

Annual Competition 2025-26

Version 2.1

Summary

Deadline for Entries

Sunday April 12, 2026, **10:00 pm**.

Submissions will open after the March Monthly Competition entries are processed.

Date of Competition

Thursday, April 23, 2026, **7:00 pm**.

Results

Results will be announced at the Annual Awards Night, May 28, 2026, **6:30pm**.

Competition Categories (Summary - Full Details Below)

Please read the full entry requirements and rules for each listed below.

- 100 President's Challenge: Strong and Free. (Digital Single Image)
- 200 Photographic Technique: Intentional Camera Movement (Digital Single Image)
- 300 People: Classic Portrait (Digital Single Image)
- 400 Outings and Workshops (Digital Single Image)
- 500 Plantlife (Digital Single Image)
- 600 Wildlife (Digital Single Image)
- 700 'Scapes (Digital Single Image)
- 800 Photo Essay (Digital Composite Image)
- 900 Clive Mathewson. Humour/Lighthearted (Digital Single Image)
- 1000 Video Composition. Open. (MP4 or similar video file, 3 minutes maximum)
- 1100 Print. (Printed Single Image, Max 20 inches)

Rules and Entries

Rules

The rules for IACC competitions are contained in the Competition Manual for the current club year (2025-26), on pages 8-10. All rules therein apply to the annual competition, unless clearly stated otherwise. In addition there are specific requirements, restrictions, and themes for certain categories within the annual competition.

Please read the details of each category you wish to enter. Some categories have quite specific requirements, and some have changed from previous years.

How to Enter

Submission procedures are detailed in the IACC Competition Manual for the current year, on pages 5 to 7. Note especially that:

- A complete entry form for all entries must be submitted prior to the entry deadline.
- Some categories have further submission requirements. Please read the details of each category you wish to enter.
- If you make an error in your submission (e.g. wrong file, wrong format, error in title, or whatever), you can correct it by re-submitting *the entire form*. We always use the last submission from each entrant in each category.

Scoring and Results

Categories 900 and 1000 are voted on by members in attendance at the April club meeting, in the same way as monthly competitions. Categories 100-800, and 1100, are judged and scored by experienced photographic judges chosen by the competition committee. These are professional and/or highly experienced photographers, who have had experience judging in competitions. Normally, the judges are not current club members.

Winners will be announced at the Annual Awards Meeting in May. Winners of “Best Overall in a Monthly Category” will also be announced at the Awards Meeting. These winners are determined by the judges scores in the monthly competitions they have entered. Shortly after the awards evening, a summary of image numbers, scores and

rankings will be available online. This information may be accessed via a link on the Members Only Competitions page on the IACC Website.

Competition Categories

100 President's Challenge

1. Each club member can enter a single **digital** image.
2. The theme for each year is announced annually at the Awards Night in May of the preceding year. It is set by the club president.
3. The theme for 2026 is "Strong and Free"

200 Photographic Technique

1. Each club member can enter a single **digital** image.
2. The theme for each year is announced annually at the Awards Night in May of the preceding year. The theme will be a photographic or compositional technique. It is set by the competition committee.
3. The theme for 2026 is "Intentional Camera Movement" (ICM). ICM involves intentionally moving the camera or lens controls during exposure, or mimicking such effects in post-processing. ICM can include physically moving the camera, zooming or refocusing the camera, or some combination thereof. For purposes of this competition, it also includes post-processing techniques which mimic such movements.

300 People (Digital Single Image)

1. Each club member can enter a single **digital** image.
2. A specific type (theme) of people photography will be highlighted each year.
3. The theme for each year is set by the competition committee.
4. The theme for 2026 is "Classic Portrait".
 - a. A classic portrait is an image focused on the face of one main individual. The aims are to effectively draw attention to the face of the model, and to communicate something of their personality, condition, and/or emotions. This usually requires that the photographer is engaged with the subject, and not capturing an image where the subject is unaware.
 - b. Classic portraits can be taken with artificial or natural light.

