



Montreal Camera Club

APRIL 2025

Rules Governing
Competitions

PREAMBLE

The rules governing the Montreal Camera Club (MCC) competitions may be revised from time to time by the MCC Executive Committee. Any such changes shall be announced at the opening meeting of the Club.

Any member wishing to make changes to the Rules shall submit a proposal, in writing, to the Executive Committee for consideration well in advance of the opening meeting of the Club.

Except on statutory holidays, the Montreal Camera Club meets from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Wednesday evenings, commencing the first or second Wednesday following Labour Day, up to and including the month of May each year. This period constitutes the MCC competition year.

The Executive Committee may change the regular meeting day and/or time in response to exceptional circumstances. It may also be necessary for the Executive to make temporary changes to the number of competitions and requirements for trophies. The status of such provisional Executive Committee decisions shall be reviewed before the start of the competition year.

Throughout the year, four (4) regular competitions take place in the two (2) main divisions (Nature and Pictorial), plus one Image of the Year competition in each division, plus one Gemboree competition, and one slideshow competition.

PROVISIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DECISION IN EFFECT FOR 2025-2026

The Executive Committee has suspended Print division competitions for the current year. The rules concerning the Print Division are currently suspended.

Competition standings and the awarding of trophies are suspended for the 2025-2026 season. Instead, the winner of each category in each competition shall be given a Club medal. The winner of each division in the Image of the Year competition shall receive a Club medal with their name engraved on one face.

NATURE, PICTORIAL, AND PRINT DIVISIONS

1. A maximum of three (3) images per member may be submitted for each Nature or Pictorial competition. Image titles must conform to the rules for the division as written in the guidelines for that division.
2. Images that have received a score in one division may not be re-entered in a different division, nor prints made therefrom entered in any category of the Print division.
 - 2.1. Likewise, the digital image of a print that has received a score in the Print division is ineligible for submission in any other division.
 - 2.2. Images that have been previously entered in a judged Club competition, and have been scored, cannot be re-entered in any other judged Club competition.
3. No image or print shall have a frame, border, or signature.
4. When images substantially alike are entered for evaluation, only the highest scoring photograph shall be counted toward a Club trophy or certificate.
5. Images of similar subject material, not a duplicate but a different photograph, are acceptable.
6. At the start of a competition year, the Nature Chair may optionally designate up to three of the four Nature competitions to be themed in up to two of the four Nature categories (Botany, Nature General, Ornithology, or Zoology). For example: *Competition: 2; Category: Zoology; Theme: Insects and Spiders.* A hand-of-man (Adaptive) theme is permitted.
7. At the start of a competition year, the Pictorial Chair may optionally designate up to three of the four Pictorial competitions to be themed in up to two of the three Pictorial categories (Creative, Pictorial General, or Photojournalism/Street). For example: *Competition: 3; Category: Pictorial General; Theme: Architecture.*
8. Submissions to the themed category in any competition are optional, and members who choose not to participate are free to enter their images in the other categories for that competition.
9. A category may be themed only once during the competition year.
10. No categories may be themed in Competition 4 of any division.
11. Themed category entries are treated in the same way as regular category entries with respect to entry limits, scoring, Image of the Year eligibility, Honours, and awards. It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure member entries conform to the category theme.

12. In the Nature and Pictorial divisions, the maker shall decide into which category an image is submitted and shall name the image accordingly. Before judging commences, the Chair may question the eligibility of an image in the category and proceed as outlined in (83) and (83.1).

