

IEPPV 2026 Image Competition Rules

Approved by the IEPPV Board

Image Competition (herein referred to as IC) is provided to Inland Empire Professional Photographers and Videographers, Inc. (herein referred to as IEPPV) members as a tool to help with the constant development of the art and craft of photography through a process of review and constructive critique of an individual's work.

Entry to the IC is made available to IEPPV members or IEPPV Affiliate member in good standing. A member in good standing must be a current member, registered in a membership category that allows entry into the IC and with all membership dues current at the time of entry. By entering a competition, the entrant certifies that he or she has created, composed and made the original exposures and that the processing, image enhancements and any special effects were done by the entrant or under the entrant's direct supervision. The rules are enforced at the discretion of the IC Chair with the board having the final judgement. If a violation of rules is identified after a competition, action may be taken to rectify it at the discretion of the IC Chair with the board having final judgement.

I. GENERAL RULES

1. Events

- A.** Image competition will be held five times a year on the third Wednesday of the month during the months of March, May, July, September, and November. If any change is made to an image competition date, members will be notified at least 30 days in advance.
- B.** Each event will consist of two divisions of competition, Regular and Master. While occurring in a single event, each division will be a distinct and identified portion of the competition. Each division will have the same categories (except the Master division will not have a Workshop category). Event and year-end awards will be given at each division. Each entrant will compete in one of the two divisions based on the following criteria:
 - a.** Members who hold a Master level degree, Photographic Craftsman, or an equivalent award in PPA, PPC, or other photographic organization must enter at the Master division.
 - b.** Members not possessing a Master level degree will automatically be entered in the Regular division unless they indicate on the image comp entry form that they wish to compete in the Master division when entering their first IC entry of the year. Once a member enters their first IC entry of the year they cannot change divisions during that year.
- C.** Each event will also consist of a critique-only option. Participation in the critique only portion does not allow for any event or year-end awards. Critique-only is limited to four

images per event. A \$15.00 fee per entry applies. The entry of critique-only images does not count toward the IC entry limit. Images entered in critique-only may be entered in subsequent IEPPV IC events.

2. ENTRANT

- A. The entrant must be the sole individual responsible for the capture of the entry. Postproduction work of the entry must be made by the entrant or under the direct instruction of the entrant in categories that allow postproduction. Except for entries in the Workshop category, no entry will be eligible for competition that has been made under the supervision of an instructor or in a class, seminar, workshop or school setting. (See individual category rules for further details.)
- B. By entering IC the entrant agrees to hold IEPPV harmless against any liabilities or claim arising out of the Association's consideration, display, publicity, promotion or other use of submitted entries.
- C. The entrant must attend a minimum of five IEPPV events (in person or virtual) in the same year to qualify for any year-end award. Exceptions may be granted by the board for reason at their discretion.

3. ENTRIES

- A. The cutoff of submission of entries will be 6:00 am on the Monday prior to the competition. The submission deadline may be extended by the IC Committee. Entries are not considered for judging until all of the aforementioned entrant requirements are met. Full payment is due at or prior to image submission.
- B. At the time of their first entry of the year the entrant shall indicate the division (Regular or Master) they are competing in for the year. If it is determined an entrant meets the requirements of the Master division (paragraph I.1.B.b) and has completed in the Regular division their image may be disqualified.
- C. Each entrant may enter a total of four digital entries in each competition up to twenty entries over the course of the calendar year. A \$15.00 fee per entry, or any IEPPV approved payment plan, shall apply. The board reserves the right to modify the number of entries, for the entire membership, for good reasons at their discretion. In no manner shall the name, logo or markings of the entrant be visible on an entry at any time during the judging process. No one shall at any time during the event, allow for any reference or indication to the judges that an entry under judging is that of the entrant. Any indication of an entrant's identity prior to or during the event may be grounds for disqualification and expulsion of all entries by that entrant and/or offender from that month's event.
- D. Entries will be judged in accordance with the PPA "12 Elements of a Merit Image" (Exhibit A).