400 Outings and Workshops (Digital Single Image)

1. Each club member can enter a single **digital** image.
2. The image must be from a sanctioned IACC Outing or Workshop, conducted since the previous year's Annual Competition entries closed. The original image must have been acquired at the Outing or Workshop.

500 Plantlife (Digital Single Image)

1. Each club member can enter a single **digital** image.
2. **Definition:** A plant is a living organism that generally does not change location by itself and absorbs nutrients from its surroundings. This "includes the flowering plants, conifers and other gymnosperms, ferns, clubmosses, hornworts, liverworts, mosses and the green algae" (Wikipedia entry 'Plant' n.d. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plant>). For the purposes of this competition, we will also accept lichens and fungi as well as red and brown algae (e.g. seaweed).
3. Photographs of individual plants, groups of plants, or parts of plants at any scale are all acceptable. Plants photographed in any setting, including in a studio or on a light box, are acceptable.

600 Wildlife (Digital Single Image)

1. Each club member can enter a single **digital** image.
2. **Definition:** An animal is a living organism that generally does change location by itself during at least some stages of its life, and gains nutrients from consuming other creatures. Animals include vertebrates (birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish); molluscs (clams, oysters, octopuses, squid, snails); arthropods (millipedes, centipedes, insects, spiders, scorpions, crabs, lobsters, shrimp); annelids (earthworms, leeches); cnidarians (jellyfish, anemones, corals); and sponges. (Wikipedia entry 'Animal' n.d. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal>).
3. A wild animal is a member of a species that grows without human aid or intervention in any part of its life cycle (Webster's Dictionary). A non-wild animal is a member of a species that requires such intervention, and/or has been bred by humans over time to fit specific requirements, and/or has been tamed.
Non-wild animal species include all pets and farm animals. Feral versions of non-wild species are not eligible for this category.
4. Wild animals may be photographed in any setting, including game farms and zoos.

700 'Scapes (Digital Single Image)

1. Each club member can enter a single **digital** image.
2. The image may be a landscape, a seascape, a skyscape or a cityscape. There are no hard restrictions, other than that the image is to be made of the outdoors.
3. Entrants should consider that judges will generally think of landscape photography “in reference to photography of naturally occurring scenery in open spaces—typically ranging from a dozen feet, to a dozen meters, to a dozen miles, in breadth” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landscape_photography). Cityscapes, seascapes, and skyscapes have similar meanings for their own specialties. Images which do not clearly reflect these concepts are likely to receive lower scores, even if they are otherwise good images.

800 Photo Essay

1. Each club member can enter a single photo essay.
2. A photo essay is a series of images, presented together, designed to tell a story of some sort.
 - a. Photo essays are usually considered to fall into two broad categories: narrative or thematic. Narrative photo essays tell a story, while thematic photo essays explore a theme. Many judges recognize only narrative photo essays as legitimate. Therefore we strongly recommend submitting an essay that clearly tells a story. *See below.*
3. For the purposes of this competition, a single photo essay consists of 5 to 9 discrete images plus a title.
 - a. There should be no information on the essay or its component images identifying the photographer.
 - b. There should be no titles or numbers on the individual images.
4. A complete entry consists of three elements:
 - a. **Digital File of the whole essay.** The 5 to 9 discrete images must be combined into a single jpeg (jpg file), which needs to be submitted with the entry form. The digital image must be in a 4 by 5 aspect ratio (16 by 20 inch print size). It can be horizontal (landscape) or vertical (portrait) orientation. It should be at least 2880 by 3600 pixels, but no larger than 4000 by 5000 pixels.
 - b. **Print of the whole essay.** A print of the jpg must be received at the competitions desk at the hall before **6:50 pm** on the night of the April annual competition meeting. The print should be 16 inches by 20 inches, and stiffened in some way to allow it to stand on our easels. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please arrange to have someone else bring your print. Contact the competition chair at

competitions@imagesalberta.ca if you need assistance. See below for advice on printing this image.

