



Photo Travel Division

Updated January 2022

GUIDE FOR JUDGES AND CHAIRS OF PSA-RECOGNIZED EXHIBITIONS WITH PHOTO TRAVEL SECTIONS.

Important updates to sections 4, 10 and 12.

This guide should be studied by the exhibition chair, the PT section chair and the PT judges before any judging and should be closely adhered to. This update will be in effect for PT exhibitions with closing dates in 2022.

It is paramount that all Exhibitions organize an Award meeting as per Exhibition Standards 2022 Section ES-K4.

“Only the judges may select the awards designated for that section. In selecting awards the judges must meet either in person or via videolink. The Exhibition Chair must be in attendance at all such awards meetings. An exception to judges selecting awards is allowed for the Exhibition Chair to select a Chair’s Choice award.”

Photo Travel Definition.

A Photo Travel image expresses the characteristic features or culture of a land as they are found naturally. There are no geographic limitations. Images from events or activities arranged specifically for photography, or of subjects directed or hired for photography are not permitted. Close up pictures of people or objects must include features that provide information about the location.

Techniques that add, relocate, replace or remove any element of the original image, except by cropping, are not permitted. The only allowable adjustments are removal of dust or digital noise, restoration of the appearance of the original scene, and complete conversion to greyscale monochrome. Other derivations, including infrared, are not permitted. All images must look natural.

Purpose of the Photo Travel Definition.

The PSA Photo Travel Division (PTD) is *reality-based*, like the PSA Photojournalism and Nature Divisions. The objective of PSA Photo Travel (PT) is to show the world *as it is found naturally*. The purpose of the PT Definition is to guide PT photographers towards making images that show *how our world really is*, rather than to arrange it and manipulate images to obtain the “best” photographs. *PT images should be a true record of that scene. The PT Definition is also a guide for exhibition judges to ensure that images that violate the definition are not accepted.*

When assessing Photo Travel images judges have to take into account:

- **The content requirement. The image must express the characteristic features and/or a culture of a land.**
- **Staged/set-up images are not allowed in Photo Travel. Judges need to review the Gallery of staged images on the PSA website.**
- **Portraits or other close-ups of people or objects must include elements depicting some of the surrounding environment, to make it obvious that the image was not taken in a studio setting.**
- **The editing/processing of the image must adhere to the Photo Travel definition.**
- **The image must look natural.**
- **If there is a Themed Section, the image must first meet the Photo Travel definition.**

Further information on all sections discussed below can be found on the main PTD page under PTD Education Resources.

Below are the individual sections of the PT Definition *in blue*, illustrated Examples and comments:

PT 1. Characteristic features.

A Photo Travel image expresses the characteristic features or culture of a land as they are found naturally.

If the image is predominantly or exclusively a land-, sea- or cityscape, these “scapes” must include characteristic, distinctive and recognisable physical features, although it is not necessary that the image identify the exact location.

Two acceptable images are below.



The characteristic features in the following images are generic and do not help to identify a land. None of the images are suitable for entry into Photo Travel.





PT 2. Culture.

A Photo Travel image expresses the characteristic features or culture of a land as they are found naturally.

Images that predominantly or exclusively depict people and their activities must illustrate a distinctive culture of a country, region, or continent.

The culture presented in a Photo Travel image showcases how different people are in our world. The culture illustrated in the image should identify a people of a region or of a community and should be connected to a land. In a Photo Travel image, the culture portrayed should not be a culture that is found around the globe.

The activities portrayed in the following images are generic and do not help to identify a land or culture. None of the images are suitable for entry into Photo Travel.





PT 3: No geographic limitations.

There are no geographic limitations.

There are no restrictions as to where the image could be taken. A Photo Travel image can be captured from outside one's front door or on the other side of the world.

PT 4. Staged or Set-up Images are not permitted in Photo Travel.

Images from events or activities arranged specifically for photography, or of subjects directed or hired for photography are not permitted.

PT is about images that present a culture and/or of the characteristic features of a land as they are found naturally. Images from arranged situations cannot be entered into PT.

Judges should do their best to keep known staged images out of PT.

Set-ups can be identified when many images of the same or similar scenes are submitted to exhibitions, or when they depict unnatural actions or behavior by the people shown in the photo.



The photo below confirms that the picture of the boys throwing water is a staged "setup".



Determining whether a suspect image is staged is difficult. If you, as a judge, do not have proof that the image is staged you should score the image on the side of leniency. When you do not have evidence that the image is staged, the image **should not be disqualified.**

Images which are strongly suspected of having been staged can be kept out of the Awards.

The Photo Travel Division has a Gallery of ‘Staged Images’ which can be found on the main PTD page under Staged Images. Judges and chairmen should review this Gallery before scoring images.

The images in the following articles should be reviewed:

<https://www.picsofasia.com/the-library-of-fake-travel-photos-in-asia/>

<https://www.picsofasia.com/stage-in-travel-photography/>

<https://petapixel.com/2021/06/30/this-popular-chinese-photo-tourist-spot-is-entirely-fake/>

PT 5. Close-up images.

