

WORLD PRESS PHOTO

TECHNICAL REPORT

2018 PHOTO CONTEST

Foreword

This report is designed to enable informed conversation within our community of professional visual journalism and storytelling.

This is the third edition of the World Press Photo Foundation's technical report reviewing the annual photo contest. Each year our commitment to transparency means we make public data on the contest related to issues of diversity, representation, and verification.

This report is designed to enable informed conversation within our community of professional visual journalism and storytelling. It has been compiled in the weeks after the 2018 Photo Contest award nominees announcement, and is not intended to be a comprehensive presentation of all aspects of all the relevant issues.

With the [State of News Photography reports published in 2015 and 2016](#), we began a research program surveying contest

entrants to help understand the lives and livelihoods of professional photographers. We are repeating that survey this year, and we hope the main findings, incorporating data from 2017 and 2018, will be presented later in the year.

To get a comprehensive picture of the global professional community from which our contestants come, we need partners to help us undertake this research and we welcome proposals that would contribute to this effort. In the meantime, I hope you find information of value in this review of the 2018 Photo Contest.

Lars Boering
Managing Director

The World Press Photo Foundation and the World Press Photo Contest

The World Press Photo Contest is one of the World Press Photo Foundation's most important and best-known programs, and this year, for the first time, the foundation made a statement on representation to all jurors.

The contest rewards photographers for the best single exposure pictures contributing to the past year of visual journalism. The criteria for entries is that they are accurate, fair, and visually compelling insights about our world.

The foundation sets the contest categories and rules, requires entrants to accept the contest code of ethics, and selects the jury. Once appointed, the jury, chair, and secretaries are independent of the foundation, and no member of the foundation has a vote on which image or story wins.

Once the winners have been decided and announced, they are all presented to the world via the foundation's website and social media channels, and a large selection is made available through the foundation's exhibition and yearbook. These showcases mean many millions of people around the world will see them, often for the first time.

World Press Photo is a platform that connects professionals and the global audience through high quality, non-fiction reporting

and storytelling that can be trusted.

Being a global platform gives the foundation the responsibility to present the best, most accurate and compelling work, even though the foundation has not directly chosen this work. As such, without restricting the jury's decisions, the foundation asked the jury to consider issues of representation when it was deliberating on the entries:

- Whether the images and stories under consideration repeat well-known examples or are distinctive
- Whether the images and stories under consideration they reinforce or challenge stereotypes
- Whether graphic and violent photographs are appropriate for the story presented, especially when they involve vulnerable people
- Whether issues of the subjects' consent appear to have been appropriately handled by the photographer

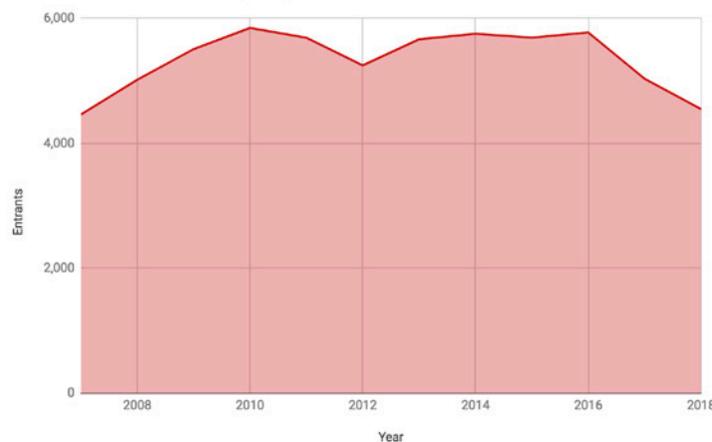
The foundation recognizes these are often matters of judgment, but they indicate some of the issues World Press Photo deals with as it presents the visual stories that matter to the world.

The number of entrants and submitted photos 2007 - 2018

The 2018 Photo Contest saw 4,548 photographers from 125 countries enter 73,044 images.

