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*May 4, zoom meeting only, 7:30*

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*Featured Cover by Shahrooz Shaparnia  
(see makers description on page 6)*

# Notices and Coming Events

See the [Calendar](#) on our website for latest updates or details.

## Next Competition - Mon. May 4, Zoom only

**Submission Rules** – Members may enter a maximum of two projected images. On months with prints, a maximum of three images may be submitted as three prints or a combination of prints and (up to two) projected images.

**Our meeting judge** for May will be Becky Jaffe. In stating her philosophy, she says, “I know I will see gorgeous and moving photography when I attend a camera club meeting. I am less interested in ranking and sorting this beauty than I am in leveraging the competition as a platform for learning from each other’s gifts and talents, so that we each might come away from the evening with additional tools in our artistic toolbox, a dose of collective inspiration, and a visceral yearning to create ever more exquisite art. ”

**Categories for May** - Besides the monthly categories of Mono and Color the challenge categories will be Creative and Journalism projected.

### Creative Category

Creative photography is producing an image through the use of imaginative skill or originality of thought including the altering of reality. No image should be eliminated from competition simply because it looks realistic, provided it shows originality of concept. Creative images may include modifications in the darkroom, on the computer, or in the camera, as well as unusual points of view, imaginative use of subject matter or lighting, or any other presentation that begins with the maker’s photograph or a collection of photographs. HDR w/o further changes are not considered “Altered Reality”. Images are judged both for . . . [MORE](#)

### Journalism Category

- Images with informative content and emotional impact
- Reflecting the human presence in our world.
- The journalistic (story-telling) value of the image should receive priority over pictorial quality.
- Images that misrepresent the truth, such as those from events or activities arranged specifically for photography, or of subjects directed or hired for photography, are not eligible.
- The title should identify the activity (answer who, what, where, when and why) and complement the story as . . . [MORE](#)

**Club Field Trip** - Field Trip! Sunday May 3rd — Evening and possible night shooting! Stanford University. We will start at the Arizona Cactus Garden meeting at 6p.m. and later to the Memorial Church near Hoover Tower area. [Click for more info on our Calendar and to Register.](#)

## Print Competitions Schedule

Prints will be judged every other month along with projected. For the rest of 2026, prints will be judged in . . .

- June- Journalism, Creative, Mono, Color
- August - Nature, Travel, Mono, Color
- October – Journalism, Creative, Mono, Color
- December - Nature, Travel, Mono, Color

**Special Interest Group Links below**  
(Click on any SIG title for detailed information)

- [Special Interest Group - Seeing in Sixes](#)
- [Special Interest Group in Monochrome Photography](#)
- [Special Interest Group in Photoshop](#)
- [Special Interest Group - Novice Only](#)
- [Special Interest Group - Bird Photography](#)
- [Special Interest Group - Hands-on Editing](#)
- [Special Interest Group - Astrophotography](#)
- [Special Interest Group - Eastern Sierra Photography](#)
- [Special Interest Group - Landscape Photography](#)



Creative image from 2018 -The intersection of you are here and High St.



Journalism image from 2019. Placards for Each Person Killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas HS

**Monthly Hands-on Photo Editing Session** - register to attend – Check the Club Calendar for dates, usually the last Wednesday of the month 3:45 - 5:45 at the Saratoga Library. We’ll edit photos you bring. **How to Register:** - Log-on to club website, Click event under “calendar” Questions, email [here](#)

## April Competition Winners Tell Us How They Made It



◀ The Limpkin, a large fresh water wading bird found in the wetlands of Florida, extracts an apple snail from its shell by using its long bill that twists at the tip to cut into the shell, Mary Ellen Kaschub, Nature Print

Photographing birds was a new experience when I signed up for the Out of Chicago bird conference at Merritt Island, a large preserve near Cape Canaveral. It was fantastic. In the process I learned. Lots. We had gone early in the morning to photograph beautiful Spoonbills, then I spotted this Limpkin. Not familiar with Limpkins, I watched, then photographed its feeding process to catch this shot. I learned that Limpkins extract

an apple snail from its shell using the twist at the tip of its bill to cut the adductor muscle using a scissoring motion. It then discards the shells. I've loved learning about birds and their behaviors. I intend to attend the Club's Bird SIG to learn more!

