

A person with reddish-brown hair, wearing a yellow floral shirt and blue overalls, is holding a clear glass jar filled with red liquid and strawberries. The person is sitting outdoors, and their legs are visible in the foreground. The background is a blurred green field.

lensculture

How to get the most out of photography competitions

Submitting images to a juried photography competition is the first step many artists take towards building a global audience for their work.

But how do you choose among the wide range of competitions available to photographers today? And how do you give your work its best chance of being recognized amongst the other submissions?

In this comprehensive guide, we attempt to answer these questions, and more.

Within these 66 pages, you'll find a checklist to help you critically analyze which competitions are notable, and which ones are worthy of your time, your work, and in many cases, your money.

We highlight the extra perks that can exist beyond the competition itself, and sharpen your skills for submitting your work in a professional way that gives it every opportunity to be noticed.

Drawing on contributions from frequent jurors alongside tips and advice from previous competition winners, our aim is to provide you with a must-have resource for finding and assessing photography competitions, and making the most of your efforts when you submit.



© Iraklis Kougemitros

Consider this your companion for all future award submissions. A source of tips, inspiration and advice for our community of photographers and photography lovers around the world.

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“Getting your work in front of the big players in the industry is important, but I also think entering competitions is a good discipline for artists to develop skills in writing artist statements and other work.”

DEBRA KLOMP CHING

Klompching Gallery



CHAPTER 01

Evaluate

There are a lot of photo competitions to consider, and the quality and results vary widely.

Image by © Matjaz Krivic

Photo competitions are an excellent way to get your work in front of the people who matter — influential jury members who can open doors and provide opportunities for your work.

In this chapter, we walk you through a list of considerations to research before entering a photography competition, go behind-the-scenes of our exhibition at Aperture Gallery, and highlight the submission review service we offer photographers who enter our awards.

Why enter?

“I’m always on the lookout for new stories and original representation for publication in *The Guardian*, and judging photo competitions is a great way to discover the most excellent work. While judging the *LensCulture Emerging Talent Awards*, my eye was caught by the elegance and atmosphere of Giulio Di Sturco’s entry *Living Entity*, a study of the river Ganges, so it was with great pleasure that we went on to publish a picture gallery of his book on the project, *Ganga Ma*.”

FIONA SHIELDS

Head of Photography, The Guardian News & Media
Juror, LensCulture Emerging Talent Awards 2018

“It’s important to get your work seen and on the desks of those who give opportunities. This year, I was one of the curators invited to highlight a photographer at the Korea International Photography Festival. I chose a photographer who had not won an award, but I was able to highlight the work with an international exhibition. Nearly every year I am invited to nominate photographers for photographic awards and distinctions, so I like to be up to date on a photographer’s latest project, which often happens through their submissions to the awards.”

LAURA PRESSLEY

Executive Director, CENTER
Juror, LensCulture Emerging Talent Awards 2019

Why enter?

“Open calls are often where I encounter interesting artists who I may follow for a number of years. I personally enjoy looking through the submissions several times, getting to know the works, and then making a selection that really starts to resonate strongly around the photographer’s theme. I talent scout photographers to recommend or save for other projects while I am looking through submissions, and I know this is similar to the strategy of other jurors.”

LOUISE FEDOTOV-CLEMENTS

Artistic Director, QUAD & Director, FORMAT International Photography Festival
Juror, LensCulture Black & Awards 2019

“It’s very good practice to organize yourself. It takes a lot of thinking about what exactly is it that you want to say with your work. How do you describe it? How do you edit it down? So, even that process alone can be very valuable, and then you then have a little capsule set of materials that you can use to present yourself in any type of situation.”

LESLEY A MARTIN

Creative Director, Aperture
Juror, LensCulture Black & White Awards 2019

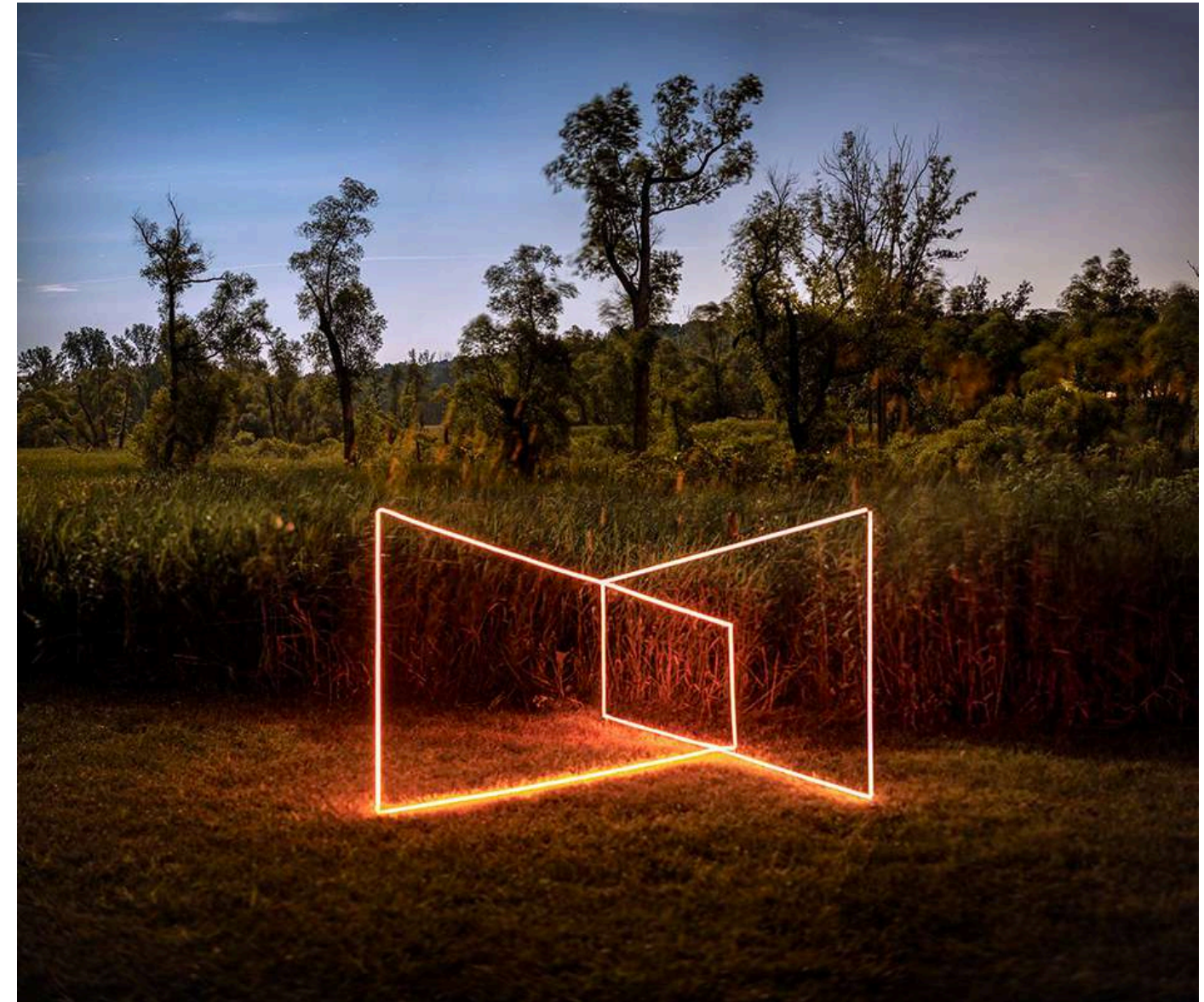
Checklist: How to evaluate photography competitions