YEAR	ENTRANTS	COUNTRIES	SUBMITTED PHOTOS
2007	4,460	124	78,083
2008	5,019	125	80,537
2009	5,508	124	96,268
2010	5,847	128	101,960
2011	5,691	125	108,059
2012	5,247	124	101,254
2013	5,666	124	103,481
2014	5,754	132	98,671
2015	5,692	131	97,912
2016	5,775	128	82,951
2017	5,034	126	80,408
2018	4,548	125	73,044

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENTRANTS PER YEAR



TOTAL NUMBER OF SUBMITTED PHOTOS PER YEAR

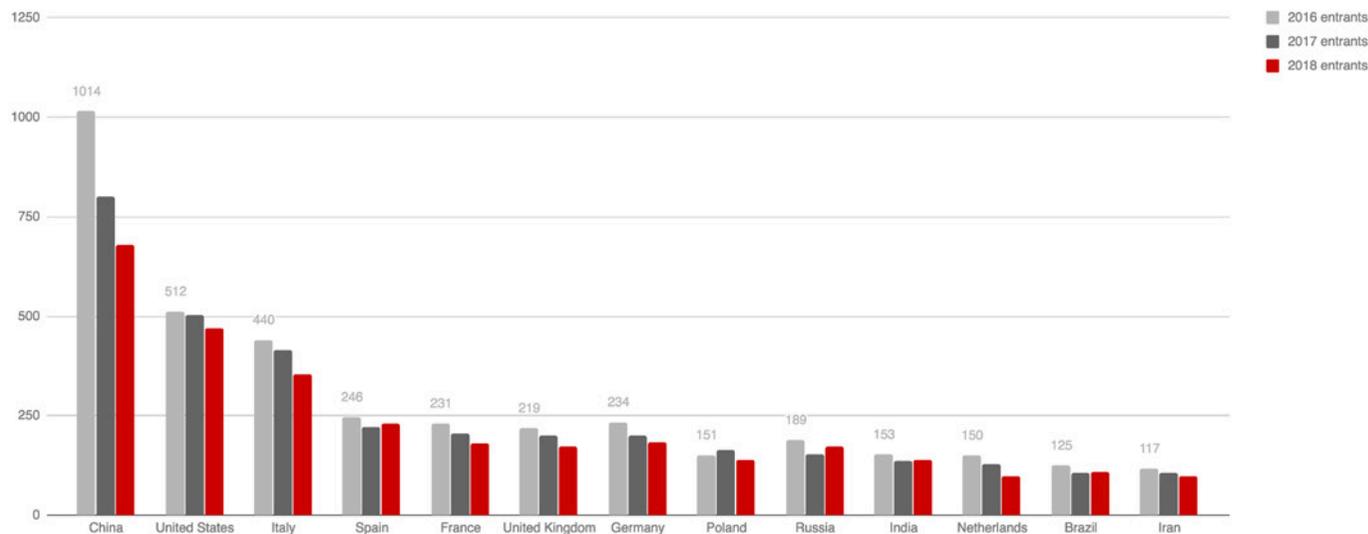


We are undertaking a detailed analysis of participants over the last five years to see what might account for the changes in the number of entrants.

The top countries with 100 or more entrants 2016 - 2018

COUNTRIES WITH MORE THAN 100 ENTRANTS	2016	2017	2018
China	1014	799	678
United States	512	503	470
Italy	440	416	353
Spain	246	222	229
France	231	206	180
United Kingdom	219	200	172
Germany	234	199	182
Poland	151	164	139
Russia	189	154	173
India	153	136	139
Netherlands	150	127	98
Brazil	125	105	108
Iran	117	106	97