- E. Image submission opens three weeks prior to the competition. Image submissions closes at 6:00 am the Monday prior to the competition.
- F. No two entries in the same month's event by the same entrant may depict the same exact subject, person, object or scene. Similar objects of scenes are acceptable.
- G. Image Specifications:
 - a. Files must be sized so the longest dimensions is 4,000 pixels.
 - b. Resolution of 200 pixels per inch.
 - c. Each file must contain an embedded color profile of either sRGB or Adobe RGB 1998.
 - d. Save each file at JPEG (.jpg) quality setting 10 (Photoshop), 80 (Lightroom) or equivalent.
 - e. The total file size should not exceed 3.5 MB. Larger files will be accepted when necessary so long as they meet the other requirements of this section (Image Specifications).
- H. IEPPV cannot be responsible for the outcome of the judging score or process due to images entered at lower resolution or quality level.
- I. Images that have merited at IEPPV in the Master division, or state, regional, national or international competitions are not eligible. Images that have merited at IEPPV in the Regular division, or PPA local affiliates may enter in the IEPPV Master division. An image that merits at any of the aforementioned competitions after the image was submitted to an IEPPV competition is eligible for that IEPPV competition. Image from local PPA affiliated member are eligible for submission at the applicable division (Paragraph I.1.B.A) with the following additional guidelines:
 - a. If entering non-merited images either division may be chosen by the entrant
 - b. If entering any images that have merited at any local PPA affiliate, the entrant shall enter in the Master division.
- J. Re-entries
 - a. To gain the greatest benefit of judges' constructive criticism as we;; as to encourage IEPPV members' participation in state, regional, national, and international competitions, entrants are encouraged to make judges' recommended improvements and re-submit entries in subsequent IEPPV competition(s) when the image does not achieve a score of 80 or above. Re-entry of an unchanged image is prohibited. All re-entries will add "_Reentry" to the end of the title.

- b. Re-entered images will be judged and scored as an image distinct from the original entry and both scores will be retained in their related competition.

K. MODEL RELEASEES, COPYRIGHTS AND TRADEMARKS

- a. Entrant acknowledges that the submitted image(s) is in original work created solely by the entrant, that the image does not infringe on the copyrights, trademarks, moral rights, rights of privacy/publicity or intellectual property rights of any person or entity, and that no other party has any right, title, claim or interest in the image. Images that violate or infringe upon another person's copyrights, trademarks, moral rights, rights of privacy/publicity or intellectual property rights of any person or entity or any other applicable law(s), will be subject to disqualification.

L. ENTRANT RIGHTS

- a. The entrant retains all rights to any image submitted, including ownership, if applicable. By submitting any image(s) for entry, you grant IEPPV a nonexclusive right, in perpetuity, to archive and use your image(s) and name in any and all IEPPV promotions, publications, slide shows, audio visual presentations and any other format that may arise for IEPPV marketing.

II. **JUDGING**

1. JUDGING

- A. The IC will be governed by these rules as set forth and posted on the <http://www.ieppv.com> website.
- B. Judges will adhere to the PPA "12 Elements of a Merit Image" (Exhibit A).
- C. The Regular division will be judged to encourage educational growth of the maker. Regular division comments should be educational and encouragement focused.
- D. The Master division will be judged in accordance with state level competition with the intent the maker will advance their images to state or international competitions. The same scoring system will be used for both divisions.
- E. Judging panels will consist of no less than three judges. Judges will be chosen by the IC Chair for their ability to best represent IEPPV's image competition rules, and its membership towards image competition as a benefit for growth and the betterment of the member's imagery. Other criteria for choosing a judge may include but not be limited to:
 - a. PPA Master Photographers, PPA Photographic Craftsman, PPA Certified Professional Photographer, PPC judging academy certificate holder, IEPPV Qualified Judge.
- F. IEPPV board members or the IC Chair may approve other recognized individuals as judges on a case-by-case basis.

G. Each judge shall have the right to challenge, per PPA challenge procedures (Exhibit B). Only the adjusted score will be tabulated for any awards/ribbons.

H. Image Competition Moderator:

- a. The IC Chair shall appoint the Image Competition Moderator.
- b. The Image Competition Moderator shall be a non-sitting judge and shall be present during the event.
- c. Should there be an instance of wide discrepancy in score or less than acceptable knowledge of an image in the judging panel's area of expertise, the Image Competition Moderator may challenge the scores of the judges and state his or her case and ask for a re-score of

2. SCORING

A. Judging will adhere to the standard set forth by PPA utilizing the 12 Elements of a Merit Image (Exhibit A) and shall be scored utilizing the PPA point system from 65 to 100 as follows:

Exceptional	100-95
Superior	94-90
Excellent	89-85
Deserving of a Merit	84-80
Above Average	79-75
Average	74-70
Below Exhibition Standards	69-65

B. All images with a merit score with the majority of the judges awarding a non-merit score will receive an automatic review. All images with a non-merit score with a majority of the judges awarding a merit score will receive an automatic review.

C. Scores will be recorded by the PrintCompetition.com application. The IC will also be digitally recorded.

D. An entrant may bring to the attention of the IC Chair all suspected discrepancies in scoring of any entry at any time prior to the Best of Show judging period by contacting the IC Chair via text message. The Image Competition Moderator will allow a two-minute period before the start of the Best of Show judging for all entrants to make such a request. In case of dispute, the decision of the IC Chair will be final.

