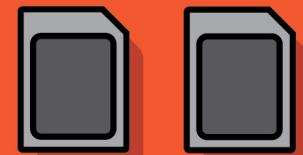
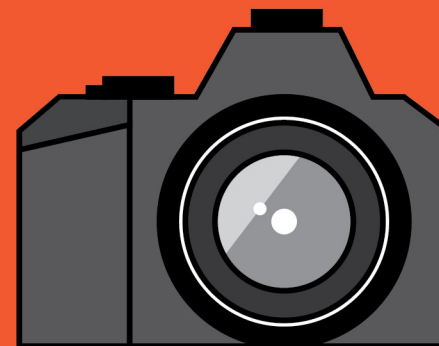
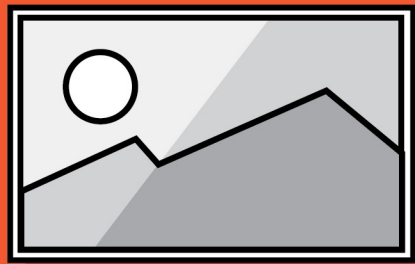
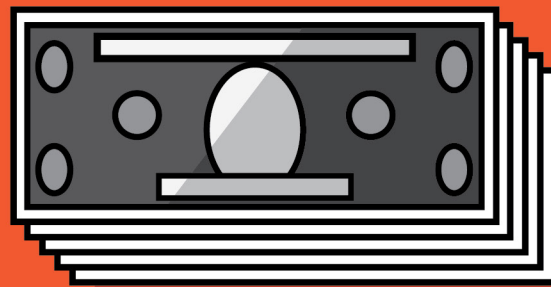
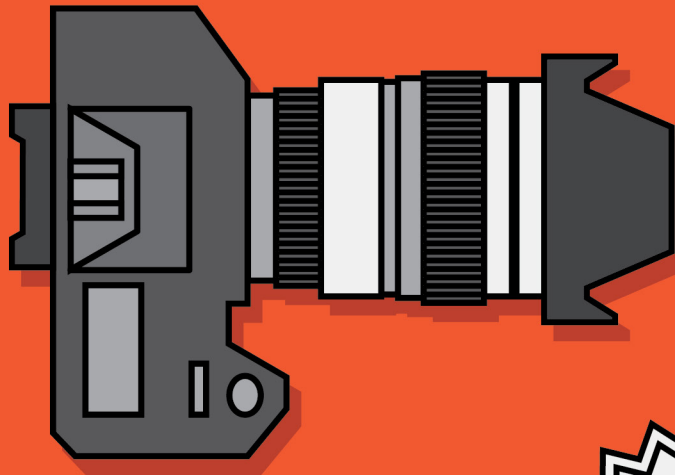


The Photographer's Guide to **PHOTO CONTESTS**

2019



an educational guide by:



PHOTOSHELTER

**WORLD
PHOTOGRAPHY
ORGANISATION**

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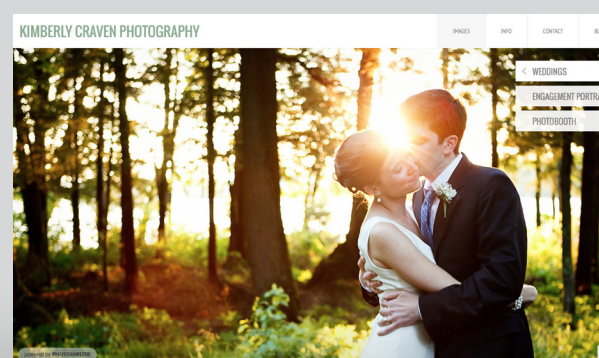
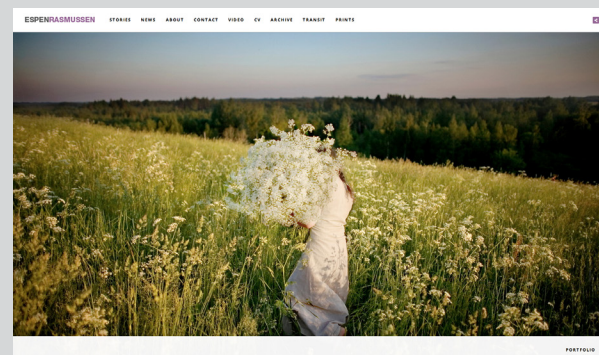
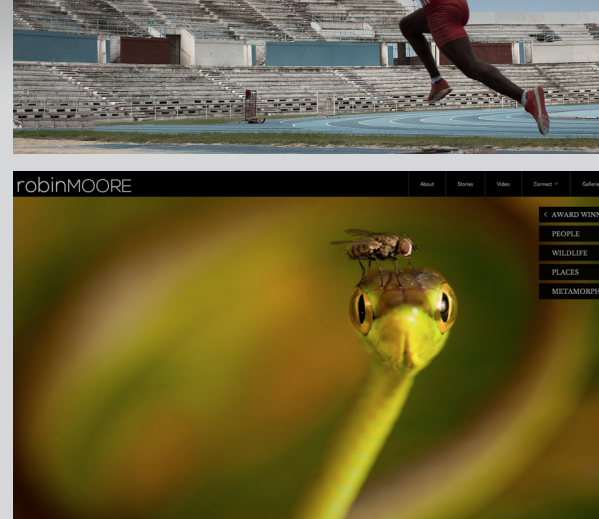
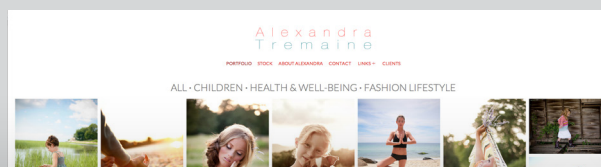
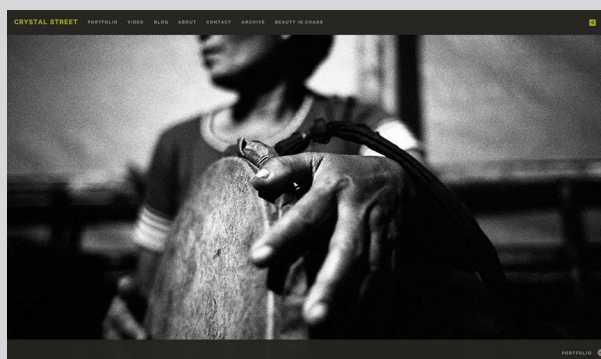
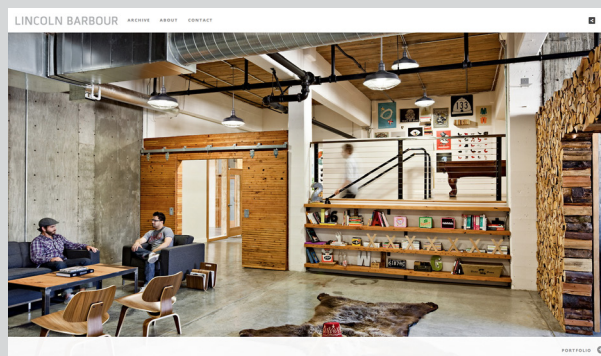
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CONTESTS19

Questions? Contact us anytime at 212-206-0808 or support@photoshelter.com.

Offer valid for new PhotoShelter users. Get 20% off a monthly Standard account for the first year only.

2019 Deadlines

- Open | Youth:
January 4, 2019
- Professional:
January 11, 2019

Competitions

- Professional
- Open
- Student
- Youth

2020 Awards

Opens for entries
June 1, 2019

Prizes

- Sony digital imaging equipment
- Up to \$30,000 in cash prizes
- International exposure
- Publication in annual winners' book
- International exhibitions
- Sell your images

Enter for Free
worldphoto.org/swpa



PART I

Intro

The ever-growing popularity of photography has spawned a myriad of contests in every possible niche from microscopy to wildlife to drone photography. But as contests have proliferated, photographers have become increasingly savvy to the racket run by some promoters that charge exorbitant entry fees with paltry prizes and horrendous rights grabs. Photo contests are not all created equal.

For the past six years, PhotoShelter has produced an annual guide to photo contests. We've evaluated dozens of contests, spoken to winners, and made some recommendations from the list. This year, we're departing from that formula and simply publishing a list of contests that we believe are worth your consideration. You'll still have to evaluate whether the time, effort, and yes, entry fees are worth a potential prize.

Our picks are skewed towards larger prizes, in part, because most of the winners we've talked to in the past didn't see a material increase in print sales or job offers. Press exposure can yield increased name recognition – particularly when a photographer wins several competitions in a year – but for most photographers, nothing beats cold, hard cash.

Our methodology continues to be driven by four main criteria: 1) entry fees, 2) prizes, 3) submission rights, and to a lesser degree 4) promised exposure. The glut of photo contests has rendered the title of "award-winning photographer" into a cliché, but we still believe that photo contests have a place in a photographer's marketing arsenal.

Entry Fees

Entry fees are sometimes used as a way for unscrupulous contests to simply generate revenue. Many great contests have no entry fee. That said, entry fees can provide a way for contests to compensate judges, fund prizes and exhibitions, weed out unserious entrants, and pay for operating costs when a deep-pocketed sponsor isn't available.

Some contests offer "early bird" discounts as well as marked-up "late entry" options. Since most contests typically set their deadlines around the same time each year, you can save yourself some cash by entering early.

We like to look at the entry fee to grand prize ratio. Contests like the Kuala Lumpur International Photo Award offer a \$5000 prize with a \$15 entry fee. By contrast, the GDT European Wildlife Photographer of the Year charges €30 and offers a top

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prize of €3000. Of course, contests can offer many more prizes and perks, but this single ratio can be an effective evaluation tool.

Prizes

Contests should offer cash and/or equipment prizes that are in line with the size of the contest and audience. Premier contests attract premier sponsors which usually lead to better prizes. We value contests that have multiple prizes for different categories or top finishers. We abhor contests that have entry fees, while only awarding certificates to the winners.

