

# **Delaware Photographic Society**

## **Print Competition Rules 2026-2027**

### **General**

The Delaware Photographic Society (DPS) holds competitions to encourage club members to learn to print, show, and improve their photographic work. Monthly print competitions are held on the third Mondays of September, October, November, January, February, March and April. A year end competition for the Color and Monochrome Prints-of-the-Year is held in May. Competition meetings begin at 7 PM at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1502 W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Wilmington, Delaware.

### **Categories**

There are three competition classes: Class B, Class A, and Salon. Each class will have three categories: (1) that month's assigned subject in color and monochrome, (2) open color, unrestricted subject and technique, and (3) open monochrome, unrestricted subject and technique.

Monochrome is defined as paper base white and one color (black, brown, sepia, blue, or warm tone similar to chemical toning in the gelatine silver print era).

A fourth category, Creative, has no class distinctions and may be color or monochrome. Creative images are those that use imaginative skill or original thinking including the altering of reality. However, no image should be eliminated from competition simply because it looks realistic, provided it shows originality of concept. Creative images may include modifications in the camera, darkroom, or computer, as well as unusual points of view, imaginative use of subject matter or lighting, or any other presentation that begins entirely with the maker's own photography. Artificial intelligence (AI) software is allowed to assist luminosity, color, and sharpness corrections. Creation of subject matter or any elements in a composite image via AI software is not allowed. There are no date requirements for the creative category.

Key features of creative images:

- Creative photography goes beyond literal in seeking to express the photographer's vision, feelings, and messages artistically, rather than just documenting reality.
- Imaginative skill and originality of thought can help produce images through technique, including altering reality.
- Creative images can involve modifications made in-camera, in the darkroom, or via digital manipulation, such as composites, stitching or montages.
- Photographers may use unusual perspectives, lighting techniques, or post-processing to enhance the uniqueness and mood of the image.
- Creative photography can use imagery to convey a message, tell a story, or evoke emotions in the viewer.

- Even if the final image looks realistic, as long as it demonstrates an original concept, it can be considered creative.
- While manipulation and mixed media can be included, the final creative image must retain significant photographic content.

### **Eligibility**

The competitions are open to all Delaware Photographic Society members whose current dues were paid prior to the competition. Exhibitors must have made the original film or digital captures of all parts of a composite image including, but not limited to, sky, background, and subject matter. Artificial intelligence (AI) software is allowed to assist luminosity, color, and sharpness corrections. Creation of subject matter or any elements in a composite image via AI software is not allowed.

Any image that has been previously ***selected*** in an intra-club monthly competition, whether in print form or as a projected image, may not be re-entered in DPS monthly competitions. For a ***selected*** image to be entered again, the image must have been substantially changed from when it was previously entered and ***selected***, subject to the judgment and discretion of the Print Director or a member of the Standards Committee. If this matter is unclear, consult the Print Director.

Printing may be done by the DPS member or by another printing source, but all corrections and modifications in the image itself must be made by the member.

### **Classes**

- Class B is for members who are new to print competitions or do not yet have a success record in producing competition prints in DPS.
- Class A is for members who have been successful in print competition and recommended for Class A by the Standards Committee.
- Salon Class is for members who have demonstrated high skill in producing successful competition prints and are recommended for Salon Class by the Standards Committee.

### **Class Assignment**

Entrants will be assigned to competition classes by the Standards Committee prior to the first competition in September, or thereafter, prior to the first competition that the member enters. Members may petition the Standards Committee for placement in a different class.

### **Print Sizes**

Print size limitations for each class are as follows:

- Class B: Maximum print size of 13" x 19", maximum mount size of 16" x 20".

- Class A: Maximum print size of 13" x 19", maximum mount size of 16" x 20".
- Salon Class: Maximum print size of 16" x 20", maximum mount size of 16" x 20".
- Creative: Maximum print size of 16" x 20", maximum mount size of 16" x 20".

Failure to comply with the size rules can disqualify the print for that month's competition.

### **Maximum Number of Entries Per Monthly Competition per Member**

Assigned subject (color or monochrome) – 1 print each month.

Open subject color – 1 print each month.

Open subject monochrome – 1 print each month.

Creative (color or monochrome) - 1 print each month

### **Print Comments**

While a print is in the viewing box for competition, anyone may request 'Comment Please' which will be done as a discussion session following the competition. At that time the requestor must be present and ask what they desire to know about the print or if they wish the judge and audience to discuss the print.

Each member may also bring one or two prints for non-competition Discussion Only. These should be placed in a separate group under the 'Discussion Only' sign at the entry table.

After all entries are judged there will be a discussion of the entries when a judge as well as meeting attendees can comment on the print as a learning experience for both the member who created the image and people in attendance.

### **Assigned Subjects**

A list of Assigned Subjects is published in the *The Reflector*. Assigned Subject competitions are conducted in all classes. All prints that are to be entered in the Assigned Subject contests for the 2026-2027 DPS year ***must have been captured after September 1, 2025.*** The judging panel for any monthly competition will have the final determination as to whether or not a print fits the assigned subject.