THE TOP THIRTEEN COUNTRIES BY ENTRANTS 2016 - 2018

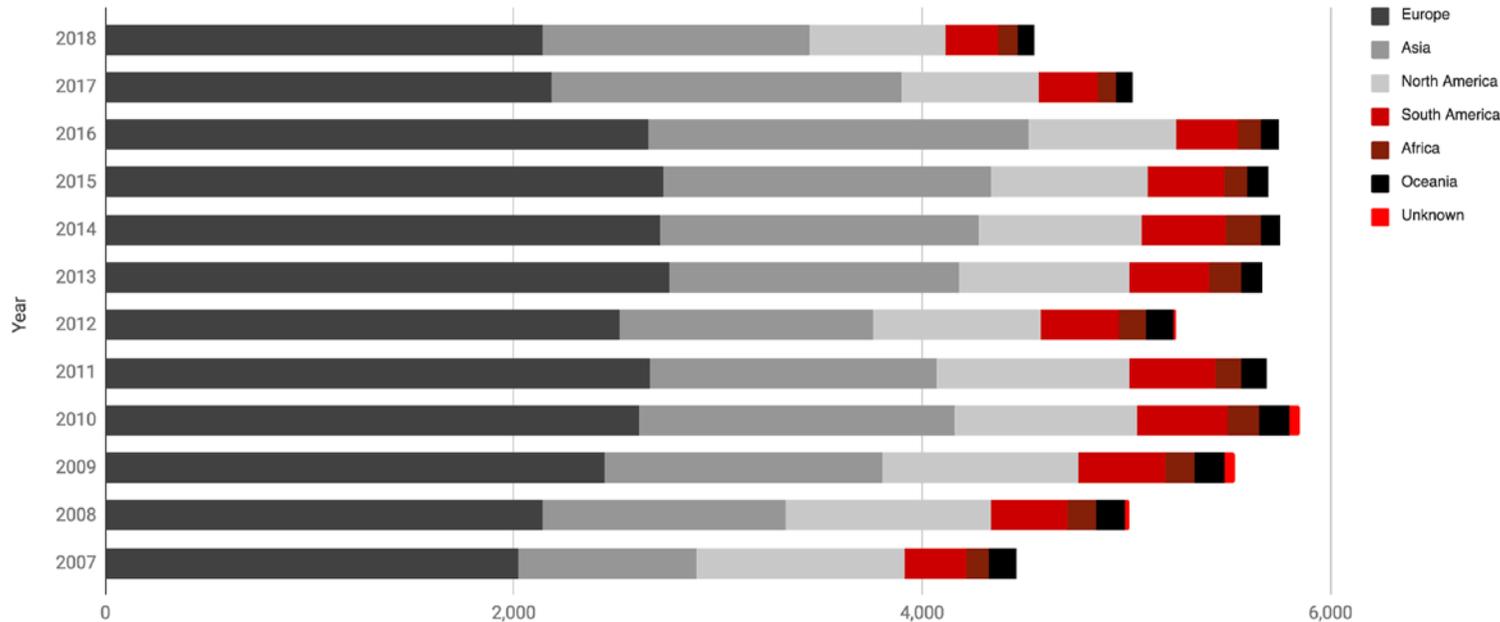


The geographic distribution of entrants is weighted towards Europe and Asia, with the 2018 data showing 47 percent of entrants came from Europe and 29 percent

from Asia. North America was the source of 15 percent of entrants, 6 percent were from South America, 2 percent from Africa, and 2 percent from Oceania.

These proportions changed very little from 2017 (North America was +2% and Asia was -2%, with all other regions the same).

ENTRANTS BY CONTINENT



Improving global diversity is a major goal for the organization. Addressing the under-representation of female identifying photographers and photographers in Africa and South America is a priority for the coming years.

To address these issues the foundation is undertaking a series of training and talent identification programs. For example, we had satellite masterclasses in Mexico City (2015), Nairobi (2016) and Accra (2017), and we are developing a global masterclass program to build on

these pilots. We have established and are expanding the African Photojournalism Database on Blink (in conjunction with Everyday Africa) and the 6x6 Global Talent Program, we are supporting new talent and connecting them to the international media economy.

Beginning in October 2017 we commenced a social media campaign, backed by the recruitment of ambassadors and direct mailings, calling attention to these issues and inviting increased participation from female identifying photographers, photographers in Africa and South

America. This campaign also sought entries for the new Environment category as well as the Sports category.

The Environment category received a substantial number of entries. While there was a very small increase in participation by female identifying photographers, there was no increase in African and South American participation. We did not expect the campaign alone to produce immediate improvements; it is, instead, the start of an ongoing commitment to seeking improvement in these areas.

Contest Outreach 2017



"After a decade of winning the first prize in spot news, the photograph I titled, 'Hell from Heaven', is a phenomenon that continues to shape my artistic impressions and has become a key signature in my photojournalism career."

Akintunde Akinleye, Nigeria
Photojournalist

The 2018 World Press Photo Contests are now open for entries. Deadline: 4 January. Find out more at worldpressphoto.org and enter your work!



"2015 was an important turning point in my career and winning a World Press Photo award certainly played a large part in that."

Winning the award gives your work exposure to a wider audience, and it gave me encouragement to continue working on personal projects."