Camera Info:

Mirrorless Fuji X-T5 70-300 with a 1.4X extender. The Limpkin was close to shore: lens at 200mm, ISO 1250; F 4.8 at 1/640 sec.

**Pink Means "I'm Hungry".** The baby of an eared grebe (*podiceps nigricollis*) has a head sensor to tell his parents if he is hungry. And Pink color means, "I am hungry, please feed me.," Kelly Zhang Nature Projected ▶

I was curious about the pink spot on top of this Eared Grebe's head and consulted a birder friend. He told me it's actually a head sensor that alerts parents when the baby is hungry and needs feeding. Nature works wonders indeed. The photo was taken in Don Edwards County Park in Santa Clara in 2025. A Sony A1 with a 600mm fixed lens and a 1.4x extender was used for this image.



## April Competition Winners Tell Us How They Made It



◀ Metal Worker - Fes - Morocco, Alan Levenson, Travel Projected

A medina is the old, walled part of a city, commonly found in North Africa, characterized by narrow streets, historical architecture, and traditional markets known as souks. The term “medina” literally means “city” or “town” in Arabic. This metal worker is one of many craftsman practicing their skills in the open outdoor marketplace of the medina.

In the heart of doubt, I find my balance, Irina Nekrasova, Monochrome Projected ▶

Shot in nothing but natural light, in the simplicity of a parking lot- yet she transforms the ordinary into a stage of pure grace. Initial editing done in LR, conversion to Monochrome done manually in PS using BW adjustment layer, then refining the light (Dodge and Burn) with Curves adjustment layers.

Sony ILCE-7M3 camera settings: ISO 800, F4.5, S 1/250, 51 mm



## April Competition Winners Tell Us How They Made It



◀ **Oaxacan Garlic, Tim Meadows,  
Monochrome Print**

This image started as a somewhat mundane shot of earthenware and garlic found just as you see it on a shelf at a mole cooking class that we took on a recent trip to Oaxaca Mexico. The way the raking light hit the cup and garlic caught my eye, and this is what makes the final image pop. The edge of the original had a lot of clutter in the lower left, so I used the generative remove tool to simplify that area, reducing the amount of rosemary and garlic stalks. I then used Photoshop's generative expand to give the image a little more space at the bottom and left edge. After lots of dodging, burning and

spot and noise removal, I converted the image to black and white in Silver Efex. I chose a pretty pronounced sepia toning mode to make the final image in keeping with this earthy shade commonly found in Oaxaca. I was happy to hear the judge comment on the print, "this looks so much better than what I saw online"! Those of you reluctant to print might keep this in mind.

Camera Specs: Nikon Z50, 16-50mm lens at 35mm, ISO 6400, f9, 1/60 sec.

### **Opulence, Straight From the Tin, Irina Nekrasova, Color Print**

The message is my visual commentary on how luxury can be packaged, perceived, or even trivialized—suggesting that value and beauty aren't always where we expect them, and that appearances can redefine what we consider "prosperous"...

Photoshop adjustments are limited to cropping and Smart Sharpening.

Canon camera settings: ISO 100, F16, 5 sec, 64 mm



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## April Competition Winners Tell Us How They Made It

### ◀ Snow storm. Yosemite Valley, February 2026, Shahrooz Shahparnia, Color Projected

Captured in Yosemite National Park on February 16, just as a snowstorm was moving into the valley. Making images like this was the main goal of the trip. I've been to Yosemite many times and have captured all sorts of images of the iconic spots, in summer, winter, at night, even during the fires. But this time, my intention was to capture the more intimate corners of the valley while it was snowing. The red-toned redwoods make Yosemite such a unique place for winter photography. In this specific image, I wanted to create a layered effect using both in-focus and out-of-focus snowflakes, along with the tree trunks at various distances. The use of a telephoto lens was intentional to compress the depth, and the way the road is composed is all part of that “play” of layers.