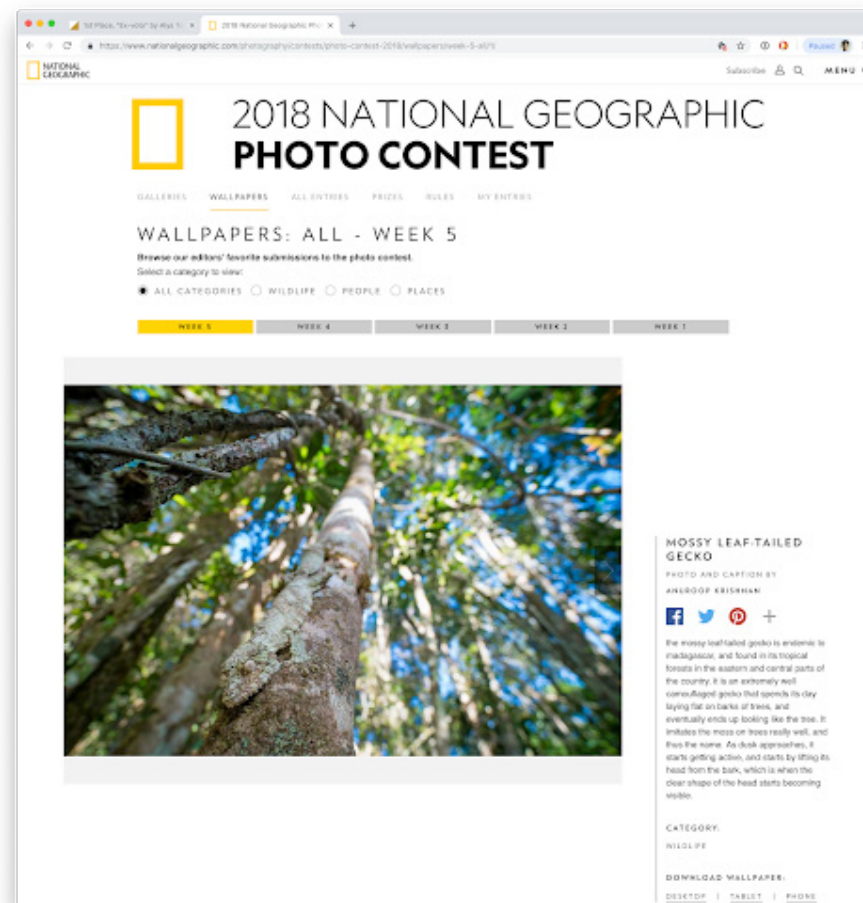
Some niche contests don't offer as rich a prize package as the larger contests. But if they are well-regarded and maintain a cachet within the niche, we believe they can still be valuable for the photographer.

Just remember that you're on the hook for taxes – even if the prize is gear or an exotic cruise down the Nile.

Submission Rights

Good contests have limited rights-grabbing language, and only use images in conjunction with promotion of the contest while including appropriate photo credits. The best contests restrict their use of images to a fixed duration. All contests will ask for broad rights to reproduce images in multiple media (e.g. print, exhibitions, online, in-app, etc), and more competitions are asking for display rights to all entries, not just the winners (some contests like the Audubon allow entrants to opt-out of this type of usage). This allows contests to build and slow a steady stream of content throughout the course of the application and judging periods.

Of course, the more an image is displayed online, the greater the chances it will be stolen. But the approach to showing curated entries is becoming more of a norm – particularly in contests geared more towards non-professionals. Contests like the National Geographic Photo Contest also allow downloads of popular images as wallpaper which includes a visible copyright notice, but the file does not include embedded metadata.



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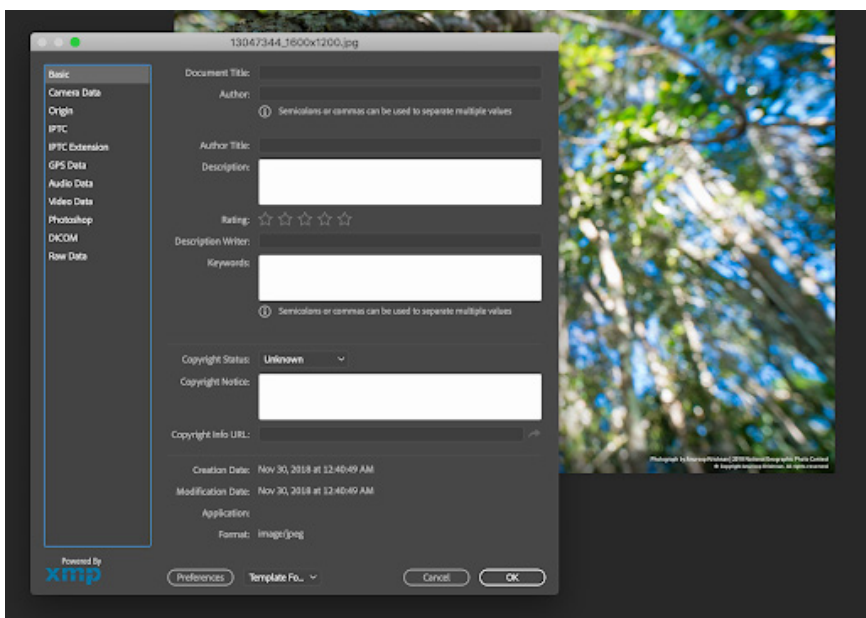
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An example of bad photographer rights from [Smithsonian Photo Contest](#) (we bolded egregious sections). We don't like this language because it allows Smithsonian to use your image on materials that have nothing to do with the competition (e.g. calendars, books, subscription cards, etc).

"You retain your rights to your photograph; however, by entering the contest, you grant the Smithsonian Institution (and those authorized by the Smithsonian) a royalty-free, world-wide, **perpetual**, non-exclusive license to publicly display, distribute, reproduce and create derivative works of the entries, in whole or in part, in any media now existing or later developed, for any Smithsonian Institution purpose, including, but not limited to, **advertising and promotion of the magazine and its website**, exhibition, and commercial products, including, but not limited to Smithsonian Institution publications. Any photograph reproduced will include a photographer credit as feasible. The Smithsonian Institution will not be required to pay any additional consideration or seek any additional approval in connection with such uses."



Better photographer rights from [World Press Photo](#) restrict utilization to specific purposes (e.g. promotion of the contest and education activity).

"Copyright holders retain copyright of their work. For awarded pictures, copyright holders grant the World Press Photo Foundation unlimited non-exclusive use of high-resolution pictures for activities in all media, including social media, online and print, in relation to the contest, the exhibition, the yearbook, the public archive, and all promotional and educational activities for and under the auspices of the World Press Photo Foundation, without any remuneration being due."

Great photographer rights from the [World Photography Organisation](#) restrict both usage and duration.

"All entrants understand that any image submitted to the site may be used by the World Photography Organisation for marketing and promotional purposes of the site only, for a maximum of three years after the entry is uploaded. You hereby grant the World Photography Organisation a non-exclusive, irrevocable licence in each Entry throughout the world for three years in all media for any use connected to the promotion of the Site."

Promised Exposure

Sometimes cash and equipment prizes aren't significant, but media exposure, publications and/or exhibitions can bring significant benefits. Certain publications are known for their annual contests/awards, and the design and packaging of those publications make them collectible.

Shows like the Sony World Photography Awards at the Somerset House in London, the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize at the National Portrait Gallery, or World Press Photo's traveling exhibition have become increasingly renowned, and bring tens of thousands of eyeballs to the winners. Many successful awards leverage effective public relations to generate millions more views online.

In truth, exposure rarely leads to new work or print sales. Winning contests increases networking opportunities, but contest winners still have to hustle to close deals and convince buyers to open up their pocketbooks.

A number of photographers have told us that they are more interested in exposure that well-known contests bring them – both in terms of general PR as well as being seen by an influential jury. All the more reason to do your research before entering.

Photo Contest Controversies

When money and prestige is on the line, some photographers will find a way to cheat, steal and lie to win. Photo contests have unfortunately been plagued with scandals ranging from image manipulations to questions about authenticity and ethics in dealing with a subject.

The argument against photo contests continues to evolve. Manipulation has been a dominant issue in the past, but the controversy discussion has moved beyond pixels to intent, identity, and the fate of the depicted subject.

Vox visuals editor, Kainaz Amaria, has been particularly outspoken on the issue.



"As it stands today, award-winning photojournalism is defined by how much pain/suffering of brown&black bodies one has documented. That type of work and the photographer are then lionized as morally righteous - the story becomes about the photographer's sacrifice and daring..."

"...the people in the images are rarely considered after the awards have been won - and in this case - even before the contest has been entered."

"there is something macabre about winning contests off the pain and suffering of poor folks not from your own community."

@kainazamaria

twitter.com/kainazamaria/status/1069273616016162817

twitter.com/kainazamaria/status/1069275441796706306

twitter.com/kainazamaria/status/1069277085234077697

[Do photojournalism contests glamorize pain and suffering?](#) The answer is undoubtedly yes, and even if juries aren't explicitly instructed on how to judge images, contests have personalities that can't be ignored. Previous contest winners influence future contest winners – and contests set the bar for the definition of "good" photography for better or worse.

Travel contests are built around portraying destinations as "exotic," and there is a tendency towards [visual sameness](#) that results from a photo touristic approach. Not to mention how popularizing a particular location through contests can contribute to [environmental degradation](#).

And John Edwin Mason, professor of African history and the history of photography at University of Virginia, took issue with the results of the 2018 Taylor Wessing portrait prize.



"So, let me get this straight... All four prize winners in this year's Taylor Wessing competition are portraits of black or brown people made by white photographers. That's fucked up."

[@johnedwinmason](#)

twitter.com/johnedwinmason/status/1052345869570363397

Mason makes a point of stating that the results are [not racist](#) (the jury made their selections without knowing the photographers, but the judges almost certainly knew some of the work beforehand), but he [points out](#) the white jury has continued to pick "safe" winners that allow white audiences to "stare" at black people. Mason tweeted:

"What do I mean by 'safe'? I mean that they do nothing to disrupt established ways of seeing — and, thus, knowing — black and brown people. Ways of seeing and knowing that are the product of societies in which white supremacy is a given."

You can reasonably argue that your interest in contests transcends these issues. But by their very nature, contests highlight a very narrow band of photography that is often constrained by a correspondingly narrow definition of "good." Does participating and winning improve your photography or your business of photography?

Contests can function as supersized "Like" buttons whereby a win yields a massive hit of dopamine, PR, and perhaps the adulation of your peers. But all photographers should consider their motivation for entering contests, and weigh whether the very act of participating causes more harm than good.