- E. Should a system failure or a problem arise during the judging process, the image will be brought up at the end of the regular judging period for re-judging and the original score will be voided.
- F. Official scores for all entries will be posted on the www.ieppv.com website in a timely manner.

III. CATEGORIES

1. The following rules apply to all the entry categories:

- A. Each category in the IC is governed by its own class rules in regard to the basic content of the entry and entrant(s) as per each classification description only. All additional areas of the IC are governed by the general rules of the event.
- B. You may enter up to four entries in any competition.
- C. Prior to the start of any image competition, any entry deemed not to be in its most appropriate category by the IC Chair may be moved into its most appropriate category or disqualified.
- D. Entrant should be aware that the IC Committee may request the original file(s) and if applicable copyright information for images included within the entry prior to any year-end awards.
- E. Entrant that qualifies in a particular standard category shall be awarded the title IEPPV Photographer of the Year for that category (except for the Workshop category).
- F. Scores of all merited images are tabulated for year-end Photographer of the Year totals (except for the Workshop category).
- G. Except for the Workshop category, images created in or adjacent to settings in a workshop or contain image components that were created in or adjacent to settings in a workshop are ineligible for entry in the standard competition categories with the exception as used as a minor element in the Photographic Artist category. A workshop is defined as an event that includes instruction. Meet-ups do not fall under this restriction. Meet-ups are defined as any event, sponsored by IEPPV or not, which involves a group of photographers meeting to photograph an event or location, and there is no instructor nor IEPPV provided photographic related resources.
- H. A workshop's instructor(s) images are allowed entry into any appropriate category and are not subject to the restrictions of the workshop category listed below.

2. WORKSHOP CATEGORY

- A. IEPPV wants to encourage participation in classes, seminars, workshops, schools and other educational environments. Likewise, IEPPV wants to encourage IC participation by those who do so.

- B. The Workshop Category is reserved for images created in or adjacent to settings in which there is a direct relationship between the instructor and the entrant leading to the capture of the image presented for judging.
- C. Any photographer who “tags” along with a workshop, whether participating or not, all work produced will be considered part of the workshop. Attendance at a workshop is considered attending a workshop; images cannot be entered or used in creating images in the standard competition categories with the exception as used as a minor element in the Photographic Artist category.
- D. Entries in the Workshop category are not eligible for Best of Show or year-end awards.

3. **STANDARD CATEGORIES** (scores are tabulated toward Photographer of the Year totals)

A. **Commercial or Master Commercial**

- a. Commercial photography involves taking pictures for commercial use where the images are used to promote or sell a product or service. Commercial photography uses include advertising, merchandising, product placement or packaging, leaflets, menus, brochures, and websites.
- b. This category is meant to stay in the spirit of a commercial photographer working with actual clients and art directors within the confines and limitations found therein.
- c. A tear sheet, screen capture of the legitimate website from the image, or statement of purpose is requested, but not required. If there is a tear sheet of the image please upload with your image entry.

Lack of a tear sheet or image capture could undermine your score, but is not mandatory. Make sure your name is not visible on the image or the tear sheet. If entrant chooses to not submit a tear sheet, proof of actual client work may be required by the IC Chair to qualify the image as a valid entry.

Tear Sheet Defined: A tear sheet is a page cut or torn from a publication to prove to the client that the advertisement was published.

B. **Landscape or Master Landscape**

- a. Outdoor environment only.
- b. Example subjects:
 - i. Landscape: An image showing a land scene, which is the predominant feature of the image and the rest of the image being water and/or sky.
 - ii. Waterscape: An image of a body of water either salt or fresh, such as an ocean, sea, lake, or any deep broad river. The water being the predominant feature of the image and the rest of the image being land and/or sky.
 - iii. Cityscape: Any view of a city, especially large urban centers.

C. Nature or Master Nature

- a. Images where the flora and/or fauna in their natural habitat are the dominant subject. The following are NOT eligible nature subjects; domesticated animals, pets, mounted specimens, flower gardens, potted plants, floral arrangements, or any image in which humans and man-made objects appear, unless of archaeological significance, or the natural habitat of the species.
- b. Example Subjects:
 - i. Fauna: All forms of animal life; mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, insects, spiders or any aspect of their life such as dens, nests, eggs, tracks, discarded antlers, spider's webs, etc.
 - ii. Flora: All forms of plant life; the whole or any part of trees, shrubs, wild flowers, weeds, grasses, ferns, mosses, fungi, lichens, seeds, fruits, etc.
- c. Heavy digital manipulation is not appropriate for this category and belongs in the Photographic Artist or Master Photograph Artist category.