Malin Fezehai, Eritrea/Sweden
Photographer and filmmaker

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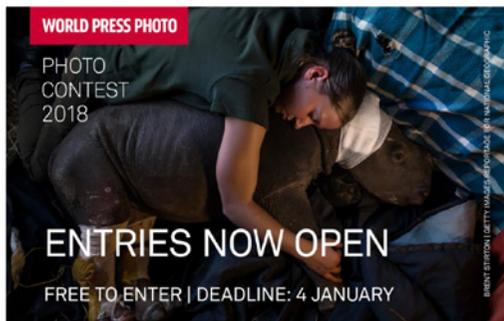


"The importance of World Press Photo is undeniable. There is no contest with a greater scope, both in the number of participating photographers and the exhibition's reach; being seen around the world by visitors who may not otherwise be exposed to this work."

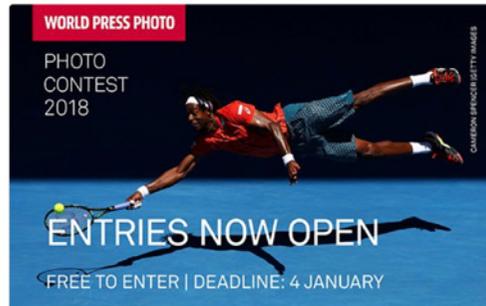
Marizilda Cruppe, Brazil
Documentary photographer and former jury member

The 2018 World Press Photo Contests are now open for entries. Deadline: 4 January. Find out more at worldpressphoto.org and enter your work!

W World Press Photo @WorldPressPhoto · 9 Dec 2017
Last year only 2% of our entrants were from an African country—help us change this! If you know a photojournalist from #Africa whose work you'd like to see in our #WPPH2018 worldwide exhibition, share this tweet with them now & encourage them to enter: bit.ly/2A4idmK



W World Press Photo @WorldPressPhoto · 12 Dec 2017
Calling all professional sports photojournalists! Submit your work to the #WPPH2018 Photo Contest - find out more & register before 4 January: bit.ly/2BzpGia



W World Press Photo @WorldPressPhoto · 16 Dec 2017
Last year only 15% of our photo contest entrants were women. We need your help to show a more comprehensive picture of the world - find out more about the #WPPH2018 Photo Contest & enter today: bit.ly/2AJp2tM



W World Press Photo @WorldPressPhoto · 30 Nov 2017
Entries open tomorrow for the 2018 Photo Contest & 2018 Digital Storytelling Contest! Find out how to enter: bit.ly/2Aph01Q



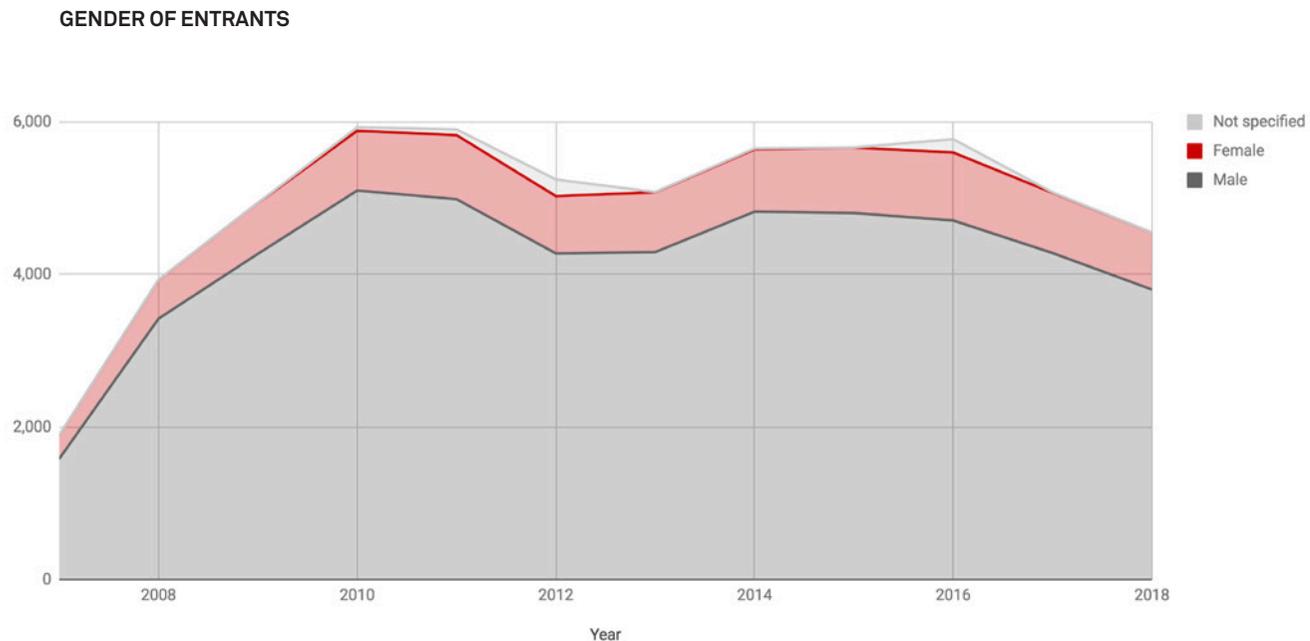
W World Press Photo @WorldPressPhoto · 17 Dec 2017
Share this tweet with a female photographer whose work you'd like to see among the winners at our worldwide exhibition & encourage them to enter: bit.ly/2AtU7Cj - Only 15% of our photo contest entrants were women last year - we need your help to change this!



