

VCC Competition Guidelines 2016-2017

Introduction

This document contains the following:

- Describes the internal club competitions & defines entry eligibility
- Competition level definitions & level advancement process
- Monthly & annual competition categories & definitions
- Detailed entry requirements for monthly competition
- Digital & print image requirements
- Competition judging
- Appendix 1 – Definition of Internal Competition Nature categories – Checklist for Wildlife versus Natural World
- Appendix 2 – Sensitive Content & Figure Photography
- Appendix 3 – CAPA Definition of Nature for External Competitions

What Competitions are there?

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 based on the placed images from the 6 monthly competitions.

Who can enter?

Any registered and paid-up active member can compete. In order to be a competing member, you must have a unique email address listed on the club's website and set up as a competing member.

What are the levels?

The three competition skill levels and where members may start are as follows. A member will commence at the appropriate level as described below. They will remain in that level for the duration of a 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.

Intermediate

Intermediate is for any member who is comfortable using their camera in manual mode 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 this 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 this level outside of the club. Any member who is, or has been, a professional photographer must enter at this level.

How do you advance to the next level?

Members are welcome to self-assess their skill level and voluntarily request to be moved up to the next level before the beginning of the competition year (September).

At the end of the competition year (May), the competitions committee will review the images and aggregate scores of all competitors and recommend which Novice and Intermediate members will move up to the next level for the following season starting in September.

Competition Categories by Level

There are different categories based on the competition level.

Category	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
Natural World (digital)	✓	✓	✓
Wildlife (digital)	✓	✓	✓
Open (digital)	✓	✓	✓
Creative (digital)		✓	✓
Theme (digital)	✓	✓	✓
Advanced Nature Print (combined natural world & wildlife)			✓
Advanced Monochrome Print			✓
Advanced Open Print			✓
Intermediate/Novice Open Prints (monochrome, nature, and open in one category)		✓	

The print categories for 2016-2017 have been changed. At the advanced level there are 3 print categories: Nature (combined Natural World & Wildlife), Open and Monochrome.

Novice and Intermediate members will enter all prints in the combined Intermediate/Novice Open Print category.

Note for all Levels

A digital version of print entries **must** also be uploaded into the competitions gallery in order to track the print and its associated score and comments and for display in the competitions slide show. If there is no digital version of the image, the print will not be judged.

Category Definitions

Nature has been split into two categories for the internal club competitions. See Appendix 1 at the end of this document for a complete checklist of acceptable and not acceptable. The Competition Committee trusts the members to correctly assess their images and enter in the appropriate category.

Digital and Print

Natural World

Landscapes, geologic formations, weather phenomena, wild flowers and un-cultivated plants. Editing and minimal hand-of-man is acceptable. “Minimal hand-of-man” means that the human elements must not improve or contribute to the image. For example, if a small building in the far distance is not noticeable at first glance then it would be acceptable. The maker could also chose to remove (clone out) the building. If retouching is chosen, close attention will be needed to technique as poorly done editing will be noticed by the judges and will affect the images score. See the checklist in Appendix 1 for more details. Images entered in Natural World under our rules may not qualify for external nature competitions (see Appendix 3.)

Wildlife

Wild birds, animals, insects, marine creatures, reptile and amphibians. Editing and minimal hand-of-man is acceptable. “Minimal hand-of-man” means that the human elements must not improve or contribute to the image. For example, if a fence is out of focus in the background and it is part of the animal’s natural environment, then it would be acceptable. The maker could also chose to remove (clone out) the fence. If retouching is chosen, close attention will be needed to technique as poorly done editing will be noticed by the judges and will affect the images score. See the checklist in Appendix 1 for more details. Images entered in Wildlife under our rules may not qualify for external nature competitions (see Appendix 3.)

Nature

For Prints only – includes both Natural World and Wildlife.

Open

Any subject, but **must not** include nature images as defined in Appendix 1. Open does not include images that meet the criteria for Creative except for Novice competitions. Since there is no Creative category for the Novice level, novice members may enter creative images in the Novice Open Category.

Creative / Altered Reality

A Creative/Altered Reality photograph should depart from reality and must be noticeably different from a scene viewed through a camera lens. Creative/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 authors own making and the image must have a photographic base.

This category does not include images whose sole creativity is infrared, monochrome, High Dynamic Range (HDR), wide angle or fish-eye lens.