Disclaimer

We strive to publish accurate details on the contest prizes and deadlines. However, in some cases, we were unable to verify 2019 contest information and therefore relied on information from past years.

PART II

About the World Photography Organisation

The World Photography Organisation (WPO) is a global platform that celebrates the best imagery and photographers on the planet by building lasting relationships with both their industry-leading partners and individual photographers. The WPO works to raise the level of conversation around photography and curates an exciting calendar of events all year long.

Events like the annual Sony World Photography Awards and PHOTOFAIRS—international arts fairs dedicated to photography with events in Shanghai and San Francisco—are at the heart of the WPO. The Sony World Photography Awards recognize contemporary photography from the past year across a wide variety of photographic genres.

The Awards are always free to enter.

Photographers at any level of ability from anywhere in the world can submit their best work to either the Professional, Open, Youth, or Student competitions across a range of categories from landscape to portraiture to street photography to nature and wildlife. Local photographic talent is also celebrated in the National Awards program, which runs across over 60 countries worldwide.

Since the inaugural Awards event in 2007, nearly 2 million images from 200 countries and territories have been submitted for consideration. The Sony World Photography Awards have the power to change lives, as many of the showcased photographers have gone on to secure gallery representation, global press exposure, and publishing deals.

Winning photographers receive the latest Sony digital imaging equipment and a cash prize. All winning and shortlisted images are exhibited at the landmark Somerset House in London before being shown as part of a world tour.

Don't miss your chance to show your work on the unique global platform that is the Sony World Photography Awards! Enter the 2019 competitions before the January deadline, or be sure to submit your best work for consideration for the 2020 edition which opens on June 1, 2019.

**WORLD
PHOTOGRAPHY
ORGANISATION**

PROFILE

Edgar Martins

*By World Photography
Organisation*



Acclaimed Portuguese photo-artist Edgar Martins was the 2018 winner of the Sony World Photography Awards' Professional Still Life category with the series 'Siloquies And Soliloquies On Death, Life And Other Interludes.' He was also awarded 2nd Place in the Professional Architecture category with the series 'The Poetic Impossibility of Managing the Machine,' and shortlisted in the Professional Discovery category with different images from the series 'Siloquies and Soliloquies on Death, Life and Other Interludes.'

We spoke to him about his success at the Awards and how it has positively influenced his career development. "The media response to the Awards was overwhelming, with extensive press and TV coverage all over the world," he says. "Apart from providing my work a huge international platform, it has also brought my images to the consciousness of collectors, curators, galleries, and museums. As a direct result of being part of the Sony World Photography Awards, my work was acquired by several private and public collections."

Martins grew up in Macau (China) and moved to the United Kingdom in 1996 to study Photography and Social Sciences at the University of the Arts and the Royal College of Art, London. He has represented Macau at the 54th Venice Biennale,

and his work has been exhibited widely across the world and is held in major museum collections.

He was studying philosophy and humanities in Macau when he published a book encompassing poetry, poetic prose and philosophical essays. Martins' intention was to enroll in university in Portugal to continue studying literature and philosophy but his incredibly visual approach to writing made him change course and study fine arts instead.

"Because of the connection with Hong Kong, and the fact that the best fine-art courses were based in the UK at the time, I felt that it would make sense to move to England so I took the plunge," he says. The MA brought his work to the attention of the art world and he got gallery representation in London fairly soon after that. "I was already exhibiting in public institutions before but through my MA I published my first book and got my work into the collections of prestigious museums such as the V&A. I also harnessed the fund-raising skills fairly young, which allowed me to develop complex projects, with large budgets from very early on in my practice."

Martins spent 10 years working on themes related to technology, and his practice became increasing-

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ly rooted in collaborations with what he terms 'hard-to-access environments.' In other words, organizations that are closed to the public and do not have a culture of dialogue with artists.

This gave rise to collaborations with institutions such as the European Airport Administration Authority, the UK Metropolitan Police, EDP Energias de Portugal (that manage all the power stations in Portugal) as well as The European Space Agency and BMW.

"After that, I really wanted to challenge myself as an artist and as an individual and so I made a concerted rupture with my default methodology," he explains.

Martins became much more focused on a multidisciplinary and hybrid approach to photography and developed an award-winning project with the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences in Portugal over a period of three years.

"It is the images from this project that were awarded in the Still Life of the 2018 Sony World Photography Awards. This project was primarily a reflexion on the tensions and contradictions inherent in the depiction of violent death, but also on the fundamentally invaluable but contradictory role that photography has played in our intelligibility of death," he says.

That project finished in 2017 and he has been exhibiting it all over the world. Shortly after he started with a project in Birmingham with Grain Projects and HM Prison Birmingham, the largest category B prison in the Midlands. Using the social context of incarceration as a starting point, this project explores the philosophical concept of absence and addresses a broader consideration of the status of the photograph when questions of visibility, ethics, aesthetics, and documentation intersect.



© Edgar Martins, Portugal, Professional Architecture, 2018 Sony World Photography Awards

The Sony World Photography Awards have a very transparent process, are incredibly well organized and generate impressive exposure.

Edgar Martins

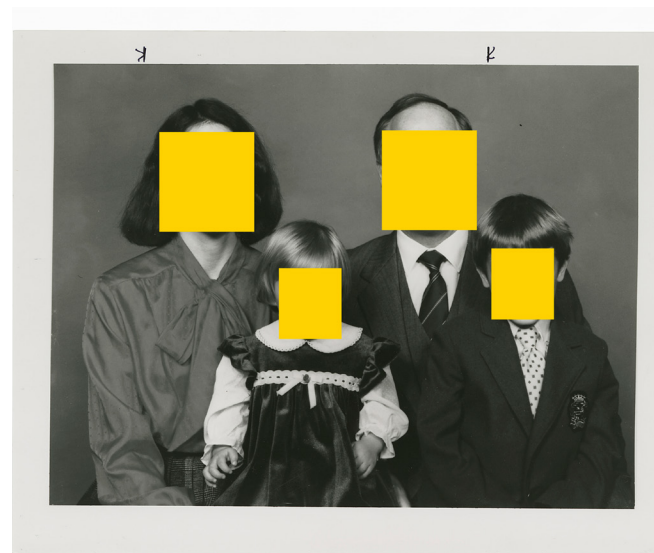
By giving a voice to inmates' families and addressing incarceration as a set of social relations rather than a physical space, Martins' work proposes to re-think and counter the sort of imagery normally associated with incarceration.

It will be officially launched in March next year at the Format Festival (Derby) but there have already been smaller shows at the South Bank, Purdy Hicks Gallery London as well as Paris Photo 2018.

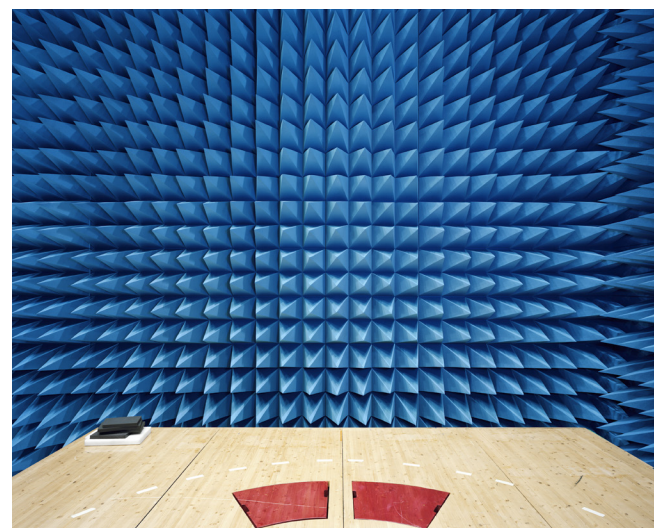
The work will tour to the Three Shadows Art Centre in Beijing, MNAC in Barcelona, the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Lisbon, MAM (Macau Museum of Art), Catharine Clark Gallery in San Francisco, amongst others.

"It's not easy to produce work and be involved in its dissemination at the same time. But I guess this is an integral part of being an artist. It's about how you manage those two aspects. Normally it's a cyclical process. When you work on a long-term project there are periods when you're more focused on producing work and others when you're fully involved in doing it. But when you're as productive as I am, working on one project after another, inevitably there will be overlaps. By the time a new project starts one is still exhibiting the previous work and so on. However, my new work projects mark a very different way of working for me: they are much more multifaceted and interactive, they incorporate different media and in truth, they have changed my relationship with photography. Photography has always been about control; whether it's the control the photographer exerts over his subject or that the apparatus exerts over any given circumstance. In my new work, I have tried to relinquish some of this control. I'm experimenting a lot more and I'm not always totally certain of what I am doing. But it's the process of re-solving that's more rewarding than any resolutions one might come to."

Martins was particularly impressed with the Sony World Photography Awards and thinks that the non-fee paying format is the way to go. "At a time when there are so many awards out there, one can question the legitimacy and overall intentions of some of them, but the Sony World Photography Awards have a very transparent process, are incredibly well organized and generate impressive exposure," he adds.



© Edgar Martins, Portugal, Shortlist, Professional competition, Discovery, 2018 Sony World Photography Awards



© Edgar Martins, Portugal, 2nd Place, Professional competition, Architecture, 2018 Sony World Photography Awards

FEATURE

Want to be a winner?

The World Photography Organisation shares top tips on how to impress the judges

You've taken what you think is your best photograph. You've read through this guide and chosen which photography competition(s) you want to enter.

Before you press "submit," get a leg up on the competition with advice from some past and current judges of the Sony World Photography awards and some insider tips from the World Photography Organisation.