D. Photojournalism or Master Photojournalism

- a. An image that captures a moment in time and tells a story.
- b. The photographer shall have no control of the situation, subjects, wardrobe, or surroundings captured in the photojournalism image.
- c. Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context. Do not manipulate images or add or alter in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.
- d. No images in part or in whole may be added or removed to/from the original capture. Only cropping that does not change the original context of the image is allowed.
- e. Only color correction, dodge/burn, and conversion to black and white which does not change the original context of the image, will be accepted. The original captured file (RAW/JPG) may be requested.

E. Portrait or Master Portrait

- a. An image capturing a person(s), pet or animal that is in an environment with the photographer having control of lighting, posing, situation, wardrobe, and/or setting.
- b. The category shall include images both in and out of a studio environment where the photographer has control over the image capture and a reasonable amount of time to create the image.
- c. Example Subjects:

- i. Families.
- ii. Children.
- iii. Pets.
- iv. People and pets in the same image.
- v. Glamour/Boudoir/Fine Art Portraits.
- vi. Sports/Team Portraits.

F. Wedding or Master Wedding

- a. This category is meant to stay in the spirit of a photographer working with actual clients in the confines of a wedding, Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah, or Quinceañera schedule while having limited control of the subjects and situations. All images will be photographed on the day(s) of the event.

G. Photographic Artist or Master Photographic Artist

- a. Art that is of photographic origin, made with the help of computer software. This category includes composites, digital paintings, and special effects. Some minor elements of composite images may include stock imagery however the main subject and major component parts must be original works by the entrant.
- b. Techniques in blending and digital manipulation must be applied and lead to the creation of a unique work of art.
- c. Source files should be included as thumbnails (beneath or next to the image).

H. Illustrative or Master Illustrative (Open)

- a. Images representing an alternative type of creativity, photography, and/or not meeting the requirements of any other category.
- b. Any entry that does not fit into another category can be entered in this category.

IV. AWARDS

1. Event Awards

- A.** All entries attaining a final score from 80 and 100 will be given an Award of Merit Ribbon.
- B.** Best of Category Ribbons are awarded for the highest score (minimum of 80) within each division's categories. In the case of a tie a majority vote of the judges will decide the Best of Category.

- C. A Best of Show Ribbon is awarded at each division to the entry selected by a majority vote of the judges from the Best of Category winners. The Workshop category is not eligible for Best of Show.

2. Annual Awards

A. Eligibility

- a. To be considered for an award, one must be an IEPPV member in good standing. IEPPV Affiliate members do not qualify for end-of-year awards (only Best of Class or Best of Show awards). If competing for annual awards, IEPPV membership must be purchased prior to entering any competition in that year.

B. Individual Category Awards

- a. In each division's individual category a minimum of four merits in that category are required to qualify for that category's photographer of the year award. In each individual category, an entrant's four highest scores of merited images in that category will be totaled to determine the award in each category. The Workshop categories are not eligible for annual awards.
 - i. The wording on the awards shall reflect the division of the award. For example; Regular division "IEPPV Portrait Photographer of the Year" or Master division "IEPPV Master Portrait Photographer of the Year".
 - ii. In any category, in the event of a tie score and the tied entrants both have additional merit images in that category the next highest scored merited images from that category will be added to the previous total scores to determine the award winner. If additional tiebreakers are needed they will be in the following order.
 - iii. The entrants' number of Best of Show winners for the category for the calendar year. If the score is still tied, the following tiebreaker will be in effect:
 - iv. The entrants' number of Best of Category winners for the category for the calendar year. If the score is still tied, the IEPPV executive board may award both entrants the applicable award.

C. Photographer of the Year and New Photographer of the Year

- a. To qualify for Photographer of the Year a minimum of nine merits are required with no less than two merits in three separate categories. Workshop category merit images will not be used in determining the Photographer of the Year.
- b. Photographer of the Year title will be awarded to the photographer with the highest totaled sum from their nine highest scores out of a possible 20 entries during the

current year. Six of the nine scores used will be the highest two scores available from three separate categories. The remaining three scores used will be the three highest unused from any category (except Workshop).