With so many photography competitions available today, it can be difficult to figure out which ones are a good fit for your work and which ones offer you true value and authentic opportunities. Remember, not all competitions are created equal!

Use this checklist to critically assess the next competition you're thinking of entering to make an informed choice about where you'll spend your time crafting a submission and, if required, your money for entering.

01. Who is hosting the competition?

Look for organizations that are well-known and well-respected in the international photography world. Do some quick research online to find out if the organization is dedicated to photography and has a history of recognizing talented photographers. Do they have a presence at major photography events and festivals? Do they partner with other leading brands? Publications, websites and social media can be a good indicator of how influential an organization is, and how far-reaching and meaningful their exposure is.



© Barry Underwood



02. **Who is on the jury?**

Access to an influential jury with decision-making power in the photography community is one of the greatest assets offered via photo competitions, because a well-connected advocate of your work can be invaluable for your career. Connections to major publications, galleries, festivals and an influential network in the photography world are important with both international and regional jurors, so do your homework and get to know each juror.

03. **What are the exposure opportunities?**

It only takes the right pair of eyes to see your work for doors to open. Through exposure, competitions offer the chance for your work to reach new audiences

Exhibitions

Exhibitions on your CV can help legitimize you and your work in the photography community. That being said, there is a wide range of exhibition quality and prestige, so it's worth looking into the exhibition promises to determine its value.

Is the gallery known for showing photography? Does it have a large following ? Can you find documentation of previous exhibitions to determine the quality and public interest? Is it located in an important city for art and photography, where influential people are more likely to see your work?

See page 21 for a look behind-the-scenes of a LensCulture exhibition.

Printed Publications

Having your photographs included in a printed publication has long-term benefits, and can help put you and your work in front of important people who may not be able to attend an exhibition. In fact, many professionals use books or catalogs as reference tools when looking for new work.

If a printed publication is offered as part of an award prize, see if you can get an understanding of how and where that book will be distributed. It's no good if it sits on a shelf in a warehouse gathering dust!

Online

Online promotion can exponentially increase awareness of your work in the photography community, and often give your own social media platforms a boost in new followers. Consider the audience reach of the hosting organization and how active their online forums, social networks, and websites are.

How many people like, share or comment favorably on their posts? What kind of permanent home do winners have on their website, and how might this impact SEO for photographers when their name is searched in the future?

04. **Is there a cash prize?**

Cash awards demonstrate that the hosting-organization understands there is tangible value of the work you are doing. Money can help fund continued work, new projects, new gear or the publication of a book, but it also indicates that the hosting organization respects photographers and their efforts in making new work, and accounts for the entry fee if there is one. In the best of all competitions, you will win cash and get extended visibility, recognition and fame.



© Yangkun Shi



05. Are there categories or is there a theme?

Competitions with defined categories or a specific theme can be helpful by offering you an opportunity that is particular to your specialty. Take the time to look into themes and categories that best represent your work to maximize your shot at being selected for an award. It's helpful if the theme is clearly represented in your photos, but if it could be up for interpretation, use your artist statement to help explain why the theme pertains to your work.

06. **Do you meet the eligibility criteria?**

Read the rules and guidelines for eligibility carefully. Before you spend time on a submission, make sure you fit any requirements for age, location, themes and levels. If you're unsure, read the terms and conditions, and if you're still unsure, contact the competition for clarification. If you've already won a big award for the same work, are you still eligible to submit for the competition you're looking at?

07. **Is there an entry fee?**

Some competitions require an entry fee, while others are free. Entry fees are often necessary to offer award packages and administer the competition. Compare fees with other competitions and weigh up the cost of entry with the benefits and awards offered.

Are there benefits of entering outside of winning the award that can help justify the cost? Are there early-bird or multiple-entry offers you can take advantage of to reduce the cost of entry?

In addition to the entry fee, make sure you understand all the costs involved. For example, sometimes winners will be required to pay additional fees to cover costs of exhibitions or shipping work.

