**PPLAC Digital Photographic Competition**

**Rules and Entry Specifications**

**Revised 01/27/2025**

The **DPC** (Digital Photographic Competition) is one of the most important events held by PPLAC, the Professional Photographers of Los Angeles County. Members who take advantage of PPLAC’s image competition seminars, workshops and mentoring opportunities will enjoy continuing development of the art and craft of their photography through a process of review and constructive critique. Current PPLAC members in good standing are eligible to enter the Digital Photographic Competition. The rules are enforced at the discretion of the DPC Director with the PPLAC board having final judgment of any disputes that arise. There will be four (4) quarterly digital photo competitions: February, May, August, and November (*or as adjusted by the Board of Directors*.)

**EACH ENTRY MUST BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH ALL RULES.**

# A. ELIGIBILITY

1. All PPLAC Active Professional, Retired and Honorary Life members may enter digital image competitions. Related trade, Sponsoring, and Aspiring members are eligible for judge’s critiques and merit qualification but are not eligible for Best of Show or Best of Category or any end of the year awards.
2. Affiliates: A member of another PPC affiliate has limited membership privileges and can only enter Digital Photographic Competitions **for Critique Only**. Members of other affiliates may attend general meetings at no charge as long as no member fees are charged. Workshops may be attended at the same cost as PPLAC member fees for that workshop.
3. Anti-Award Farming Rule - A PPLAC member with membership in another PPC affiliate can enter PPLAC’s DPC for “critique only” if that member is competing in the other affiliate’s image competitions. He/she will not be eligible for PPLAC’s DPC and year end awards. If the member is NOT competing in the other affiliate’s image competitions, he/she may enter the PPLAC DPC for awards.
4. A maximum of four (4) entries per member may be submitted per competition. IMPORTANT! ALL ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED via the **PrintCompetition.com** website **BEGINNING at 12:01 AM** **the first day of the month in which the DPC is to be held through Sunday at** **11:00 PM**, ***TWO WEEKENDS BEFORE THE COMPETITION***. **If, for whatever reason, a person cannot submit their image(s) within the allotted time frame, they are to contact the DPC Director who will then request an Exception to Policy with the PPLAC board. The PPLAC board will then vote whether to approve or deny the Exception to Policy request.**
5. Entry fees: $15.00 per image.
6. The entrant certifies that he or she has created, captured, edited and created the original exposure. The processing, image enhancements and any special effects must be done by the entrant or under the entrant’s direct supervision.
7. You may not enter an image that was made under the supervision of an instructor, given as a class assignment, or created while attending a class or workshop.
8. No two entries (unless entered by different makers) shall be of the same subject within the same DPC (e.g., same model, but different poses or clothing).
9. If your image merits, you cannot enter a similar image that was taken at about the same time, position, lighting, and subject matter that makes it almost indistinguishable from the merit image in the same calendar year.
10. Previously Entered Images Eligibility:
    1. You may resubmit an image that did not previously merit, but entries that previously merited 80 or above at PPLAC may not be re-submitted.
    2. Entries previously entered and/or merited at another PPC affiliate competition, any merited image from any PPC State Competition, or any “Finalist” images in the PPA International Photo Competition (IPC) may not be entered into a PPLAC image competition.
    3. Any image entered into PPA Monthly Image Review (MIR), regardless of outcome, may be entered.
    4. Critique Only images may not be re-entered since they have received a judges’ critique during competition which is viewed as a learning tool for this membership category.
11. Entries previously submitted to a PPLAC competition scoring 79 or below may be re-entered one additional time, but only if modified. Critique Only category images for any level may not be re-entered.
12. The Image Maker must obtain all necessary releases and agree to hold PPLAC harmless against all claims and liabilities arising out of PPLAC’s consideration, display, publication, promotion or other use of each image or other materials submitted to PPLAC.

# B. IMAGE CATEGORIES

The Digital Photographic Competition has ten (10) image categories:

**Critique Only (CO), Architectural (A), Commercial (C), Electronic Art (E), Landscape (L), Nature (N), Open (O), Portrait (P), Photojournalism (PJ), Wedding/Event (W)**

## 1. Critique Only (CO)

**Critique Only** is meant to help ***Aspiring Members*** further their qualification in order to upgrade to a professional level within PPLAC. The image may be from any of the categories below and will be judged the same but without the announcement of a score. Judges are encouraged to critique the image to help the member. These images will only receive a “merited” announcement if scored 80 or above, which will count as a “virtual” merit, but is NOT eligible for any awards or ribbons. This also applies if you belong to another affiliate, other than PPLAC, and wish to receive a judges’ critique.

2. **Architectural (A)**

Architecture: Exterior and/or interior Images of structures**.** Structure must be the dominate feature. May include people.

## 3. Commercial (C)

Industrial, tabletop, advertising, stock and aerial images. **The image must be from an actual commercial assignment**. Industrial, tabletop, advertising, stock, web page or aerial images are included in this category. A tear sheet, a screen capture of the legitimate website from the image or statement of purpose is requested, but not required. If there is a tear sheet of the image, please bring it to the DPC and hand it to the DPC Director in an appropriate envelope prior to the start of the competition.