Close-up images of people or objects must include features that provide information about the location.

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.

The following two images do not meet the requirement: Although the people portrayed in each image wear clothing that identifies them as being members of a particular culture, the images do not include elements depicting some of the surrounding environment to make it obvious that the image was not taken in a studio setting.



By contrast, the following photographs meet that requirement to a much better degree: In each of the images below the images do include elements depicting some of the surrounding environment to make it obvious that the image was not taken in a studio setting.



It is not necessary that that elements be so specific that we know where the image was taken. It is only necessary that there are such elements in the photograph.

PT 6. Editing techniques in Photo Travel.

Techniques that add, relocate, replace or remove any element of the original image, except by cropping, are not permitted. The only allowable adjustments are removal of dust or digital noise, restoration of the appearance of the original scene, and complete conversion to greyscale monochrome. Other derivations, including infrared, are not permitted. All images must look natural.

Post processing of an image is restricted to only allowing the author to show, as closely as possible, what was actually seen when the shutter was pressed.

The following editing techniques **are allowed**:

- Cropping.
- Straightening.
- Complete conversion of color images to greyscale monochrome.

The following editing techniques **are allowed** but must be limited to making the image look as close to the original scene as possible:

Adjustment that enables an accurate reproduction of the captured scene:

- Exposure.
- Contrast.
- Dodging and burning.
- Sharpening.
- Noise reduction.

Adjustments that allow for lens deficiencies:

- Distortion.
- Chromatic aberration.

Adjustments that compensate for camera limitations:

- Blending of multiple images of the same subject and combing them in camera or with software (exposure blending or focus stacking.)
- Image stitching – combing multiple images with overlapping fields of view that are taken consecutively (panoramas).

Time exposures are allowed, as long as they do not dominate the image as a special effect (star trails, for example, are a dominating effect).

Neutral Density filters are allowed to help the author replicate the scene.

The following editing techniques are **NOT allowed**.

- Any form of manipulation that misrepresents what we found naturally.
- Cloning.
- Removing image elements by any means other than cropping (including content-aware fill).
- Adding image elements (including clip art or images created by some-one else). Some examples: fog, mist, dust, light rays, fireworks, lanterns.
- Duplicating image elements.
- Replacing image elements (such as a sky).
- Partial desaturation or blurring of any part of the image
- Changing the colour of any element in the image.
- Moving elements within an image (including content-aware move).
- Darkening any part of the image which obscures elements in the original scene.
- Noticeable vignette / over-saturation / over sharpening.
- Adding textures or artistic filters.
- Elaborate or decorative borders. Check the Conditions of Entry for details on any allowed single border.
- Watermark, logo or entrant's name on the image.
- Tones (only complete greyscale monochrome is allowed).
- Infrared/ Solarization.

There is a video on 'Editing Techniques' available for viewing on the main PTD page under PTD Educational Resources.

PT 6 a) Conversion to complete greyscale monochrome.

Entries can be entered in Photo Travel in colour as in image 1 or converted to complete greyscale monochrome as in image 2. Images cannot have some sections of the image converted to monochrome as depicted in image 3. Neither can the image show partial desaturation as in image 4. The image cannot be presented in tones as per images 5 and 6. Only complete conversion to greyscale monochrome is permitted.

Image 1:



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



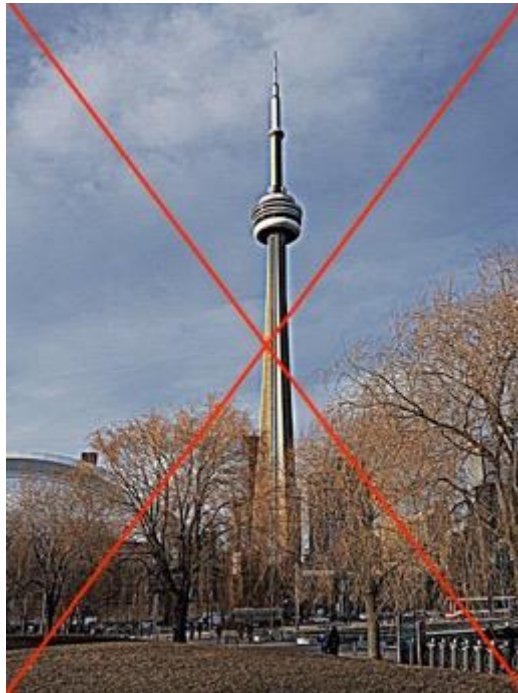
Image 6



PT 6 b) Oversaturated images should be given lower scores.



PT 6 c) Over-sharpening where unnatural artifacts appear such as halos should be scored low.



6 d) Techniques that add, relocate, replace or remove any element of the original image are not allowed.



PT 6 e) Noticeable vignettes are not allowed.



PT 6 f) Darkening areas to hide elements is not allowed.