Camera and lens info: Canon R6 M2, 92mm (RF70-200), 1/250s, f8, ISO3200, basic Lightroom edits

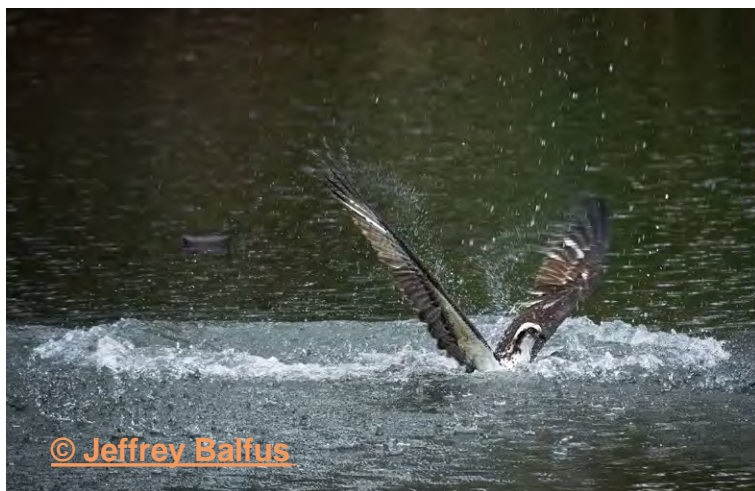


April Second Place Competition Winners



*All results and all images from a competition can be seen by [clicking here](#).*

April Second Place Competition Winners (continued)



*[All results and all images from a competition can be seen by clicking here.](#)*

## Nearly 90% of Working Photographers Are Using AI

from *Petapixel.com* by Jeremy Gray <https://petapixel.com/2026/04/09/nearly-90-of-surveyed-working-photographers-are-using-ai/>

**Key Findings from Surveyed Photographers** (*Editor's note - this survey was conducted by an AI post processing company*)

- 01 **AI adoption is mainstream**  
AI is now widely adopted with 83% of all photographers using it in their workflows.
- 02 **Working photographers are moving first**  
68% of working photographers use AI weekly or daily, double the rate of enthusiasts.
- 03 **Curiosity supersedes fear**  
Only 5% of photographers feel threatened. Most approach AI with curiosity and cautious optimism.
- 04 **Mundane tasks thwart creative joy**  
AI can take on the busywork, giving photographers more time to focus on high-value creative work.
- 05 **AI works best in a support role**  
The strongest demand is for AI that handles repetitive tasks. Efficiency is the priority.
- 06 **Business is the big opportunity**  
Photographers are not asking AI to replace their vision. They want help growing their businesses.
- 07 **General AI tools are popular, but insufficient**  
Photographers are adapting existing tools to their needs, but they want tools specifically designed for their workflows and style.
- 08 **Time saved is time reinvested**  
Reclaimed time doesn't go to one place. Enthusiasts put it toward balance and personal work, while many pros also see it as an opportunity to grow their business.

[VSCO](#) (an AI post processing company), surveyed 401 “general popular photographers” in the U.S. and Canada, independent of VSCO’s user base, and asked each how they perceive, use, and think about AI in creative and business environments. VSCO separated the respondents into two groups: 56 percent were working photographers, and 44 percent were self-described enthusiasts who are serious about photography but do not earn money from it.

Among the surveyed photographers, the most popular genres were travel and lifestyle, followed by landscape, nature, and wildlife. Across the board, despite the diversity of types of photographers in the survey, the vast majority use AI in some capacity already as part of their workflow.

“Photographers aren’t debating whether AI belongs in their workflow any longer — 83 percent are already using it,” says VSCO CEO Eric Wittman. “Over half use it weekly or daily. Among working photographers, that number doubles compared to enthusiasts — 68 percent use AI weekly or daily compared to 34 percent of enthusiasts.”

