

Photo Credits on Back Cover

How to Get the Most Out of Photography Competitions

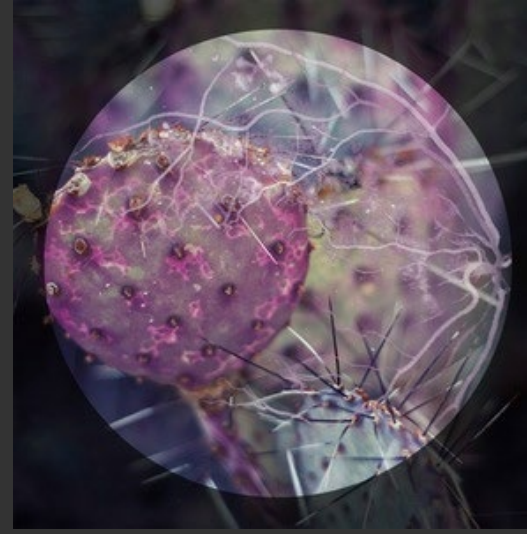
PLUS: Insiders' Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



© Marius Schultz
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2014



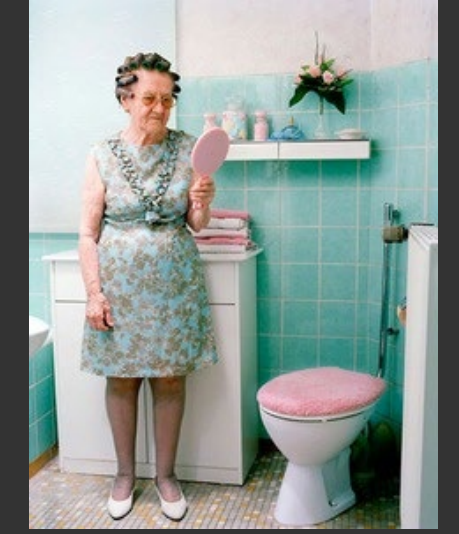
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Photographers Award 2013



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LensCulture Exposure Awards 2009



© Camille Seaman
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© Carlotta Cardana
LensCulture Emerging Photographers Award 2013



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Introduction

Submitting work to juried photography competitions is the first step artists take towards building a global audience for their work. But how do you choose among the wide range of competitions available to photographers today?

This Guide has been created to introduce you to the process of entering competitions and help you make the most of your efforts.

While there is no formula for determining precisely which competitions are right for you and your work, there are several factors that can help you decide: Judges, theme, prizes and exposure are the key areas to consider. It will then be up to you to tackle the task of editing your images to fit the competition guidelines.

We have sought the advice of many noted Judges who will share their experience and insight with you, guiding you towards your best possible submission. And we have compiled a substantial list of competitions for you to consider entering. We hope the tips, advice and information in this Guide will help you understand ways to increase your chances of success.

With good photography and a smart strategy, we wish you the best!

“Entering juried competitions is often the best way to get your work seen.”

– Mary Virginia Swanson

How to Evaluate Photo Competitions

Photo competitions are an excellent way to get your work in front of the people who matter—influential jury members who can have a career-building impact on any photographer. That said, there are a lot of photo competitions to consider, and the quality and results vary widely. We asked hundreds of photographers who entered our competitions, as well as photography experts, to define the most important factors for effective competitions. Here is a checklist of things to consider when entering a competition:

1 **Hosting Organization**

Look for organizations that are well-known and well-respected in the international photography world. Influential organizations can provide winning photographers with meaningful exposure that can lead to career-building opportunities. Other activities, publications, websites and events associated with a hosting organization can also be a good indicator of what they can offer. Look for organizations that are dedicated to photography and have a history of recognizing talented photographers.

2 **The Jury**

An influential jury panel with decision making power in the photography community can be one of the greatest assets offered to you when entering a photo competition. Think about whether or not the people on the jury can help your work be featured, published, shown or acquired. Connections to publications, galleries, festivals and an influential network in the photography world are important with both international and regional jurors. A well-connected advocate of your work can be invaluable in helping you further your career.

3 Exposure Opportunities: Exhibitions

Exhibitions are great for your CV and can help to legitimize you in the photography community. That said, there is a wide range of exhibition prestige, so it's worth looking into where a show will be, if it's offered, and who will be in attendance. Invitations to press and private previews are a great perk, so think about the hosting organization's connections and try to find documentation of previous exhibitions they have hosted.



The World Press Photo 2012 Exhibition Tour
Budapest, Hungary © Tamas Revesz



Aperture Remix Opening, Aperture Gallery.
New York



LensCulture Exposure Awards 2013
London Exhibition



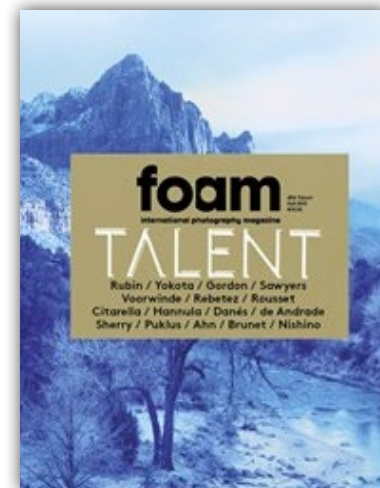
Foam Talent 2013 Exhibition at UnSeen Festival
© Stefan van Ruijven

4 Exposure Opportunities: Printed Publications

Having your photographs included in a printed publication of award-winning work has long lasting benefits, and can help put you and your work in front of important people who may not be able to attend an exhibition. A book or catalog is more permanent than an exhibition and it also allows more people to see your work in context with the other winning photographers. Printed publications are often used as reference tools and resources for serious professionals. And they offer yet another opportunity for experts all around the world to discover you and your work.