W World Press Photo @WorldPressPhoto · 29 Dec 2017
Know a photographer who documents human impact, positive or negative, on our environment? Share this tweet with them & encourage them to enter their work into the 2018 Photo Contest's new #Environment category at bit.ly/2B8jXs



Gender of contest entrants 2007-2018



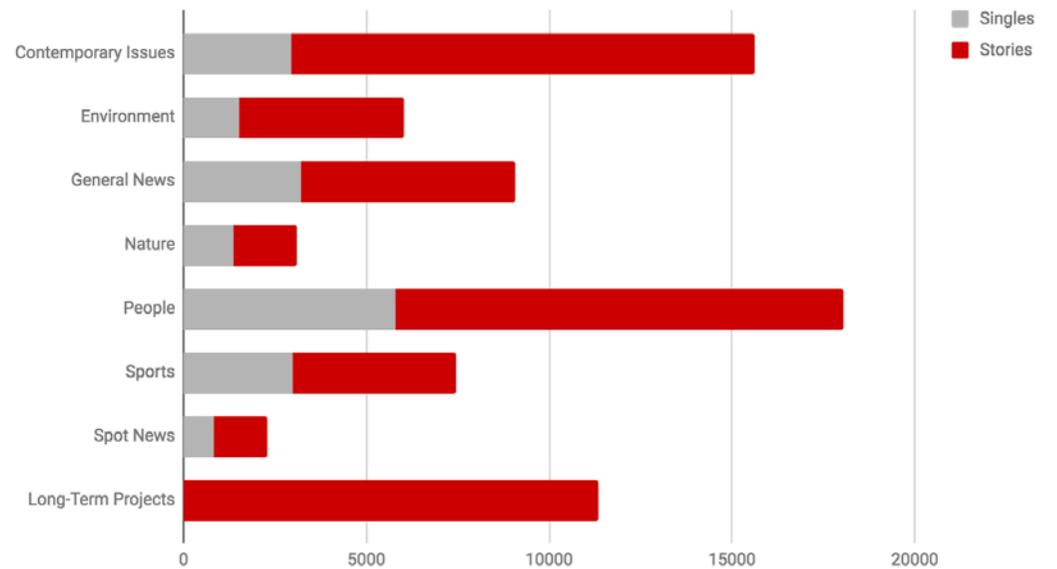
In the last three years, the number of female entrants to the World Press Photo Contest has been 15 percent, and this year it increased ever so slightly to 16%. In 2012, the most recent "high point", it was 17.5 percent.

One hindrance to clarity on this topic is the fact that we do not know what proportion of the professional photojournalism industry is female, so we cannot confirm whether or not the proportion of female entrants is reflective of the industry.

Contest entries by category

CATEGORY	SINGLES	STORIES
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES	2931	12712
ENVIRONMENT	1512	4535
GENERAL NEWS	3228	5843
NATURE	1357	1753
PEOPLE	5808	12255
SPORTS	2994	4471
SPOT NEWS	834	1478
LONG-TERM PROJECTS		11333
	18664	54380

NUMBER OF PHOTOS ENTERED AS SINGLES OR STORIES PER CATEGORY



Award nominees by country

This table shows the number of awards per country from 2007 to 2018, not the number of winning photographers. For 2007-2017 it shows winners and for 2018 it shows nominees. This means if a photographer is nominated for or awarded a prize in two categories,

the country is counted twice. The table does not include either nominees for or winners of the photo of the year. Note also that the nationalities of the nominees and winners are provided by the entrants when they submit, and on occasion the nationalities have changed after

announcement, when dual nationalities are sometimes declared by photographers.