As Wittman acknowledges, photographers have “legitimate concerns about creative control, ethics, and professionalism” regarding AI. However, in VSCO’s survey, fewer than five percent of respondents feel threatened by AI. More respondents are generally open to AI in their workflow, at least in limited ways.

“This points toward a considered, practical relationship with technology, shaped by experience, not hype,” Wittman continues. “The deeper issue this research surfaces is the competition for their time. Nearly half of photographers spend between a quarter and half of their working hours on tasks that bring little creative satisfaction — file organization, planning, communication, promotion. For working photographers, time spent in this drudgery is even higher.”

Per VSCO, its findings point toward a future where AI is a helpful assistant or supporter to human-centered, human-driven creativity. *MORE* - <https://petapixel.com/2026/04/09/nearly-90-of-surveyed-working-photographers-are-using-ai/>

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## That Image Would Look Great as a Print!



Article by member *Tim Meadows*

### *That Image Would Look Great as a Print!*

I know what you're thinking, here he goes again trying to twist my arm to get more prints entered on competition nights... Actually, I'm passionate about prints because I believe processing your images for digital display on Flickr, Instagram, or even monthly projected competitions doesn't bring out the best. Many fine art photographers consider the print to be "the final form of the work — the culmination of the creative process. Ansel Adams famously called the negative the "score" and the print the "performance." Many would say, until it's printed, the work isn't truly finished.

This past print competition the judge said upon viewing of one of my print entries, "This looks so much better than what I previewed on the computer". In the MonoSIG I lead, you will often hear me say "that would look great as a print." Viewing a physical print engages the eye differently — you can see texture, subtle tonal gradations, and paper quality in ways no screen can replicate. The tactile dimension of art is simply absent in digital form. I've found that through the act of processing for printing and then creating the final print I develop a deeper connection to my images than when creating a digital version.

True, printing is not as simple as creating a digital image. It does take more work, but it is also more rewarding. I often hear "I don't print because I don't have a printer". Or, "it's expensive to print and mat my image". Or even, "what do I do with all the prints I make? I don't have enough wall space." Those, indeed, are valid concerns, but somewhat easy to overcome. I do have my own printer, cut my own re-usable mat. Considering paper and ink, I figure it costs me roughly \$3 per print for competition entry. But, if you don't have a printer, there are many printing services from CVS to BayPhoto. Even BayPhoto charges less than \$6 for a 10" x 15" print. The wall space problem is a real one. After competition, I typically remove the print from the mat and save it in my printer paper box, freeing up the mat for re-use next time. More on "what to do with all my prints" in a later article by Eric Gray.

Hopefully we will see more prints on competition night, since your image will look great as a print.

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## Are More Pixels Better?



*Photo credit - Amir Bohlooli / MUO*

from *makeuseof.com* by Brady Snyder - <https://www.makeuseof.com/i-finally-learned-why-12mp-beats-50mp-photo/>

Image sensor size is the more important spec than megapixel count, and that's a problem for smartphones with tiny cameras. Smartphone cameras are small, and that leads manufacturers to employ software tricks to improve image quality despite the inherent size limitations. You can easily find an Android phone or iPhone with a camera sporting a higher megapixel count than a mirrorless body or DSLR camera. As you've probably heard before, megapixels aren't everything, and they hardly tell the entire story. Image sensor size is the more important spec than megapixel count, and that's a problem for smartphones with tiny cameras.

Megapixels quantify the resolution of a camera, measured in millions of pixels. A phone with a 50MP main camera has 50 million pixels, while a device with a 200MP camera has 200 million pixels. However, pixels aren't always equal. Pixels are the tiny squares that capture light to create images, but they come in different sizes. Pixel size and image sensor size determine the resolution of a camera, measured in megapixels. To cram more pixels into an image sensor, you either need to include a larger sensor or miniaturize the pixels.

