

PSA Interclub Competitions

These entries have been updated to apply to all PSA recognized exhibitions in 2026, and for all internal PSA competitions with immediate effect.

Image Creation and Authorship

All submitted images must be entirely the photographer's original work, including post-processing, with every pictorial element captured by the submitting photographer. Images must not incorporate or present other artists' work as the photographer's own, in whole or in part (clip art, stock images, replacement skies, photos of others' artwork, AI-generated content, etc). The term author refers to the person who is the original creator of a submitted image; photographers may own the rights to use purchased content, however authorship requires that all visual elements in the submitted photograph be personally created by the photographer. Photographers must retain copyright ownership of all visual elements contained within any submitted image, including composites. A violation of this rule constitutes plagiarism, a serious PSA ethics offense.

Statement on Artificial Intelligence (AI)

1. Permitted AI-enhanced editing includes editing tools that perform transformations, enhancements, or corrections based exclusively on the existing pixel data captured in the author's original photograph without introducing externally sourced content.
2. Prohibited AI editing: includes any AI-assisted processes for synthetic image generation that incorporate external image data, visual elements, textures, objects, or scenes not originally present in the author's photograph are prohibited.

Statement on Subject Matter – applicable to all sections

PSA's fundamental rule prioritizes animal welfare over photography, prohibiting baiting with live

creatures, nest disturbance, endangering subjects, or depicting feeding of live prey to captive animals. Aerial photography must not disturb individuals or animals and must comply with local regulations. The images must comply with the division and section definitions listed on the PSA website; images that do not comply will be disqualified by the judges. Participation in PSA exhibitions is conditional on entrants accepting these policies.

Similar Images: Identical or similar Images shall not be allowed in the same section or different sections of the same exhibition as determined by the judges or exhibition chair. Similar images are those which are practically equivalent, as defined on this page: <https://psa-services.org/pdf/Practical-Equivalence.pdf> 'Be advised: while similar images may be entered in different exhibitions, these images and acceptances may be disallowed by the separate review process associated with applications for stars, diamonds and galaxies. To avoid disappointment, do not enter images that are practically equivalent.'

Two images are considered practical equivalents unless two of the following parameters vary between the images

- Noticeable change in camera position on: examples of a camera position change include high angle vs low angle, pan, tilt or tracking shots, etc.
- Noticeable subject movement: a subject's movement may be slight (a head movement) but must be obvious. This parameter may also apply to inanimate subject matter (arrangement of subjects in a lightbox)
- Noticeable change of compositional or design elements: this includes a wide variety of possible changes, from lighting and lines to spaces and shapes
- Story-telling sequences: Can apply to any Division. For example, in PJD and ND story-telling sequences are captured by multiple images (change of facial expression or emotion, animal interactions, foraging, etc)

Monochrome Definition

An image is considered to be Monochrome only if it gives the impression of having no color (i.e. contains only shades of grey which can include pure black and pure white) OR it gives the impression of being a greyscale image that has been toned in one color across the entire image. (For example, by sepia, red, gold, etc.) A greyscale or multi-colored image modified or giving the impression of having

been modified by partial toning, multi-toning or by the inclusion of spot coloring does not meet the definition of monochrome and shall be classified as a Color Work.

Attention is drawn to the PSA Statements on Artificial Intelligence and Subject Matter which apply to all sections.

Color versus Monochrome (Black and White)

Within PSA international exhibitions an image is either monochrome or color; there is no third option.

- A **Color** image is defined by the presence of more than a single color or hue. If an image is treated with two or more colors in any manner or any amount (spot coloring, duotone, etc), it is a color image.
- A **monochrome** image is defined by the presence of exactly one color or hue; it can display unlimited variations in that single color's intensity, tints, and shades but may not include additional colors (partial toning, split-toning, spot coloring, etc). Black and white images (also referred to as grayscale) are considered monochrome, though technically they are achromatic images which may span the full tonal range from black to white. Monochrome images may not be entered in color sections of PPD or PID.

