

SCPC Assigned Topics 2012/2013

Portraits – Portrait photography is photography of a person or group of people that displays the expression, personality, and mood of the subject. Like other types of portraiture, the focus of the photograph is usually the person's face, although the entire body and the background may be included. For our portrait competition the portrait should be the main subject in the picture, not an incidental element. Environmental portraits, where the image tells more about the person by including some of the location in the frame, are valid, but the person should not be too small.

Painting with Light – Painting with light is a fun technique that gives great results. It is called painting with light because this is what you are actually doing while taking the shot - painting with light. It's done by setting the camera on the tripod and taking a relatively long exposure. Once the shutter is open, use a flashlight to light the subject that you want to "paint." You can use the flashlight as a brush, and "smear" the light, just like you would have done with brush and paper. Or, you can use the light as a pen, and do precise work. Areas where you move the light slowly or repeat painting will be brighter than other areas. Be careful not to linger too much over the same spot - you will burn it.

Macro – Macro photography refers to taking pictures of small things at close range. Any small object, or a small portion of a larger object, can be a subject for macro photography. A good macro photo reveals details and textures in the object that can't be observed with normal photography or by an undiscerning eye. For our Macro Photography competition, the main subject shown in the image should be 3 inches or smaller. The main subject shown may be a small portion of a larger object (e.g., center of a flower, tip of a finger).

High-Key or Low-Key in Black & White/Monochrome – High-key technique produces images that are bright and have low contrast. High-key photos are characterized by dominating bright tones and the lack, if not absence, of shadows. The histogram of a high-key picture will be condensed on the right side (bright tones) but without losing too many details of highlights.

A low-key image is one that contains predominantly dark tones and colors. Like high-key images, they convey atmosphere and mood. But where a high-key image feels airy and light, a low-key is usually dramatic and full of mystery. And where high-key lighting over-lights the subject to reduce contrast, low-key lighting creates striking contrasts through reduced lighting. Shadows are now the primary element of the composition.

Submissions to this competition must be monochrome high-key or low-key images.

Back Lighting – a controlled technique of lighting, used in photography, in which the main light is placed behind the object, person, or scene to produce such effects as depth or separation of subject and background. The unique characteristics of backlit photography should be evident in images submitted to this competition.

Still Life – Still life photography is the depiction of inanimate subject matter, most typically a small grouping of objects. Still life photography gives the photographer leeway in the arrangement of design elements within a composition. Still life photography is a demanding art, one in which the photographers are expected to be able to form their work with a refined sense of lighting, coupled with compositional skills. The still life photographer makes pictures rather than takes them.

Somerset County – The images must be taken in Somerset County, NJ. They should show scenes, unique details, significant building or objects, or local color taken in Somerset County. General subjects that can be seen anywhere should be avoided (e.g., flower close ups, cars, still life arrangement). However, a unique display in a local store window would qualify.

Nature – The picture must depict a natural scene or subject. Human elements shall not be present except on the rare occasion where those elements enhance the nature story. The presence of scientific bands on wild animals is acceptable. Photographs of domesticated animals, mounted specimens and obviously set arrangements are not acceptable. Farm animals are considered to be domesticated and are not acceptable. Any form of image manipulation that misrepresents the true situation or that alters the content of the image is not permitted. Minor cloning to remove small incidental distractions in the image are permitted if the cloning operation is undetectable by the judge. A judge may disqualify any image in which he or she detects evidence of cloning or pasting. Any live plant is acceptable as long as it is photographed in a natural setting.