Monochrome

Monochrome images with various tones of only one colour, such as black & white. Other tones such as sepia, cyanotype, selenium etc. are also acceptable.

Theme Category

Theme is any image that is an interpretation of the stated theme for the current month. This theme does not apply to other categories such as Open or Creative.

The theme competition subjects for 2016 – 2017 are:

September 2016	Automobile Detail
October 2016	Textures / Patterns
November 2016	Raw Food
January 2017	Foul Weather
February 2017	Monochrome Architecture
March 2017	Disappearing Technologies

Information about the Themes will be provided in Close-Up a few months before the competition.

Sensitive Content

Sensitive content includes subjects such as nude figure photography and bloody nature kills. Fine art nude/figure photography is one genre of fine-art photography which depicts the human body with an emphasis on form, composition and other aesthetic qualities. A committee will review all images having sensitive content and will decide if an image can be entered into a club competition. See Appendix 2 for more details.

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 minors 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.

Monthly Competition Details

Members may enter one (1) image in each of their level's categories.

Images must not have been entered in a previous VCC 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
- No greater than 1400 pixels wide and 1050 pixels tall
- No makers name, watermark or title may appear on the image

How to Enter

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 Competitions". At this point 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 can then select the competition to enter. All future competitions are shown so be sure you are entering the correct month's competition. The website will allocate the Intermediate and Advanced images to the correct competition level. Novices have their own competition categories.

Titles for Images

After the image has been uploaded, the system will ask you to give the image a title. The default 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 communicating what you want to say with your image.

Print Requirements

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.

In order to make handling of the prints manageable and to keep the prints safe, please follow these guidelines.

All prints shall comply with the following requirements:

- Print and 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 to be white or black
- 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. Back of the print must be labeled in the **top right corner** with:
 - Image Title
 - Category
 - Competition Month
 - Photographer's name, phone number, and email address
 - Indicate print orientation 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 will not be judged.
- We cannot guarantee your cellophane sleeve will be returned to you after judging.
- **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

The 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

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

The club asks judges to use the CAPA Judging Guidelines. Judges are requested to consider the following criteria:

- Assess images in an objective and unbiased manner.
- Be receptive to new concepts in photography. The issue is not whether the judge likes the technique, but whether it is well done.
- Personal feelings should not be part of the point scoring or comments.
- Score each photograph using a 20-point system
- When assigning scores and comments to an image, remember that one of the objectives of competition is to encourage the members that are competing and help them to improve their photographic skills.
- The Judge's comments may be edited for publication in Close-Up.

Annual Competition Awards

Distinguished Photographer Awards

At the end of season, annual recognition will be awarded for outstanding achievement in the competition year. The competition committee will assign points based on the monthly placement of images (1st, 2nd, and 3rd and Honourable Mention) to determine these awards.

Year End “Best of” Image Awards

The categories for this competition are the same as monthly competitions. Note that novice members have a different set of categories than Intermediate and Advanced.

All placed images from the monthly competitions (1st, 2nd, 3rd and Honorable Mention [HM]) will automatically be entered in the year-end image competition. If a member does not wish an image to compete in the year end completion, he/she must contact the Competition Committee prior to the deadline for the competition.

Members wishing to have their previously placed prints entered into the year-end competition must bring the prints to the competitions night meeting on the 1st Thursday in April.

Year End Image Competition Judging

Judges for the year end image competition are not members of the club. There are no scores or comments assigned to the images during judging – just placements. Winning images will be awarded 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Honorable Mention in each category and level at the May competition meeting.

Appendix 1. Natural World versus Wildlife Checklist for VCC Internal Competitions

For 2016-2017 we will be using our own definitions of Nature. We will not be using the CAPA/FIAP/PSA definitions of Nature or Authentic Wildlife. See Appendix 3 for CAPA rules governing most External Nature competitions.