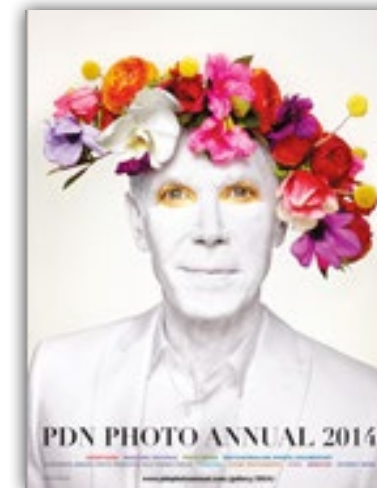
CA Photography Annual



Foam Talent Issue



World Press Photo Yearbook



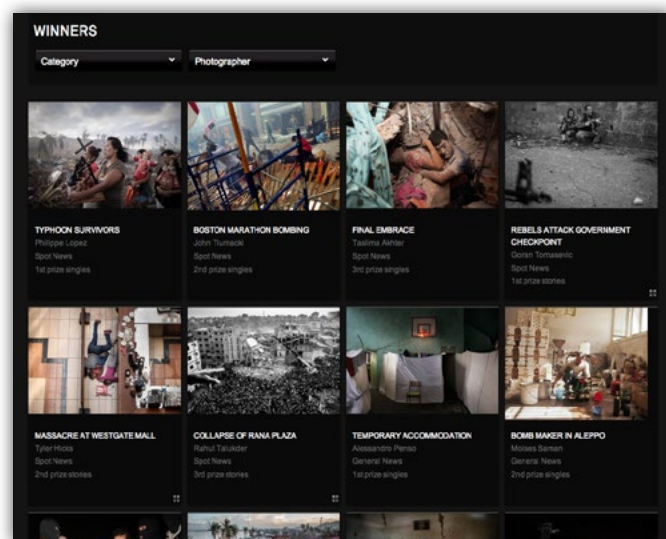
PDN Photo Annual



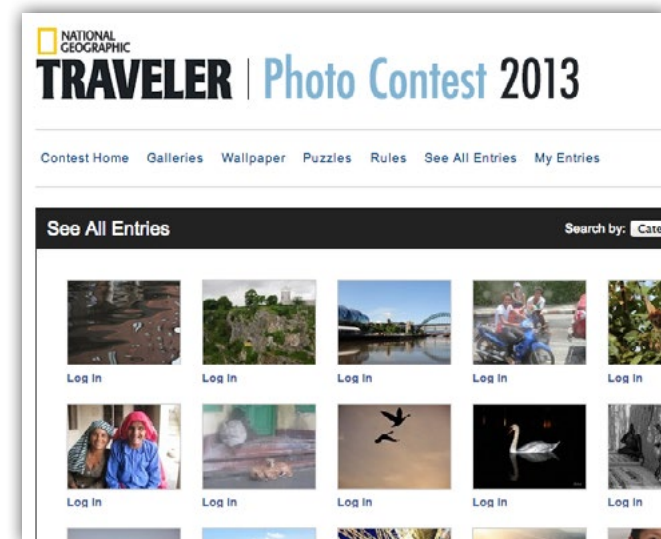
LensCulture Emerging Talent Annual

5 Exposure Opportunitites: Online

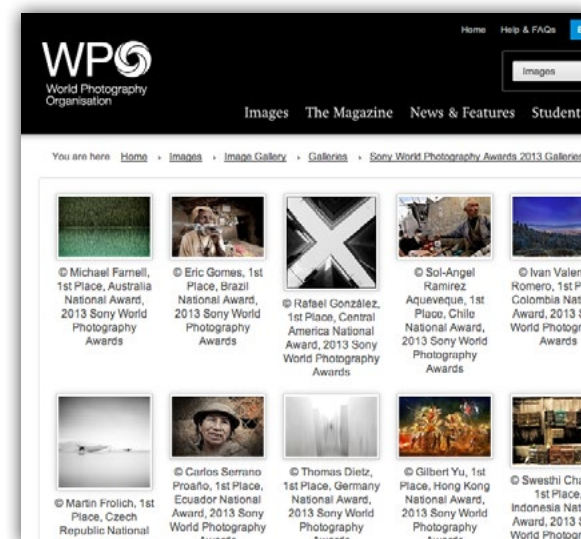
The overall value of an award package should last beyond an initial cash award or press release, and provide you with continued opportunities for growth. Online promotion can exponentially increase awareness of your work in the photography community. Consider the audience reach of the hosting-organization and how active their online forums, social networks, and websites are. The power of the Internet has the potential to make content go viral and sometimes can account for overnight success stories.