PT 6 g) Decorative/wide borders are not allowed. Check the Conditions of Entry for the details on any allowed single border.



PT 6 h) The addition of textures is not allowed.



Images with obvious signs of overprocessing should be scored low to ensure they stay out of the PT. Such images should be excluded from the Awards.

Image manipulation by removing, moving or adding objects is often difficult to spot and to prove. When judges suspect a violation, it should be investigated.

PT 7. All images must look natural.

The Photo Travel image must look natural to the eye, therefore images taken with an extreme fisheye lens are not allowed in PT.



PT 8. Images taken at shows, re-enactments, dance or music performances.

Images taken during performances, re-enactments or shows are suitable for entry into Photo Travel sections as long as the event was not arranged specifically for photographers.

The basic rule of content applies i.e., the image should express the characteristic features or a culture of a land as they are found naturally.



PT 9. Themes in Photo Travel.

Images in Photo Travel Themed section must be in compliance with the Photo Travel Definition. Firstly, the image must meet the Photo Travel definition and secondly the image should suit the Theme. The Theme should always be subservient to the Definition.

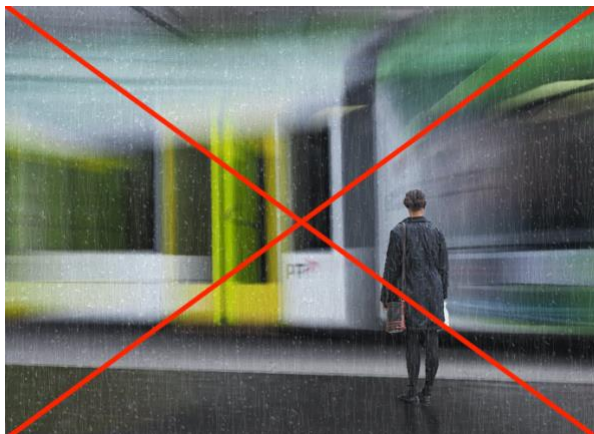
PT 10. Animals in Photo Travel

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.

With regards to the **PSA Statement on Subject Matter**: This policy is meant to discourage photographers from setting up situations in which they compromise the welfare of the subject (or someone does so on their behalf) so that a photograph can be obtained. Rodeos, bull fights, horse racing etc, might in some cases compromise the welfare of the subjects, but these events are generally not staged for the benefit of photographers. Regardless of whether a judge might dislike these practices, they are not covered by PSA's current rules. These images (rodeos, bull fighting, horse racing) **should not be disqualified.**

PT 11. People Traveling.

Images of people travelling do not necessarily mean that those images would be appropriate for Photo Travel. The image must adhere to the content requirement of the PT definition i.e. the image should express the characteristic features or a culture of a land.



PT 12. Disqualification:

The PT division emphasizes that disqualification of images should only be considered for the very serious offences i.e., where the entrant has deliberately tried to deceive the judges. Where practical, the Raw File must be requested and checked.

Lack of content, failure to comply with the close-up requirement and set-ups should be scored low. **The PT division does not recommend that these are grounds for Disqualification.**

With regards to editing techniques: vignettes, darkening areas, over-saturation and over-sharpening should be scored low. Images that show extreme lens distortion or have decorative or elaborate borders should be scored low. **The PT division does not recommend that these are grounds for Disqualification.**

PT 13. Scoring Guideline:

The scoring guideline is available from the PT Division page under Education Resources.

Extract from 2022 Exhibition Standards ES-K7:

“ES-K7 The judges must be given instructions just prior to the commencement of judging regarding any pertinent requirement or restriction, including information on medals and other awards.

- i) Instruction must include judges being given the definition for the section being judged and an explanation of the method of judging to be used. Particular care must be taken that images presented in any theme within a particular star path conform to that Star Path's definition.
- ii) Instructions must include that there be no discussions between or among the judges regarding entered images before the meeting to select awards. The only exception allowed is discussion concerning whether an image conforms to the applicable definition.
- iii) Nature, Photojournalism and Photo Travel Divisions have produced Guidelines for judging sections within these divisions, to be found under each Division on the PSA website. Where these are available, Chairs must make sure that judges had read and understood these guidelines before the day on which judging starts. In addition, the Exhibition or Judging Chairs must make sure that judges are following the Guidelines, and if necessary, intervene to require re-scoring if the guidelines are not being followed.”

The Exhibitions Standards is available for download from the PSA website under Exhibitions, Application to run a PSA recognised Exhibition.

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Distribution of this guide has been approved by the Chair of PSA's Photo Travel Division, Stan Bormann APSA, MPSA.

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If this Guide is printed it should be printed in colour to preserve the information provided.

The PT Division now have an 'Advanced PT' course which explains the PT definition. PSA members can register after log-in.

For more information about this guide or about the judging of Photo Travel competitions please contact PSA's Photo Travel Exhibition Standards Director, Nadia Filiaggi MPSA, ptd-esd@psa-photo.org