12.1. This rule shall also apply to prints submitted to Print competitions.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN PHOTO COMPETITIONS

13. Images submitted to club competitions shall comply with the following CAPA definitions and restrictions.
 - 13.1. A photographic image is defined "as being a captured image on a light-sensitive device (e.g., film camera, digital camera, smartphone, tablet, etc.) and recorded on film or in a digital format."
 - 13.2. An AI-generated image is not deemed to be a photographic image because it was created from scratch by the AI system and contains no image captured by the photographer. Therefore, this type of image will not be accepted.
 - 13.3. All parts of the image or images must have been photographed by the author.
 - 13.4. Use of AI features contained within a post processing application (e.g., masking, sharpening, de-noise, enlarging, etc.) is permitted provided they do not contain any elements which were not captured by the photographer (e.g., texture, sky, etc.).
 - 13.4.1. 'Content-aware Fill' or similar software tool that is entirely based on pixels in the original image(s) is permitted.
 - 13.4.2. 'Generative Fill' or other software tool that uses content generated by software from written prompts or which uses the work of others (whether sourced from the internet or located on the local computer, and used with or without permission) is not permitted.
 - 13.5. The Chair may require the photographer to provide a submission's supporting images (e.g., sky, texture, etc. which must have been captured by the submitting photographer).

NATURE DIVISION

14. The Nature division has four (4) categories: Botany (B), Nature General (NG), Ornithology (O), and Zoology (Z).
15. Nature images are deemed to be of natural history material as defined in Canadian Association for Photographic Art (CAPA) rules with the following exceptions: pelicans on pylons are accepted; birds with tags are accepted.
16. As CAPA makes change(s) to its Nature rules, the Executive Committee shall review, evaluate, and decide whether to adopt the change(s).
17. Any form of image manipulation that alters the truth of the Nature photographic image is not permitted, specifically techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements (except by cropping).
18. In all Nature categories, post-processing techniques **not** permitted are:
 - composites;
 - cloning;
 - addition or removal of any part of the image;
 - stitching together of two or more images;
 - creative filters;
 - softening or blurring of the background;
 - infrared images (either direct-captures or derivations).
19. Techniques that enhance the presentation of a Nature photograph without changing the nature story (nature value) or the pictorial content, or without altering the content of the original scene, are allowed.
20. In all Nature categories the following post-processing techniques **are** permitted, provided that the resulting image appears natural:
 - cropping;
 - sharpening;
 - dodging and burning;
 - removal of sensor spots, dust spots, and digital noise;
 - conversion of colour images to greyscale monotone;
 - saturation/desaturation of colour images (must appear natural);

- HDR;
- focus stacking.

21. The Chair may ask a competition participant to provide their original camera RAW (or unretouched JPEG) to confirm image authenticity and post-processing.
22. Any sign of “hand of man” shall disqualify the image, unless explicitly authorized by the Chair for a specific themed competition. For example: roads, houses, fences, electrical wires, people, mowed grass, tool-cut wood.
23. The title of an image entered in any Nature category must correctly identify the subject for educational purposes. The title should identify the subject by its specific common name or its scientific name.
24. A maximum of eight (8) entries per year is allowed in any one category (Botany, Nature General, Ornithology, Zoology). If more than eight (8) images are entered into a category, only the first eight (8) images submitted will be used in the calculations for trophies, standings, and Honours, etc.

NATURE: BOTANY (B)

25. The subject matter in the Botany category consists of wildflowers, trees, plants, and fungi growing in the wild or cultivated in gardens, etc. in their botanical form. Note compliance with (22).

NATURE: ZOOLOGY (Z)

26. The subject matter in the Zoology category consists of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects in their natural environment, in refuges or in zoos. Note compliance with (22).

NATURE: ORNITHOLOGY (O)

27. The subject matter in the Ornithology category consists of undomesticated birds in their natural habitat, in a zoo, game farm, refuge or aquarium. Note compliance with (22).

NATURE: GENERAL (NG)

28. The subject matter in the Nature General category consists of specific aspects of landscapes (e.g., wetlands), seascapes (e.g., tidal pools), rocks (e.g., basalt formations), fossils, and astronomical images. Note compliance with (22).