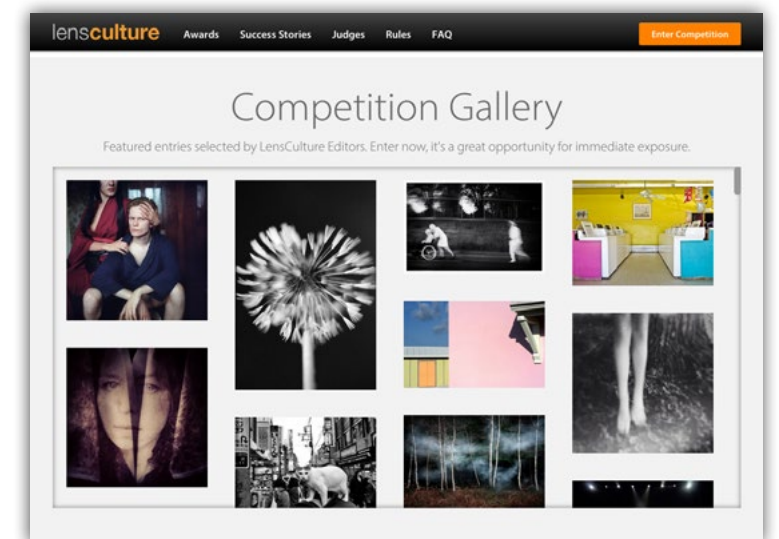
World Press Photo Winners Gallery



National Geographic Winners Gallery



Sony World Awards Winners



LensCulture Competition Gallery for Entrants



© Konstancja Nowina Konopka
LensCulture Emerging Photographers Award 2013



© Alena Zhandarova, LensCulture
Emerging Photographers Award 2013



© Sean Lee
LensCulture Exposure Awards 2012



© Ilona Szwarc
LensCulture Emerging Photographers 2013

6 Cash Awards

Cash Awards demonstrate that there is tangible value to the work you are doing, and the money can often help fund continued work, new projects, or publication of a book. Awards or grants can keep your practice alive and allow you to focus more attention on your photography. While it's always wonderful to win money, many photographers find that other components of an award are actually much more valuable than money — such as having your work included in exhibitions or printed publications. Being broadly seen around the world can be much more valuable to your career than a cash prize. In the best of all competitions, you will win cash and get extended visibility, recognition and fame.

7 Theme

Themed competitions can be helpful by offering you an opportunity that is particular to your specialty. While not all competitions have themes, you might be asked to submit to a specific category or genre. Take the time to look into themes and categories that best represent your work to maximize your shot at being selected for an award. It's helpful if the theme is clearly represented in your photos, but if it could be up for interpretation, use your artist statement to help explain why this theme pertains to your work.



© Maroesjka Lavigne
LensCulture Emerging Photographers Award 2013



© Elin Hoyland
LensCulture Exposure Awards 2009



© Isabel M. Martinez
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2014



© Aoife Herrity
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2014

8 Eligibility

Read the rules and guidelines for eligibility carefully. Make sure you fit any requirements for age, location, themes and levels. Pay attention to instructions about the number of images you can submit, naming and numbering the photos, or adding captions and text. If you've already won a big award for the same work, are you still eligible to win another competition? Plus, make sure your work fits any size, quality, color, or skill level requirements particular to the competition.

9 Entry Fees

Often times entry fees are necessary to offer award packages and keep helpful organizations running. Compare fees with other competitions and if they seem reasonable make sure you understand all the costs involved. Sometimes winners will be required to pay additional fees to cover costs of exhibitions, for example, so make sure to read all the rules.

10 Photographer Rights

You should always retain all copyrights to your own work. Competitions may want to use your winning photographs to help publicize you and your work (which is great!), but make sure it's done fairly. You should always be credited for your work and it should never be used without your permission.



© Andrey Ivanov-Eftimiopulos & Sasha Shikhova, Insight
LensCulture Exposure Awards 2011



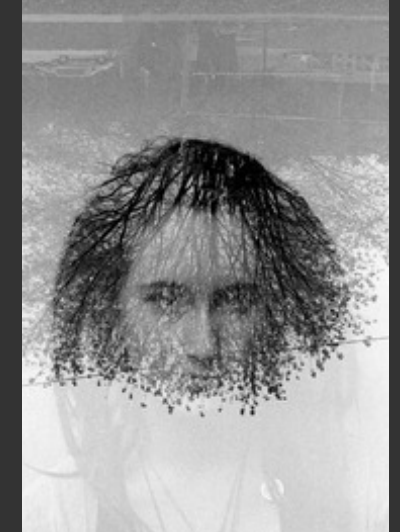
© Jessica Hines
LensCulture Exposure Awards 2010



© David Favrod
LensCulture Exposure Awards 2013



© Michelle Rogers Pritzl
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2014



© Justin Gonyea
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2014

11 Feedback from Previous Winners

Looking at previous winners and their experiences *after* their award announcement can be a good indicator of whether the competition is worthwhile to enter. It's always a good sign if you've seen their work displayed in other places and if they are willing to tell the world how much the competition helped them gain more recognition.

12 After the Competition

Sometimes competitions offer added benefits for participants beyond the deadline. Look for awards that get publicity from other online and print organizations, which is a great way to receive continued worldwide acknowledgment. You might also be eligible for extra perks or membership opportunities just for applying, which is an added benefit even if you aren't selected as a winner.

Okay! You've done your homework and research, you've identified the best competitions that can help you. So now it's time to pick your best work and enter. Dive in!

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



Natasha Egan

Executive Director,
Museum of Contemporary
Photography,
Columbia College,
Chicago, IL, USA

“When looking at photographs I listen foremost to my intuition, but this is subjective, of course. I find that I am drawn to work that is layered—visually or conceptually—and capable of communicating multiple stories depending on the life experience of the viewer. A series of pictures needs to convey a multifaceted story, with irony, humor, or formal complexity.

I am also interested in pictures that educate the viewer about a topic. I’m drawn to sociopolitical landscapes or personal human dramas that can be viewed in a wider context beyond the depicted subject, as well as art that pushes the boundaries of traditional photography.”

“I am drawn to work that is layered—visually or conceptually—and capable of communicating multiple stories depending on the life experience of the viewer.”

– Natasha Egan



Michael Famighetti

Editor, Aperture Magazine
New York City, USA

“I’m looking for a clear expression of an idea; I ask why is the photographer asking me to look at this? When reviewing hundreds of submissions, exceptional, well-executed work that animates an idea and is visually exciting really stands out and deserves to be recognized.”

“I’m looking for a clear expression of an idea; I ask why is the photographer asking me to look at this?”

– Michael Famighetti

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



Daphné Anglès

Picture Editor,
The New York Times
Paris, France

“You need to grab the jurors’ attention from the start and hold it firmly through to the last image. Editing is crucial. Each photograph has to be strong and the sequencing needs to make sense, from a story-telling and an aesthetic point of view. Avoid repetitions.

