

AMBER CAMERA CLUB

Affiliated to the Photographic Society of South Africa (PSSA)

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COMPETITION CATEGORIES AND JUDGING CRITERIA

Rules

At the Amber Camera Club, we use the same competition rules as the Photographic Society for Southern Africa:

- All elements of the original image must be completed by the photographer.
- No images or parts of images may be downloaded from the internet.
- All actions in reaching the final presentation must be made by the photographer with the exclusion of film processing, un-manipulated commercial scanning and printing.
- Manipulation is not allowed in Nature, Wildlife and Photo Journalism including Sports Photography.
- Members are also reminded that when entering salons each image must have a unique name i.e. the name of an image must not be changed at any time as acceptances are based on the image name.

Manipulation

Manipulation shall constitute any or all of the following modifications to the original image:

- Adding an element to the image that was not contained in the original capture;
- Removing an element from the image that was contained in the original capture;
- Moving or repositioning an element of the image that was contained in the original capture.

In the categories Nature, Wildlife and Photo Journalism, including Sports Photography, manipulation is not allowed. In the Open category there are no restrictions whatsoever in the way authors choose to post process an image.

Post Capture Process

The interpretation of what the “truth” of an image constitutes (and when post-capture processing is considered “manipulation”) is subjective by its very nature, and likely to be interpreted differently by different people. While it is obvious that there is no clear answer as to what is “right” and what is “wrong”, these are some guidelines as to what is considered acceptable for entry into specific sections or categories of photography.

The following is not considered manipulation so is permissible when entering competitions across all categories:

- Cropping
- Correction of lens distortion, chromatic aberrations, purple fringing, lens vignette and vertical/horizontal perspective adjustments

- Removal of dust spots or scratch marks from sensor or scanned images
- Adjustments to exposure and contrast
- The blending of different exposures of the same scene to broaden the dynamic range e.g. High Dynamic Range. However, HDR is not allowed in Photo Journalism
- Adjustments of colour balance
- Application of colour saturation
- Selective Dodging and Burning
- Monochrome, but restricted to black and white
- Reduction of noise
- Sharpening
- Focus stacking to widen the depth of field, especially in Macro photography. However, this is not allowed in Photo Journalism or Street Photography.
- In the case of Nature and Wildlife, HDR and focus stacking will not be considered as manipulation and may therefore be used *provided* that the end result is a faithful representation of the original scene.

Basically, anything which could normally be done by the camera is allowed to be adjusted with editing software, after the picture has been taken.

Monochrome versus Colour

- Monochrome is a black and white image. A black and white work fitting from the very dark grey (black) to the very clear grey (white) is a monochrome work with the various shades of grey.
- A black and white work toned entirely in a single colour will remain a monochrome work able to stand in the black and white category.
- 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.

Category Definitions

Category	Colour or Mono	Manipulation
Set Subject	Usually either but may be specified	Will be specified
Nature/Wildlife	Colour or Mono	None
PJ, Sport and Travel	Colour or Mono	None
Creative (Abstract/Altered Reality/Visual Art)	Colour or Mono	Encouraged
Open	Colour or Mono	Yes
Scapes	Colour or Mono	Yes, except Nature

Set Subject

The set subject is a monthly theme or topic set by the committee to stretch and challenge members. Past examples include subjects such as “*Silhouettes*”, “*Human*”

Emotions” and *“Bridges*”. Any limitations such as not allowing manipulation will be mentioned in the competition information on PhotoVault.