PICTORIAL DIVISION

29. The Pictorial division has three (3) categories: Creative (CR), Photojournalism/Street (PJ), and Pictorial General (PG).
30. Any subject matter may be submitted within the three Pictorial division categories.
 - 30.1. The subject matter of a Photojournalism (PJ) image shall conform to the definition given in (40).
 - 30.2. The subject matter of an image entered in PJ as a Street image shall conform to the definition given in (41).
31. All images which are entered in the Pictorial division shall be judged on their merits (impact, composition, technique) irrespective of their subject matter.
32. A maximum of eight (8) entries per year is allowed in any one category (Pictorial General, Creative, Photojournalism/Street). If more than eight (8) images are entered into a category, only the first eight (8) images submitted will be used in the calculations for trophies, standings, and Honours, etc.

PICTORIAL: CREATIVE

33. The Creative category promotes the manipulation of a photograph, or of several photographs, to create a fictional or conceptual image, or “photographic art.” The resulting photograph exhibits an evident use of a person’s imagination to alter reality. In general, the change(s) should be evident in some fashion and are created using in-camera and/or post-processing techniques, whether they be in colour, form, shape, or any combination of these three elements. Creative images are often a blend of multiple images or a manipulation of a single image through duplication, etc.
34. An image which has been created while conforming to the Creative category guidelines, but which closely resembles a Pictorial General (PG) image shall have the word “composite” added to the end of its title.
35. The original photographic content of an image should still be identifiable in the final creation, but it may also include artwork or computer graphics generated by the photographer. Exceptionally, composite abstract images are permitted if clause 35.1 is met.
 - 35.1. Images that are created totally electronically with no discernible photographic origin are prohibited.

- 35.2. Contemporary practice also allows limited use of "selected" portions of a clearly identifiable artwork such as Michelangelo's "The Creation of Adam," or a portion of an iconic (meaning universally known) photographic image, to be part of a multilayered creation. This is considered visual quoting.
- 35.3. The Chair may request the original images used in the creation of the submitted Creative image.
- 36. HDR (High Dynamic Range) images without further changes are not considered Creative.
- 37. The Montreal Camera Club guidelines incorporate the definitions of "Altered Reality" as found in CAPA and the Photographic Society of America (PSA).
- 38. Judges score images based on innovation, quality of execution, and believability of the image, as well as the usual emphasis on impact, composition, and technique.

PICTORIAL: PHOTOJOURNALISM/STREET (PJ)

- 39. Guided by (40 & 41), the maker shall decide if their image is photojournalistic or street photography. The maker shall indicate a (PJ) Street image by adding the word "Street" to the end of the image title.
- 40. Photojournalism consists of an image that tells a story or documents people affected by an event or a situation. The image should clearly make one point or convey a message. Good composition would significantly enhance the conveying of the story.
 - 40.1. The Photojournalism/Street category shall follow the rules of CAPA with respect to Photojournalism images. As CAPA makes changes to its Photojournalism rules, the Executive Committee shall review, evaluate, and decide whether to adopt the change(s).
 - 40.2. The Chair may ask a competition participant to provide their original camera RAW (or unretouched JPEG) to confirm image authenticity and post-processing.
- 41. Street photography features unmediated, chance encounters and random incidents, etc. in public places.
 - 41.1. Street photography does not necessitate the presence of a street or even the urban environment. Though people usually feature directly, street photography might be absent of people and can be of an object or environment where the image projects a decidedly human character in facsimile or aesthetic.
 - 41.2. Framing and timing can be key aspects of the craft with the aim of some street photography being to create images at a decisive or poignant moment.
 - 41.3. When CAPA sets a guideline for Street Photography, the Executive Committee shall review, evaluate, and decide whether to adopt those rules.
- 42. The same restricted editing rules shall apply to both Photojournalism images and Street images.
- 43. Only basic post-processing is permitted such as cropping, tone and colour adjustment.
 - 43.1. Selective adjustments or pixel modifications are not permitted. For example, elements cannot be added, removed, or cloned.
 - 43.2. No dodging or burning.
 - 43.3. No digital gradient filter and no vignettes.
- 44. Post-processing techniques NOT permitted are composite, HDR, stitching, using filters, applying textures, and focus stacking.
- 45. The title of the image should complement or contribute to the vision or message being presented in the image.
- 46. Judges will award their marks based on key elements such as composition, technique, and subject. However, judges will reward a strong emphasis on the creative message, the quality of execution, innovation, and wow factor.

