

Sun City Palm Desert Camera Club Competition Category Guidelines Updated 12/21/2021

For each Camera Club competition a set of categories will be selected by the Competition Committee. A category specifies the subject, and possibly the photographic technique, that must be incorporated in the entries into that category. Before submitting an image, be sure the image fits the category or it will be disqualified.

Categories:

Standard categories are: Open, Travel, Photojournalism, Landscape, Macro, Nature and Field Trip. Occasionally, a competition category will have other requirements, such as monochrome, creative, portrait, still life, a specific technique or a specific subject. Criteria for these additional requirements will be announced prior to the Competition.

Changes to the Original Image (Manipulation):

1. Manipulation is any technique that results in alteration of reality and/or removes and/or inserts an object that was not in the original scene. Manipulation is allowed in the following standard categories:
 - Open
 - Landscape
 - Macro
 - Field Trip
2. Manipulation, except by cropping, is not permitted in the following categories:
 - Travel
 - Photojournalism
 - Nature

The only other allowable modifications in these categories are those that enable an accurate reproduction of the captured scene. These include:

- Exposure (globally and selectively), color balance, contrast, dodging and burning, sharpening (globally and selectively), noise reduction, and straightening
- Editing that removes small elements that were not part of the original scene (such as spots caused by dust on a digital sensor or scratches on a scanned image)
- Adjustments that compensate for lens deficiencies such as distortion, chromatic aberration, and lens flare
- Adjustments that compensate for camera limitations:
 - Exposure blending of images with the same content
 - Focus stacking of multiple exposures of the same subject
 - Stitching (joining multiple images with overlapping fields of view that are taken consecutively)
- Reversing (flipping the image horizontally).

Other manipulations will be cause for disqualification.

Any image may be submitted in monochrome, even if not a requirement of the category. Monochrome images are judged according to the entered category criteria with the following additional guidelines:

- Monochrome images must contain only shades of grey, which can include pure black and pure white, or be fully-toned in one color across the entire image. Fully-toned means that a single tint is applied across the entire image, such as sepia, or any single color. Partial toning, multi-toning, or the inclusion of spot coloring does not meet the definition of Monochrome.
- Good monochrome images generally incorporate a strong range of values from the darkest to almost white.

Category Descriptions:

Open

Any image, regardless of whether it could fall into another competition category, may be entered into the Open category. There are no rules in this category – anything goes. Since there are no subject rules*, the photographer should strive to meet the “IMPACT” and “WOW” criteria described in the “Judging and Scoring Criteria for Camera Club Competitions” document (also known as “pictorial quality”).

Entrants are encouraged to be creative and to explore altered reality with respect to the subject matter, the colors, image reversal, adding or deleting elements, distortion or anything else the artist cares to incorporate into the final image.

*Note: An image of another person’s art work is not permitted unless the art work is not the main subject of the photographer’s photo or if the art work is shown in some unique way.

Travel

Photos should show scenes that describe the habitat, activities or culture of people throughout the world. This category is intended to convey a sense of place and/or culture. There are no limitations on subject matter. Consider the "story" behind the image. Images are judged on pictorial quality and the requirements of the category.

Photojournalism

Photojournalism shall consist of pictures with informative content and emotional impact, including human interest, documentary, and spot news. Photographs which misrepresent the truth, such as manipulation to alter the subject matter, or situations which are set up for the purpose of photography, will be disqualified. The journalistic value of the photograph shall be considered over pictorial quality.

Landscape

Landscape images should feature the natural environment and tell a story. A person or other object that enhances the story is sometimes helpful. A broken fence in a field, a person walking down a path in the woods, etc. Images are judged on pictorial quality and the requirements of the category.

Macro

The club's definition of Macro photography is where the subject of the photograph is very small in real life, or is a small detail of a larger object. The final image is normally larger than life-size. The most important features of a macro image are sharpness and composition.

Nature

Nature photography depicts observations from 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 as to its honest presentation.

Wildlife is defined as one or more organisms living free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat. Land and marine botanical subjects in the wild, including fungi and algae, are eligible, as are animal carcasses. Insects, marine subjects and botanical subjects taken in the field are also suitable wildlife subjects.

Domesticated animals such as dogs, cats, or other pets, as well as animals commonly found on farms or other food producers are not considered wildlife.

Landscapes and similar scenes that have not been "made or modified by humans" are acceptable Nature subjects. This includes landscapes, rock structures and landforms resulting from natural weathering and erosion, seascapes, icebergs, waves, rivers, lakes, natural waterfalls, volcanoes, lava, boiling mud pools and geysers, minerals and naturally formed crystals. The real challenge will be capturing such images in interesting and unusual ways.

Photographs of artificially produced hybrid animals or plants, such as roses and tulips, mounted specimens, or obviously set arrangements are ineligible.

Human elements shall not be present, except where those human elements enhance the nature story. The presence of scientific bands, scientific tags or radio collars on wild animals is permissible.

The photo should have high technical quality, while the storytelling value of the photograph shall be considered over its pictorial quality. Any color or exposure adjustments to the image must appear natural.

Field Trip

Each entry into this category must have been taken during one of the SCPDCC field trips that has taken place between July 1 and June 30 of the current club year. The purpose of this category is to encourage competition entrants to attend SCPDCC field trips. Photos will be judged using the same criteria as those in the Open category.