08. **Do you retain copyright?**

You should always always always retain all copyrights to your own work. Competitions may want to use your winning photographs to help publicize you and your work (which is great!), but make sure it's done fairly. Read the terms and conditions to understand how the hosting organization can use submitted images. You should always be credited for your work and it should never be used without your permission.



09. **What is the experience of past winners?**

Looking at previous winners and their experiences after they won the award can be a good indicator of whether the competition is worthwhile to enter. It's always a good sign if you've seen their work displayed in other places.

Check out their social media profile — do they speak positively about the competition in public? Reach out to previous winners or finalists of the competition and ask them about their experiences. Would they recommend that others enter?

10. **Are there any perks beyond the competition itself?**

Sometimes competitions offer additional benefits to participants beyond the competition itself. For example, you may get access to discounted rates for memberships or subscriptions in the future, just for applying. LensCulture competitions offer photographers the opportunity to get a detailed, professional written review of your work, which is a unique benefit that provides you with insight and feedback to help you move forward. Look to see what media coverage the competition gets in online and print media, and how entered work is profiled online by the hosting organization.

OKAY!



© Daisuke Takakura

You've done your homework!
Hopefully this exercise gives you a greater insight into photography competitions out there, and helps you make informed decisions on what competition is right for you, your work and your budget.



Behind The Scenes

**LensCulture
exhibition at
Aperture Gallery**

Nothing beats the feeling of seeing your work professionally printed and hung on the wall of a gallery. In this Q&A with art director Heidi Romano, we take a peek behind the scenes of one of LensCulture's recent exhibitions: Beyond Boundaries at Aperture Gallery, in New York City's Chelsea District.

Run us through the process of putting on a LensCulture exhibition. What did the planning look like?

We usually plan our exhibitions one to two years in advance, aiming for two large group shows per year. At the moment, we are primarily focusing on New York and Paris, two of my favorite cities and two important places for photography throughout history.

Working closely with Laura Sackett, Creative Director at LensCulture, we start by discussing and sketching out all the possibilities, including adding, moving or eliminating entire walls. Concurrently, we carefully review all of the winning projects, identifying key images for each photographer. Then I start to ponder about how the images will work on the wall, from sequencing to sizes and arrangements. No exhibition is the same, so it's like slowly putting a jigsaw puzzle together based on the gallery, the space available, and the work. I love this part of the process.

How do you go about curating and designing such an expansive group show, with such a range of work?

Exhibition ideas often start with infinite possibilities, and this one was no different. With such a diverse group show, it was important for us to consider the photographers' intentions as well as the overall impact that size, scale, and juxtaposition would make on a visitor. My approach was experimental and playful. I tried to combine boldness, poetry and craftsmanship in a visual dance across the wall. I wanted to create something that spoke to our understanding of the photographic image, but was intriguing. We wanted an exhibition that was both unified and visually rich.

What role does the space play in curating the show, particularly one as highly regarded as Aperture?

Every space has a huge influence on how I design the walls for any exhibition. I consider the light, flow of visitors through the space (all the way from the entrance), how the opposing walls relate to each other, and how high the ceilings are.

For the Aperture exhibit, we made many different layouts, even printing the images and laying them out in the studio. We also build foam core models with tiny scaled prints in order to really get a sense of the work in a space.





“As an image maker, it is wonderful to see your work shown on gallery walls and be able to share the work with a wider audience. This is especially true and meaningful with Aperture Gallery, the famed gallery and foundation in NYC. The history and gravitas attached to this space is especially humbling, and encourages me to continue my work and set the highest standards for its future iterations.”

MARC OHREM-LECLEF, USA

Art Photography Awards 2018 Juror's Pick

Did you get an opportunity to meet many exhibited photographers?

