

**STANDING RULES**  
of the Professional Photographers of Los  
Angeles County **REVISED 1/25/2023**

**2023 PPLAC DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION**  
**RULES AND ENTRY SPECIFICATIONS**

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 Premium, General, Honorary and Life members may enter digital image competitions. Related trade, Sponsoring, Student 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](http://PrintCompetition.com) website **BEGINNING** at 12:01 AM **MONDAY MORNING THRU SUNDAY** at 11:00 PM, **TWO WEEKENDS BEFORE THE COMPETITION.**  
Entry fees: \$15.00 per image.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. No two entries (unless entered by different makers) shall be of the same subject within a calendar year (e.g., same model, but different poses or clothing).
8. If your image merits, you cannot re-enter the same person or same subject in the same calendar year. For

example, you cannot enter the next frame of an image that merited or enter a different pose of the same person; same location, either morning, noon or night; same landscape – sunny or cloudy; same exact flower – open or closed; same exact animal; same exact insect...etc. The spirit of this rule also extends to subjects that are so similar as to be indistinguishable from each other. For example: two insects of the same species where the markings and color are seemingly the same.

9. You may resubmit an image that did not previously merit, but entries that previously merited 80 or above at PPLAC cannot be re-submitted. Entries previously entered and/or merited at another PPC affiliate competition, any merited image from any PPC State Competition, PPA Western States Regional or PPA International Photographic Competition are not eligible, including any image from a merited album. Aspiring 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.

9. 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.

10. The Image Maker must be present during the competition. In the case of an exception (e.g., personal emergency, illness, vacation or unforeseen client demands) a proxy may be present to represent you. Each member can only have one proxy visit per competition year. The Image Maker must arrange for a PPLAC member proxy to present his/her signed entry form along with payment at the competition. The Image Maker's proxy must stay for the duration of the competition to accept any awards on behalf of the Image Maker at the end of the evening. Critique Only image makers MUST be present. There is no proxy allowed for the Critique Only category.

11. 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 *Student and Aspiring members further their skills and improve in the craft with the goal of participating in DPC to earn merits*. 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:

- a. Commercial/Advertising/Editorial
- b. Composition (non-Landscape/Nature)
- c. Scientific/Industrial
- d. 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:

- a. Preconceived/Created images. Software created images built primarily in the computer.
- b. Overly processed, painterly and/or special effects.
- c. 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:

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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:

- a. Flora: All forms of plant life; the whole or any part of trees, shrubs, wildflowers, weeds, grasses, ferns, mosses, fungi, lichens, seeds, fruits, etc.
- b. 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:

- a. Children/Family.
- b. High School/Senior/Individual.
- c. Animals/Pets.
- d. Glamour/Boudoir/Fine Art Portraits.
- e. 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 BEGINNING MONDAY MORNING at 12:01 AM THRU SUNDAY BY 11:00 PM TWO WEEKENDS BEFORE THE COMPETITION.**

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

### 1. File must be named exactly as follows:

Category Initial\_Title Title

Title\_FirstName LastName.jpg

EXAMPLE: P\_Smile You're On Candid

Camera\_Jane Doe.jpg

Use these specific letter designations for the category you wish to enter – CO, A, C, E, L, N, O, P, PJ or W

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

**Please note images in the wrong category may be disqualified at the discretion of the DPC Director or Moderator.**

**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.

File size must not exceed 3.5MB.

Embedded Color Profiles: *sRGB* or *Adobe RGB* only. **Any other color space will result in disqualification.**

**3. Electronic images must be submitted to PPLAC upon DPC registration.**

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 (MasterCard or VISA only).

You will receive a confirmation email from the DPC Director informing you of your image submissions within 48 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.

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.

**ALL SUBMISSIONS ARE FINAL. NO CHANGES TO YOUR ENTRY ARE PERMITTED ONCE IT IS SUBMITTED. YOU MAY NOT CHANGE THE TITLE, CONTENT, OR TYPE OF ANY ENTRY AFTER YOU SUBMIT PAYMENT TO FINALIZE THE ENTRY.**

## **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 0 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:** Highest merit score in the category. Tie score will be broken by the judges.

**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**

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 or above in three Image Competitions excluding Critique-Only.

2. Three entries must score an 80 or above in three different categories for the year excluding Critique-Only.

4. To determine Photographer of the Year, the DPC Director will take the highest merit score from three different categories and then add them together. The highest sum score will win Photographer of the Year. 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.

**All images and content are ©.**