Scott Gray
CEO, World
Photography
Organisation

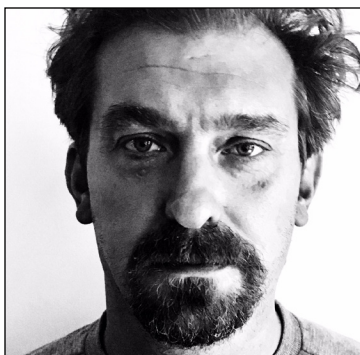
"The judging for the Sony World Photography Awards is always anonymous, and the World Photography Organisation is impartial to the process. We work with industry-leading experts to ensure the artists who enter their images to our Awards are given the best opportunity to be seen. Having sat in on the judging of all 11 editions of the Awards, I would recommend the following to anyone entering any photography competition:

1. **Self-Editing** - this is absolutely vital. If, like our Professional competition, you need to enter a body of work make sure that every image in the series is strong, and you aren't adding in weaker images just to pad out the work. Does each image tell the story you want to share? What does each image add? If it doesn't add anything, take it out.
2. **Feedback** - your photographs are your pride and joy, but does the image communicate what you want to others? Whether it is a trusted friend or an online community, getting feedback on your work is always really helpful to guarantee you enter your best images.
3. **Description** - most competitions require you to submit a description with your image/images. Make sure that the purpose of the image is clear and whatever you write is clear. Remember, it is likely that the judges do not speak the same language as you so don't overload your writing with flowery statements or complex jargon.
4. **Does it fit the brief?** Judges will often see amazing work, but they can't reward brilliant images that are in the wrong category or don't fit the competition brief. Read the requirements of the competition, and then read them

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again. Does your image really work well for that competition, or is it better elsewhere? For categories which have a looser interpretation, such as the Discovery and Creative categories in our Awards, make sure your supporting statement outlines why your images fit that specific category.

Lastly, entering photography competitions can be a fantastic way to gain exposure and recognition, so make sure that whatever you present to the judges is to the best of your ability."



Mike Trow

Chair, 2019 Professional competition

"For 2019, I hope the standard is even higher. I think more environmental and political work is important as it highlights major current global and local issues that affect everyone. The Still Life and Landscape categories I hope will continue to gain more and more innovative entries. My main hope is that photographers from all nationalities apply and submit their best works. It is a global competition and the judges are excited to see entries from across the world that tell stories that might take audiences out of their comfort zone."



Jason Baron

*Creative Director of Photography at BBC
Creative (2019 Student competition judge)*

"I'd like the students to not think too much about the images they enter. If they really believe their image has something to say about the truth, then that's what I want to see. I don't care too much about technical know-how or clever stuff. It's mostly all tricks. Sometimes tricks are marvelous, but only if they shed light on a truth that's never been photographed before. The other thing is that I used to be a comedian, so I like funny things because I'm not funny anymore. Awards are often full of very serious pictures of serious subjects, and I get a bit fed up with all of that. Some levity would be good."



Jeff Hamada

*Founder and Editor, Booooooom
(2019 Student competition judge)*

"I'm really excited to see what gets submitted to the 2019 Awards. I'd like to see work that demonstrates a firm grasp of the fundamentals of photography and a consistency, but more than anything else, I'm looking for a unique eye."



Erin Barnett

Director of Exhibitions and Collections at the International Center of Photography in New York (2019 Professional competition judge)

"From my experience, a good photography series uses great storytelling from a unique perspective. I am particularly keen to see fresh images of interesting (or even mundane) subjects. I want to be surprised. While it is important to look at the work of other photographers, make work that is wholly and uniquely yours."



Zelda Cheatle

Curator (Chair, 2018 Open, Youth competition and National Awards)

"In choosing the winners, the images all had to have something special - whether it be composition, impact, skill, a portrayal of a unique event or informing in a new way. Above all else, each winner had to be an exceptional photograph."



Dewi Lewis

Publisher, Dewi Lewis Publishing (2018 Professional competition judge)

"For me, the most important thing is that a photographer develops their own voice – that their individual qualities and personality come through. This ultimately means finding a theme / a subject that they really believe in and that they really care about."

Find out more about the judges of the Sony World Photography Awards [here](#).

PART III:

28 Photo Contests Worth Considering

*Contests organized by niche category

Wildlife/Nature

Audubon Photography Awards

With its 113-year legacy of bird conservation throughout the Americas, it's no surprise that the National Audubon Society recognizes the power of photography in elevating the natural world in our collective conscience. Although the contest is limited to residents of the US and Canada, the winners receive worldwide exposure, and the contest has served as a springboard for past winners. Wildlife photographer and judge Melissa Groo helped the contest draft rules around [ethical bird photography](#), which means winning goes beyond just a pretty picture. The organization is introducing two new categories for 2019 to give photographers even more options to win.

DEADLINE

April 8, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Summer 2019

ENTRY FEES

\$15-\$20

for single image

PRIZES

\$5,000

Grand Prize

\$2,500 Professional Prize

\$2,500 Amateur Prize

Audubon's Hog Island Photography

Camp Youth Prize

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Published in *Audubon* magazine, *Nature's Best Photography* magazine, and displayed in the Audubon Photography Awards traveling exhibition

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

For birders and naturalists alike, there is no better contest than the Audubon. The prize money is solid, the ethical guidelines show a commitment to wildlife, and the competition provides a high bar to aspire to. The contest even lets you mail in prints in lieu of digital submissions.



Photo by Liron Gertsman / Audubon Photography Awards

Disclosure: PhotoShelter co-founder Allen Murabayashi serves as a judge for the contest.

Big Picture Natural World Photography Competition

The California Academy of Sciences sponsors this nature photo contest to “celebrate and illustrate the rich diversity of life on Earth.” Photographers can enter images in seven different categories including this year’s “Pushing the Limits” photo story category that allows 5-8 images per submission.

DEADLINE

March 1, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

May 2019

ENTRY FEES

\$25

for up to 10 images

\$15

for Photo Series (3-5 images)

PRIZES

\$5,000

Grand Prize

\$1,000 prizes in seven categories

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Exhibition at the California Academy of Sciences

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

The quality of winners rivals any nature and wildlife competition in the world. And for a relatively small contest, their marketing department does a great job getting the winners published on multiple media outlets like *The Atlantic* and *The Telegraph*. Although the rights grab restricts the use of the images to promotion of the contest, they altered the duration from five years to perpetuity much to our chagrin.



Photo by Tanya Houppermans

National Geographic Photo Contest

The National Geographic Photo Contest rallies amateur and professional photographers from all over the world to submit their work to three categories: people, place and wildlife. In 2018, the contest received over 10,000 entries from photographers in over 150 different countries – all of which you can see online through Nat Geo's photo community, Your Shot, before the judging takes place. Formerly known as the "Nature Photographer of the Year," the current incarnation has been rechristened as the "National Geographic Photo Contest" to differentiate it from the Travel Photo Contest. Whereas the Nature contest had a \$10,000 prize, the current Photo Contest prize has unfortunately been halved.

DEADLINE

mid-November

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

December

ENTRY FEES

\$10

per photo for early entry
fee increases up to \$25 at the deadline

PRIZES

\$5,000

Grand Prize

\$2,500

First place winners

Second place winners will receive \$1,500.

Third place winners will receive \$750.

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Publication in an upcoming issue of National Geographic magazine and featured on the @NatGeo Instagram account

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

Full-time pros might balk at the rights grab which allows for wallpaper downloads, but the low entry fee combined with a decent cash prize make this a pretty good deal for most photographers. And when your photo is seen by nearly 100 million people on Instagram, you'll probably pick up a few followers.



Wildlife Photographer of the Year

The UK Natural History Museum sponsors the annual Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition to promote the discovery and understanding of the natural world through photography. Although many contests focus on the natural world, few have as rich a prize and the prestige and press to go with it. The contest rules explicitly prohibit photographers from engaging in activity that might “injure or distress an animal or damage its habitat in an attempt to secure an image.”

DEADLINE

December 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

October 2020

ENTRY FEES

£30.00

per entrant (up to 25 entries)
for Adult competition

Free, for up to 10 images
for Young competition

PRIZES

£10,000

Adult overall winner

£1,000

Young overall winner

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Exhibition at the Natural History Museum
in London + global tour and published in a
hardback book

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

The six cash prizes ranging from £1,000 to £10,000 would be enough to warrant our recommendation. Throw in a trip to the awards ceremony combined with the contest’s reputation and guaranteed exposure make this a no-brainer. This is one of the most widely respected contests in photography, and we like their solid position on ethical photography.



Photo by Thomas P. Peschak

N **NATURAL
HISTORY
MUSEUM**

Photojournalism/Documentary

Pictures of the Year International

Pictures of the Year International (POYi) is one of the oldest and most prestigious photojournalism programs in the world, and is managed by the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the Missouri School of Journalism. The organization is a non-profit dedicated to promoting documentary photographers and freelance photojournalists, and the competition celebrates great work from photojournalists worldwide. For the past several years, the contest has provided a live cast of the judging through their [Facebook page](#), providing a rare and transparent way for photographers to understand the machinations (and tedium) of contest judging.

DEADLINE

January 14, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

March 2019

ENTRY FEES

\$50

per entry

PRIZES

\$1,000

and Tiffany crystal trophy for Photographer of the Year, Newspaper Photographer of the year, World Understanding Award, Community Awareness Award, Environmental Vision Award

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Multiple exhibitions including the Newseum in Washington, D.C.

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

In the restaurant world, the Michelin Awards have given some ground to newer, shinier lists of top restaurants, but for many chefs, Michelin stars still represent the pinnacle of culinary achievement. So it is with POYi. There are certainly richer prizes, but not many photojournalism awards have the legacy and cachet that POYi offers.

World Press Photo

World Press Photo is the 800 lbs gorilla of photojournalism contests. The brand strength is immense, but it seemingly can't escape some flavor of controversy from year to year – both a function of its visibility, as well as some self-inflicted wounds. The contest is arguably the most influential and internationally acclaimed in photojournalism, and the organization continues to evolve its marketing and educational activities.

DEADLINE

January 8, 2019

registration deadline: January 3

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

April 11, 2019

ENTRY FEES

no fee

PROMISED EXPOSURE

All prize-winning photos are assembled into an exhibition that travels to 45 countries and published in a yearbook distributed worldwide.

PRIZES

€10,000

World Press Photo of the Year
+ travel expenses to the Award Ceremony in Amsterdam, Canon digital camera, and the Golden Eye Award

€1,500

1st place in each category
+ the Golden Eye Award and sponsorship of their trip to the Awards Ceremony in Amsterdam

2nd and 3rd place receive the Golden Eye Award and a diploma

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

Insofar as photojournalism is concerned, there is no more visible a prize in the industry. Everyone pays attention to the winners and the types of photos that win. The prizes are rich and the marketing is impressive. Traditionalists have lambasted the organization's foray into "new developments in the media and technology [that] have transformed journalism and storytelling," but WPP is too big to fail at this time.