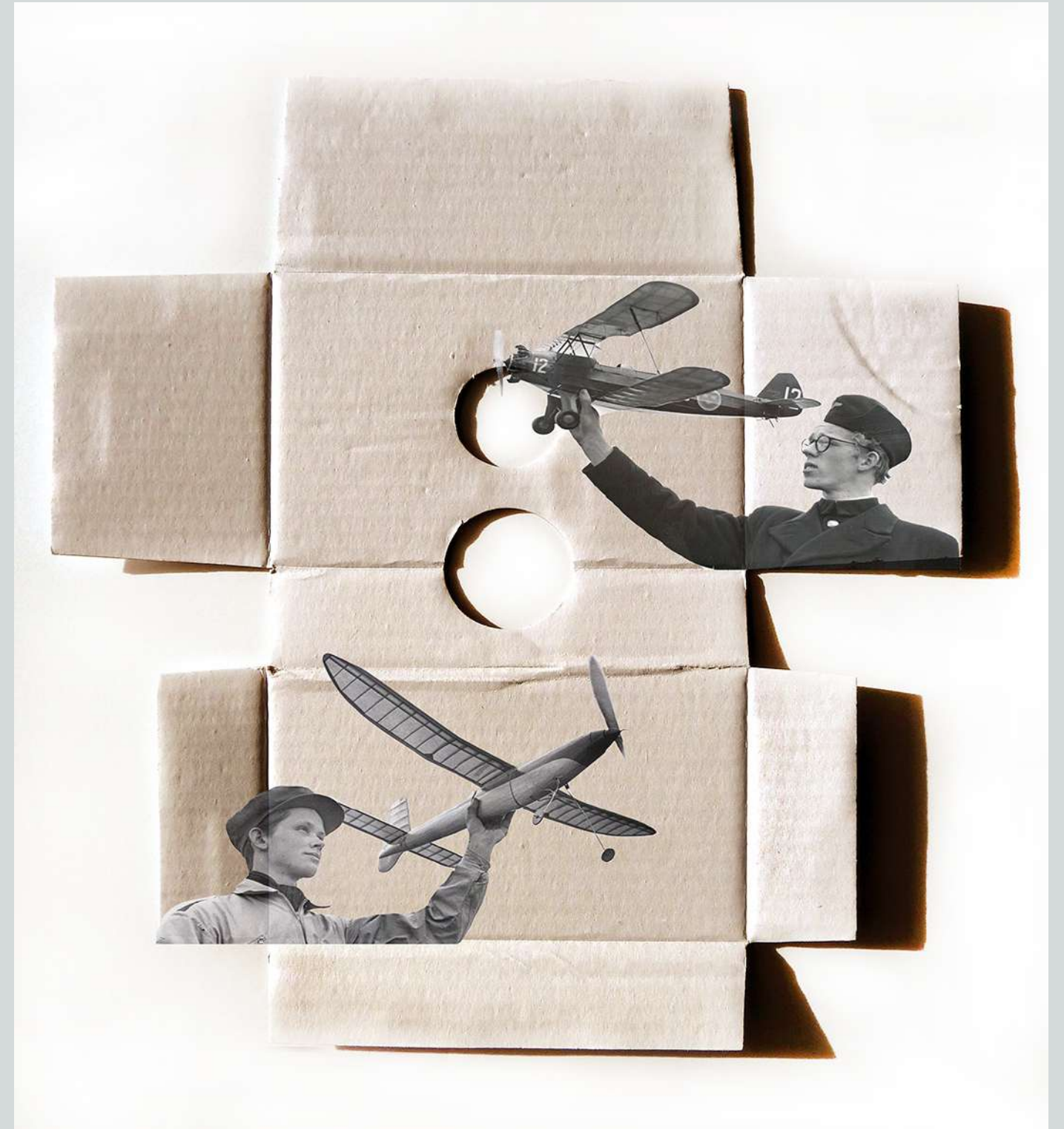
You have to remember that the LensCulture team is distributed around the world. As a result, we don't often get to meet the photographers we discover in person, let alone spend time with each other as a team! I was thrilled that so many artists decided to fly out to New York to attend the opening at Aperture, particularly because I felt I knew each of the works quite well by that stage, through both the exhibition design and the other activities LensCulture does when our winners are announced. It was fantastic that some came from as far as Mexico, French Polynesia, South Korea and Australia to see their work in the exhibition. It was a delight to see them walk in and smile wide when they saw their work up on those walls, amongst so many talented peers. There was certainly a positive buzz in the room on opening night.



“I’ve always held LensCulture at high esteem, so I was thrilled to learn that I had placed second in this competition. I don’t really submit many things to competitions these days, only when I think the jurors are really interesting. My decision to submit was based on the jurors and on LensCulture itself.”

WALTER PLOTNICK, UNITED STATES

Art Photography Awards 2018 Winner



A person with blonde hair is shown from the chest up, looking upwards with their mouth slightly open. The background is a dark blue night sky filled with numerous bright, out-of-focus stars, creating a bokeh effect. The person's skin is fair, and their hair is light brown or blonde.

BEYOND THE COMPETITION

LensCulture Submission Reviews

Did you know LensCulture offers photographers the opportunity to receive detailed written feedback on their competition submissions? We've sent out more than 100,000 reviews since we began the program in 2015!

How does it work?

Enter a Series or 5+ Single Images in any LensCulture competition and you can receive a professional, written review of your work for an additional \$15.

Our reviewers provide detailed written feedback, complete with:

- + personalized recommendations for consideration
- + ideas for improvement and progression
- + strategies for getting your work seen in more places, more often

With more than 100 trusted and qualified photo editors, curators, publishers, gallerists, educators, critics, consultants, and other industry professionals on our list of reviewers, our submission reviews offer a unique opportunity for meaningful critique and actionable feedback on your work.

LensCulture submission reviews are an important part of our mission to help photographers of all levels move forward creatively and professionally, no matter where they are in the world or what experience level they have.

Visit lensculture.com for details.



“I feel my submission has been very carefully considered and I’ve been given fantastic suggestions to follow up in terms of further reviews, competitions, books, and more. For somebody working in a deeply rural location, far from any centres of excellence, this process of submission and review by experts in the field can be immeasurably useful.”

LUCY SAGGERS, UNITED KINGDOM

“Thank you so much. This review is way beyond what I expected. I’m always so nervous to put my work out there to a professional and ask for their critical opinion, but I feel so reassured by the feedback, and it has definitely provided me with the encouragement I need to keep going. I hadn’t thought about how the composition reflects musical notes, but I can so see that now. Thank you also for all the links, I look forward to researching them all. I can’t express how much I appreciate your review... thank you.”

LAURA REID, AUSTRALIA





“I want to thank you so much for your kind and thorough review! I am blown away by your thoughtful, detailed evaluation. Your advice has been incredibly helpful. I have been to portfolio reviews, but not yet with this series. I will definitely begin that process! I really appreciate your time and feedback and wish I could thank you personally!”

KATE POLLARD HOFFMANN, UNITED STATES



CHAPTER 02

Submit

So you've found an exciting competition that fits your project or your goals in terms of getting your work seen. What next?

Image by © David Salcedo

How do you prepare a submission that best represents your vision and catches the eye of the jury?

In this chapter, you'll find a step-by-step guide for submitting to awards alongside advice from past jurors on selection, sequencing and supporting text.

Dive in!



© Tania Franco Klein

Plan your time

Many photographers significantly underestimate the time it takes to build a considered submission. Allow yourself two or three weeks before the deadline to start your submission, and work on it slowly around your other commitments so you're not making rushed decisions before the deadline arrives. Build your submission in time to seek feedback and give your peers or mentors enough notice to fit you into their schedule.

Read the small print

Being aware of the terms and conditions before you start your submission can save you time later. Make a list of everything that is expected by the host-organization. Some of the requirements (for example, capture date or subject consent) may immediately rule out some of your work. Others specifications (for example, the file name or image dimensions) are essential for your work to be accepted by the online submission system and viewed easily by the jury.