- c. **Digital Files of each individual image.** The judges have requested that all the individual images be submitted to enhance both the scoring and their critiques. To submit them, send them as jpg files via a file transfer service such as Smash, WeTransfer, Dropbox, etc. (preferred) or as email attachments to competitions@imagesalberta.ca. They should be sent within 24 hours of the closing date and time of the competition. We suggest sending them in the same format you would use for any other digital competition entry. There should be no information on the image, **or in the file name**, identifying the photographer.
 - i. You do not need to print these images! The judges will view them on their laptops.

How to Structure a Narrative Photo Essay.

Narrative photo essays tend to be chronologically structured, but not all narrative photo essays follow a purely chronological format. Below is one writer's fairly rigid sequence for a narrative photo essay, but remember that there are many other potential approaches.

1. Introduction
2. Contextualization
3. Opening
4. Development
5. Conflict
6. Continuation
7. Climax
8. Resolution
9. Closing (Lightstalking: <https://www.lightstalking.com/create-meaningful-photography-essay-5-steps/>)

How to Print Your Photo Essay

If you are not familiar with printing, here is a convenient and easy approach:

- London Drugs Southgate will print a 16 by 20 image for \$14.70 for IACC members (make sure you have your membership card with its 2026 sticker with you). You can submit via their [web portal](#) and pick it up at the store any time before the meeting.
- For best quality printing, the submitted image file should be at least 2880 x 3600 pixels. If you followed the instructions in 4a, you can print that image without further modification.
- The print can be stiffened by fixing it to a 16 by 20 piece of cardboard, card stock, or foamcore. Please avoid heavier materials such as wood or metal, or

actual frames. The print can be attached to the backing with four or so bits of folded over tape, or any other way that is convenient and unobtrusive. It can be matted if you prefer, but that is not necessary as the layout will frame the images.

900 Clive Mathewson Humour Award

1. Each club member can enter a single **digital** image.
2. The theme of the category is humour. The submitted image should be humorous or lighthearted.
3. This category is scored by member voting.

1000 Video Composition

1. Each club member can enter one video/slideshow with either verbal or musical accompaniment.
2. The content/theme of the slideshow is “Open”.
3. Length: The show may be up to THREE (3) minutes long. Longer shows will not be accepted.
4. Since the videos will be member voted, please avoid including watermarks, signatures, or other elements that identify the entrant.
5. Titles and other text elements are allowed, as long as they do not identify the entrant.
6. This category is scored by member voting.
7. Special Submission Instructions
 - a. Entrants must submit their entry using the provided entry form, similar to all other IACC entry categories.
 - b. When submitting the entry form, you will need to provide a placeholder image to make the form work. This can be anything, as it will not be used for the website.
 - c. Due to the size of video/slideshow files, the actual file for projection should be sent directly to the Competitions Chair at competitions@imagesalberta.ca, using WeTransfer, Dropbox, or physically handed over on a thumb drive. Contact the chair first to make sure they are expecting the file.
 - d. The presentation should be in a file format that does not require special software for playback (e.g. MP4). All widely used video formats are acceptable. **Do not submit .exe files.**
 - e. **Powerpoint shows** must be converted to video for submission. MP4 is preferred. This prevents problems with timing, sound sync, etc. Please check with the competition chair regarding other formats.
 - f. It is recommended that videos be in HD resolution of 1920x1080 pixels.

- g. Music used in the show needs to be properly identified and credited.

1100 Print.

1. Each club member may enter a single printed image. A digital version must be submitted when entering.
2. The theme is "Open".
3. Submission Instructions
 - a. You will be emailed a print tag for your submission. you must print it and affix it to the upper right corner of your submission with the image number and title clearly visible. Your name must not be visible.
 - b. Prints (hardcopy) must be received at the competitions desk at the hall before **6:50 pm** on the night of the April annual competition meeting.
 - c. The rules regarding acceptable print materials and presentation are the same as for monthly competitions.
 - d. Maximum print size is 20 inches in any direction. This excludes the size of any matte.
 - e. The submitted image must be capable of being displayed on our easels. It must be rigid enough to be self supporting. The most common method of achieving this is to matte or mount the print. It also cannot be too heavy. This precludes the use of frames, and glass or metal prints. The decision of the "pit crew" is final.