PICTORIAL: GENERAL (PG)

- 47. The Pictorial General category consists of everything not included in either the Creative or Photojournalism/Street category.

PRINT DIVISION (SUSPENDED FOR 2025-2026)

- 48. The Print division has four (4) categories: Monochrome (M), Colour (C), Creative (CR), and Theme (TH).
- 49. The themes for the Print division shall be announced at the beginning of the competition year.
- 50. Any subject matter may be submitted within the three Print division categories of Monochrome, Colour, Creative.
 - 50.1. The maker shall title their digital image and label their print with the same category and title.

51. The entrant must be the maker of the original digital image ("negative"); however, the resultant Print may be commercially produced.
52. Prints should be at least 9" on the long side and least 8" on the short side of the image and mounted to a maximum size of 16"x20" (including the mount). Traditional mounting is required: the top matte with a bevel-cut, placed on top of the print with rear protective support.
53. "Flush-mounted" prints will not be accepted.
54. A maximum of three (3) prints per member may be submitted in each regular Print competition whether Colour, Monochrome, Creative, or a combination of the three, plus one submission to Theme.
55. Where a print previously entered in competition has been reworked in a completely different process (e.g., solarization, paper negatives, hand colouring, etc.) it may be resubmitted in another Print competition.
56. The number of prints submitted by a member in any one year in the regular print competitions may not exceed a total of twelve (12). Of the total prints, not more than five (5) may be from one category (i.e., five (5) Colour, or five (5) Monochrome, or five (5) Creative).

PRINT: CREATIVE (CR)

57. A print submitted in the Print Creative category is defined and marked as in the Pictorial division. See (33) through (38).
58. It is the member's responsibility to mark their entry as "Creative" in the title and on the back of the print. Failure to do so renders the entry ineligible for the "Creative" Trophy. "Creative" images will be judged separately from Colour and Monochrome. "Creative" prints count in the maker's overall Print standings for the year.

PRINT: MONOCHROME (M)

59. A Monochrome print has only one single colour and may have a range of tones of that colour.
60. A Monochrome print may also consist of shades of white, grey, or black, or a combination of any of those tones. In this case, the print is referred to as a black and white print.
61. Monochrome prints that have been selectively coloured with a second colour (or a single colour, in the case of a black and white print) in a localized area are classified as Colour, regardless of how small or large the area of the second colour.

PRINT: COLOUR (C)

62. Prints entered in the Colour category must contain at least two colours. Exceptionally, a black and white print with one colour is classified as a Colour print. See (61).

PRINT: THEME (TH)

63. Prints entered into the Print Competition in the Theme category are in addition to the number of prints submitted to the regular Print competitions. See (54).
64. There are five (5) Print Theme competitions in the year. A member may submit one (1) Theme print in each of the regular five Print competitions, in addition to the three (3) prints submitted in the regular Colour, Monochrome, and Creative Print categories. The marks received for prints entered into the Theme Competitions will be used solely for the calculations in relation to the Theme Certificate and will not be included in the calculations for any other trophies.
65. The best three (3) of five (5) submissions shall count towards the Print Theme Certificate.

SUBMISSIONS FOR COMPETITIONS

66. Division Chairs are not required to accept entries for competition after the deadline.
67. For all divisions, digital images with a file name in the required format shall be submitted to the designated email address of the division Chair by the deadline date and time set by the division Chair.
68. For the Print division, digital images with a file name in the required format shall be submitted to the designated email address of the Print Chair or sent using an alternate digital transfer method requested by the Print Chair.
 - 68.1. The Print Chair will return by email a form with the print title and a number indicating the print's position in the judging display sequence. This form and number are to be attached to the back of the print. The mounted and labeled prints shall be submitted no later than 7:00 p.m. on the evening of the judging.