Lack of tear sheet or image capture could undermine your score, but is not mandatory. Make sure your name is not visible on the image or tear sheet.

Stock images, photographed on spec, do not qualify because they are not for a specific commercial assignment.

Example Subjects:

1. Commercial/Advertising/Editorial
2. Composition (non-Landscape/Nature)
3. Scientific/Industrial
4. Fashion/Studio

## 4. Electronic Art (E)

Entries may be reproduced from existing photographs, portraits, graphics or any other artwork so long as the entrant is prepared to provide appropriate written documentation indicating permission for usage. The final result is a factor, but the execution of technique and degree of difficulty are also considered. Guide images must be included on image to help the judges understand the process used and techniques involved in creating the final image.

The purpose of this category is to allow the entrant to demonstrate their electronic imaging skill and expertise. Entries will be judged for digital, artistic and technical proficiency. Entries must have been sourced, composited, manipulated and/or produced by digital means by the creator.

Examples are:

1. Preconceived/Created images. Software created images built primarily in the computer.
2. Overly processed, painterly and/or special effects.
3. Images predominantly created from multiple images.

## 5. Landscape (L)

Images of landscapes, seascapes, cityscapes and nightscapes being the dominant subject. People can appear in the image.

Example Subjects:

1. Landscape: An image showing a land scene, which is the predominant feature of the image and the rest of the image being water and/or sky.
2. Seascapes: An image of a body of water either salt or fresh, such as an ocean, sea, lake, or any deep, broad river with the water being the predominant feature of the image and the rest of the image being land and/or sky.
3. Cityscape/Nightscapes: Any view of a city, especially large urban centers.

## 6. Nature (N)

Images where the flora and/or fauna are the dominant subject and no man-made objects are visible. No studio lights or studio backgrounds may be included. However, Speedlights, flashes and on-camera flashes will be allowed as long as the net effect is that the lighting looks natural (naturally part of the natural scene). If it is obvious that the subject has been artificially lit, the image should be entered into the Open Category. That said, in the case of either category, the judges can comment on the quality of the lighting.

Example Subjects:

1. Flora: All forms of plant life; the whole or any part of trees, shrubs, wild flowers, weeds, grasses, ferns, mosses, fungi, lichens, seeds, fruits, etc.
2. Fauna: All forms of animal life; mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, insects, spiders or any aspect of their life such as dens, nests, eggs, tracks, discarded antlers, spider’s webs, etc.

7. **Open (O)** Images representing an alternative type of creativity, photography and does not meet the requirements of any other categories.

## 8. Portrait (P)

Photographs captured of an individual or a group of two or more people of any age in a studio or in an outdoor setting. Portrait lighting is essential in this category where the photographer has control of lighting, posing, situation, wardrobe, and/or setting.

This category may also include portraits of pets or other animals created in a portrait-like setting with or without people.

Example Subjects:

1. Children/Family.
2. High School/Senior/Individual.
3. Animals/Pets.
4. Glamour/Boudoir/Fine Art Portraits.
5. Sports/Team Portraits.

## 9. Photojournalism (PJ)

Image captured at the peak of action and telling a story. Nothing may be altered, added, or removed. Cropping, minor dodging and burning, dust spot removal and minor curve adjustments are the only treatments allowed. No color enhancements are allowed, but conversion to black and white is allowed. Maker must be prepared to submit the original file at any point for verification.

## 10. Wedding/Event (W)

This category is meant to be in the spirit of a photographer working with actual clients in the confines of wedding portraits and wedding photojournalism or any religious ceremony taken before, during or after the event. This includes “trash the dress” or any other event associated with the wedding, as well as Bar Mitzvahs, Bat Mitzvahs, Quinceañeras and similar events.

# C. DPC IMAGE ENTRY SPECIFICATIONS

**IMPORTANT! ALL ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED via the PrintCompetition.com website BEGINNING 12:01 AM THE FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH IN WHICH THE DPC IS TO BE HELD THROUGH SUNDAY at 11:00 PM TWO WEEKENDS BEFORE THE COMPETITION. If, for whatever reason, a person cannot submit their image(s) within the allotted time frame, they are to contact the DPC Director who will then request an Exception to Policy with the PPLAC board. The PPLAC board will then vote whether to approve or deny the Exception to Policy request.**

Images submitted must meet the following guidelines or they will not be accepted.

1. There is no required format for image file names. File names are for the maker’s use only and have no bearing on the judged images.
2. Image size may be any shape with the longest dimension being 4,000 pixels (20 inches at 200 dpi). Images larger than 4,000 pixels on the longest side will not be accepted.
   1. File size must not exceed 3.5MB.
   2. Embedded Color Profiles: ***sRGB*** or ***Adobe RGB*** only. Any other color space will result in disqualification.
3. Images must be submitted through the **PrintCompetition.com** website during the image submission dates (see schedule.) Payment must be made during the image submission process (American Express, MasterCard or VISA only).
4. You will receive a confirmation email from PrintCompetition.Com informing you of your image submissions within 24 hours. If you do not receive confirmation, please submit an email to the DPC Director by accessing the Contact Us page and selecting the DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION (DPC) option.
5. With the makers consent, the DPC Director may reassign a photo to another category which they feel is more appropriate. If the maker does not agree, they may request the photo be withdrawn and a refund issued.
6. Once submitted, changes are authorized up to closing date of submissions per **PrintCompetition.com** availability.