As entries are judged anonymously, the country of entrants is not a visible factor during the judging process.

COUNTRY	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	TOTAL
USA	13	15	9	9	5	7	4	11	9	9	5	10	106
ITALY	5	4	6	9	9	7	6	3	9	2	4	5	69
FRANCE	6	2	6	6	4	4	1	4	2	1	2	1	39
CHINA	3	3	7	2	3	3	4	3	6	2	1	1	38
GERMANY	1	2	2	3	6	1	1	3	2	2	3	5	31
AUSTRALIA	2	3	1	3	3	1	2	2	1	4	2	2	26
SPAIN	5	4	1		3	2	3	2		2	3	1	26
THE NETHERLANDS	2	1	1	6	3	5	1	1				3	23
UK	1	3		7		2	1	4	1		2	2	23
RUSSIA		1	3			3	1	3	3	2	4	1	21
SWEDEN	2		2	2		3	1	1	1	4	1	2	19
CANADA	2	4	2	2	1	1	1			2	2	1	18
POLAND		2	5		2	2	2	3	1				17
DENMARK	3	1			1	2	4		1			1	13
SOUTH AFRICA	1	1	1		2	2	1	1		1	1	1	12
BRAZIL	1		3	1	1		1			2	2		11
IRAN						1	3	1	2	1	1		9
IRELAND			1	1	3	1			1			2	9
MEXICO	1		1	1	1	1	1	1		2			9
JAPAN	1	1	2			3				1			8
SWITZERLAND	2	2	2				1			1			8
HUNGARY	1	3		1	1						1		7
ARGENTINA	1		1	1		1	1	1					6

Award nominees by country

COUNTRY	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	TOTAL
BELGIUM		1	1				2		1			1	6
INDIA			1		2	1	1				1		6
ISRAEL	2	2		1	1								6
BANGLADESH					1			2	1			1	5
PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES	2			2			1						5
TURKEY							1		2	1	1		5
CHILE			1	1			1				1		4
SYRIA										2	2		4
CZECH REPUBLIC							1	1			1		3
PORTUGAL		1					1			1			3
SERBIA							1	1				1	3
AZERBAIJAN								2					2
BULGARIA		1						1					2
COLOMBIA			1									1	2
EGYPT						1						1	2
EL SALVADOR			1					1					2
FINLAND								1			1		2
INDONESIA					1		1						2
JORDAN							1	1					2
MALAYSIA							2						2
NEW ZEALAND								1			1		2
NORWAY	1					1							2
PERU				1			1						2
SLOVENIA										2			2
SOMALIA				1	1								2
VENEZUELA												2	2

Award nominees by country

COUNTRY	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	TOTAL
AFGHANISTAN						1							1
AUSTRIA										1			1
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA						1							1
ECUADOR				1									1
ERITREA									1				1
GREECE			1										1
HAITI					1								1
HONG KONG					1								1
MALI				1									1
NIGERIA	1												1
PAKISTAN											1		1
PHILIPPINES											1		1
ROMANIA											1		1
SOUTH KOREA			1										1
UKRAINE			1										1
VIETNAM							1						1
ZIMBABWE		1											1

Verification Process

The World Press Photo contest has three verification processes to ensure compliance with its code of ethics and entry rules.

Photography gives us a creative interpretation of the world. However, when we want pictures to record and inform us of the varied events, issues, people, and viewpoints in our world, so they can be visual documents, there are limits to how pictures can be made so that the audience can trust them. This is why we take a strict stance on manipulation.

We are the only photo contest that has this extensive a verification process, and we are the only photo contest that can say all the nominees and winners have successfully passed an extensive verification process.

A) ENTRY CHECKS

[Entry rule 10](#) states the contest is for single frame, single exposure pictures. This means multiple exposures, polyptychs (diptychs, triptychs, etc.) and stitched panoramas (either produced in-camera or with image editing software) are not eligible. These entries that are not eligible are removed from the contest by a team of checkers after the first round of judging is completed. In addition, one entry, which recreated a story from a former winner, was excluded for violating the code of ethics.

B) MANIPULATION REVIEW

The manipulation review implements entry rules 11 and 12. [Entry rule 11](#)—revised for 2016, and retained for 2018—states “*the content of a picture can not be altered by adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame.*”

There are two exceptions to this:

- (i) cropping that removes extraneous details is permitted;
- (ii) sensor dust or scratches on scans of negatives can be removed.

