

SAPF JUDGING AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Notice to SAPF-affiliated Clubs

There have been many questions about Artificial Intelligence (AI) and photography competitions in general, and some of those questions have come to me about judging in SAPF-affiliated Clubs.

The first thing to note is that all international and national photographic bodies have specified in their rules that all components of a photograph entered in any competition/exhibition must have a photographic origin.

I would advise Clubs to also add this to their competition rules because it is the Clubs' responsibility to manage the eligibility of entries in their competitions.

As such, there have not been any specific instructions to judges on AI.

The main reason for this - it is the Club's responsibility to ensure that their competition rules reinforce that any entry into the Club's photography competitions has been captured on a light-sensitive medium (ie. film or digital sensor) - in essence, that means a camera. The only exception is the creative use of an enlarger and photo paper in a wet darkroom.

The arguments around this are compounded by the confusing uses of the term AI:

- software that uses AI techniques to improve post-processing (such as Topaz AI applications) is acting in the realm of photo editing the original capture
- software that creates visual "art" from text-based instruction does not use a photographic process and is more accurately referred to as Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) in the movie & TV industry.

The complication will come when popular software such as Photoshop offers an AI capacity for its graphic arts customer base.

In simple terms, this is comparable to the current requirements by all exhibitions and photographic bodies that all elements (eg. in composites or sky replacement) are the work of the submitting author.

In the past Clubs have had to deal internally with people using downloaded elements in their entries, this is something that judges with varying degrees of technical understanding cannot be expected to "police".

I have no doubt that someone will eventually try it on, as they have in the past with downloaded elements and even plagiarism/stolen photographs. I firmly believe that this is best controlled at Club level and is reliant on the integrity of Club members who have joined a photography club or camera club - not a computer club.

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