A good text with the pictures is short, concise, to the point, informed, descriptive. I find it helps to imagine you are speaking to a smart child who would rather be outside playing with friends: you have very little time to tell the story and explain WHY it matters. The same holds true for captions. 1st sentence: describe the image. 2nd sentence: why and how this image fits into the body of work.”

“You need to grab the jurors’ attention from the start and hold it firmly through to the last image. Editing is crucial...” – Daphné Anglès



Louise Clements

Artistic Director, QUAD &
FORMAT International
Photography Festival
Derby, UK

“When judging a photo prize, I am looking for something that I might not have seen before. This can be a subtle nuance or a spectacular revelation. Mainly I want to see something that is genuine and original.

I am interested in all genres and cross-fertilised projects, the key thing is for the work to be fresh and true to the originator and the subject.

The work also needs to provoke me in some way through ideas and/or composition as a single image or as a series. I am very interested in how the works communicate and make me think.”

“I am looking for something that I might not have seen before... a subtle nuance or spectacular revelation.”
– Louise Clements

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



Jim Casper

Editor & Publisher,
LensCulture

“I am always looking for surprising ‘new’ talent as well as great work from established photographers.

Every great picture tells a story and should be able to stand on its own, but viewers are often eager to know a little bit more about what the photo is about. So a simple title or caption, or a few words, can make a great photo really come to life in someone’s imagination.

If you’ve created a series of images, think of them as a story. Choose a very strong image to start off the series to make a powerful first impression.

Every image should contribute something fresh and new to the series and help add character to the submission. A strong submission can be as few as 5 images, or as many as 10 or 15 or more.”

“Every image should contribute something fresh and new to the series and help add character to the submission. A strong submission can be as few as 5 images, or as many as 10 or 15 or more.”

– Jim Casper

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



James Estrin

Co-Editor,
New York Times Lens Blog
New York City, USA

“Entering contests can be a good way to promote yourself, but it does not necessarily make for great photography. If you win, that’s wonderful. If not, don’t worry. Anyone who has ever judged a photography contest can tell you that it is not a scientific process. It is subjective. Different judges will give you different results.

That said, when I judge a contest I look for photographs that make me feel something. Anything. I also look for stories that are original. I see thousands of stories a year and most are sadly quite similar. So a story that I haven’t seen before, or a unique approach to a story that I have seen before goes very, very far. Take chances!

Captioning and text can be useful, but your images have to be understandable on their own to have a good chance of getting past the first quick viewing. Most entries have too many images. Only submit the very best work in tight edits. Less is more.”

“Does the image tell the story or illustrate the photographer’s vision clearly? The difference between a good photograph and a great one can be subtle, but a great photograph evokes an emotion/connection in the viewer. Photographers should avoid cliché images when submitting to a photo contest — they should submit images that show their own vision, what is true to them.”



Patricia Lanza

Director of Talent &
Content, The Annenberg
Space for Photography Los
Angeles, CA, USA

“Anyone who has ever judged a photography contest can tell you that it is not a scientific process. It is subjective...”

– James Estrin

“The difference between a good photograph and a great one can be subtle, but a great photograph evokes an emotion/connection in the viewer.”

– Patricia Lanza

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



Sarah Leen

Director of Photography,
National Geographic
Washington, DC, USA

“I look for images that move me, that are not derivative of other work that I have seen and that show the photographer has their own ‘visual voice’ and point of view. I love photographers who can show me familiar things in new ways and whose sense of the art of the photograph is as strong as the journalism and the message.

If the contest entry is a portfolio or is a group of images to create a visual narrative then editing and sequencing are extremely important. A few mediocre images can bring down an otherwise strong portfolio. A sequence that does not ‘read’ or tell the story in a logical fashion does not communicate in the same way as a well-edited set. Photographers need to resist the urge to add images that are not the best of their best. They should have friends or colleagues whose opinions and taste they trust look at their work and see how they react.

What separates a good photo from a great photo is a feeling somewhere between what I feel physically and what I would call an ‘aesthetic experience.’ It’s almost like the beginning of a love affair, you are just drawn to the image, you are lifted off your feet, you are moved. You just have to have it. You want to ask them to dance.

Always think hard about what category you’re entering. Always spend a lot of time editing. Find a friend with great taste to give you honest feedback. Never make a copycat image, especially not of an image that won last year.”

“Photographers should resist the urge to add images that are not the best of their best...”

– Sarah Leen

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



James Wellford

Photo Editor, Curator,
and Educator
New York City, USA

“Remember the world around your frame needs to be in your frame. A great picture actually distills 360 degrees and condenses space and emotion into an experience that registers long after you look away from the image.

Think when you photograph and don’t confuse speed with purpose. Finding and capturing these moments means the photographer is always on a path to discovery and this process forms an essential aesthetic and a unique voice. One picture is a piece of a whole and I am forever curious about the many elements (photographs) that create an entire story.

Present your work with a range; find a rhythm that speaks not only to a detail in your image but also to an emptiness, one that is full of considerations of consequence. Think metaphorically of the power of music: remember those beats of silence. Extraordinary photographs know this silent note as well.

A picture is more than punctuation — it is a verb, active, evolving and always cogitating. What informs a picture is often as important as the picture. When experience and process are powerfully channeled in the photograph(s), the image becomes a portal revealing depth and nuance about a moment that reverberates through time.”

“...the image becomes a portal revealing depth and nuance about a moment that reverberates through time...”

– James Wellford

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



Mary Virginia Swanson

Advisor to Artists and
Arts Organizations

If you have amassed a group of images that you feel proud of, I encourage you to put your work in front of industry professionals to be considered for recognition amongst your peers. Every competition will have one or more designated Jurors whose activities you should research. Should you wish to see your photographs being included in their gallery, exhibitions or publications, herein begins the process of entering a photography competition.