Natural World	Yes / No	Wildlife (Living Creatures)	Yes / No
Minimal hand-of-man or human elements may be present but Nature elements must dominate . Human elements must not add to story or impact of image.	Yes	Minimal hand-of-man may be present but Wildlife elements must dominate . Human element can only be part of creature's natural or adapted environment – e.g., Barn owls in barn; raptor on fence post, bugs on garden flower. The human elements must not add to story or impact of image.	Yes
Adjustments to colour, contrast, white balance etc. All adjustments must appear natural.	Yes	Adjustments to colour, contrast, white balance etc. All adjustments must appear natural.	Yes
Remove pictorial elements – e.g., car, people or building in distance, blurring of background	Yes	Remove pictorial elements. e.g., stray leaf or twig, blurring of background	Yes
Add new pictorial elements to image - Composites should be entered in Creative	No	Add new pictorial elements to image - Composites should be entered in Creative	No
Cropping – any amount	Yes	Cropping – any amount	Yes
HDR , Focus Stacking	Yes	HDR, Focus Stacking	Yes
Stitched Images – e.g., panoramas	Yes	Stitched Images - panoramas	Yes
Colour converted to Monochrome	Yes	Colour converted to Monochrome	Yes
Infrared - either direct capture or derivations	No	Infrared – either direct capture or derivations	No
Removal of dust spots, digital noise	Yes	Removal of dust spots, digital noise	Yes
		Minimal hand-of-man or human elements are allowed in the following areas as described above	
All Wild Birds, animals, insects etc. should be in Wildlife	→	Wild Birds	Yes
		Wild Animals	Yes
		Insects - Insect on cultivated flower is allowed if insect is primary subject of image.	Yes
		Reptiles & Amphibians	Yes
		Living wild creatures in controlled conditions; zoos, game farms, aquariums	Yes
		Marine animals/creatures incl. clams etc.	Yes
Minimal hand-of-man or human elements are allowed in the following areas as described above		Scientific tags or radio collars on wild animals are permissible.	Yes
Wild flowers & un-cultivated plants including fungi and algae	Yes		No
Landscapes	Yes		No
Geological Formations	Yes		No
Weather Phenomena	Yes		No
Astronomy – Night-time sky including time-lapse	Yes		No
Domestic Animals – Farm animals / Pets should be in Open	No	Domestic Animals – Farm animals / Pets should be in Open	No
Feral Animals	No	Feral Animals	No
Cultivated Plants – eg. Garden flowers , images of farm land in the Palouse etc. should be in Open	No	Cultivated Plants – e.g., garden flowers , images of farm land in the Palouse etc. should be in Open	No

Appendix 2. 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

A model release **must** be obtained by the photographer for fully or partially nude figure models. The photographer is responsible to verify the model's identity and age to ensure the model is of legal age. A copy of the model release may be requested by the club prior to the image being displayed on the website, at an event sponsored by the club or published in Close-Up.

Acceptable Content

- Nude model posed in such a way as to not display genitalia
- Purpose of the image is not for sexual excitement

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
- defamatory content
- unclothed children

Who Decides?

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 3. Definition of Nature for Most External Competitions

COMPETITION DEFINITIONS for NATURE COMPETITIONS

In 2014, CAPA adopted the New International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) nature definition as follows:

Definition of Nature

Nature photography is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archaeology, in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject material and certify its honest presentation. The story telling value of a photograph must be weighed more than the pictorial quality while maintaining high technical quality.

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. Scientific bands, scientific tags or radio collars on wild animals are permissible.

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.

Manipulation / Post Processing

- No techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are permitted.
- 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.
- Stitched images are not permitted.
- All allowed adjustments must appear natural.
- Color images can be converted to grey-scale monochrome.
- Infrared images, either direct-captures or derivations, are not allowed.

Images used in Nature Photography competitions may be divided in two classes: Nature and Wildlife. Images entered in Nature sections meeting the Nature Photography Definition above can have landscapes, geologic formations, weather phenomena, and extant organisms as the primary subject matter. This includes images taken with the subjects in controlled conditions, such as zoos, game farms, botanical gardens, aquariums and any enclosure where the subjects are totally dependent on man for food.

Authentic Wildlife

Images entered in Authentic Wildlife sections meeting the Nature Photography Definition above are further defined as one or more extant zoological or botanical organisms free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat. Landscapes, geologic formations, photographs of zoo or game farm animals, or of any extant zoological or botanical species taken under controlled conditions are **not eligible in Wildlife** sections. 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. Wildlife images may be entered in Nature sections of Exhibitions. The photographer, whatever photographic medium is used, must have taken the original image.

Botany – includes images that portray uncultivated plant life such as trees, flowering and nonflowering plants, ferns, algae, fungi, etc. in their natural habitat. Photographs of domestic plants, artificially produced hybrid plants, flower arrangements etc are **ineligible**.