Smartphones use smaller pixels and image sensors due to their obvious space constraints, and that's why they feature a trick called "pixel binning" to improve performance. By combining pixels together, phone cameras can produce better images with a lower resolution (megapixel count). It's the reason why a 12MP photo can look better than a 50MP or 200MP one captured with modern camera phones.

Megapixel counts are easy to market, which is why smartphone brands advertise them so prominently. Everyone knows a bigger number is better than a smaller one, right? That's hardly the case in mobile photography, but many consumers mistakenly assume that the Galaxy S26 Ultra's 200MP camera sensor is automatically better than the iPhone 17 Pro Max's 48MP primary shooter. Instead, the pixel size and sensor size are more important in predicting camera performance. For instance, the Galaxy S26 Ultra's 200MP main camera has tiny 0.6-micron pixels, while the **iPhone 17 Pro Max's main camera offers much larger 1.22-micron pixels**. *Ed. Note My old Nikon D750 has very large 6.0 micron pixels and the newer Nikon Z8 has large 4.35 $\mu$ m ( $\mu$ = microns). BTW- the bigger the pixel the more light is collected.*

Entire article - <https://www.makeuseof.com/i-finally-learned-why-12mp-beats-50mp-photo/>

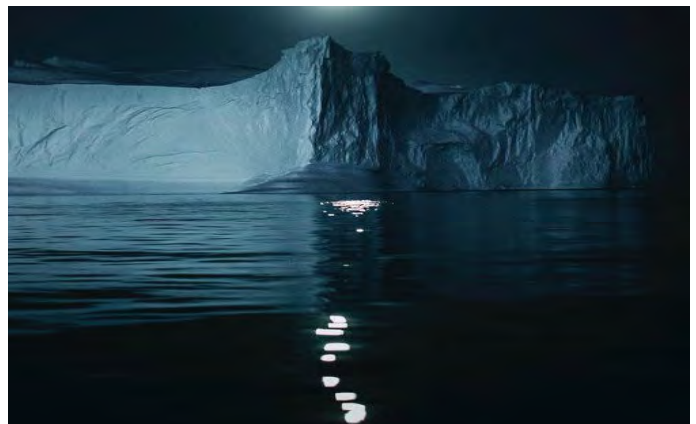
## Inspiration - Iceland

from 121clicks.com by Venkat Prakash - <https://121clicks.com/inspirations/gunnar-freyr-gunnarsson-iceland-photography/>

Iceland has no shortage of jaw-dropping scenery, but in the hands of Gunnar Freyr Gunnarsson, it hits on a whole different level, like something straight out of another planet. His photos don't just show landscapes; they pull you into vast, cinematic worlds where rivers twist like veins, volcanoes breathe quietly, and coastlines stretch into infinity. There's scale, mood, and movement in every frame, making Iceland feel alive, raw, and almost surreal.

Born in Denmark to Icelandic parents, Gunnar grew up between two cultures, carrying a deep-rooted connection to his homeland. In 2015, he made a bold move, leaving behind a stable corporate career at PwC after earning a master's degree in Business and Auditing. He sold everything, bought a one-way ticket, and returned to Iceland, chasing something more meaningful. [More Iceland Click here](#)

