not constitute a significant artistic transformation. It would very much be dependent on the final presentation.

Consider: Ask yourself, will the average viewer think, "Wow, that's something different", "I never looked at it that way" or "Ok, that's different but not that unique"? If the response is the former, then you have transformed the shot. If it is the latter, you haven't.

In contrast, if you were to photograph a Dale Chihuly glass sculpture that relies heavily on color, for its' impact, and then turned that image into B&W you would arguably have a better chance of meeting criteria for executing a significant artistic transformation. Those 99 others only saw the sculpture in color, so your B&W interpretation, is substantially different from what they saw.

There may also be certain structures that are so iconic that everyone will photograph them, no matter what. The Statue of Liberty or the Eiffel Tower would be examples. That being said, there would still be an expectation that the final image would convey some effort, on the maker's part, to imprint it with their thumbprint of creativity.

As photographers, we scan the world for interesting subject matter. This may include observational curiosities that are related to art or things artistic. This is not to say that there should be an absolute prohibition on photographing a work of art or anything artistic but rather that there be an expectation that the maker will have made some noticeable effort to render the subject in a manner that changes it from a straight-forward record shot into their unique interpretation.

The examples above are presented as general guidelines. Your fellow competitors

will make the final determination. They will be the ones to assess if they feel you are presenting a fundamentally unaltered record shot or have successfully transformed that work of art, via your unique artistic interpretation.

Addendum 7.2 What is “Art” and when is it not art?

Art is among the more interesting words in the English language. It is described in myriad ways in sometimes seemingly contradictory thoughts.

What people seem to agree upon is that “Art” is a human endeavor, that it is an original product of creative thought and/or imagination. Visual fine arts, like painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography, are viewed as an aesthetic with no functional purpose. Rather, art is intentionally created to express particular thoughts and/or emotions and to evoke similar processes in the viewer.

Art is in the mind of the beholder. Evidentially, there is some hard-to-understand collective-based transformation that takes places where works, by a given artist, are considered “Trash” one day and then are relabeled as “works of art” the next. Andy Warhol’s work is a 20th century exemplar.

The main intent of the WPS restriction on taking a record shot of other people’s artwork leans mostly on identified works of art. If pondering options for photographing something that looks like art, let common sense prevail. If an object is in a museum, gallery, exhibition, sculpture garden or anywhere works of art are displayed, assume it’s a piece of art. If a work that is ascribed to an artist, has a title, or some type of commemorative plaque, assume it’s a piece of artwork.

To make this discussion more confusing, consider that not everything that looks artistic is to be considered a real work of art. There are numerous architectural ornaments that are beautiful but will not be identified as an official work of art. There are many talented artisans who create works that are very professional, attractive and interesting, and that motivate people to purchase the piece. They are “artistic” and skill-based works, but not considered true “works of art.”

Artistic works tend to be attractive by nature and thus invite us to take pictures of them. But we are instructed to be creative with our captures and not just render a record shot. If you feel that confused about what constitutes a “work of art” and/or what one has to do in order to “transform” it into your own unique creation, then find something else to shoot. There is abundant subject matter to photograph without going anywhere near pieces of art.

Don’t get carried away misinterpreting everything that has some artistic presentation as constituting a true work of art. If you are critically appraising a submitted image and wondering if it’s a work of art, and if so did the maker make a sufficient effort to meld it into their own, then consider the comments made above. Ask yourself, What was the context? Would the object portrayed be referred to as a true “work of art” or is it the product of a skilled artisan or other person with talent, but not someone who would collectively or by some authority, be recognized as an artist. Trying to definitively define what is art can be like attempting to stand erect of shifting sand. And, a critical element in the evaluation process is, did the maker display sufficient intent/effort in trying to transform the capture, to make it their own creation? Intentionality supersedes execution.

Addendum 7.3 What is a “Record Shot”?

A record shot, sometimes derogatorily referred to as a “snapshot,” is the intent is to capture a straightforward photographic record of the place or object, without a noticeable effort to infuse the content with your own artistic interpretation.

For travel photography a record shot fundamentally conveys: *This is where I went. This is what I saw. This is what happened or what I experienced.* For a person or object, it’s: *This is who/what I*

saw. This is what the person/object looked like. This is what the person was doing. This was the object in some state. This was the general context the picture was captured in.

If you find yourself somewhere surrounded by others holding up their cameras, or more likely smart phones, all taking a shot of the same thing, from the same angle, etc., then you might concede that all of you are taking a record shot.

Despite any disparaging comments people might make, taking record shots is no capital crime. This is the mechanism that all photographers employ to learn the fundamental building blocks of their craft. Take photographs of what you like. Just exercise a bit of reflection when considering a capture of a work of art.

Addendum 8.0 Use of Images Captured at Workshops

Photographers attend workshops, of all sorts. These pre-arranged circumstances / venues, etc., provide photographers with the opportunity to capture images sometimes under optimal circumstances. Such workshops may be conducted indoors, with artificial lighting or outdoors, with or without supplemental lighting. WPS limits but does not fully prohibit the use of images taken in these settings.

NECCC “Photo Ops” is an example where all major elements are pre-determined and therefore prohibited. There are other, less constrictive setups at NECCC and other workshops where while some of the essential elements (venue, lighting, subject matter, supporting props, etc) may similarly be provided. However, here the photographer does have significant influence on the use of or combined employment of elements as to provide an opportunity of creating their own interpretation of the moment.

WPS competitors are asked to be on the honor system when it comes to submitting images from such arranged opportunities. Makers are requested to ask themselves if they had a significant role in creating the capture. Were they able to adjust lighting, arrange subject matter/props, direct the model or have the handler to pose the animal, and/or have the freedom to alter their PoV as to substantially shape the overall look of the image? The more the maker has had an opportunity in determining the action/impact of one or more of the critical elements, then the more it will be assumed that she/he was able to imprint the image with his/her own creative style. If you have had no or minimal influence on manipulating these variables, then we ask that you defer from entering those images into any of our competitions.

Addendum 12.0 b Submission of “close facsimile and/or sequential images

The purpose of WPS competitions is to provide a friendly competitive environment where individuals can publically share their work and receive constructive criticism. The goal is to learn from judge’s comments so we might improve our craft. Therefore, the resubmission of the same image and/or the submission of a close facsimile or image(s) in close temporal sequence is seen as being in conflict with that objective and our club ethos. Submitting images that are significantly similar may garnish high scores but does not help the member in attaining feedback from submitting a variety of images. Therefore, such behavior is strongly discouraged, may be challenged and possibly subject to disqualification.

The concept of “close facsimile” is somewhat subjective. The following guidelines have been established to assist the competitor in deciding if a second image, taken in sequence, is appropriate for submission. Is the subject(s) between two images the same? Is there an apparent similarity/overlap in the composition of the images. Will the average viewer see a strong similarity in the action or behavior (human/animal) seen in both images? Does it appear that the maker fired off a burst or rapid sequence of images, as noted in the metadata? Just because one is able to capture multiple images in rapid succession it does not mean that you

should submit multiples where the compositional/ action changes are minimal. The expectation is that the photographer should select the best from the sequence and hold the others for another competition season. Therefore, where there is a strong similarity between images, a time limit of five (5) minutes between captures will be used as criteria for delineating separate sequential captures. Images that are viewed as either a close facsimile and or taken within five minutes of one another may be challenged and subject to possible disqualification.