Nature

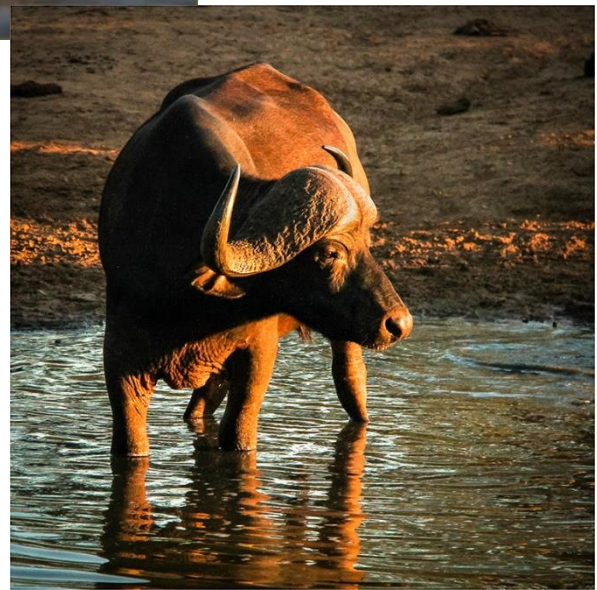
- Nature photography is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archaeology, in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject material and certify its honest presentation.
- The story telling value of a photograph must be weighed more than the pictorial quality while maintaining high technical quality.
- Human elements shall 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.
- Scientific bands, scientific tags or radio collars on wild animals are permissible.
- Photographs of artificially created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domestic animals, obviously set arrangements, mounted specimens including insects or animals doped or killed for macro (or any other type of photography), are ineligible, as is any form of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement. Any action which causes harm, no matter how unintentional it may be, is not acceptable. The use of live bait and actions such as chilling, freezing, spinning or light anaesthesia of any creature is unethical and therefore not acceptable.
- 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.
- All allowed adjustments must appear natural.
- Colour images can be converted to greyscale monochrome.
- Stitched images are not permitted.
- Infrared images, either direct-captures or derivations, are not allowed.
- Images used in Nature Photography competitions may be divided in two classes: Nature and Wildlife.

Parameters for Nature

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



In zoos and game reserves or
roaming free...

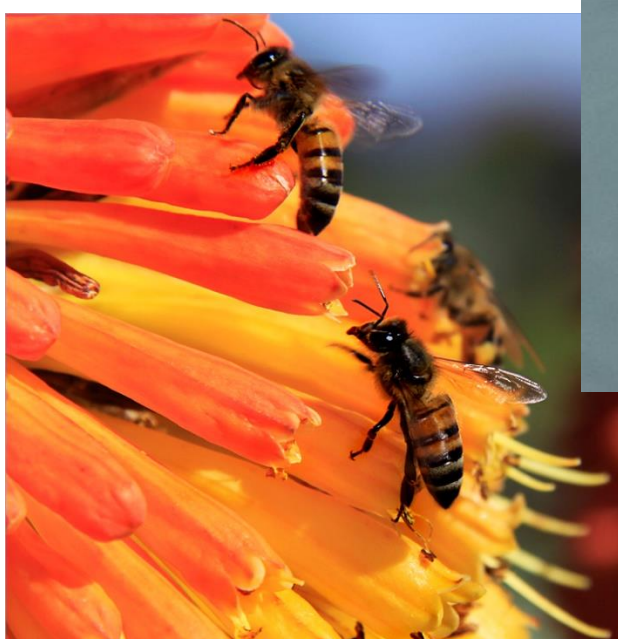


Landscapes of weather, geological
formations etc.

Parameters for Wildlife

- Images entered in Wildlife sections meeting the Nature definition above are further defined as one or more extant (still in existence) zoological or botanical organisms free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat.
- Wildlife is not limited to animals, birds and insects. Marine subjects and botanical subjects (including fungi and algae) taken in the wild are suitable wildlife subjects, as are carcasses of existing species. Wildlife images may be entered in Nature sections of Exhibitions.
- Landscapes, geologic formations, photographs of zoo or game-farm animals or of any existing zoological or botanical species taken under controlled conditions are not eligible in Wildlife sections.

*Note: A non-natural macro setup is defined as a macro or miniature scene set up artificially in a studio or table top arrangement used to create a fake “natural environment” for the subject being photographed.