© Joel Jimenez

Prepare a wide edit

Start with a wide edit of images that could be suitable in your final selection. Give yourself plenty of options to work with at this stage, though you should feel strongly about the ones you include. Depending on your work, perhaps an image works better when placed alongside others than it does on its own. Or vice versa. A wide edit helps you see the possibilities.

Make a selection & sequence

From your wide-edit, make your first selection for submission. Be ruthless and ensure each image adds something to your submission. Kill your darlings! You might find it helpful at this point to print out your wide selection and stick the images on a wall, then move them around until the selection and sequence makes sense for the story you are trying to tell.

Draft your supporting text

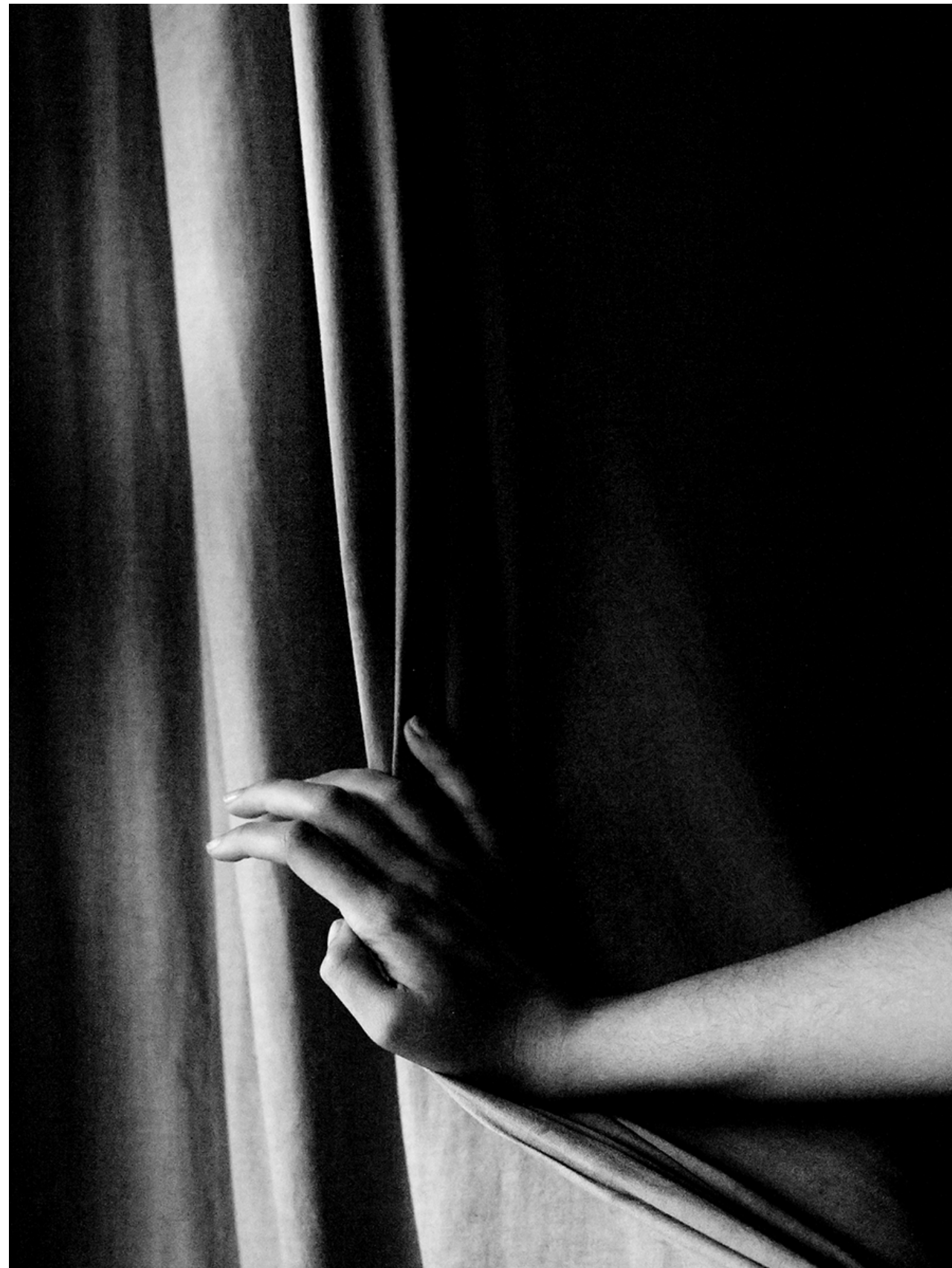
Many competitions provide an opportunity to submit supporting text - an artist or project statement - along with your images. While it's okay to let your images speak for themselves, a statement is an excellent way to introduce your work and intentions to your audience in a way that complements and enhances the work itself. Aim for clear and simple language to get your message across effectively and efficiently.

Get feedback

Send your draft sequence, your wide edit and your draft supporting text to a few trusted peers or mentors. You might also want to send them details about the competition itself, so they can see what opportunity you are applying for. Ask them if the text is clear and speaks to the selected images, and how your sequence and selection could be improved. Collate and consider the feedback received, then repeat steps 4, 5 and 6 until you're satisfied with your submission.



© Daniel Jack Lyons



Finalize, double-check, export

Once you're happy with your final selection, sequence and supporting text, complete one final round of checks before you export for upload. Run spell-check on your text and proof read carefully. If needed, make sure all the required metadata is complete on your images.

Export your submission as specified and save it in a place where you can easily go back and reference it in the future - this can save you valuable time and effort for future competitions!

Submit!

Upload your work and make sure you get confirmation that your submission was received. Try and do this well before deadline, you don't want any upload or technical issues to get in the way of you and the deadline.