Photo by Ronaldo Schemidt / Agence France-Presse



Photo by Anna Boyiazis

Days Japan International Photojournalism Awards

Ryuichi Hirokawa started the monthly [Days Japan](#) journal in 2004 on the anniversary of the Iraq War in response to a “distrust of the conventional media” that often “urged” a path to war. The magazine promotes hard core photojournalism and covers global topics that advocate the “dignity of humans and nature.” Due to declining subscriptions and the health of the founder, the magazine will cease operations in March 2019, but the contest will live on through the establishment of the non-profit Japan Photojournalism Association.

DEADLINE

January 15

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Unknown

ENTRY FEES

no fee

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Winning photos will appear in DAYS JAPAN magazine and website. Exhibitions will be held in major cities in Japan to publicly display the awarded works.

PRIZES

¥1,000,000

Grand Prize
+ trophy and camera gear

2nd Place Winners (2) receive ¥300,000
and trophy and camera gear

3rd Place Winners (3) receive ¥100,000
and trophy and camera gear

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

A newly designed website has made the contest friendlier to an English-speaking audience, which will hopefully increase the accessibility of what we've always thought was a great contest. The prizes are generous, but the competition is stiff. It may be the best contest you've never heard of.



Istanbul Photo Awards

The Turkish-based Anadolu Agency organized the first contest in 2014, attracting a who's who of photojournalism with solid cash prizes. The contest unsurprisingly attracts many photographers covering events in the Middle East and Europe with work that typically doesn't get much circulation in the US. Thus the winners reflect a different point of view of the world. The past juries have featured more eastern European and Arabic representation than your average contest, but the gender composition skews highly male like many contests.

DEADLINE

January 31, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

April/May 2019

ENTRY FEES

no fee

PRIZES

\$8,000

Photo of the Year

plus four categories each with 1st (\$5,000),
2nd (\$3,000) and 3rd (\$1,500) prizes

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Gallery exhibition (last year's winners were displayed at the Izmir Adnan Menderes Airport) and photobook which will be sent to photography professionals all around the world

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

The top prizes have been reduced (previously USD\$10,000 for photo of the year), but the contest still provides generous cash awards in four categories for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place.



Photo by Kevin Frayer

NPPA Best of Photojournalism

The [National Press Photographers Association's](#) Best of Photojournalism (BOP) contests have a new home in 2019 at the University of Georgia's Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication in Athens. The four divisions (still photography, video, online visual journalism, and editing) remain the same, but a new contest committee has reorganized the categories to "better reflect a rapidly changing industry." Unlike many photojournalism contests, the NPPA's gives equal weight to broadcast journalists. NPPA runs numerous US-based regional contests throughout the year, but BOP doesn't require NPPA membership to participate

DEADLINE

January 31, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

late March 2019

ENTRY FEES

no fee for members

\$75

for non-members

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Published in the NPPA's Best of Photojournalism issue of News Photographer magazine and on the NPPA website

PRIZES

Stills portfolio winners

\$500

+ Sony camera

Editing and Online portfolio winners

\$800

Video portfolio winners

\$1000

Team/Newsroom Online portfolio winners

Tiffany crystals



Photo by Lisa Krantz

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

There is no doubt that the NPPA award has cachet – particularly in the US – that all but guarantees exposure to top editors. But like Pictures of the Year International, the contest might struggle to attract top talent when richer prizes with growing influence are popping up around the world. The award is very much a “for professionals by professionals” affair that is designed to highlight quality work to discerning eyes.

Travel

National Geographic Traveler Photo Contest

One of the best brands in photography also has one of the most popular contests. Judges sifted through over 18,000 entries showcasing landscapes, portraits, diverse cultures and surprising moments all over the world to award ten top prizes in 2015.

DEADLINE

May

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

July

ENTRY FEES

\$15

per entry

PRIZES

\$10,000

Grand Prize

\$2,500

first place winners (2)

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Featured in National Geographic Traveler and online

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

The rights grab language allows your image to be downloaded by others for personal use, and grants NatGeo an unlimited right to use the image in connection with promotion of the contest. Could they sell prints of your image by creating a “contest winner” category? Unfortunately, it’s unclear. Like many large circulation magazines, the photo contest is geared more towards consumers, not professional photographers who would undoubtedly cringe at this stipulation. The contest previously offered a luxe trip as the grand prize, but we’re happy to see that they’ve moved to a chunk of cash instead.



International Landscape Photographer of the Year

Two Australian photographers, David Evans and Peter Eastway, serve as co-founders and co-curators for the relatively new landscape photography contest. Eastway is a strong proponent of post-production techniques and as such, the contest doesn't have any restrictions on Photoshopping, but the source material must be a photograph. Some may find the winners' gallery to be a bit heavy-handed, but there's no doubt that the images catch the imagination and fancy of many consumers.

DEADLINE

late November 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

February 2020

ENTRY FEES

\$25

per entry

(every fifth entry is free during the early-bird entry period)

PRIZES

\$5,000

+ trophy and Awards book

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Winning images published in awards book and publicized worldwide

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

Legendary photojournalist and Contact Press Images co-founder David Burnett headlines the jury along with last year's winner Max Rive. Should a contest that allows for unlimited Photoshop have "photography" in its title? Many contests have strict rules about manipulation, but photography isn't only about veracity. Photography means different things to different people, and creative agency allows photographers to alter an image to match their mind's eye, and the contest offers a decent cash prize for doing so.

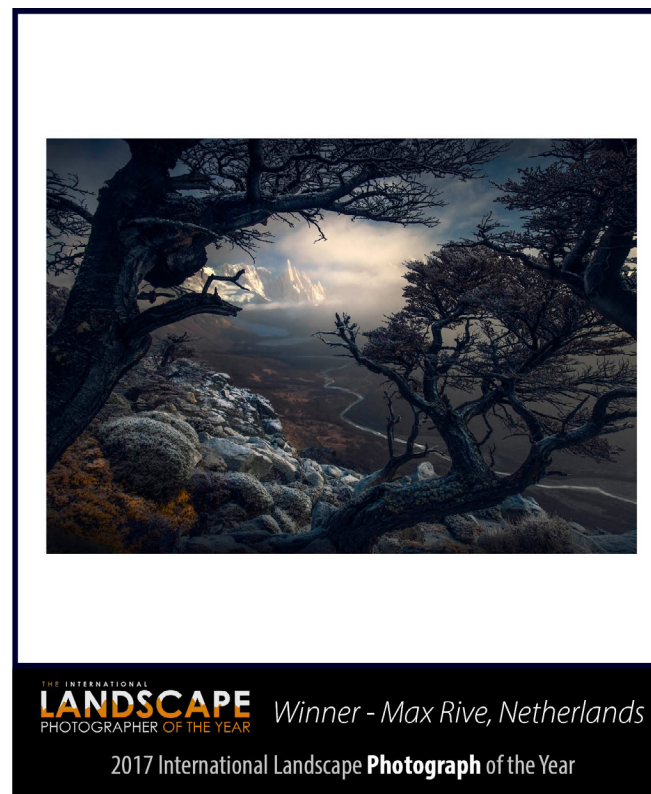


Photo by Max Rive

Portrait

Kuala Lumpur International Photo Awards

If you were going to design a photo contest to raise the profile of your relatively small country (32 million people in a land mass similar to New Mexico), you couldn't do much better than the KLPA. Open to photographers of all levels, the Kuala Lumpur International Photo Awards focuses on contemporary portrait photography and attracts just over 1,000 entries. The work is both global and diverse and studying the winners provides a comprehensive survey of contemporary portraiture.

DEADLINE

March 30, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

June/July 2019

ENTRY FEES

\$15

per photo

PRIZES

\$3,500

First prize in each category
(Open and Themed single images)

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Exhibition in Kuala Lumpur

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

The fee is nominal and the prizes are significant for a relatively small competition. In 2017, KLPA commissioned the Malaysian artist Kong Wee Pang to redesign the award trophy. Not only does the effort support local artists, but it's a hell of a lot better looking than a piece of Lucite.



Photo by Batten Fullerton

Moran Contemporary Photographic Prize

Founded in 1988 in celebration of Australia's bicentennial, the Moran Prize is Australia's richest photo contest with a AUD\$50,000 grand prize (the Moran's National Portrait Prize offers a gigantic AUD\$150,000 prize). The only stipulation for entry is that the photographer must be an Australian citizen and photographers are encouraged to explore the theme of "Contemporary Life in Australia."

DEADLINE

March 6, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

May 2019

ENTRY FEES

\$25

per entry

PRIZES

TBD

(last year's first place award was AUD\$50,000, and all finalists received AUD\$1,000)

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Touring exhibition, social media and website promotion

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

For a country with a relatively small population, Australia has a number of great photo contests, and the Moran is no exception. Although the contest is limited to Australian citizens, it is a fantastic example of an incredibly well-funded competition with restricted rights demands. It's unfortunate that more national prizes of this size aren't offered elsewhere. Limited marketing exposure won't turn the winner into an overnight sensation, but AUD\$50,000 can buy a lot of plane tickets.



Photo by James Bugg, 2018 MCPP Winner

Taylor Wessing Portrait Prize

In 2003, the National Portrait Gallery in the UK established a Photographic Portrait Prize with Schweppes as the title sponsor. In 2008, the international law firm Taylor Wessing took over the naming rights to the international contest which accepts submissions from amateurs and professionals alike. The association with the Gallery has certainly helped boost the contest's credibility, and the four month-long exhibition proves that the Gallery stands behind the prize.