- c. When appropriate, the New Photographer of the Year title will be awarded to a qualified member who has never entered an IEPPV Image Competition prior to the current year and achieves the highest total of their four highest merit scores out of a possible 20 entries. This award does not apply to the Master division. Workshop category merit images will not be using in determining the New Photographer of the Year.
- d. Award tiebreakers for Photographer of the Year and New Photographer of the Year.
 - i. In the event of a tie score and the tied entrants both have additional merit images in any category the next highest scored merited images from any category will be added to the previous total scores to determine the award winner. If the tie still exists, the same process will continue with the next highest scored merited image in any category until the tie is broken or only one entrant has an additional merit image. If only one entrant has an additional merit image in any category that entrant will be the applicable Photographer of the Year winner. If additional tiebreakers are needed they will be in the following order.
 - ii. The entrants' number of Best of Show winners for any category for the calendar year. If the score is still tied, the following tiebreaker will be in effect.
 - iii. The entrants' number of Best of Category winners for any category for the calendar year. If the score is still tied, the IEPPV executive board may award both entrants the applicable award.

D. People's Choice Award

- a. All merited images (both divisions) from the current year submitted and previewed at the annual awards banquet will qualify for the People's Choice Award. Each entrant is permitted a maximum of two entries. All attendees at the annual awards banquet, whether a member of IEPPV or not, will have one ballot for the People's Choice Award. Each ballot will require the attendee to vote for one image. The image with the highest number of votes is the winner.

Exhibit A

12 Elements of a Merit Image

The Professional Photographers of America Photographic Exhibitions Committee (PEC) uses the 12 elements below as the “gold standard” to define a merit image. PEC trains judges to be mindful of these elements when judging images to the PPA merit level and to be placed in the International Print Exhibit at Imaging USA, the annual convention. The use of these 12 elements connects the modern practice of photography and its photographers to the historical practice of photography begun nearly two centuries ago.

Twelve elements have been defined as necessary for the success of an art piece or image. Any image, art piece, or photograph will reveal some measure of all twelve elements, while a visually superior example will reveal obvious consideration of each one.

The twelve elements listed below are in accordance to their importance.

1. Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling images evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense emotion. There can be impact in any of these twelve elements.
2. Technical excellence is the quality of the image itself as it is presented for viewing. Retouching, manipulation, sharpness, exposure, printing, mounting, and correct color are some items that speak to the qualities of the physical print/image.
3. Creativity is the original, fresh, and external expression of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message or thought.
4. Style is defined in a number of ways as it applies to a creative image. It might be defined by a specific genre or simply be recognizable as the characteristics of how a specific artist applies light to a subject. It can impact an image in a positive manner when the subject matter and the style are appropriate for each other, or it can have a negative effect when they are at odds.
5. Composition is important to the design of an image, bringing all of the visual elements together in concert to express the purpose of the image. Proper composition holds the viewer in the image and prompts the viewer to look where the creator intends. Effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the image-maker.
6. Presentation affects an image by giving it a finished look. The mats and borders used, either physical or digital, should support and enhance the image, not distract from it.
7. Color Balance supplies harmony to an image. An image, in which the tones work together, effectively supporting the image, can enhance its emotional appeal. Color balance is not always harmonious and can be used to evoke diverse feelings for effect.
8. Center of Interest is the point or points on the image where the maker wants the viewer to stop as they view the image. There can be primary and secondary centers of interest. Occasionally

there will be no specific center of interest, when the entire scene collectively serves as the center of interest.

9. Lighting—the use and control of light—refers to how dimension, shape and roundness are defined in an image. Whether the light applied to an image is manmade or natural, proper use of it should enhance an image.
10. Subject Matter should always be appropriate to the story being told in an image.
11. Technique is the approach used to create the image. Printing, lighting, posing, captures, presentation media, and more are part of the technique applied to an image.
12. Story Telling refers to the image's ability to evoke imagination. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect his own message or read her own story in an image.

Exhibit B

Judges are not allowed to discuss the image during the judging. Images are discussed only in the event of a challenge. If a judge is not satisfied with the average score obtained by the image, he or she has the right to challenge it (one time only) and state his or her reasons for doing so. This is the only method by which a judge can discuss a particular image. After he or she has stated their reasons for the challenge, each judge in seating order from the judge who raised the challenge then gives their score and states whether or not they agree with the challenge. After each judge has given their reasons for their scores, the original judge that challenged the image is allowed a rebuttal to the judges before each judge is again asked to rescore the image. The original challenging judge should not change his/her score unless his/her opinion is changed by the comments of another judge. After the second score is announced, another juror can again challenge the image, however, the original challenger cannot.

The above does not apply to the constructive critique that occurs after the score has been finalized for each image. The critique is a valuable part of IC as it assists photographers in improving their art. A single judge, in rotation, will present the critique after the score is finalized. If a challenge has occurred and has been discussed, a final critique is not needed.