Selecting the strongest group of images to submit for consideration is no small feat. This requires that you seriously assess your overall body of work, a challenge that you may not have attempted previously. My advice is to tightly edit your selections to demonstrate your exploration of one project, theme, or process.

Since there are so many photography competitions, decide carefully which you will enter. My advice is to invest only in those competitions that advance your career goals. Are the Jurors individuals you have targeted as professionals you hoped to share your work with one day? Will there be broad promotion of the selected photographs in print and online? Will there be an exhibition of the selected works? Some competitions offer those who are accepted inclusion in a printed exhibition catalogue, others offer purchase awards, while others assign cash awards. Sharing your photographs with a broader audience will put your work in front of new communities, and move you onward to new creative projects.

“The process of entering a photography competition offers a tremendous learning experience and begins the path towards a broader dialogue about your work.”

– Mary Virginia Swanson

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



Alan Taylor

Editor, The Atlantic
In-Focus Photo Blog
Natick, MA, USA

“For me, it always starts with a gut feeling, something about the image that reaches out and forces me to pay attention. Whether it’s the subject matter, or a powerful composition, or a masterful use of light, or a new way of seeing something I thought myself familiar with — something about the image really has to catch my eye. After that, I look for signs of craftsmanship, storytelling and intent. I am in awe of photographers who can manage to capture a fleeting moment with skill and artistry. Based on the overall context of the competing entries, does the image powerfully evoke a reaction in the viewer, does it engage and tell a story well? In the end, it’s a subjective judgment and it also depends on the composition of the competing entries.”

“For me, it always starts with a gut feeling, something about the image that reaches out and forces me to pay attention...” – Alan Taylor



Elisabeth Biondi

Visuals Editor,
Independent Curator,
New York City, USA

“The first thing I look for is some sort of surprise — something that catches my interest. Captions become important only after I have narrowed down the images to a smaller number, from which I will choose the finalists. Editing is essential and good sequencing certainly helps with my selection. My mantra is less is more. Include only your best pictures — anything else will weaken the submission.”

“My mantra is less is more. Include only your best pictures, anything else will weaken the submission.”
– Elisabeth Biondi

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



Erik Vroons

Chief Editor,
GUP Magazine
Amsterdam,
The Netherlands

“The difficulty with judging photography is that there is no ‘absolute’ in quality, as a pre-set parameter, so we have to qualify work we see based on what we know that exists. From a photographer’s perspective, this means that you simply need to guarantee that the ‘experts’ in the field, and the potential clients that you hope to work for, are aware of what you do – that you exist and are worthy of being noticed.

That being said, photography is first and foremost a visual medium. So, one must communicate primarily through pictures. However, additional info – background info per image in case of photojournalism and documentary projects, an artist statement in the case of art or personal work – is often essential to understand the ambitions of the photographer. Even if the image comes first, accompanying words can still provide crucial information that simply cannot come across in an image.

Remember, without editing, there is no articulation. Selection and ordering means creating authority over your expression. It is what makes music out of noise, or meaning out of words. Photographic editing is somewhere in between music and (linear) writing.”

“Remember, without editing, there is no articulation. Selection and ordering means creating authority over your expression.” – Erik Vroons

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



William Hunt

Collector, Curator, and
Consultant

New York City, USA

photo © Ethan Hill

“First of all, I look for clarity. Do not confuse me. When I judge I am probably first looking at 1 inch jpegs. Show me what you are doing in that first image. What is your story or your thesis? Who are the protagonists? Put them in focus. I cannot emphasize how important that first slide is.

If you are going to write something, make it short and make it real. Do not say ‘surreal’ or ‘existential’ or ‘Man’. Don’t do it. Keep me engaged. Don’t confuse me.

In the same vein, I prefer work that is formal, clean. Know your photo history. It can help.

Still, give me some mystery, ask something of me. Surprise, delight, engage, provoke, stagger, insist, demand!

“First of all, I look for clarity...Show me what you are doing in that first image.” – W.M. Hunt



Celina Lunsford

Artistic Director and Chief
Curator, Fotografie Forum
Frankfurt, Germany

“When jurying, I look for the most unique visual dialogue, dynamic composition and, of course, high quality images. A text should be honest, with clear facts. It should not be too long and is best written by the photographer. Choice of images is always important, as is the best edit.

Research who has won the prize in the past and research who is in the jury, if published. Entering a competition is a way to introduce your work to important people in the field.”

“I look for the most unique visual dialogue, dynamic composition and, of course, high quality images.”

– Celina Lunsford

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



Jeff Moorfoot

Festival Director,
Ballarat Photo Biennial,
Australia

“The difference between a good photograph and a great photograph is that the great image is unconditional. All the elements of the picture come together at the same time, whereas in a good picture only most of the elements are in synchronicity. Only when a photographer has patience and/or the dedication to wait and persevere will he or she ever make great images.

Captions can sometimes give clues as to how the viewer is meant to interpret an image, but in most cases, if a picture doesn’t communicate its intent visually, then it is probably a fail and the text won’t fix that.

If the prize is for a body of work or a sequence of images it is vitally important that consideration is given to the order in which the images are presented. It is exactly the same as the order you would hang prints in an exhibition or lay them out in the pages of a book.

Pictures with a borrowed aesthetic, that is, pictures done that imitate the style of another well known photographer, or those that imitate the winner of last year’s prize, push my buttons in a negative sense. I respond best to images that take me somewhere I have never been.

Any photographer who enters a competition with the sole expectation of winning a prize is probably destined to a life of misery! If you want someone to always say something nice about your pictures, show them to your mom! Work hard, persevere.”