DEADLINE

June

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

October

ENTRY FEES

£28

per photo

PRIZES

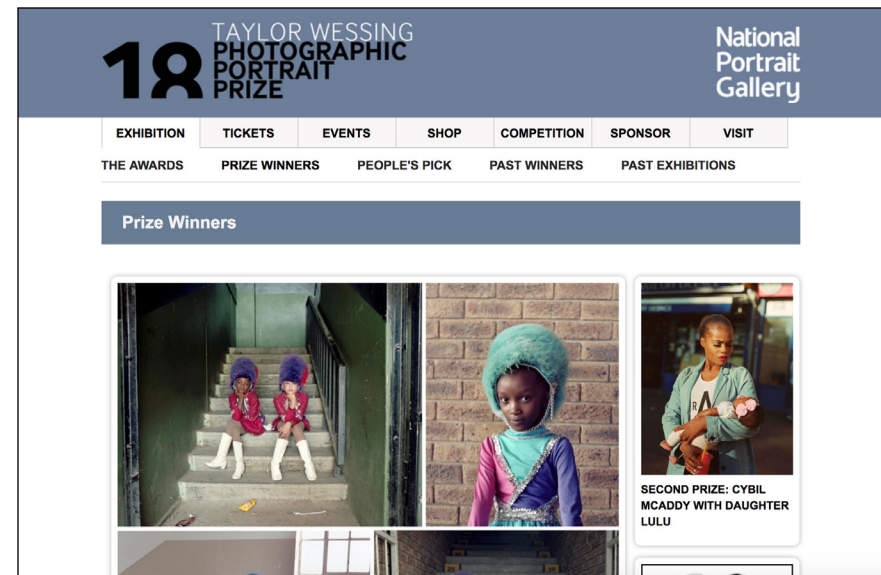
£15,000

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Exhibition at the UK's National Portrait Gallery

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

Other than the Moran Contemporary Portrait Prize, which is only open to Australian citizens, the Taylor Wessing Portrait Prize has the largest cash prize of any of the contests we recommend. According to the British Journal of Photography, the 2018 contest had a total of 1,973 entrants – far fewer than many of the larger more amateur-oriented contests, and thus professionals should really consider entering.



Niche

Insight Investment Astronomy Photographer of the Year

Insight Investment, a global asset management firm, is the title sponsor for one of the world's premier astrophotography contests. Hosted by the Royal Museums Greenwich, the Astronomy Photography of the Year competition awards great images of the sky and space in eight categories. A decade after inception, the contest attracted over 4,200 entries from 91 countries around the world.

DEADLINE

March

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

October

ENTRY FEES

no fee

PRIZES

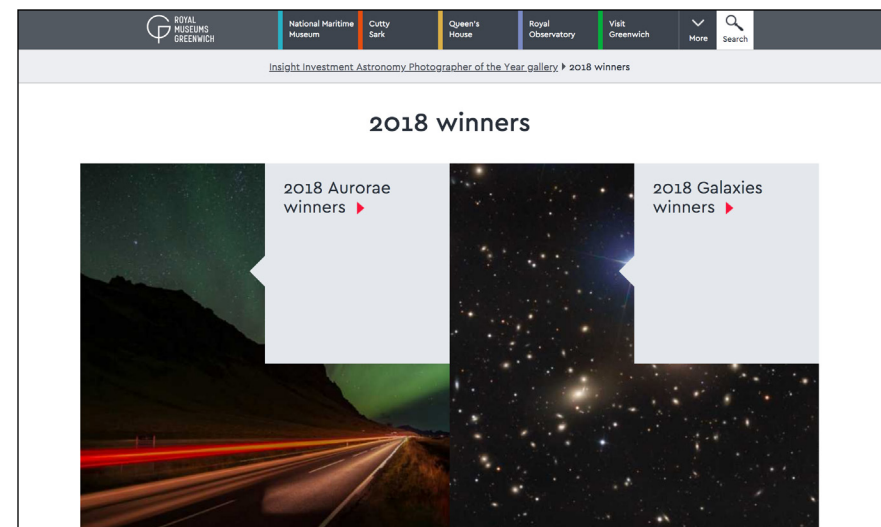
£10,000

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Exhibition at the National Maritime Museum in the UK; published in the Astronomy Photographer of the Year book, significant press coverage

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

The rights grab is aggressive (particularly the paltry £50/image merchandising payment which is limited to ten years), but the Overall Winner prize is big, and the contest offers three cash prizes in each category. Press exposure is significant with publications like *The Guardian*, *BBC*, *Gizmodo*, *Petapixel*, *Al Jazeera* and more. Whether you're a fan of wide field or deep space astrophotography, your photos will be surrounded by jaw dropping images from around the world.



Nikon Small World Photomicrography Contest

The Nikon Small World Photomicrography Competition is regarded as the leading forum for showcasing the natural world through the light microscope (macro photography is not permitted). Unlike general photography where macro lenses are relatively common, the average photographer doesn't own a microscope, so many of the entrants skew towards scientists. In 2011, the contest added a motion category and entrants have submitted both real-time and timelapse movies that will make your jaw drop. The 2018 winners ranged in magnification from 1:1 to 100x magnification using a variety of techniques from reflected light to focus stacking to 3D conofocal microscopy.

DEADLINE

April 30, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

mid-October 2019

ENTRY FEES

no fee

PRIZES

\$3,000

towards Nikon equipment

1st Prize

total of (20) prizes totaling over \$11,000

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Small World Exhibit travels throughout North America at selected museums and centers for science.

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

Like other forms of "nature" photography, the Small World Contest is an amazing niche opportunity for non-professionals – from scientists to school teachers – to compete on a world stage. Although the subject matter and equipment is highly specialized, Nikon still manages to offer 20 prizes with cash awards, plus a few more honorable mentions for good measure. The winning images never disappoint.

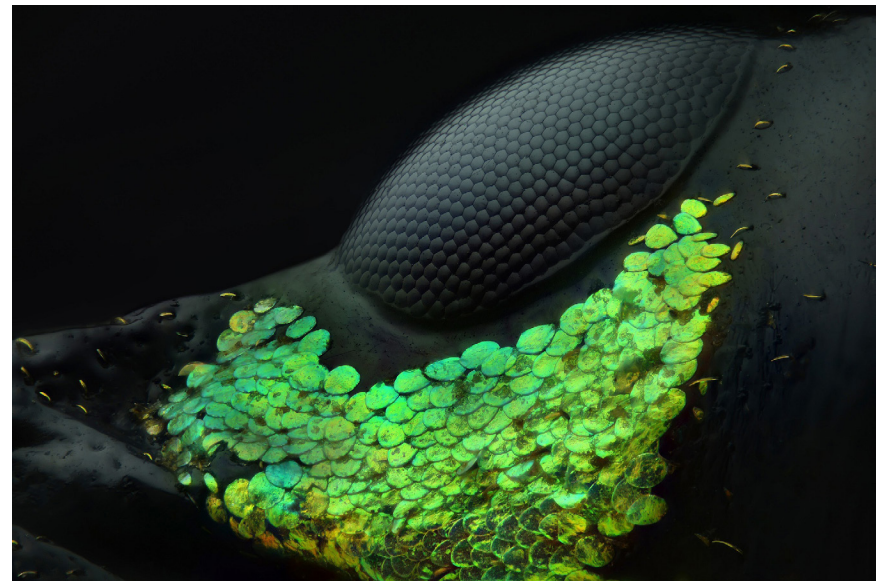


Photo by Yousef Al Habshi

Red Bull Illume

The contest was previously held every three years, but due to “globally growing interest in photography,” Red Bull is moving to a biennial format starting in 2019. In the meantime, Red Bull created a partnership with the new LUMEN Museum atop Mount Kronoplatz-Plan de Corones in the South Tyrolean Alps to host a permanent exhibition of mountain sports photography culled from previous editions of Illume. Like the extreme sports depicted in the photos, the contest is highly competitive. The 2016 edition received more than 34,500 entries from 5,646 photographers in 120 countries.

DEADLINE

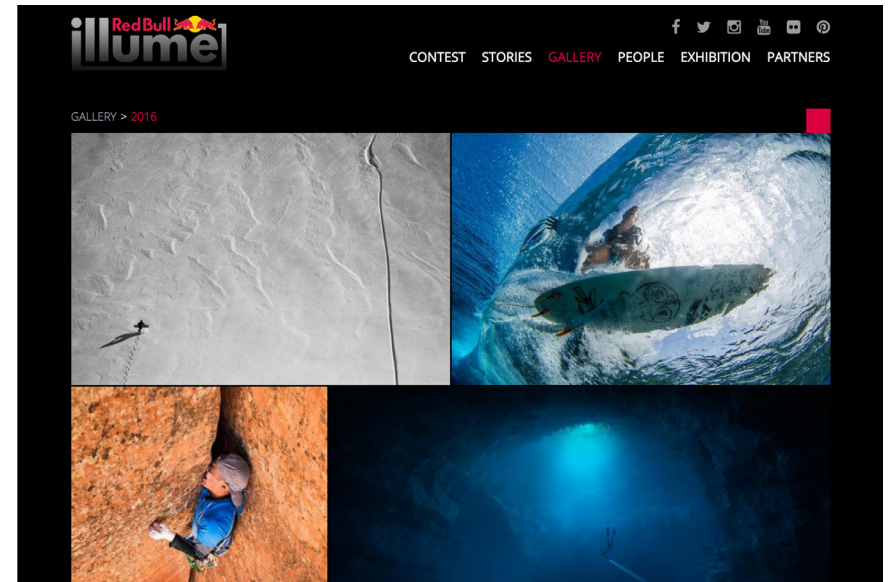
July 2019

PRIZES

£15,000

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

Many of the winning photographers whom we’ve talked to in the past have nothing but praise for the well-organized contest. It doesn’t hurt that Red Bull’s marketing reach is enormous, and although the prizes haven’t yet been announced, the 2016 contest offered up a Leica S2 camera system worth \$20,000 – and winning the top prize is sure to give you wings...



Multiple Category/Open

Sony World Photography Awards (Open and Youth Competitions)

Scott Gray founded the World Photography Organisation in 2007 to raise the profile of photography, particularly as it relates to the art photography marketplace. With Sony as title sponsor, the WPO's World Photography Awards has grown into one of the best and most visible contests in the past few years. The contest winners are widely published online and the in-person exhibition at London's Somerset House in central London continually attracts visitors. The Awards are composed of four entry fee-free competitions: Professional, Open, Student or Youth competitions. This year, the Open, Youth and National Awards are chaired by Rebecca McClelland, Director of Photography and Head of Art Production for Saatchi Saatchi & Prodigious.