69. In the Print division, digital images must be submitted in advance to allow the organization of the images to be displayed to the audience during the judging. The file name must be in the required format and shall be submitted to the designated email address of the division Chair by the deadline date and time set by the division Chair.
70. In the event of a misplaced entry, the division Chair has the discretion to place that entry in a subsequent competition, in addition to the member's quota for that competition.
71. In the event of the disqualification of a Nature competition image, a replacement image may, at the discretion of the Nature Chair, be submitted in a subsequent Nature competition in addition to the member's normal submission quota. This provision is called a "resubmit" and shall not apply to more than three images in any one competition year per member.
 - 71.1. The same rule shall apply to mis-categorized images at the discretion of the division Chair.
72. A new member who joins the Club one week prior to the first competition submission deadline, or later, shall be allowed to submit one (1) additional image in each of up to three (3) future competitions.

CLASSES "A" AND "B"

73. In each of the main competition divisions, members shall be classified in one of two classes: A or B.
74. All members are in Class B in a division until they have fulfilled one of the following requirements:
 - 74.1. won the Dorothy Benson Trophy in the Nature division, the William Spry Memorial Trophy in the Pictorial division, **or the Blossom Caron Trophy in the Print division**;
 - 74.2. entered nine (9) or more images in the Club Nature, Pictorial, **or Print competitions**, and achieved 90% of the score of the Class B trophy winner shown in (74.1) for that division.
 - 74.3. are improperly classified in the opinion of the Honours Chair.
75. Images and prints in Classes A and B are scored on the same basis, at the same time, and on the same standard of merit.

JUDGING

76. The judging panels shall consist of three judges as selected by the division Chairs.
77. Members who serve as a judge for a competition may not also compete in the competition. In that case, they do not score their own images and the identity of the maker is hidden from the other two judges. Their final mark for each of their images will be the average of two rather than three marks.
78. The procedure described in (77) shall be followed when the partner of a competition judge is competing in that competition.
79. Nature, Pictorial, and Gemboree images will be judged prior to the competition meeting. During the competition, all images will be projected, the mark announced, and the maker identified per (97). Constructive evaluations of as many of the images as time permits will be presented by the judges, or representatives of the judging panel, or an experienced commentator.
 - 79.1. Questions or concerns with respect to the judging comments and/or scores shall be directed privately to the Division Chair.
 - 79.2. All images shall receive comments.
80. Judging for the Print competitions shall start earlier than the regular meeting time.
81. Print division judging shall be done during the first half of a Print Competition meeting, in a room separate from the meeting hall.
 - 81.1. Judges may view a print presented on the MCC lightbox in any way necessary to evaluate it.
82. In the second half of the Print Competition meeting, the prints shall be presented to the judges on the lightbox in the meeting hall. A digital version of each print shall be projected onto a large screen for the benefit of the audience during the judges' comments. The judges will provide comments on each print, time permitting.
83. In all divisions, images shall be entered in a category chosen by the maker. If the Chair determines an image to be mis-categorized, then he/she will contact the maker for consent to move the questioned image to another category.
 - 83.1. If consent is not given, then the image will be judged as submitted.

84. The judges may advise the Chair that an image may be in the wrong category. It is the responsibility of the Chair to determine if the image will be scored, may be moved to a different category, or removed from the competition.
 - 84.1. If instructed by the Chair, the judges must score every image.
85. If the Chair decides to remove an image from the competition, then the maker will be allowed to re-submit, otherwise the image will be scored.
86. The Chair may change the category of an entry if doing so would avoid disqualification except in case (83.1).