*“I respond best to
images that take me
somewhere I have
never been.” – Jeff Moorfoot*

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



Jason Landry

Owner/Director,
Panopticon Gallery
Boston, MA, USA

“The first thing that I look for when judging a competition is whether the artwork being submitted represents the theme of the competition.

Although it might be helpful to know the taste of individual jurors, I’m not sure it gives an edge. I try to select work based on quality, not personal taste. Although I may like a certain type of artwork it doesn’t necessarily mean that I will select it for an exhibition.

In the image, I’m looking for creative images with a WOW factor. These images immediately capture my attention. They are the types of pictures that remind me of photographer Harold Feinstein’s famous quote, ‘When your mouth drops open, click the shutter.’ It is a visceral experience, and each person will react differently to different images.

I always look at the photographs first, rather than the text. If I end up choosing more than one photograph by the same artist, that is when I want to read the artist’s statement and understand what his or her series is about. I find that titles and artist statements are distracting if you read them first and then the work doesn’t live up to the hype.

Understand that if you are not chosen, it doesn’t mean that your work is not good, it just might not be the right fit for this particular competition.”

“Understand that if you are not chosen, it doesn’t mean that your work is not good, it just might not be the right fit for this particular competition.” – Jason Landry

Tips and Advice from Industry Professionals



Sujong Song

Curator and Committee
Member at the Daegu
Photo Biennale
South Korea

“First comes the quality of the image. But text is important too, especially in documentary or photojournalism. Weak editing and vague captions kill the power of a documentary narrative. A strong narrative emerges not just from the issues being shown but intelligent editing.

But the most important thing for me is to ‘hear’ the photographer’s own voice. The subject and way of showing should be specific to the artist and their perspective.

Also, always remember that many great photographers (and photographs) are not selected as winners. Even though you might not find your name in the final list, it could still be in a jury member’s diary, waiting to be spread around at a later date.”

“The most important thing for me is to ‘hear’ the photographer’s own voice...” – Sujong Song



Susan Zadeh

Founder of EYEMAZING
Amsterdam,
The Netherlands

“I need to be moved in a good or bad way at the very first glance. I do not wish to understand what I see — only feel it. I don’t want any text to explain to me what’s being shown, it should speak for itself. I am not looking for ‘good taste’ in photography, I want to see an honest attempt of the artist trying to reveal something of themselves.”

“I am not looking for ‘good taste’ in photography, I want to see an honest attempt of the artist trying to reveal something of themselves.” – Susan Zadeh

Notable Competitions to Consider

Here's a short list of notable photography competitions to consider entering based on feedback from photography experts and hundreds of photographers we surveyed. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list, however it's a great starting point. If there are competitions you think should be on this list, please email us at info@lensculture.com.

The Aperture logo consists of the word "aperture" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, centered within a solid black rectangular background.

Aperture Portfolio Prize

Aperture Foundation

Aperture, a not-for-profit foundation, connects the photo community and its audiences in print, in person, and online. The purpose of the Aperture Portfolio Prize is to identify trends in contemporary photography and highlight artists whose work deserves greater recognition. The Aperture Portfolio Prize is a great competition that consistently recognizes very high-quality work. First prize: \$3,000.

The logo for the Center Choice Awards features the word "CENTER" in a large, bold, teal-colored, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly spaced out, and the overall style is modern and clean.

CENTER Choice Awards

CENTER

The Choice Awards recognize outstanding photographers working in all processes and subject matter. The Awards are divided into three categories: Curator's Choice, Editor's Choice, and Gallerist's Choice. The winners receive recognition via exhibition, publication, portfolio reviews and more.



Communication Arts Photography Competition

Communication Arts

A prestigious competition for creativity in photography. Selected by a nationally representative jury, the winning entries are distributed worldwide in the Communication Arts Photography Annual and on commarts.com, assuring important exposure to the creators of this outstanding work.

Notable Competitions to Consider



Critical Mass

PhotoLucida

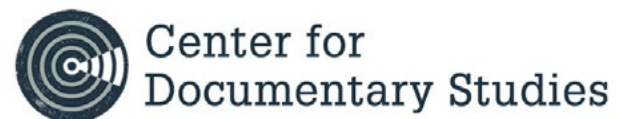
The aim of Critical Mass is to provide participants with career-building opportunities and to promote emerging and mid-career artists. Critical Mass is about exposure, connection, and community. Awards include a monograph publication, an artist residency, a solo exhibition, and an international group exhibition. 200+ jurors.



Daylight Photo Awards

Daylight Books

Daylight is dedicated to publishing art and photography books that are distributed throughout the world. By exploring the documentary mode along with the more conceptual concerns of fine art, Daylight's uniquely collectible publications work to revitalize the relationship between art, photography, and the world-at-large.



Dorothea Lange-Paul Taylor Prize

Duke University

\$10,000 award from the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, supports documentary artists, working alone or in teams, who are involved in extended, on-going fieldwork projects that rely on and exploit the interplay of words and images.



FOAM Talent

Foam Magazine

Foam Magazine is one of the photography industry's most respected magazines. Each year, they host The Foam Talent Call, a prestigious contests for young (35 and under) photographers from all over the world.

Notable Competitions to Consider



LensCulture Emerging Talent Awards

LensCulture

Emerging Talent Awards is an international competition to showcase outstanding emerging photographers — from all cultures, all points of view, with no age limit. It's hard to gain attention as a relatively new photographer, and this competition is focused on getting work seen through immediate exposure opportunities online, as well as through career-building photo exhibitions.



LensCulture Exposure Awards

LensCulture

The upcoming 6th edition of Exposure Awards is an annual competition open to photographers with a goal to offer meaningful and lasting opportunities for exposure. Winning work is seen by international photo editors, creative directors, curators, publishers and art collectors. More than 30 photographers are selected for awards.



