



VCC Competition Guidelines

2020-2021

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Internal Club Competitions

The club holds 6 rounds of monthly competitions – in September, October, November, January, February and March. Each competition has 3 skill levels – Novice, Intermediate and Advanced.

The annual year-end competition in April is comprised of the images that placed (1st, 2nd, 3rd, Honourable Mention) in the 6 monthly competitions.

Competition Entry Eligibility

In order to compete, you must be an active paid-up member, have a unique email address listed on the club's website and be set up as a competing member. Contact the membership coordinator or the competitions committee to set up or change your competition level.

The Competition Levels

The three competition levels are described below. A member will commence at the appropriate level and will remain in that level throughout the competition year.

Novice

Novice is recommended for those that are new to photography, but open to any member except those that must be in Intermediate or Advanced. Novice does not mean new to the club. Novice competitors are still learning to use their camera and working on getting off the automatic settings. New members are expected to honestly self-assess themselves and contact the membership or competitions manager to set up the correct level. If you are unsure about what level you should be at, contact the competitions committee and they will view your photos and recommend a level.

Intermediate

Intermediate is for any member who is comfortable using their camera in manual or semi manual modes and understands the basics of composition. Intermediate is also for any member who has been promoted from Novice, or who has consistently placed images in competitions at a comparative level outside of the club.

Advanced

Advanced is for any member who consistently produces superior images and has a good understanding of the technical and artistic aspects of photography. Advanced is also for any member who has been promoted from Intermediate, or who has consistently placed images in competitions at a comparative level outside of the club. Any member who is, or has been, a professional photographer must enter at this level.

Advancing to the Next Level

Members are welcome to self-assess their skill level and request to be moved up to the next level before the beginning of the competition year (September). Contact the membership coordinator or the competitions committee prior to September to change your competition level.

As well, at the end of the competition year (May), the competitions committee will review the images and aggregate scores of all placed images for all competitors and recommend which Novice and Intermediate members will move up to the next level for the following season starting in September. The aggregate scores are based on a point system allowing 4 points for 1st, 3 points for 2nd, 2 points for 3rd, and 1 point for an HM and 1 point for having an image selected for entry into an External Competition.

Benefits of advancing to the next level include having one's work rated against more advanced photographers. This can help to improve participants' skills. As well, more specific competition categories are available in the more advanced levels.

Available Competition Categories by Level

There are different categories available based on the competition level.

	Category	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
DIGITAL	Nature/Wildlife	x	x	x
	Open	x	x	x
	Altered Reality		x	x
	Theme	x	x	x
	People	x	x	x

	Category	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
PRINT	Nature/Wildlife			x
	Monochrome			x
	Open *	x (2 submissions allowed)		x

* Novice and Intermediate members will enter all prints in the combined Intermediate/Novice Open Print category. The prints will be judged in the categories separately unless too few entries have been submitted.

Monthly & Annual Competition Categories and Definitions

Digital Nature

Nature photography is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict all branches of natural history except anthropology and archeology, in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject material and certify its honest presentation.

Eligible:

- Images entered in Nature can have landscapes, geologic formations, weather phenomena, and extant organisms as the primary subject matter. This includes images taken with the subject in controlled conditions such as zoos, game farms, enclosures that make the subjects dependent on man for food and botanical gardens.
- Scientific bands, scientific tags or radio collars on wild animals permissible.
- Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content, or without altering the content of the original scene, are permitted including HDR, focus stacking, and dodging/burning.
- Techniques that remove elements added by the camera, such as dust spots, digital noise, and film scratches, are allowed.
- Color images can be converted to greyscale monochrome.

Not Eligible:

- Human elements shall not be present, except where those human elements are integral parts of the nature story such as nature subjects like barn owls or storks, adapted to an environment modified by humans, or where those human elements are in situations depicting natural forces, like hurricanes or tidal waves.
- Photographs of human created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domestic animals, or mounted specimens are ineligible, as is any form of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement.
- Techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are not permitted.
- Stitched images, including Panoramas, are not permitted.
- Infrared images, either direct-captures or derivations, are not allowed
- The story telling value of a photograph must be weighed more than the pictorial quality while maintaining high technical quality
- All final images must look natural.

Digital Wildlife

- Images entered in Wildlife and meeting the Nature Photography Definition above are further restricted as one or more extant zoological or botanical organisms free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat.
- Photographs of zoo or game farm animals, or of any extant zoological or botanical species taken under controlled conditions are not eligible in Wildlife.

Digital Wildlife (cont'd)

- Wildlife is not limited to animals, birds and insects. Marine subjects and botanical subjects (including fungi and algae) taken in the wild are suitable wildlife subjects, as are carcasses of extant species.

*****Please note:** The Nature and Wildlife competitions will be alternating month to month, with 3 competitions per year being Nature, and 3 competitions per year being Wildlife. The purposes of this restriction are:

- The creation of a balance of opportunities for photographic genres, styles and subject matter,
- the images that qualify in the Wildlife category also qualify in the Nature category
- both Wildlife and Nature images are now allowed in Open.