PJ, Sport and Travel

Photojournalism (PJ)

- These are images which tell a news story. Photojournalism is distinguished from other close branches of photography by the qualities of:
 - Timeliness — the images have meaning in the context of a recently published record of events.
 - Objectivity — the situation implied by the images is a fair and accurate representation of the events they depict in both content and tone.
 - Narrative — the images combined with other news elements to make facts relatable to the viewer or reader on a cultural level.
- Photojournalism entries are images with informative content and emotional impact which usually include human interest, documentary, news or sport.
- The journalistic value of the image shall receive priority over the pictorial quality.
- In the interest of credibility, PJ images that misrepresent the truth and model or staged set-ups are not permitted.
- Techniques that add to, relocate, replace or remove any elements of the original image, except by cropping, are not permitted.
- Techniques that enhance the presentation of the image, without changing the photojournalism story content, are permitted. All enhancements must appear natural.
- Colour images can be converted to greyscale/monochrome.
- Derivations, including infra-red, are not permissible.



Street Photography

- Street photography records un-posed scenes in public places.
- The primary subject is people and/or symbols of people, at rest or in motion, alone or with others, going about their everyday activities.
- Manipulation should be confined to colour correction and judicious cropping.



Sport/Sports Action

Sports Photography covers any aspect of a sporting event. Images must depict an active pastime or recreation involving physical exertion and/or skill that is governed by a set of rules or customs and often of a competitive nature. Images in this section could include, for instance, the judge or umpire in a sporting event.



Sports Action Photography concentrates on sports people in action. Images must depict an active pastime or recreation involving physical exertion and/or skill that is governed by a set of rules or customs and often of a competitive nature. The level of sport can range from children playing a sport to the Olympic Games.



Photo Travel

- A Photo Travel image must express the feeling of a time and place and portray a land, its distinctive features or culture in its natural state.
- There are no geographical limitations.
- Close up pictures of people or objects must include distinguishable environment.
- Techniques that add to, relocate, replace or remove any element of the original image, except by cropping, are not permitted.
- All adjustments must appear natural.
- Derivations, including infrared, are unacceptable.

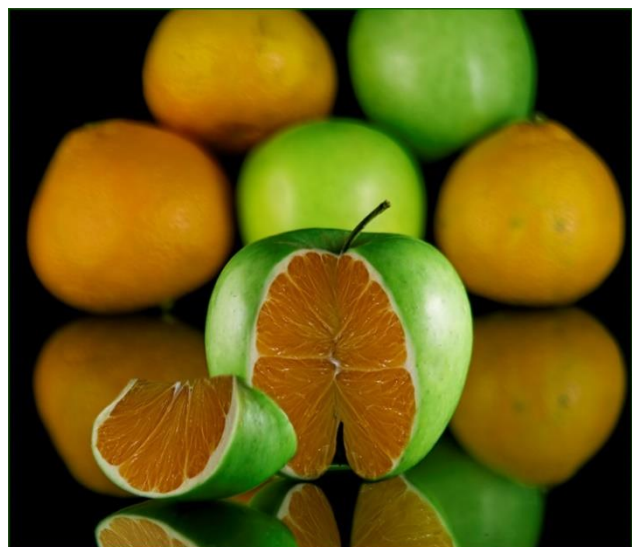


Creative (Abstract/Altered Reality/Visual Art)

While it is acknowledged that all photography is creative, this category seeks to take that creativity to another level with deliberate emphasis on aspects such as F-stop, shutter speed, HDR and post processing.



Abstract: An exercise in composition for the sake of art. The *real* identity of the abstractionist's subject is not important and the result is not intended to *be* anything.



Altered reality: An image created by altering reality in an obvious manner. It can be created digitally or in camera. The intention is the creation of a new image that conveys a feeling or message, or tells a story.

Visual Art: Photography as a means of expression and as a vehicle for the author to make a personal photographic statement. The important part of the definition for Visual Art is that these images should go beyond the straightforward pictorial rendering of a scene. However, the image does not have to employ derivative or manipulative techniques to be Visual Art. All work should be that of the author and not copied or derived from elsewhere.