LensCulture Portrait Awards

LensCulture

On a mission to discover a full range of 21st century portraits, the Portrait Awards is a photography competition open to all ideas of portraiture from anywhere in the world. With an international jury, a range of high-profile awards are available for winners and finalists alike.

Notable Competitions to Consider



National Geographic Photo Contest

National Geographic

Known globally, National Geographic is a standard for the photographic world. The competition is judged on creativity and photographic quality by a rotating panel of experts. Harness the power of photography and share your stunning travel experiences from around the globe with us. The Categories for entries are Travel Portraits, Outdoor Scenes, Sense of Place and Spontaneous Moments.



Nature Conservancy Photo Contest

The Nature Conservancy

A yearly, international nature photography competition hosted by the international nature photography society, The Nature Conservancy.



ONTHEMOVE International Award

Cortona On The Move

The festival Cortona On The Move sponsors a photography competition with an annually changing theme. This year's edition is "Happiness ONTHEMOVE." The award will go to a photography project related to travel and will consist of a €4,000 prize as well as an exhibition at the festival in 2015.



PDN Photo Annual

PhotoDistrict News

Hosted by PDN, Photo Annual is one of the largest competitions in photography offering top exposure to some of the biggest names in the business. They give out several awards in several categories, changing from year to year.

Notable Competitions to Consider



Pictures of the Year International

Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the Missouri School of Journalism.

A photographic contest designed to pay tribute to press photographers and newspapers and to compile and preserve a collection of the best in press pictures each year. Prizes given in categories from sports to natural disasters to everything in between.



Print Center Annual International Competition

The Print Center

The Print Center's Annual International Competition is one of the oldest competitions in the United States. The Print Center is interested in highlighting artists from around the world who utilize photography and printmaking in intriguing ways and whose work pushes the boundaries of traditional photographic and printmaking practices. The top prizes include museum exhibitions and grants.



Prix de la Photographie

Prix de la Photographie

The Prix de la Photographie, Paris (Px3) is one of Europe's most prestigious photography competitions. Since 2006, Px3 has promoted an acute appreciation of photography, discovered hundreds of emerging talents as well as awarded professional photographers. Px3 each year introduces photographers from around the globe to the artistic community of Paris. Prizes are €3,000 and €1,500, an exhibition in Paris, and publication in our Annual Book of Photography.

Notable Competitions to Consider



Prix Elysée

Musée de l'Elysée, Parmigiani Fleurier

The Prix Elysée is open to promising photographers, regardless of nationality, who have already enjoyed their first exhibitions and publications. Photographers must be recommended by a reputed professional in the fields of photography, contemporary art, cinema, fashion, journalism or publishing. There is no imposed theme or preference for any particular photographic genre or technique. The prizes include 40,000 Swiss Francs to complete an unfinished photographic project and 40,000 more to produce a book of the work.



Renaissance Photography Prize

Renaissance Photography Prize

The Renaissance Photography Prize is an international competition that showcases outstanding photography from emerging or established photographers. All the profit raised from entries is donated to support younger women with breast cancer. Entering gives photographers the chance to have their work judged by some of the most influential photography critics in the industry.



Smithsonian Photo Contest

Smithsonian Magazine

Annual competition dedicated to a broad cross-section of science, history, art, popular culture and innovation. Their winning images demonstrate “technical quality, clarity and composition, but also a flair for the unexpected and the ability to capture a picture-perfect moment.” Grand prize of \$2,500. 2014’s categories are Natural World, Travel, People, The American Experience, Altered Images and Mobile Photos.

Notable Competitions to Consider



Sony World Photography Awards

World Photography Organisation

Professional, amateur, youth and student photographers from across the world can enter their best work for free. Seeking the very best in international contemporary photography, the awards have established themselves as one of the world's leading photography competitions. Photographers compete for a range of cash prizes and the latest cutting edge digital imaging equipment from Sony. Overall winners will be announced at a gala ceremony held in London.

The logo for 'THE FENCE' is a black rectangle with the words 'THE FENCE' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

The Fence

Photoville

Each year, THE FENCE - Brooklyn's premiere summer-long, outdoor photographic exhibition - invites photographers from around the world to explore and define the meaning of community across cultural boundaries and geographical lines. Presented in 3 cities (Brooklyn, Boston, Atlanta), THE FENCE reaches an audience of 1.5 million visitors each summer.



Vienna International Photo Awards

Vienna International Photo Awards

The Vienna International Photo Awards (VIPA) mission is to draw more attention to documentary photography in Austria and worldwide. VIPA has become one of the leading documentary photography contests, focusing on the niche between press and art photography. The uniqueness of documentary photography lies in its rendering of a wide variety of themes and the plurality of perceptions in a way not found in press photography or art photography. Prizes include money, a juried exhibition, and inclusion in a printed catalogue.

Notable Competitions to Consider



Wildlife Photographer of the Year

Natural History Museum/BBC Worldwide

Now in its 50th year, the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition provides a global showcase of the very best nature photography. The competition is co-owned by two esteemed UK institutions – the Natural History Museum and BBC Worldwide. The winners are exhibited all over the world and printed in an annual catalogue.

The logo for the World Press Photo competition. It features a solid red rectangular background with the words "WORLD PRESS PHOTO" written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font.

World Press Photo

World Press Photo

The World Press Photo contest is the world's leading competition for professional press photographers, setting the standard for the profession. The photo of the year wins 10,000 euros and a professional Canon camera. The winning pictures are presented in an exhibition that travels around the world.