Now, take a moment to congratulate yourself on making the time and effort to shape your work and share it with others. It takes courage and hard work, well done!

A photograph of three children walking through a field of tall grass and reeds. The child on the left is a young girl in a light blue shirt and green pants, carrying a basket. The child in the middle is a boy in a blue shirt and dark pants. The child on the right is a boy in a light blue shirt and dark pants, carrying a white duck. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. The text "Advice from LensCulture jury members" is overlaid in white, bold, serif font on the left side of the image.

Advice from LensCulture jury members

On supporting text:

“The best statements are honest and clear, and talk about what is most important to consider in the work, whether it is a story, fiction, participant narrative, practical detail, or how the images sit within your wider practice as an artist. Don’t waffle with unneeded words that don’t make sense. Consider asking someone else to write about your work, and edit a statement from there.”

LOUISE FEDOTOV-CLEMENTS

Artistic Director, QUAD & Director,
FORMAT International Photography Festival
Juror, LensCulture Black and White Awards 2019

“The meaning and intention of some work is clear upon first viewing it, but other work doesn’t reveal itself as easily. Also, most jurying is done on the internet these days, which adds a level of removal from what the object is communicating. If statements are provided, I always read them, hoping to deepen my understanding of the context and meaning of the work.”

BARBARA TANNENBAUM

Curator of Photography, The Cleveland Museum of Art
Juror, LensCulture Black and White Awards 2019

On sequencing:

“Sequencing and editing are very important elements of the work—it can take many years and variations to get to the perfect balance. Most jury members are able to see past a poor edit or sequence in order to understand the potential for a series to develop, but if you would like to get better at it, a few ideas are: print out your images and stick them to a wall with tacks, rearrange them, living with them for as long as you can, and reduce them down until a selection emerges.

Share this selection with a few people to see if it communicates what you are trying to say. Attend portfolio reviews and ask the reviewer to organize the sequence according to what they think would work best. You can photograph each response for a record, and consider which direction to take with the work when you leave those conversations.”

LOUISE FEDOTOV-CLEMENTS

Artistic Director, QUAD & Director,
FORMAT International Photography Festival
Juror, LensCulture Black and White Awards 2019

On selecting:

“A common mistake is that photographers want to be safe, so they choose imagery that has been seen as successful before. I think taking risks is important for making an impact and standing out. Show something new.”

LAURA PRESSLEY

Executive Director, CENTER
Juror, LensCulture Emerging Talent Awards 2019

“The process of making that tight edit is one of the most difficult things a photographer has to do when approaching a prize. I think the best way to do it is by trying to stand outside of yourself, looking at your work very objectively, with very clear eyes. Sometimes you have to let go some of your favorite images if they’re not really advancing the core of the story. That can be really hard, but very necessary.”

LESLEY A MARTIN

Creative Director, Aperture
Juror, LensCulture Black & LensCulture White Awards 2019

On reading the fine print:

“Read the guidelines carefully and present the work according to that criteria. If we ask for something, provide it to us as we’ve described and don’t deviate too much - there’s a reason why we’ve asked for submissions in the manner that we have. Adhering to those specifications demonstrates to us is that you are ready to have a professional business relationship with us. The creative bit is really only 50 percent of being a professional artist.”

DEBRA KLOMP CHING

Klompching Gallery

“Make sure you are clear about the ideas in the work and make a strong edit, but mention if there are more works available. Put weblinks into the text, and make sure you understand what the organization offers if you are selected (read the small print!). Be aware of how your images will be used online, in print and in an exhibition, and be aware of who pays for what. Most importantly, make sure you provide all your contact details!”

LOUISE FEDOTOV-CLEMENTS

Artistic Director, QUAD & Director,
FORMAT International Photography Festival
Juror, Black & LensCulture White Awards 2019



CHAPTER 03


Reflect

Want to get the most out of
photography competitions?

Image by © Shinya Masuda

After the winners' names are revealed, there is one final (and often forgotten) opportunity in the award process that can carry a lot of value for photographers: the chance to reflect and gather lessons to apply to your future efforts.

In this chapter, we cover strategies for growth whether your name is listed amongst the winners or not, and check in with past LensCulture winners on their experiences after their work was awarded.



**The winners
are announced,
now what?**

You didn't win

It's natural to feel disappointed that your work isn't recognized, particularly if you are confident in the project or if it feels like you just can't catch a break with something you have poured a lot of time and energy into creating.

How to close the loop on your award submission process

- + Take a look through the winning work and pay careful attention to the way it has been presented, from project text to sequence and the selection itself. What methods you could apply to your own work in the future?
- + Read through the statements from the jury, if they're available. What aspects of the winning work do they highlight? Are there any patterns year to year, award to award?
- + While the competition is fresh in your mind, write some notes for yourself as reminders for the next opportunity. Aim for small improvements and changes each time.

Remember, there are many benefits of entering awards beyond winning the main prize, and the process is very subjective.

**Stay positive and just keep going!
Good photography, a strong submission
and hard work will always pay off.**

You won!

Congratulations! From hundreds of submissions, your work has been recognized! Many photographers dream of such success, so take a moment to celebrate your achievements and efforts.

Here's how to get the most out of your recognition:

- + Winners often experience an increase in visitors to their website and social media platforms when the announcement is made. Impress these new and curious eyes by giving your online presence a refresh. Make sure your new award is mentioned, upload new work and remove old work that no longer fits with your direction. And make sure it is easy for people to contact you!

- + Share announcements on social media to spread the good news with your followers. Tag the host-organization if appropriate, which can be a fantastic way for your posts to be re-posted, helping new followers find their way to you and your work.
- + Contact the jury and thank them for the award, particularly if you have received specific recognition. Now is the perfect time to start a conversation or relationship with them, and introduce them to more of your work and your professional goals.
- + Update your CV and your pitch emails with this new award, using the award announcement as a hook for timely, purposeful communication with experts in the industry.