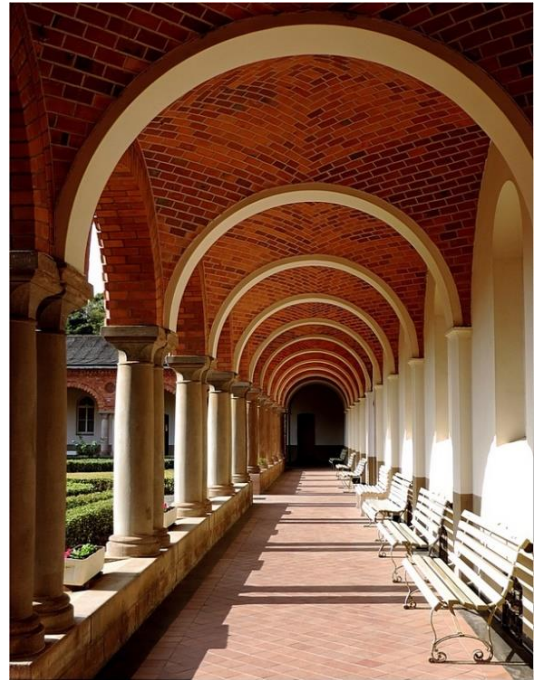


Open – Monochrome or Colour

- Please read the *Monochrome Versus Colour* section on Pg. 2 to be clear on where your image should be placed – Colour or Monochrome.
- In the open section all elements must predominantly be photographic. However, if graphic elements are included they should enhance the photographic image but not take over from it. All graphics used should be created by the photographer using his/her own artwork.
- Unless otherwise stated, manipulation is allowed.
- If any of the previous categories such as Nature/Wildlife, Photo Journalism or Sport are entered here, it will be assumed that they may have been manipulated.
- Subject matter is totally open and could include subjects not mentioned above such as:
 - Architecture
 - Panoramas
 - Macros
 - Still Life/Table top
 - Pictorial
 - Portraiture
 - Human Interest

Architecture

This is the study of buildings or structures e.g. arches, detail of trim, monuments, bridges etc.



Panorama

An image with elongated fields of view, with an aspect ratio of 2:1 or larger, the image being at least twice as wide as its height.



Macro

- A photographic situation where you get close to a small subject by physical or optical means. Starting at approximately 1/4 life size i.e. when the subject being photographed is four (4) times the size of the film plane (i.e. film or digital sensor). There is no limit on the upper end. The size of the subject in the finished photograph is greater than life size.
- Macro fits as a subsection of Open as well as Nature; when entered in a Nature section, manipulation is not allowed



Pictorial

- Images with wide visual appeal. Any subject that is treated pictorially, embodying the elements of good design, arrangement or composition, which reflects the personal interpretation of the photographer.
- “Pictorial” and “Open” are not mutually exclusive but rather synonymous.



Still Life:

An image depicting mostly inanimate subject matter



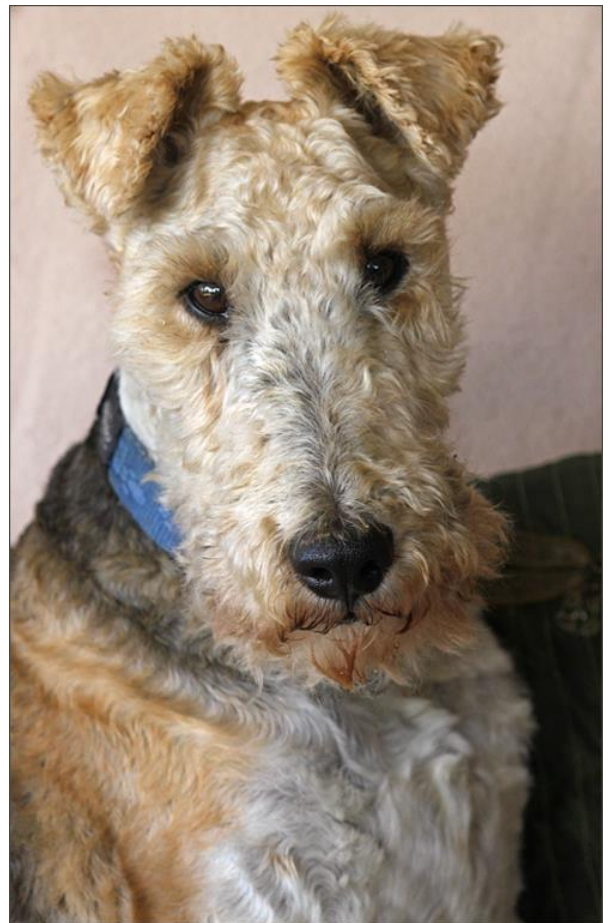
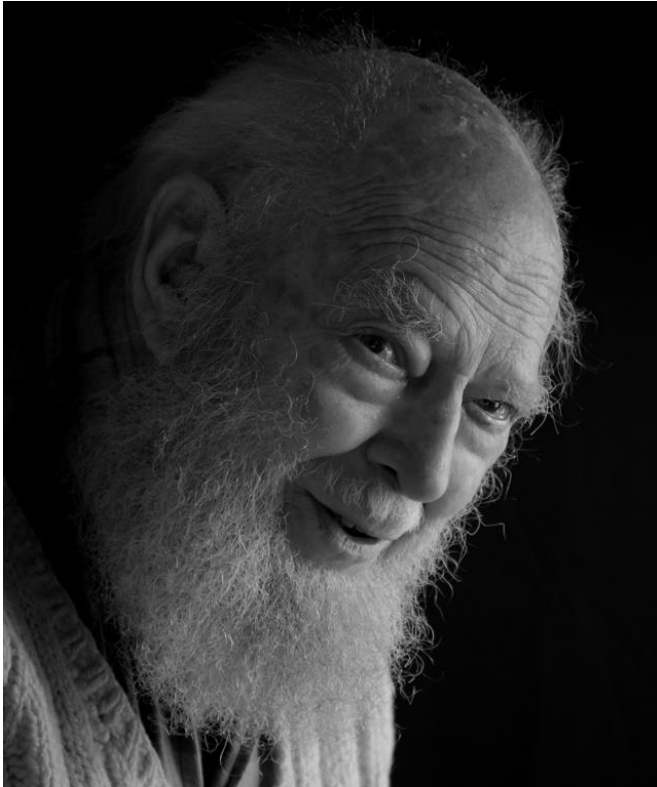
Table Top

Table top is an image depicting mostly inanimate subject matter arranged in an artificial setting such as on a table top.



Portraiture:

A likeness, personality and mood of a living subject where that subject is dominant in the image. Portraiture is not restricted to head and shoulders and may include just a part of the face, a back view or even a full length study.



Human Interest

These are images depicting a person or persons in an interactive, emotional or unusual situation, excluding recreational and sports action.