The process for ensuring compliance with both entry rule 11 and 12 takes place in the latter rounds of judging. Entrants whose pictures remain in the contest and could be eligible for nominations and awards are contacted and required to provide the file as recorded by the camera. These files could be:

- RAW file(s)
- Full format JPEG file(s). These must be as delivered by the camera, and provided in a series showing at least three frames before and after the contest entry

- For smartphones, the image captured with the built-in, stock camera app, emailed from the phone
- Scans of film negative(s), provided as a contact sheet to show a series of at least three frames before and after the contest entry

Each year we find that nearly all entrants readily comply with this requirement. That is testament to their openness and commitment to transparency on how images are produced. It underlines the fact that photographers do not want to mislead either the jury or the audience.

Two independent digital analysts compare original files with contest entries to determine whether the content of any picture (either a single picture or frame in a story) has been altered ([click here for details on how this is done](#)). The [guidance on manipulation](#) describes and shows what alterations to the content of a picture are not allowed. We produced videos with visual examples, and they have been viewed tens of thousands of times.

This year we requested original files for 304 total entries (including both singles and stories). This request was made earlier in the judging process than in previous years. After

our request, three people withdrew their entry, so their entries were not checked.

One entry was withdrawn from the contest because they admitted to the presence of processing issues, one entry was excluded because of failure to submit all of their original files before the deadline, and one withdrew for reasons unrelated to the grounds for exclusion.

From the 301 entries that were requested 159 were checked because they then remained in the later rounds, and of those 20 entries were excluded because they violated entry rule 11.

For 2018 the foundation decided that when cloning was clearly detected in entries they would be automatically excluded from the contest, without recourse to the photographers, and the jury was informed of these decisions.

This revised process followed our guidance that “altering the content of a picture by ‘adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame’ is manipulation and makes an entry ineligible for the final round,” and was enabled by [entry rule 21](#).

The relatively few instances of cloning involved very small, often tiny, elements being removed. A number of them replicated almost exactly the examples of what not to do shown in our guidance video on removal of content.

Entry rule 12 — also revised for 2016, and retained for 2018 — states:
Adjustments of color or conversion to grayscale that do not

alter content are permitted, with two exceptions:

(i) Changes in color may not result in significant changes in hue, to such an extent that the processed colors diverge from the original colors.

(ii) Changes in density, contrast, color and/or saturation levels that alter content by obscuring or eliminating backgrounds, and/or objects or people in the background of the picture, are not permitted.

It is important to emphasize that entry rule 12 is not about processing itself. All images are processed, but the line is drawn at those instances where there is darkening or lightening of area of an image so that material content is obscured and in effect removed. This was detailed in our [guidance video on unacceptable color changes](#). In contrast, levels of processing that produce changes within the rules are judged as aesthetic choices, and factored into the jury's general deliberations on the overall merits of an entry.

Of the 159 entries that were checked, 4 entries were excluded because they violated entry rule 12.

There are two entrants who have received a second exclusion. As detailed in entry rule 13, they are now prevented from entering the photo contest for the next five years. This is in addition to the two entrants who were excluded last year for five years.

C) FACT-CHECKING

This year we introduced an additional step in the verification process. During the judging process an

independent analyst checked the context in which each remaining image or story was produced, distributed and/or published. No problems were found via these checks.

Entry rule 9 states “all pictures must have accurate captions,” and the guidance on captions details what information must be provided in captions.

The process for ensuring compliance with this rule takes place after the jury decides on the nominees. An independent fact-checking team reviewed all captions to verify the accuracy of the information given. They also examined the metadata in the picture files. The independent fact-checking team found no problems with any of the nominated pictures, and was able to verify their captions and metadata.

The fact-checking process is where clause 2 of the code of ethics (that entrants “must not intentionally contribute to, or alter, the scene they picture by re-enacting or staging events”) is handled. Captions must explain the circumstances in which a photograph was taken.

STORY TEXT

Finally, once the jury has selected the nominees, the World Press Photo Foundation deploys a research team to gather background information on each image and story. While we rely on the photographers for the basic captions, which are lightly edited for accuracy and clarity, we often need additional information. This is so we can provide - in the yearbook, exhibition and on the website - the full story that gives the context for each image and story. The foundation is responsible for the content of this text.

To access previous technical reports

[2017 for download](#)

[2016 for download](#)

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