Digital Open

Images of any subject (including Nature and Wildlife) are acceptable in open providing they meet the criteria of acceptable sensitive content. See Appendix 1.

Altered Reality

Altered Reality is defined as “allowing the photographer freedom to explore the possibilities of photographic art through the extensive manipulation of images and combination of images”.

An Altered Reality photograph should depart from reality and must be significantly different from a scene viewed through a camera lens.

Altered Reality images must have been obviously manipulated or modified during or after exposure.

All elements of the image, including textures, must be of the author's own making and the image must have a photographic base.

The use of creative techniques is highly encouraged in this category. The category does not include images whose sole creativity is infrared, monochrome, High Dynamic Range (HDR), wide angle or fish-eye lens. Images created totally electronically (with no photographic origin) are specifically excluded.

Theme

'Theme' is the making of an image that is an interpretation of the stated theme for the current month. There are no restrictions on techniques or post-processing. The monthly theme applies only to this category and does not affect the other categories. In each month, the subject of the theme is defined. The theme of the month applies only to this category.

Theme Competition Subjects for 2019-2020

September 2020	Play
October 2020	Arches, Alleyways, Laneways
November 2020	Still Life
January 2021	Homage to the Group of Seven
February 2021	You Gotta Love It !!!
March 2021	Night Photography

Information about each Theme is provided in the Close-Up magazine a few months before the competition deadline.

People

This category is open to all competition levels.

The People category includes, but is not limited to:

- Portraits
- Street photography
- Photo journalism

There are no restrictions as to subject matter apart from the general suitability and family friendly requirements (sensitive content). Please see Appendix 1 for more information.

Photographers may be asked to provide model release forms if deemed necessary.

There is no restriction in post processing.

Print - Nature

Same as Digital Nature

Print – Wildlife

Same as Digital Wildlife

Print - Monochrome

Black and white work from the very dark grey (black) to the very clear grey (white) is a Monochrome work with the various shades of grey.

A black and white work toned entirely in a single colour will remain a monochrome work, able to stand in the black and white category. Split toning is not permitted in this category.

Print –Monochrome (Cont'd)

On the other hand, a black and white work modified by a partial toning or by the addition of one colour becomes a colour work (polychrome) to stand in the colour category

Print – Open

Same as Open

Entering Monthly Competitions

Members may enter two (2) images in the Novice/Intermediate Print Open category
Members may enter one (1) image in each of the balance of the categories

Images must not have been entered in a previous VCC internal competition. Once submitted, the “Same” image may not be re-submitted in another format. “Same” includes identical, or virtually the same, which have been edited differently by cropping, digital editing, or print manipulation.

All print and digital images must have been processed within the past two calendar years.

Digital Image Requirements

All submitted digital images shall be:

- In JPG format
- To a maximum 1400 pixels wide and 1050 pixels tall
- Without makers name, watermark or title on the image

How to Enter Digital Images

All digital images are entered through the club’s website. Members must be logged into the website to upload images into a competition.

Click on “Competitions” on the menu on the main page of the website. When the dropdown menu appears, click on “Submit Images to a Competition”.

If you need assistance, there is a video available showing how to upload an image for competition. Click on the button “[Video: How to Submit Images to a Competition](#)”.

Members then select the competition to enter. All future available competitions are shown so ensure you are entering the correct month’s competition.

How to Enter Digital Images (Cont'd)

After the image has been uploaded, click on "Save Images & Proceed to Edit Page". The default title is the filename, but that should be changed to a proper title for the image. The maximum size for a title is 100 characters. The title must not have the maker's name in it because the judges will see the title of the image.

The purpose of a title is to guide the viewer to see the photo in a particular way and supply some context. If you give your image a silly, jokey or flippant title, the chances are good that your image will not be taken seriously. When in doubt, keep titles simple and neutral. Titles become a part of your art. Make sure your title makes a contribution to effectively communicate what you want to say with your image.

Print Requirements

Advanced Members can enter one print in each of the three advanced print categories (Nature, Open, Monochrome). Novice and Intermediate members can enter 2 prints in the Novice/Intermediate Open Print category. Members should bring the prints for competition to the 1st Thursday night meeting of the month (competition deadline). Labeled print cases are set out to collect the print entries for the month. ***** please see Appendix 2 for 2020-2021 changes**

Prints can be printed by the member with a home printer or by a professional printer.

In order to make handling of the prints manageable and to keep the prints safe, please comply with the following requirements.

- Print plus mat must not exceed 16" x 20"
- Minimum print size is 5" x 7"
- Mounted on conventional 4-ply single window mat board (no canvas wrapped images)
- Firmly attached to backing, but must not use foam core
- Mat board may be any colour
- No makers name or title may appear on the front of the mat or image
- A label can be printed from the website when uploading the digital version of your print. OR, alternatively, a hand-made label can be prepared and affixed in the back top right corner with:
 - Category
 - Competition Date
 - Image Title
 - Photographer's name
 - Print orientation (indicate with an arrow)
- A digital version of the print must be uploaded into the competition gallery following the requirements for digital images in order to track the print and its associated score and comments and for display in the competitions slide show. If there is no uploaded digital version of the image in the monthly competition gallery, the print cannot be judged.

