

# Photo Essay Competition

## Annual Competition

### April, 2019

#### Introduction

The Competition Chair has decided to introduce a Photo Essay print category at the annual competition: the photo essay. This was inspired in part by our November speaker, Stuart Dryden, but the concept has been under consideration since last year. If the category is a success at the annual competition in 2019, we may choose to repeat it in the future.

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 in April 2019.

#### Format

For our April 2019 competition, we have decided to use the following format, and supplemental rules. The format and rules may change in subsequent competitions.

- Each club member may submit one photo essay.
- Each photo essay will be printed (no digital entries).
- Each entry (all images plus the title) must be securely mounted on a single 16 inch by 20 inch piece of matte board or Foamcore board (or similar lightweight but rigid material).
- Each entry must be fully contained within the board (images and text may not project beyond the sides).
- Images must not include a physical frame (glass, metal, wood, etc.), but may have a printed frame around each image, the title, and/or the whole thing.
- An entry should comprise 5 (minimum) to 9 (maximum) discrete images, plus a title.
- Entrants may either:
  - print a series of small prints (e.g. 3½ by 5 inch to 8 by 10 inch) and a title, and mount them on the board.

- create a composite in software (e.g. Photoshop), and print that as a single print.
  - Note: The images do not all have to be the same size, but if they are too disparate it may not “read” well. Consider the impact of both the individual images and the overall effect.
- There should be no text on the entry other than the title (i.e. no titles of individual prints, no numbers).
- As usual for IACC competitions. There should be no identification of the photographer (no watermarks, nothing in title, etc.)

## **How to Enter**

There will be an electronic entry form, put up on the web site at same time as rest of annual competition. The same deadlines for submission of the forms will apply.

Remember, for all print categories, you must have the physical entry to the hall by 7pm!

- Unlike other competition print entries, the form will not include submission of digital images at that time, as no preview planned.

## **Judging**

Our current plan is to have the photo essay category judged by a single external judge, who will provide both a score and a written critique for each entry. Either the judge or the competition chair will retain the entries until the May awards night. They will then be displayed with the printed critique.

## **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>