Pictorial Image Division

The subject matter is unrestricted for PID images in separate color and monochrome (see above for Monochrome definition) classes. There may be a theme specified for some PSA-recognized PID exhibitions and the exhibition's definition of the theme should be consulted. Each class has its own Star Ratings path.

Attention is drawn to the PSA Statements on Artificial Intelligence and Subject Matter which apply to all sections.

Photo Travel Division

Effective January 1, 2026, there are two distinct star paths in Photo Travel: **Photo Travel Division Documentary (PTDD)** and **Photo Travel Division World in Focus (PTDW)**.

Please **scroll down** to find the right definition for your purpose.

Photo Travel Division Documentary (PTDD) effective as of January 1, 2026:

Note: PTDD modifies slightly and replaces the former Photo Travel Division (PTD) definition.

A Photo Travel image is a portrayal of the real world we live in, as it is found naturally. There are no geographic limitations.

Content guidance

1. Images that predominantly or exclusively depict **people** and their activities must illustrate a distinctive culture of a country, region, or continent.
2. If the image predominantly or exclusively depicts a **place**, such as land-, sea- or cityscape, or a physical structure such as a building or monument, it must include characteristic and distinctive physical features. It is not necessary that the image identify the exact location.
3. Images that predominately or exclusively depict **animal** populations are allowed, if the animals are in their native environment and are characteristic of that country, region, or continent.
4. **Portraits** or other close-ups of people or objects, in addition to meeting the above paragraphs as applicable, must include elements depicting some of the surrounding environment to make it obvious that the image was not taken in a studio setting.
5. Images from **events or activities** arranged exclusively for photography, or of subjects directed or hired for photography, are **NOT** allowed. Images from public events such as festivals or historic re-enactments are allowed.
6. **Long exposures** are allowed if the image looks natural. If the long exposure produces a dominating and unnatural special effect on the image, then it is NOT allowed (examples are star trails and long light trails).
7. **Highly distorted images** such as those produced by fisheye lenses are **NOT** allowed.

Photo Travel Division World in Focus (PTDW) effective as of January 1, 2026:

Just as travel and tourism pictures, this section englobes the full range of photographic genres from architecture, culture, events, food, landscape, portraits, etc.

A "WORLD IN FOCUS" image expresses the spirit of an era, the essence of a place or of a culture whether it is shown in an authentic scene or whether it is arranged. Digital manipulation to optimize an image in terms of finetuning of levels and colors is allowed as long as the image is looking natural. The same counts for removal of dust or digital noise.

Techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove any element of the original image, except by cropping, are not permitted.

Editing guidance for Photo Travel Division:

Processing or editing must be limited to making the image look as close to the original scene as possible, except that conversion to grayscale monochrome is allowed.

Allowed editing techniques:

- Cropping, straightening and perspective correction.
- Removal or correction of elements added by the camera or lens, such as dust spots, noise, chromatic aberration and lens distortion.
- Global and selective adjustments such as brightness, hue, saturation and contrast to restore the appearance of the original scene.
- Complete conversion of color images to grayscale monochrome.
- Blending of multiple images of the same subject and combining them in camera or with software (exposure blending or focus stacking).
- Image stitching – combining multiple images with overlapping fields of view that are taken consecutively (panoramas).

Editing Techniques that are not allowed:

- Removing, adding to, moving or changing any part of an image, except for cropping and straightening.
- Adding a vignette during processing.
- Blurring parts of the image during processing to hide elements in the original scene.
- Darkening parts of the image during processing to hide elements in the original scene.
- All conversions other than to complete grayscale monochrome.
- Conversion of parts of an image to monochrome, or partial toning, desaturation or over-saturation of color.

Attention is drawn to the PSA Statements on Artificial Intelligence and Subject Matter which apply to all sections.