Well done, you've squeezed every last drop of opportunity from entering this competition.

Onwards!

A photograph of a long line of school children, likely in a mountainous region, wearing maroon sweaters and blue caps. They are standing in a line, looking towards the right. The background shows a clear blue sky and distant mountains.

BEYOND THE PRIZE

Entering awards as an improvement strategy

There is also much to be gained from entering a competition, far beyond being named as a winner! We sat down with frequent juror, Lesley A. Martin, Creative Director at Aperture Foundation, and asked for her thoughts.

Get organized

Just this process alone can be very valuable. Then, you have a little capsule set of materials that you can use to present yourself in any type of situation. It's very good practice to organize yourself.

Practise clarity and coherence

The process of making that tight edit is one of the most difficult things for a photographer to do when approaching a prize. Understanding how to put your best foot forward and how to edit to a very clear and concise visual statement about your work and your interests is really important.



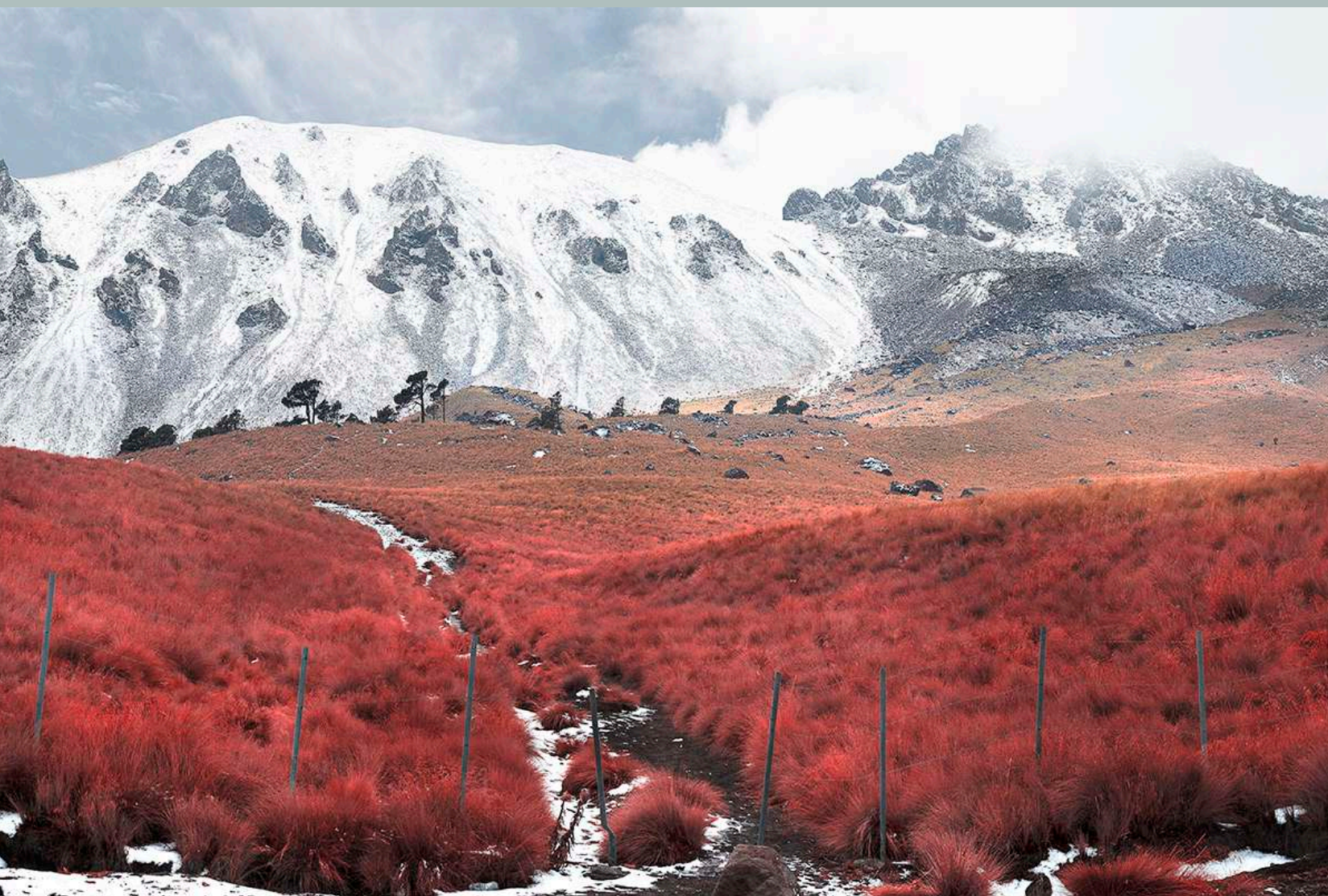
Put your work in front of the right people

It can be discouraging to not take home the grand prize, but from the other side, as a jury member, I often encounter work that I've kept in the back of my head and think about if I'm putting together a set of images or curating a show.

Demonstrate commitment

Through repeat submissions, it's very interesting to assess how individual photographers are developing their work and who is really committed. It's just valuable to get the work out there and to be seen.