LensCulture Success Stories



Yijun Liao
Brooklyn, NY

“I have to tell you that my email has been busy non-stop ever since the announcement of the LensCulture Exposure Awards. LensCulture has indeed given me great exposure worldwide. I have had really good luck in the press lately worldwide, and it’s still snowballing! It took my name to an international level. Look at where my work has been featured since I won: Huffington Post (US), iGnant (Germany), BUST (US), Daily Life (Australia), Medium, TAXI, Escapism (Canada), Il Post (Italy). Also, I have been invited to a residency in Finland, contacted by a UK collector, a Chilean Museum and a European publisher for possible projects. It’s truly been the best award I’ve won!”



Experimental Relationship
2nd Prize Portfolio Winner, LensCulture Exposure Awards 2013



Richard Tuschman
New York, NY

“I have seen a huge increase in interest in my work since the award was announced. I have begun working with a private dealer who has purchased several prints and also received serious interest from a dealer in Moscow. I have been approached by a commercial agency in Spain, my work will be the subject of articles in several print magazines across the globe and there have been numerous features on photo sites and blogs. I also got about 1,000 new Facebook fans and traffic to my website has increased by almost 500%!”



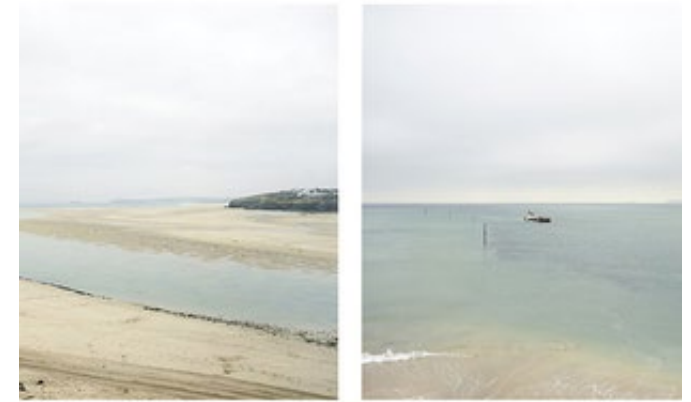
Hopper Meditations
3rd Prize Portfolio Winner, LensCulture Exposure Awards 2013

LensCulture Success Stories



Michael Marten
UK

“Winning 1st prize in the portfolio category of the LensCulture Exposure Awards, as well as attending the portfolio reviews in Paris that November, were a breakthrough for me. It led directly to the 2012 publication of my book Sea Change by Kehrer and a solo exhibition of the work at London’s Oxo Gallery. There were reviews of the book in The Observer newspaper as well as Source magazine and features in magazines and blogs ranging from The Guardian weekend magazine to Reddit. This led to a huge spike in visitors to my website. My Sea Change book is almost sold out.”



Sea Change

1st Prize Portfolio Winner, LensCulture Exposure Awards 2011



Nina Roeder
Weimar, Germany

The past few weeks have been crazy! A lot of international blogs featured my work since it appeared on LensCulture so I keep getting lots of attention. I’m especially happy that Ben Füglistner, from European Photography, will publish my work in the next edition.



Mutters Schuhe

Finalist, LensCulture Portrait Awards 2014

LensCulture Success Stories



Carlotta Cardana
London, UK

A popular monthly magazine really liked my project about Native American pride in LensCulture, and they have decided to commission me to go back and shoot more. So exciting, I still can't believe it! ALSO I have seven images from the Mod Couples series in The Eyes Collection #1 exhibition (thanks to LensCulture, obviously!).



Mod Couples
Finalist, LensCulture Exposure Awards 2013

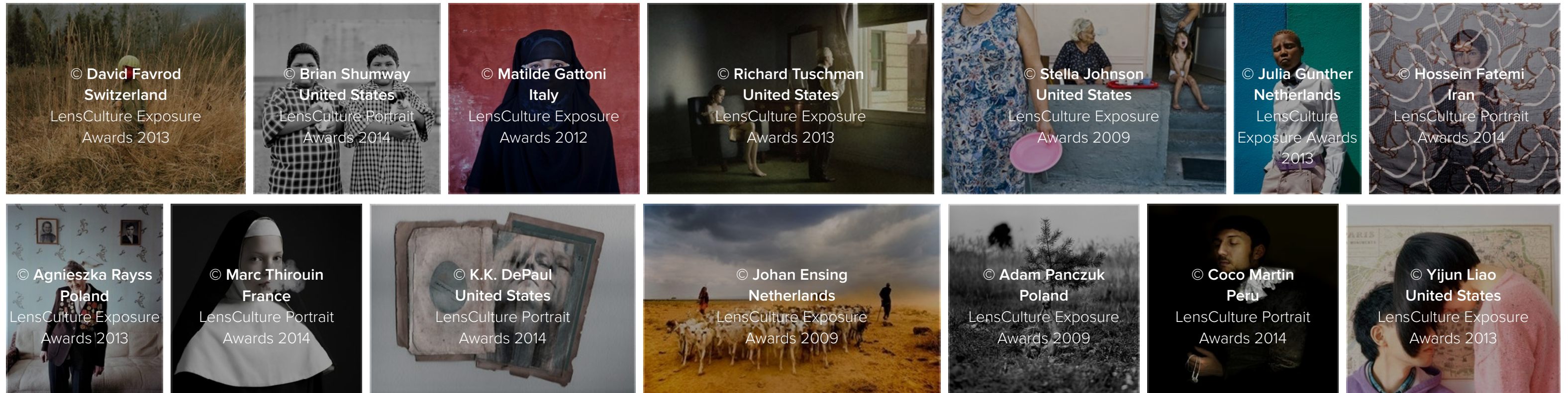


Anne Berry
Newnan, GA,

“Since I won the award, my photographs have been published in the Huffington Post, PetaPixel, Viralnova, and Feature Shoot.”



Behind Glass
Finalist, LensCulture Exposure Awards 2013



Above: Photos from the front cover.

A special thanks to all the contributors for their valuable time and advice.

To find out more about the current LensCulture competition, go to www.lensculture.com/awards