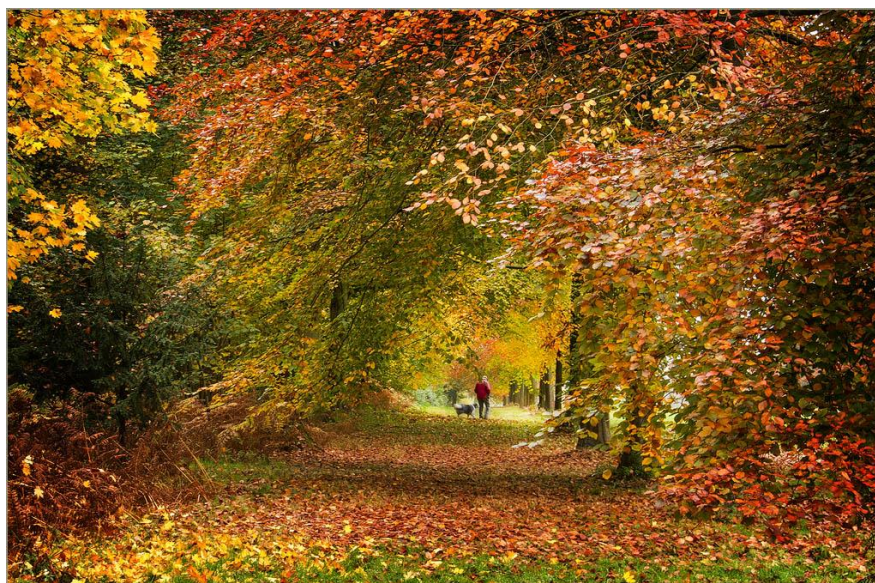


Scapes/Landscapes

- Scapes is a term that covers the depiction of scenery such as mountains, valleys, trees, rivers, forests, sea, cities etc. where the main subject is a wide view with its elements arranged into a coherent composition.
- A horizon often (but not necessarily) forms part of a "scape".



- Scapes may be natural or man-made. Derived terms include: • Cityscape • Seascape • Nightscape • Snowscape • Streetscape • Urban scape • Sandscape
- A genre intended to show different spaces within the world, sometimes vast and unending, but other times microscopic. A landscape comprises the visible features of an area, including physical elements such as landforms, water, living elements of flora and fauna, abstract elements like lightning and weather conditions. It could be pure nature or include man and/or beast.



Star Rating and Judging Criteria

All members will start at one star rating unless they have transferred from another club and have a letter of introduction from its chairperson to attest to their current rating. If a person believes they should be at a higher rating but has not come from another club, then they may submit a portfolio of 10 photos to the committee for assessment and rating.

Judging for all star ratings follows the guide-lines recommended by the Judge Education Program.

The club utilizes the sliding scale photographic judging system. Images are judged out of a total of fifteen points without reference to the person's star rating. The awarded score out of 15 is then matched by the competition steward to the author's star rating to determine the award.

The guideline below shows the points associated with each potential attribute of a photographic image, and should be applied by the judge in reaching the final score. Note that the awarded score should be the one immediately below the level at which the image "fails" to conform to the guideline.

Attribute	Guideline / Comment	Score
Artistic Merit / Emotional Impact	The image can be described as "fine art" and/or evokes powerful emotional reaction.	14-15
Creativity	The image shows significant creativity in its presentation.	13
Experimentation	The image demonstrates the author's willingness to experiment with different techniques.	12
Metaphor / Story / Message	The image communicates a message, tells a story and/or uses metaphor effectively.	11
Exploitation of the Medium	The image makes use of the potential of the digital photographic medium, eg. use of colour or monochrome, slow/fast shutter speed, post-processing, etc effectively.	10
Composition / Visual Design	The composition makes use of elements such as leading lines, shapes, directional indicators, the "rule of thirds" and balance of form, colours and light/dark areas ("chiaroscuro").	8-9
Focus and Exposure	The image is well-presented and shows appropriate focus and exposure.	7
	Focus is not 100% correct and/or the image is slightly under- or over-exposed.	6
	Focus is poor and/or the image is grossly under- or over-exposed. It has no merit.	1-5

Once a score has been awarded for a particular image, the table below must be consulted to determine which award to make for that image. This table is loaded into the Photovault TOP system which allocates the awards.

For example, if an image scores 11 points, a 5 star worker would achieve a silver award while a 1 star would receive a merit for the same image. In other words, as one advances, one's work is judged more strictly.

ACC TOP Sliding Scale Points and Awards					
Star Rating	Awards				
	Merit	Gold	Silver	Bronze	No Award
1 Star	11-15	8-10	6-7	5	1-4
2 Star	12-15	9-11	7-8	5-6	1-4
3 Star	12-15	10-11	8-9	6-7	1-5
4 Star	13-15	11-12	9-10	7-8	1-6
5 Star	13-15	12	10-11	8-9	1-7
5 Star Bronze & Silver	13-15	12	10-11	8-9	1-7
5 Star Gold & Platinum	14-15	13	11-12	9-10	1-8

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