DEADLINE

January 4, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

February 26, 2019

Open category winners announced

April 17, 2019

Open and Youth Photographers of the Year announced

ENTRY FEES

no fee

PRIZES

\$5,000

+ Sony digital imaging equipment and flight/accommodation to London to attend the Sony World Photography Awards (open)

Sony digital imaging equipment and flight/accommodation (youth)

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Exhibit at the Somerset House in London and published in the annual Sony World Photography Awards book

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

It's free to enter, the prizes are solid and the exhibition is top notch and attracts a lot of visitors. Unlike some contests, the Awards attract entrants from around the world, and the winners are reflective of a global perspective.

Disclosure: World Photography Organisation partners with PhotoShelter to produce this guide.



Photo by **Nick Dolding**, 2018 Winner, Open Portraiture



Photo by **Megan Johnson**, Youth Photographer of the Year, 2018

Sony World Photography Awards (Professional)

If there's any doubt about the legitimacy of the "Photographer of the Year" award, just take a look at the winners in the past few years: Andrea Gjestvang, Sara Naomi Lewkowicz, John Moore, Asghar Khamseh, Alys Tomlinson. There is unquestionably a bias towards documentary photography for the top prize, but the competition's ten categories provide opportunity for photographers of all stripes to gain some coveted recognition. Although the professional competition jury has an undeniable western bias, the pedigrees are notable, and the winners will certainly have an incredible networking opportunity.

DEADLINE

January 11, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

April 2019

ENTRY FEES

no fee

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Exhibited at the Somerset House in London; published in the winners book; featured in online gallery; opportunity to sell work

PRIZES

\$25,000

Photographer of the Year
+ membership for the World Photography Academy, flight/accommodation to London to attend the Sony World Photography Awards, and Sony camera equipment

Category winners receive Sony digital imaging equipment, travel and accommodation to attend Sony World Photography Awards ceremony held annually each April in London

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

A huge cash prize, plus gear, plus an exhibition, plus travel and expenses to the awards – there isn't much not to like about this contest. The contest continues to attract top notch talent, and the exhibit is in the heart of London.



Photo by **Fredrik Lerneryd**, 2018 Winner, Professional Contemporary Issues

Disclosure: World Photography Organisation partners with PhotoShelter to produce this guide.

ZEISS Photography Award

In 2016, heralded lens manufacturer ZEISS joined forces with the World Photography Organization to launch the ZEISS Photography Award. Behind the brand strength of ZEISS and marketing reach of the World Photography Organisation, the awards attracted nearly 12,000 photographers from 146 countries in 2018. The contest's 2019 theme is "The Unexpected."

DEADLINE

February 9, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

March/April 2019

ENTRY FEES

no fee

PRIZES

Choice of ZEISS lenses valued at €12,000, €3,000 to cover travel costs for a photo project, invitation to ZEISS headquarters in Germany

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Exhibited at Somerset House, London during the Sony World Photography Awards Exhibition

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

No entry fee, a trip to ZEISS headquarters, an exhibition at the Somerset House, and €12,000 in ZEISS lenses? Maybe you'll even be able to get your grubby little hands on the forthcoming ZEISS ZX1 (we can all dream!). We didn't even mention the 3-year limit on using your images to promote the contest. All-in-all, a pretty good deal.



Photo by Nick Hannes

Disclosure: World Photography Organisation partners with PhotoShelter to produce this guide.

PDN Photo Annual

There are a number of multi-category contests, but none are backstopped with flagship publication that still carries cachet to this day. The PDN Photo Annual awards the best in photography, featuring winning images in nine different categories ranging from editorial assignments, photojournalism, advertising, photo books, self-promo and more. Of the many contests that PDN runs throughout the year, the Photo Annual is arguably the most prestigious and most widely anticipated. To be clear, though, being selected as a “winner” in a given category doesn’t bring a bounty of prizes. Only those winning the “special prizes” earn cash. Entries need to be produced within twelve months of the deadline.

DEADLINE

February 9, 2019

extended deadline: February 25

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

May 2019

ENTRY FEES

\$50

for a single entry

special student rate of \$25 per entry

\$60

per series

*Fees are raised by \$10 during extended deadline period

PRIZES

\$5,000

The Photographer of the Year

The Marty Forscher Fellowship Fund cash award to one professional (\$4,000) and one student winner (\$2,000)

The PDN Publisher’s Choice Award of \$2,500

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Winning images published in PDN’s Photo Annual issue (sent to 5,000+ creatives) and online in the PDN Photo Annual Gallery (promoted to >500,000 readers and followers).

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

The Photographer of the Year award has dropped from \$10k to \$5k, but it’s hard to dismiss being associated with the PDN brand. Like the highly coveted PDN 30, Photo Annual recognition might lead you to append “award-winning” in front of your name, and not be laughed out of the room. No one is going to dispute your talent. Of all the PDN-produced contests, we think this is the most noteworthy.



Photo by Natalie Keyssar

Leica Oskar Barnack Award

Since 1979, the Leica Oskar Barnack Award has been presented to a photographer “whose unerring powers of observation capture and express the relationship between man and the environment in the most graphic form.” The contest attracts a very international crowd and the past winners are diverse in their styles and approaches to photography. Entries must be taken in past calendar year; only one entry person. The main award is only open to professional photographers, and the Newcomer award is open to aspiring professionals aged 25 and under. The gritty vibe of the winners in the past few years feels palpably different than many contests, and social and cultural issues have dominated the winner’s circle.

DEADLINE

April 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

September 2019

ENTRY FEES

no fee

PRIZES

€25,000

Leica Oskar Barnack Award
+ Leica M and €10,000 lens

€10,000

Leica Oskar Barnack Award Newcomer
+ Leica M and lens

Finalists (10): €2,500 each

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Inclusion at the Leica Booth during
Paris Photo

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

You can complain about the price of a Leica, but you can’t complain about the prizes in this contest. Even the newcomer gets a total prize package approaching USD\$20,000. And unlike many other contests, only the finalists are asked for a grant to use the images in connection with the contest.



© 2017 Max Pinckers, from the series Red Ink

Px3

Founded in 2007, the well-regarded “Prix de la Photographie, Paris” promotes photography from around the world in over 60 categories. The contest is similar to other big category contests like PDN Photo Annual and the IPA Awards. Some photojournalists were dismayed to find that the contest named Steve McCurry as the head jurist for its new “State of the World” category in light of a number of controversies that have clouded his legacy. But most photographers will probably be happy to have their images potentially seen by the photographer of the “Afghan Girl.”

DEADLINE

March 15, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

June 2019

ENTRY FEES

\$30

per photo (\$20 student)

\$50

per series (\$40 student)

PRIZES

\$5,000

Photographer of the Year

\$2,000

Best New Talent

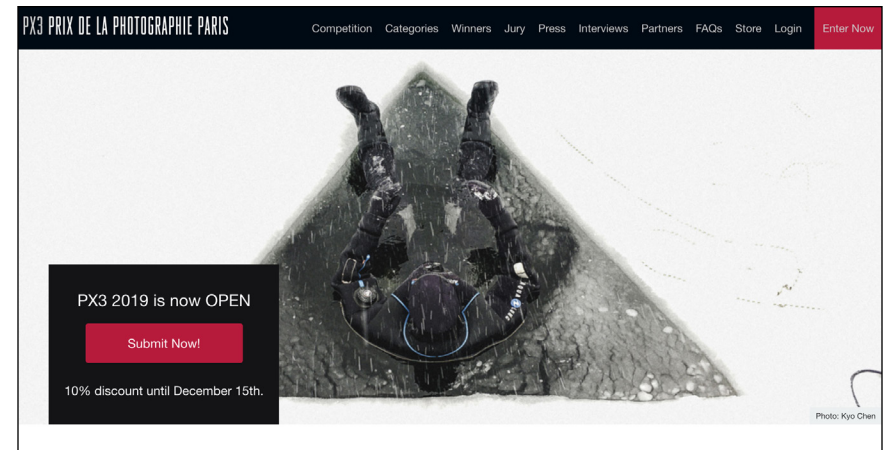
(Non-Professionals and Students)

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Winner's exhibition in Paris, published in
Px3 Annual Book

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

In a relatively short time, Px3 has built significant recognition in the contest sphere, and attracts a who's who of photography (Lauren Greenfield won 2018's Photographer of the Year award). Given the high price of entry, the contest really should offer more cash prizes, but we do like the gender diversity of the jury. A handsome printed catalog and winners' exhibition in Paris aren't too shabby either.



Prix Virginia

The biennial award is open to all professional women with the exception of photojournalism and advertising. The prize is funded by photographer/former art director Sylvia Schildge in memory of her grandmother and to demonstrate her “support for the recognition of women photographers.”

DEADLINE

The biennial award isn't offered in 2019

ENTRY FEES

no fee

PRIZES

€10,000

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Publication in the M, the magazine of Le Monde, Exhibition in L'Espace photographique de l'Hôtel de Sauroy, box-book of winners published by Editions Filigranes

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

Photography has been dominated by the male gaze well into the digital revolution. Prix Virginia celebrates the female vision, and if you doubt the legitimacy of the approach, take a look at the work of the past winners, [Cig Harvey](#) (2018) and [Sian Davey](#) (2016). The work is intensely personal and the female perspective is central to the creation of the images. For women photographers, this is an obvious choice.



APA Awards

APA is one of the most important trade organizations for commercial photographers with both national and local chapters around the US. Their annual awards is a veritable who's who of commercial and advertising photography with work that you've probably seen in the wild.

DEADLINE

July 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

September 2019

ENTRY FEES

Tiered by membership level:

\$30 (Leaders)

\$35 (Professionals/Associates)

\$40 (Supporters)

\$45 (Contributors)

\$60 (Non-members)

PRIZES

Best of Show winner receives: Canon camera EOS 5DS, Adobe Creative Cloud one year subscription, Agency Access North America, Database one year subscription, Capture One Software, Think Tank bags

The APA Awards provide over \$100,000 in Prizes across 34 winners.

PROMISED EXPOSURE

All winning images appear in a printed APA Awards book that is sent to top art buyers and photo editors.

Best of Show winning image graces the cover of the APA Awards book.

Online gallery on APA National site and highlighted on social media.

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

The entry fee is relatively high (especially for non-members), but the fees are offset by a large prize pool, which seems to have pleasantly surprised the winners. Plus you'll be competing with the cream of the crop.