*Ed note - if you haven't been there go or if you have, go again.*



## Fun with Microphotography

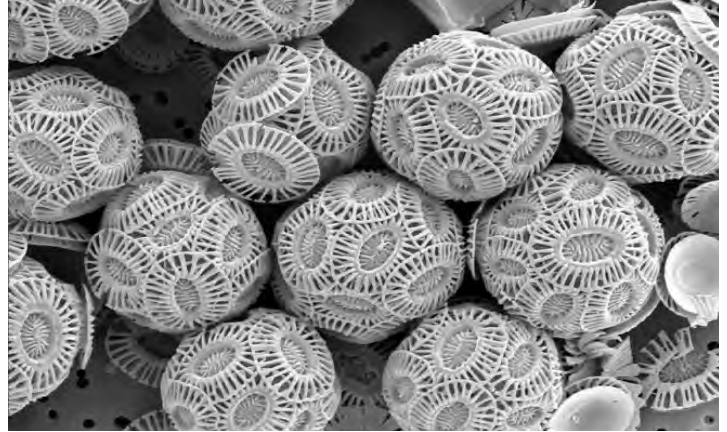
from BoredPanda by-Ifeoluwa Adesina, Eligijus Sinkunas, Karolina Kondratavičiūtė and Monika Pašukonytė - <https://www.boredpanda.com/insanely-cool-microscope-pictures/>

Grab your lab coat, or at least pretend you have one, and prepare to zoom way, way in because we're about to explore a world that's been hiding right under your nose this whole time. Ever wondered what a grain of pollen looks like up close? Or why everyday objects start looking like alien landscapes the second you stick them under a microscope?

Luckily for us, curious minds have been busy capturing this hidden universe and sharing the results online. Turns out the tiniest things can be the most mind-blowing, so buckle up, because these insanely cool microscope pictures are about to make you question everything you thought you knew about the small stuff.



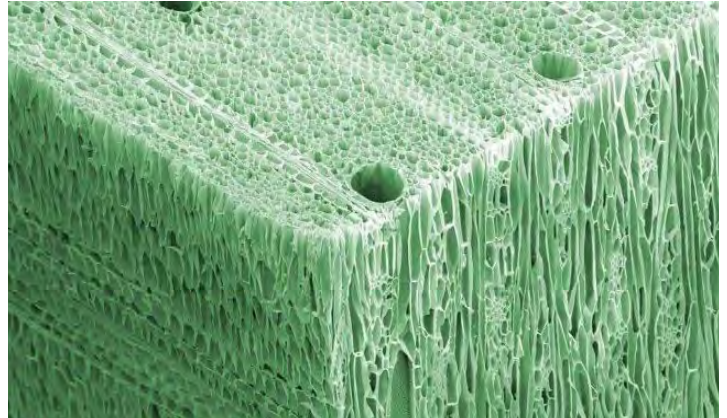
*Closeup - a cat's tongue*



*Particles of chalk*



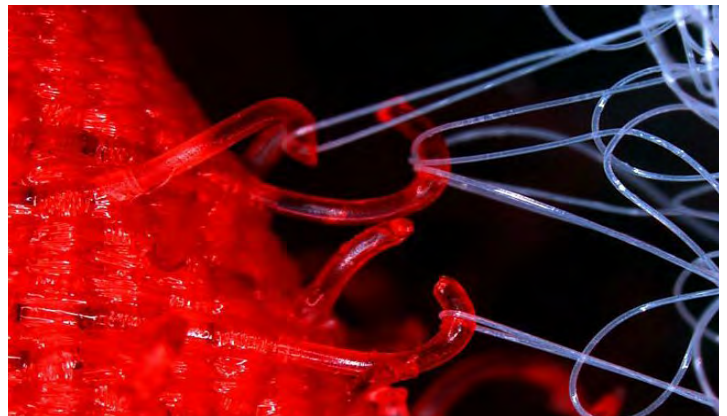
*Grains of sand*



*Corner of a wood block*



*Grains of salt*



*Two sides of velcro*

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## Iconic Photo Back Story

*from Google AI query*

NASA flight operations imagery instructors Paul Reichert and Katrina Willoughby (sometimes listed as Kristina) trained the Artemis II astronauts, including Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch, and Jeremy Hansen. These Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) alumni conducted approximately 20 hours of specialized photo and video training over several years.

Training Focus: The training involved mastering Nikon D5 DSLRs, the “workhorse” camera designed for extreme space conditions, as well as handling imagery tasks with the iPhone 17 Pro Max, Willoughby said on RIT’s news site.