# D. JUDGING PROCEDURES

The point system is used with scores from 100 to 0:

100-95 Exceptional

94-90 Superior

89-85 Excellent

84-80 Deserving of a Merit

79-78 Deserving a Review

77-75 Above Average

74-70 Average

69-65 Below Exhibition Standards

Critique Only Images: Under the Critique Only category for Aspiring, judges will score but only to decide if the image would merit. If the score is an 80 or above then it will be announced that the image merited (no score) and a critique will follow from one judge.

Images are judged utilizing the following 12 Elements of a PPA merit image:

1. Impact
2. Creativity
3. Style
4. Composition
5. Lighting
6. Color Harmony
7. Center of Interest
8. Print Presentation
9. Subject Matter
10. Technique
11. Story Telling
12. Technical Excellence/Print Quality

Three judges will score each image using the above-mentioned 100 to 65 scoring range. Each image receiving a score of 80 or higher will be considered a Merit image. A judge or judges may discuss or critique only after all scores have been recorded. Judges may challenge another judge’s score decision.

All images that receive a judge’s score ten points higher or lower than the average score will automatically be challenged. For example:

Judge 1 – 88

Judge 2 – 87

Judge 3 – 84

Judge 4 – 90

Judge 5 – 75

The average score would be 85, (84.8 rounded up to 85). Judge No. 5 is 10 points away from the average and the image would be “challenged”.

Should a judge recognize an image, that judge should step aside, and the DPC Director or Moderator will appoint an alternate person to judge the image.

Under the Critique-Only category, a score of 80 or above will count as a “virtual” merit, but is not eligible for any awards or ribbons. Critique-Only category images will not be revisited for up or down vote.

# E. AWARDS

**PPLAC DPC Awards** – For each Digital Photographic Competition (see schedule) PPLAC awards the following (Critique-Only images do not receive awards):

**Award of Merit**: A score of 80 to 100.

**Best of Category**: Judges will choose the Best of Category winner from the merited images.

**Best of Show**: Judges will choose one image from the Best of Category images.

**PPLAC Category End-of-the-Year Awards** – There can be up to nine (9) category winners:

**Architectural Photographer of the Year**

**Commercial Photographer of the Year**

**Electronic Art Photographer of the Year**

**Landscape Photographer of the Year**

**Nature Photographer of the Year**

**Open Photographer of the Year**

**Portrait Photographer of the Year**

**Photojournalism Photographer of the Year**

**Wedding/Event Photographer of the Year**

**PPLAC Category Photographer of the Year Award**

1. To qualify for the Category Photographer of the Year Awards, the photographer must score an 80 or above on three separate photo competitions within the same category.
2. The award is given based on the highest total score of an individual’s three highest scoring entries in a single category.
3. If there is a tie between two or more photographers in a category, the DPC Director will select a qualified judge outside of PPLAC who will decide the winner.

**PPLAC Overall Photographer of the Year Award**

1. To qualify for the Overall Photographer of the Year Award, the photographer must score an 80 (Merit) or above twice in three different categories (excluding Critique Only) and the six qualifying images must be from at least three different PPLAC competitions (not from the same DPC), with no more than two qualifying images from each DPC.

2. The award is given based on the highest total score garnered from the highest scoring entry from each of the six different qualifying images. One additional point will be added to the total score for each Best of Category win throughout the year. The highest sum score will win Photographer of the Year.

3.If there is a tie between two or more photographers, the DPC Director will select a qualified judge outside of PPLAC who will decide the winner.

**PPLAC Photograph of the Year**

1. For an image to qualify for the **PPLAC Photograph of the Year**, it must have been awarded with a Best of Category award during the year.

2. After the final DPC of the calendar year, the DPC Director will assemble a separate three-judge panel who will review all of the Best of Categories winners from the year’s Quarterly DPCs. By process of elimination and discussion, the three-judge panel will select their favorite three images and then rate them in order from first place to third place. *The same photographer can win multiple awards: It is the photograph that is judged,* *not the photographer!*

3. At PPLAC’s Open House and Award Ceremony the following three medals are announced and presented.

* The first-place winner is the *Gold Medal Photograph of the Year*
* The second-place winner is the *Silver Medal Photograph of the Year*
* The third-place winner is the *Bronze Medal Photograph of the Year*

**PPLAC Annual Judge’s Choice Award**

The President or DPC Director will select a SECRET judge at the PPLAC Annual Open House. The judge will select one image from a display of printed images provided by the PPLAC members.

ANY PPLAC member in good standing can bring one printed image (no larger than 36” on the longest side) for the Judge’s Choice Award during our Annual Open House. Prints must be mounted and can optionally be framed. Any medium is acceptable (paper, gallery wrap, metal, acrylic, etc.). Member must be present to win.

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