

Santa Rosa Photographic Society Competition Category Guide, v3

3.0 Overall Rules That Apply to All Categories (Except Non-Competitive)

- All image content must consist of pixels created by a photographic process captured by the member. Non-photographic pixels may not be introduced.
- Borders and frames, in the categories where they are allowed, are not considered part of the image and are not subject to category rules. However, frames may not be so large that they overpower the image.
- Text or two-dimensional art is only allowed if it is photographed as part of a larger scene and shown with enough context to allow a viewer to understand the location where it was found.
- All image editing must be done by the member.
- It doesn't matter what methods are used to arrive at the final image in Realistic, Stylistic & Creative
- Image evaluation is based in its final appearance

3.1 Realistic Category Summary

Required:

- Images, however created, must *look like* a straight, unaltered photograph of an easily recognized subject or scene portrayed in a way that is similar to how our eyes would or could perceived it.
- Depth of field should be sufficient to render the subject in focus.
- The only observable "hand of the photographer" should be the selected crop, angle of view, focal length, and the chosen moment captured.

Allowed:

- Normal exposure, color, and contrast adjustments
- Black & White, which may be given a very slight warm or cool tone
- Cloning in or out or compositing, if the result looks natural
- High dynamic range (HDR) or focus stacking methods, as long as the result looks natural
- Telephoto distance compression
- Reflections, incidental motion blur, or stop-action that is natural in a scene and secondary to the subject
- Flash

Not Allowed:

- Frames or vignettes
- Any soft-focus, diffusion, glow, textures, strong grain or noise, or other alterations of appearance applied either in-camera or in post capture processing
- Shallow foreground depth of field used with artistic intent
- Macro
- Motion blur of the main subject
- Infrared
- Unrealistic content
- Wide-angle distortion that unrealistically alters size perception, or creates perspective convergence that is unrealistic or more dramatic than that of a real life view
- Unrealistic colors, color saturation, or partial desaturation
- Unrealistic contrast
- Painting with light
- Toning of black & white images that produces a noticeable color
- Stop action shutter speeds that the human eye cannot perceive that are the main subject.
- Reflections that ARE the subject
- Subjects that are inherently abstract and hard to identify

3.2 Stylistic Category Summary

Required:

- Images should portray subjects or scenes in ways that go beyond Realistic by applying visible techniques or effects that create an altered appearance.
- Subjects must remain recognizable even if their identity is not initially obvious.
- At least some aspect of the subject(s) must retain qualities that identify the image as originating as a photograph.

Allowed:

- Frames and vignettes
- Macro
- Soft-focus, diffusion, mild filter effects, and blurring of subjects as long as they can still be recognized
- Textures as long as they do not introduce new elements recognizable as subject matter
- Altered colors

- Exaggerated saturation
- Partial desaturation
- Colorizing
- Infrared
- Lens distortion
- Cloning in or out or compositing, if the result looks like a scene that could occur in reality
- Scanner captures
- HDR and focus stacking, and other similar effects

Not Allowed:

- Abstractions that cannot be identified
- Effects such as “painting” or strongly applied filters which obscure all subject detail that identifies an image as a photograph
- Depictions of scenes that could not occur in reality

3.3 Creative Category Summary

Required:

- Images should portray scenes that are a significant departure from what we could encounter in daily life.
- Conceptual creativity and imagination in image content are more valued than creative portrayal of normal content.

Allowed:

- Frames and vignettes
- Unrealistic fantasy
- Unidentifiable elements
- Obvious cloning or compositing
- Photographic origin may be obscured by strong effects

Not Allowed:

- Image content that did not originate as a member made photograph.

3.4 Nature Category Summary

Required:

- Images must portray nature as it was seen in the field by the member.
- As much information as possible should be presented to allow a viewer to identify the subject and understand its environment.
- Images that portray a nature story are more valued than those that simply document the appearance of a species or natural object.
- Titles must be descriptive.

Allowed:

- Global and local exposure, color, and contrast adjustments as long as the result appears natural
- Very minor hand of man elements that nature is interacting with
- Blurred motion if it is inherent in the subject and not used electively with artistic intent
- Stop-action shutter speeds
- High dynamic range (HDR) and focus stacking as long as their use does not change the nature pictorial content and the result looks natural
- Macro
- Flash
- Use of the clone tool is only allowed to remove small, minor, distracting elements whose removal does not change the nature story.

Not Allowed:

- Frames and vignettes
- Any hand of man elements that are not interacting with the nature subject
- Any hand of man elements whose intent is to interact with nature
- Hybrid or domestic species, except as allowed as very minor elements when nature interacts with them
- Shallow depth of field used with artistic intent
- Soft focus, diffusion or other effects that alter normal appearance
- Infrared
- Monochrome
- Cloning that changes the nature scene by introducing new elements, or moves existing elements to new locations.
- Cute titles

3.5 Non-Competitive Category Summary

- Any member (regular, associate, honorary) from any level may submit images.
- The only rule that applies is that the image must be in good taste.
- Images will receive critique and discussion but will not be scored.
- The member must be present for an image to be shown.