They did well based on results below:



*Earthset - Earthset captured through the Orion spacecraft window at 6:41 p.m. EDT, April 6, 2026, during the Artemis II crew’s flyby of the Moon. A muted blue Earth with bright white clouds sets behind the cratered lunar surface. Image: NASA*



*Shadows Across Vavilov Crater - The Artemis II crew captured this close-up view of Vavilov Crater on the rim of the older and larger Hertzprung basin on the Moon during their lunar flyby on April 6, 2026. The right portion of the image shows the transition from smooth material within an inner ring of mountains to more rugged terrain around the rim. Vavilov and other craters and their ejecta are accentuated by long shadows at the terminator, the boundary between lunar day and night. NASA*



*NASA astronaut & Artemis II Commander Reid Wiseman took this picture of Earth from the Orion spacecraft’s window on April 2, 2026, after completing the translunar injection burn.*

*Important note - This is the first image ever to record the auroras on both the North and South Poles.*

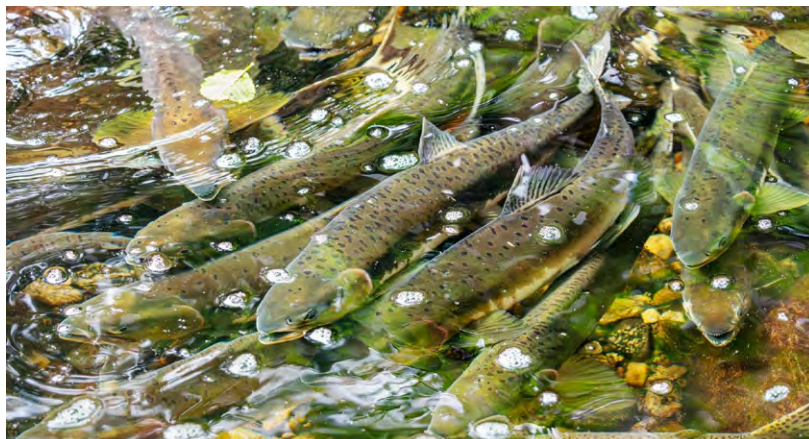
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## Confused About Photo Categories?

by member Airdrie Kincaid

The club has six competition categories. The three reality-based categories of Journalism, Travel, and Nature have *many* post processing restrictions. **These restrictions include but are not limited to:**

- Removing, adding to, moving or changing any part of an image, except for cropping and straightening.
- Adding a vignette during processing.
- Blurring parts of the image during processing to hide elements in the original scene.
- Darkening parts of the image during processing to hide elements in the original scene.
- All conversions other than to complete grayscale monochrome.
- Conversion of parts of an image to monochrome, or partial toning, desaturation or over-saturation of color
- Borders are not permitted unless part of a Diptych or Triptych.



Recent Nature Image by Mercury Freedom

**Details are in each category definition.** In general,

*Journalism* is about people. *Travel* is about places. *Nature* is about plants, animals, and other natural phenomenon. Reality category titles are factual and describe the subject and story in the image, similar to the caption you would find in a newspaper, travel article, or natural history guidebook.

**The other three categories are art-based.** Post processing for Color and Creative is unrestricted as long as all of the work was created by the maker. Monochrome images are restricted to a range from light to dark of a single color. The titles do not need to be factual but should provide insight into your inspiration for the artwork. Short titles, even one word that conveys an emotion, can be appropriate.

More info about all competition categories -

<https://www.losgatos-saratogacameraclub.org/Competitions/ClubCompetitionTypeInfo.aspx>

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### Great Photography Articles/Videos

International Journalism 2026 - <https://www.worldpressphoto.org/collection/photocontest/2026/north-and-central-america>

AI Already in Mirrorless - <https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/-mirrorless-camera-already-has-ai-built-into-it>

Luminosity Masks Explained- <https://fstoppers.com/photoshop/luminosity-masks-explained-more-natural-photoshop-901461>

Tack Sharp Images - <https://fstoppers.com/education/five-steps-tack-sharp-images-any-camera-900829>

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