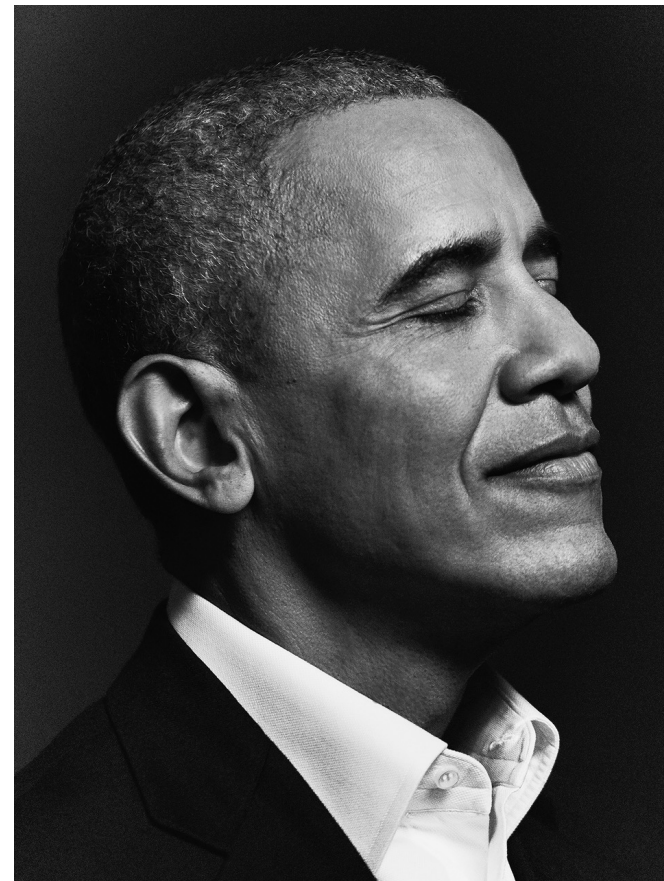


Photo by Joe Pugliese, Best in Show 2018

Disclosure: PhotoShelter provides an award for the Awards.

International Photography Awards

The International Photography Awards (IPA) is an annual competition for professional, non-professional and student photographers. Its goal is to award achievements, discover new and emerging talent, and promote a general appreciation of photography.

DEADLINE

August 2019

early bird: March 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

September 2019

ENTRY FEES

single photo:

\$35 (professional)

\$25 (non-professional)

\$15 (student)

series (2-9 photos):

\$60 (professional)

\$50 (non-professional)

\$30 (student)

PRIZES

\$10,000

Photographer of the Year (professional)

sponsored by AtEdge

\$5,000

Discovery of the Year (non-professional)

+ trophy, invitation to Lucie Awards, Winner

Certificate and IPA Seal for all winners

Category winners:

professional: \$1000

non-professional: \$500

+ \$500 travel allowance to come to NY for the winner's event & "Best of Show" exhibition

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Best of Show exhibition in multiple cities around the world; published in IPA book and on www.photoawards.com

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

Like the PDN Photo Annual and Px3, the IPAs encompass a wide range of categories, and the "winners" of those categories receive little more than a title. But the four cash-based awards are solid, and the entry fee is inline with other contests of this ilk.



Aperture Portfolio Prize

The Aperture Foundation is a non-profit arts institution founded in 1952 by photographers (Ansel Adams and Dorothea Lange are two of the most recognizable) and photo critics. Today, the Foundation primarily acts as a publisher of photography through their magazine, exhibitions, books and online properties. The Aperture Portfolio Prize is open to anyone who is a print subscriber or online member of Aperture. The award seeks to “identify trends in contemporary photography and highlight artists whose work deserves greater recognition.”

DEADLINE

January 23, 2019

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

April 2019

ENTRY FEES

Must be an *Aperture* magazine print subscriber

PRIZES

\$3,000

PROMISED EXPOSURE

First place winner: published in *Aperture* magazine and an exhibition in New York

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

The stipulation of maintaining an *Aperture* magazine subscription in order to enter feels ham-handed. But it's hard to dispute the value of the brand and the important eyeballs that will see the winning work. A number of high profile creative directors have told us this is one of the awards they pay attention to each year to discover new faces in contemporary photography. Most contests make dubious claims about exposure, but professional photographers seeking to leverage a win into future work should really consider the Prize.



Photo by Natalie Krick

Nikon Photo Contest

The biennial award is back in 2019 and accepts digital photography from any camera or smartphone. Nikon builds every edition of the contest around a theme and this year is no exception. Kazuo Ushida, Nikon Corporation's President, wrote, "...we are delighted to mark the 50th anniversary of our first Nikon Photo Contest...We have chosen 'Change' as the theme for the Open Award in the Nikon Photo Contest 2018-2019. We are all experiencing and adapting to the rapid changes occurring in today's world, but the significance of change varies for each one of us."

DEADLINE

January 31, 2019

ENTRY FEES

no fee

PROMISED EXPOSURE

Exhibition at venues managed by Nikon and displayed on Nikon Photo Contest Web Gallery and social media

PRIZES

¥500,000

Grand Prize

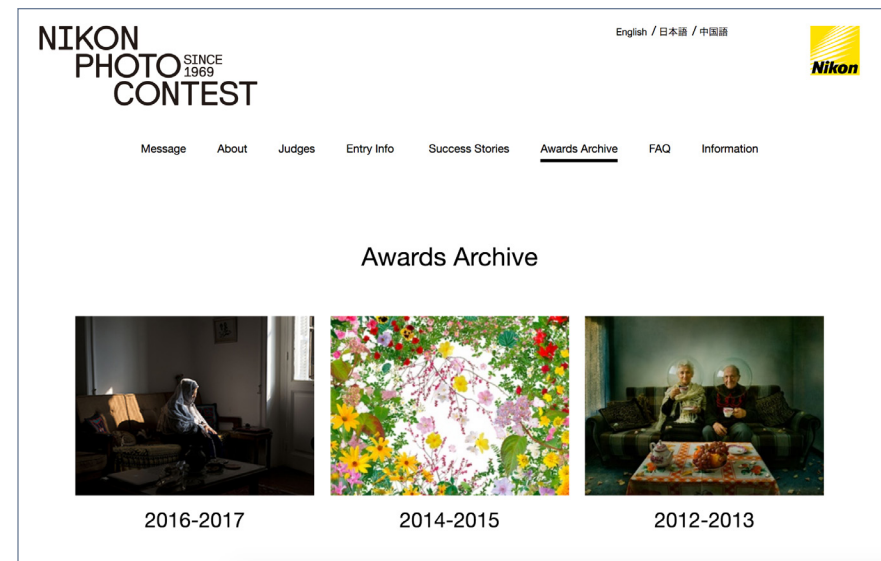
Gold prize (1 per category): Nikon D850 + AF-S NIKKOR 24-70mm f/2.8E ED VR or Nikon Z 7 + NIKKOR Z 24-70mm f/4 S

Silver prize (3 per category): Nikon D500 + AF-S DX NIKKOR 16-80mm f/2.8-4E ED VR or Nikon Z 6 + NIKKOR Z 24-70mm f/4 S

Bronze prize (5 per category): Nikon D7500 + AF-S DX NIKKOR 16-80mm f/2.8-4E ED VR

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

Unlike most contests that have a fairly consistent visual identity from year to year, we admire the diversity of winners from edition to edition. Dina Bova's (2012/2013) surrealist style placed the heads of an elderly couple in glass spheres, Katsuhiro Noguchi (2014/2015) beautifully photographed a tableau of flowers, and Annamaria Bruni (2016/2017) used window light to create a Vermeer-esque portrait of a woman praying. Add in a healthy cash prize and top-of-the-line Nikon gear, and you have the makings of an inspired contest.

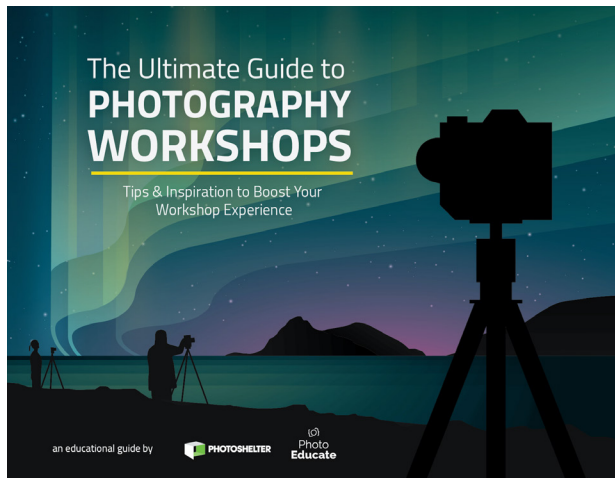
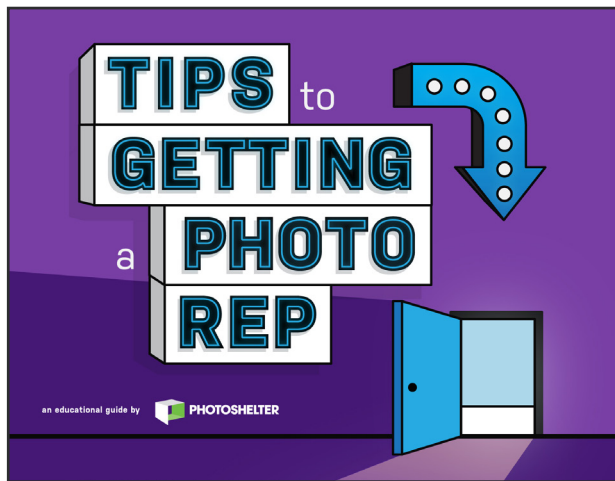


PART IV

Conclusion

There are many photo contests out there – almost too many to choose from. So before entering, you should make sure it's the right one for your business and brand. Take time to think through first why you want to enter your work and what you'd like to get out of the experience. Are you looking for exposure? Feedback? Prizes? Do you have high regards for those who have won in the past? Have you researched the jury? Do you know who is sponsoring the contest and whether they have any conflicts of interest with the subject of your photos?

Make sure you read through the contest Terms and Conditions, FAQs, plus look at previous winners' work to decide if it might be a good fit. Evaluating contests, prepping your images, and filing your entries can be incredibly time consuming and resource intensive without a clear return-on-investment. Align yourself with the competitions that are well-regarded and respected in the industry.



FIND PHOTOSHELTER ONLINE