SCORING

87. In all divisions, an image which scores an average of 7 points or more constitutes an Acceptance. Acceptances have no effect on category awards or year-end trophies, with one exception:
 - 87.1. Only Accepted images are eligible for presentation in Image of the Year and Print of the Year competitions.
88. In all divisions, an average score of 9 points or more merits an Honourable Mention (HM).
89. All divisions shall use the same scoring guideline as follows:

9.0 – 10	Outstanding – exceptional emotional impact (“wow”), with remarkably strong technical qualities. <i>MCC Honourable Mention</i>
8.0 – 8.9	Excellent – above average technical qualities and impact. Tells a story.
7.0 – 7.9	Average – well-defined subject, suitable composition, lighting, and depth of field. <i>MCC Acceptance</i>
6.0 – 6.9	Fair – several weak points, needs improvement.
5.0 – 5.9	Poor – numerous major faults.

Judges are expected to evaluate consistently, and score precisely, using 0.1 point increments. Ties are permitted.

90. In the Nature division, each judge will score out of a possible 10 points, evaluating nature value, composition, and technique.
91. In the Pictorial division, each judge will score out of a possible 10 points, evaluating pictorial value, impact, composition, and technique.
 - 91.1. The term “value” as used above, shall mean the evaluation of the photograph in terms of its success in portraying the subject matter of its category.
92. **In the Print division, each judge will score out of a possible 10 points, evaluating pictorial value, impact, composition, and technique, as well as the presentation of the mounted image.**
93. In the Gemboree competition, each judge will score out of a possible 10 points, evaluating pictorial value, impact, composition, technique, and conformance to each of the seven themes.
94. In all divisions an Honourable Mention will be awarded a ribbon.
95. The highest score achieved in each division and/or category shall be awarded a ribbon.
96. To select the images and prints of the year, three judges shall evaluate the images presented on an “in” or “out” basis. Those photographs obtaining “in” votes by a minimum of two judges will be re-evaluated by the same procedure. The process of elimination will continue until the number of images or prints has been reduced to no more than ten, at which time the final selection shall be accomplished by discussion amongst the judges.
97. Competition Adjudication Terminology

Adjudication Term	Definition	Example	Permission to submit alternate image	Scored by judges	Used for trophy, certificate, and promotion eligibility	Shown to membership on competition evening	Included in Member's Total Points & Best 9	Eligible for Image of the Year
Not Accepted	Score < 7 points		No	Yes	Yes	Title shown with “(Low Mark)” but not maker’s name or score	Yes	No
Accepted	Score >= 7 points		No	Yes	Yes	Title shown with maker’s name and score	Yes	Yes
Resubmit	Image deemed by Chair to be unjudgeable as entered for category	<i>Hand of Man Wrong category</i>	Yes, except if exclusion occurs in competition 4	No	No	Title shown with “(Hand of Man)”, but not maker’s name	No	No

Over-entry	Images exceeding category limit (in presentation order) See (24) (32)	Image 9 for PG	No	No	No	Title and maker's name shown, but not scored	No	No
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GENERAL

98. Each division Chair shall pre-screen all entries for conformity to file-naming rules, category, and theme.
99. Problems arising from the application of any rules shall be referred by the division Chair to a committee consisting of the President and the Honours Chair.
100. The Rules Governing Competitions shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee prior to the start of the competition year.
101. The rules may not be changed during any competition year.
102. In the event of a tie between two or more members for any trophy or award, the trophy or award shall be shared.
103. All Chairs and other Executive Committee members, except for those responsible for the Club archives, Club publications, image management for external competitions, and website backup maintained by the Webmaster, must remove members' images from their personal computers, personal devices, personal emails, and personal cloud storage, prior to the start of the following competition year.

NATURE, PICTORIAL, CREATIVE IMAGE OF THE YEAR, AND PRINT OF THE YEAR

104. In Nature and Pictorial divisions, all Accepted images during the competition year are eligible for entry in the Nature, Pictorial, Creative, or Photojournalism/Street Image of the Year competitions. See (87).
105. In the Print division, a member may choose a maximum of seven (7) of his/her Accepted prints from that competition year's four competitions to re-submit for Print of the Year which shall be judged separately for Monochrome, Colour, and Creative. See (87).
106. Images entered for Image of the Year and Print of the Year shall be judged per (96).