- We cannot guarantee your cellophane sleeve will be returned to you after judging unless you have your name or the title of the image on the sleeve.
- **Please do not** use tape or any sticky substance to close an envelope or cellophane sleeve for a print. Prints are easily damaged if they come in contact with the glue.

Monthly Competition Judging

Novice Level

All Novice categories will be judged by a panel of intermediate and advanced club members. Images are judged on technical ability at the appropriate level (focus, exposure, depth of field, appropriate shutter speed, post processing, etc.), composition, achieving purpose, visual impact, and subject matter.

Intermediate and Advanced Levels – Digital Images

Whenever possible, Intermediate and Advanced level images will be judged by certified photographic judges or artists who are not members of the club. Whenever possible, experienced nature photographers will be used to judge the natural world and wildlife categories.

Images will be judged on technique; content; clearly defined subjects; good use of colour, tone, or hue; lighting; layering; creativity; photographic vision; subject impact (wow factor) etc.

Each image in all three competition levels will be scored using a 20-point system.

Annual Competition Awards

The Victoria Camera Club holds a year-end competition each year and announces the winners at the meeting held on the first Thursday in May. See Appendix 4 for more details.

Two sets of awards will be presented:

- ‘Year End “Best of” Competition Awards’ is a competition between all the placed images over the competition season (September – March). Awards are presented at each competition level for each competition category.
- ‘Distinguished Photographer Awards’ are awarded for outstanding achievement in the competition year based on a point system. Awards are presented at each competition level.

External Competitions

The Victoria Camera Club enters many national and international competitions during the year. The External Competitions Committee selects its submissions to these competitions from images submitted by the members.

Please see the External Competitions tab for more information regarding external competitions.

Please check the club calendar or watch for emails concerning the specific competitions.

Appendix 1. Sensitive Content & Figure Photography

The Victoria Camera Club supports the goal of its members to pursue fine art photography, but also recognizes that we are a club of diverse members, some of which are children. We expect that all images and discussion for use on the club's website (including competitions, galleries and Close-Up) will be in good taste.

Definition of Sensitive Content

Sensitive content includes subjects such as fully or partially nude figure photography and bloody nature kills.

Definition of Fine Art Nude Photography

Fine art nude/figure photography is one genre of fine-art photography that depicts the human body with an emphasis on form, composition and other aesthetic qualities. Lighting of the model is of critical importance in fine art photography.

Glamour Photography

Glamour photographs emphasize the subject, usually female, in a romantic and attractive, sexually alluring manner. The subject may be fully clothed or semi-nude, but glamour photography stops short of intentionally sexually arousing the viewer and being pornographic. For some people, the difference between fine art and glamour is in the gaze of the model; with glamour models looking into the camera, while art models do not.

Model Releases

Any model release form that may be required by jurisdictional law is the responsibility of the photographer. A model release may be needed for a photo in which a person is recognizable, depending on the situation.

- A model release is required for nude models or any image displaying a person in a compromising position.
- In general, "Street photography" images do not require a model release unless they include the situations noted above but be mindful and respectful when on public property. Note: just because a property is open to the public doesn't necessarily make it public property.

Images of Minors: Images of minors do not need a model release if the subject in the image is the maker's own dependent(s). In most other cases, it is the responsibility of the photographer to obtain permission with a model release from the parent or guardian of the minor in the image in order to submit the image to competition or display the image on the Victoria Camera Club website or in the Close-Up newsletter. Parent/Guardian of minor's permission is NOT required if the image was taken in a public place or at a public event. However, it is recommended that permission be sought out if at all possible. As noted above, not all property that is open to the public is actually public property.

Images depicting other people's work (such as sculptures, statues, paintings, and other copyrightable works) may need to obtain a release from the rights holder. When photographing the work of others, it must be as an object in its environment and not a full-frame close-up of another person's creation.

Content Not Acceptable

Images containing the following will not be accepted for competition or display in club galleries and Close-Up.

- abuse or violence
- sexually explicit images; visually explicit genitalia
- racially or religiously offensive images

Content Not Acceptable (Cont'd)

- defamatory content
- unclothed children

All competition images are reviewed by the Competitions Committee to ensure they meet the category guidelines and meet the club's definition of acceptable content, including this policy on Sensitive Content and Figure Photography. Images submitted to club galleries or forums, and for publication in Close-Up are bound by the same guidelines and policies as competitions. Club members should report images that may not meet the guidelines and policies to the Webmaster. The galleries and forums having to do with figure photography will be limited to members only – the public will not be able to view these galleries or forums. The Victoria Camera Club reserves the right to review all images submitted and will decide if an image can be entered into a club competition or for display on the website or in Close-Up.

Appendix 2. Changes due to the COVID 19 Pandemic

Because the in-person meetings are no longer being held, the competition night meeting will be held on-line with the use of Zoom.

The results will be shown in the familiar slide show format.

It is the responsibility of the participant to deliver the competing prints to the named Internal Competitions Committee member before the closing of the competition, and to retrieve the prints when notified that they are ready. In previous years there was space to store unclaimed prints in the hall, however, the committee now asks that they be claimed upon completion of the judging.