

IACC Photo Essay Competition

Introduction

A photo essay is a series of images, presented together, designed to tell a story of some sort. 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. Both will be allowed in our competition.

Format

The format and rules may change in subsequent competitions.

- Each club member may submit one photo essay.
- Each photo essay will be digital.
- An entry will comprise a single composite image made up of 5 (minimum) to 9 (maximum) discrete images within it.
 - The composite image is limited to 50 MB.
 - The composite image must have a title. Individual images within the composite may have a title incorporated into the composite.
- Each entry will be required to have a title.
 - Enter the title in the appropriate field in the entry form.
 - The title should not identify the photographer.
 - As usual for IACC competitions, there should be no identification of the photographer (no watermarks, nothing in title, etc.)
 - Avoid use of apostrophes and other non-alphanumeric characters in file names.

How to Enter

There is an electronic entry form. The same deadlines for submission of the forms will apply.

Judging

The photo essay category will be judged by all annual competition judges. Each judge will be assigned ¼ of the entries to critique. After the competition is complete, the critiques may be posted on the club website along with the entries.

How to Do a Photo Essay.

There are many websites, books, and articles that talk about doing photo essays, but not all are created equal. A persistent problem is that many of these only discuss one type of photo essay -- the narrative. Remember that we will accept both narrative and thematic photo essays.

Thematic Photo Essays

These essays explore a theme. The theme can be a thing, a place, a person, an emotion, an idea, etc. Generally, they tend to have three main types of images:

- An establishing shot to begin.
- Several detail or instance shots.
- A closer or 'clincher' photo at the end.

Two helpful comments:

- Thematic essays work best if there is some form of visual or subject-based "arc".
- One image is usually a "feature" or "anchor" -- it stands out as the one people will remember

Narrative Photo Essays

Narrative photo essays tend to be more chronologically structured than thematic essays, but not all narrative photo essays follow a purely chronological format. I have included 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/>)

Resources

There are many resources on the web or in books. I am only going to mention one here. I encourage you to share resources you find with other members on the club Facebook page, or at meetings.

What Makes a Photo Essay Unforgettable?

<https://www.format.com/magazine/resources/photography/how-to-make-photo-essay-examples>