Assigned subjects for 2026-2027 are:

September 2026: **NONE PREDATORY BIRD** (Image of a bird that does not prey on other vertebrates)

October 2026: **SILHOUETTE** (Image subject identifiable only by a dark outline.)

November 2026: **GARDEN SCAPE** (Image showing a garden scene in any season; No close-up or macro images)

January 2027: **RUNNING WATER** (Image dominated by water in motion.)

February 2027: **KITCHEN HAND TOOL** (New or old implement used by hand in food

preparation)

March 2027: **IMAGE CAPTURED WITH A MOBILE PHONE CAMERA**

April 2027: **SOAP BUBBLES** (Image whose subject is predominately colorful soap bubbles.)

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The Open category has no date, technique or subject requirement.

### **Online Entry and Labeling**

Members are encouraged to use unique, relevant, descriptive titles for their prints, not generic placeholder names.

The exhibitor must enter all **print titles and digital thumbnail files of the prints** via the competition entry section of the DPS web site at least three (3) days prior to the Print Competition (i.e. by the preceding Friday midnight). The digital file is necessary for visual identification during the judging process and the print label.

An entry label, available online to be printed by the exhibitor, must include the exhibitor's name, print title, competition date, and class in which it is entered. The label must be securely adhered to the **upper left hand corner on the reverse side of the print mount**. The location of this label determines the print orientation for presentation to the judges and is particularly important for abstract images.

No identification marks, copyright symbol, photographer's name, or titles may appear on the front of the print.

### **Mounting**

Prints should be mounted on an appropriate mount board, such as those produced by Bainbridge, Crescent, Clear Bags, Savage, Blick or another vendor of similar smooth paperboard material. Window over mats or slip-in mounts are acceptable. Prints must be **well secured** to the mount board to prevent slippage. Since prints are stacked one on top of the other, effort should be made to eliminate any sharp projections, rough surfaces, sticky or adhesive substances on the back of the print mount. Any transparent cover over the print needs to be secured at all four sides and will not be removed during competition. Prints on aluminum or acrylic plastic are not allowed because of their hard, possibly sharp edges. Framed prints are not allowed.

### **Judging and Scoring**

Prints in each category and class will be previewed in the light box by the judges before scoring begins. Prints will receive a score from 1 (low) to 9 (high) from the judges and will be ranked by score. The score for each entry will be recorded and published online in the members website.

### **Selected Prints**

Prints with scores in the top 25% of each monthly competition (plus tie scores) will be designated as “**Selected**”. Prints so designated are shown to the audience after the judging, and are eligible for Print-of-the-Year (POY) competitions. Any prints that have been **selected** may not be reentered in subsequent monthly competitions.

### **Disqualification**

Exhibitors are responsible for adhering to the competition rules. The Print Director, at their discretion, can disqualify entries that fail to conform.

### **Annual Awards**

Cumulative scores will be kept at the members website for each member in each category and class. First, second and third place awards will be made to the top three members plus ties in each class and category at the end of the club year.

Additional awards can be given at the discretion of the Print Director.

### **Prints-Of-The-Year Competition**

A Morris-James Color Print-of-the-Year (CPOY) and Larry Hinson Monochrome Print-of-the-Year (MPOY) competition will be held in May 2027. Each member may enter any or all of their **selected** prints from the 2026-2027 club year. Assigned color and monochrome prints will be separated by the competition software team before the POY competition. Assigned, Open, and Creative subject prints will be judged together in the color category and in the monochrome category as appropriate for POY.

The POY competition will be juried by three qualified judges who are not DPS members. In order to make a critical evaluation and decision for each POY, the judges will closely examine at least three prints with the top two or three scores from the initial lightbox judging round and come to a consensus agreement for each POY.

The maker of the Color Print-of-the-Year will receive the Morris James Award medal.

In honor of Larry Hinson, an excellent monochrome print maker, the Larry Hinson Award medal will be given to the maker of the Monochrome Print-of-the-Year.

Up to 10 Honorable Mention ribbons will be awarded to top scoring exhibitors in the color category and up to 10 in the monochrome category in each class (Class B, Class A, Salon). Members who won POY in the color or monochrome category are not also eligible for an Honorable Mention in that category. Honorable Mentions are limited to one per member in the color category and one per member in the monochrome category.

### **Important Notice**

The volunteer print workers conducting the competitions will take all reasonable care in handling the prints to prevent damage. However, neither the volunteer workers, nor the Delaware Photographic Society will be responsible for any damage or loss that occurs to a print. Entering the contest signifies your acceptance of this notice.

Questions about the print rules should be addressed to the Print Director, Frank Dipietrapaul, at [franthephotoman@aol.com](mailto:franthephotoman@aol.com) or 302-383-9798. Retiring Print Director Karl Leck, at [karleck@verizon.net](mailto:karleck@verizon.net), authored this year's rules.