© David Denil



LENSCULTURE
SUCCESS STORIES

Anne Charlotte Guinot



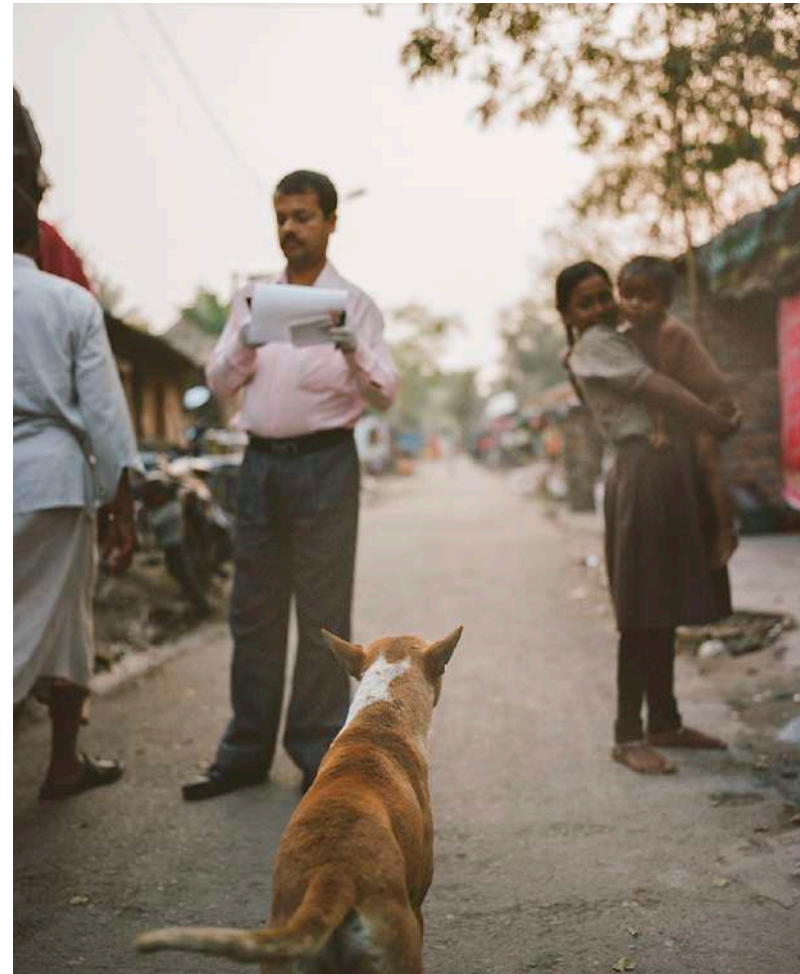
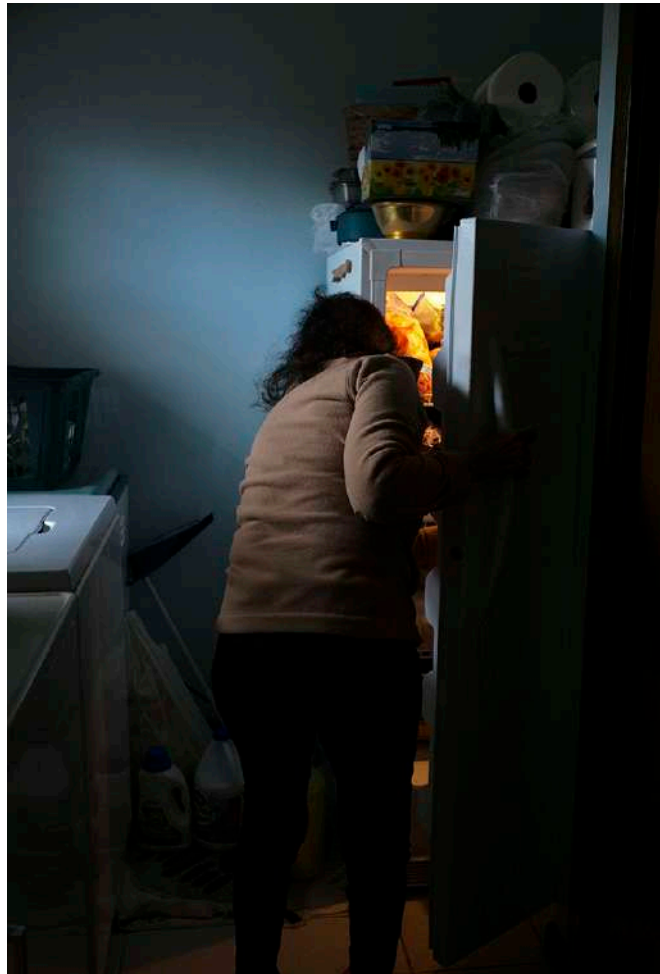
“Encountering my photograph on the wall amongst all the other amazing photos from all over the world, executed in such a beautiful design in such a wonderful space, was an experience that I will remember forever. Photography is an art form with infinite possibilities, and this exhibition gave us all a taste to explore those possibilities even more. I am so proud to be part of this unique and beautiful exhibition.”



**LENSCULTURE
SUCCESS STORIES**



Vikesh Kapoor



“Being selected as a Juror’s Pick provided me with a lot of visibility for this project. Since the award, I have been able to connect with Corey Keller at SFMOMA and show her more work, and National Geographic reached out to me about applying for a storytelling grant. Overall, it’s given me more visibility and encouragement to keep going, letting me know that this story can be universal, speaking to people other than just me and my family.”



LENSCULTURE SUCCESS STORIES

Antonio Pulgarin



“Receiving recognition from LensCulture really helped me move forward in my career. I am launching my first solo exhibition this year at Kingswell Art Museum, but I think the biggest thing that came out of the exposure was actress Zoe Saldana discovering my work and showcasing it at an event. She flew me out to LA and I got to meet her, and all this because LensCulture is willing to recognize lens-based artists who are pushing the narrative of photography forward.”

CHAPTER 04

Resources

Your list of notable photography
competitions around the world

Image by © Soomin Ham



Aperture Portfolio Prize

Aperture Foundation’s prestigious award that aims to identify trends and leading voices in contemporary photography.

CENTER Awards

Through grants, awards, and exhibitions, CENTER provides direct funding for projects in 8 categories and offers several professional development opportunities. The awards are open, but not limited to, photography, video, new media, photojournalism, installation, and web-based works.

Daylight Photo Awards

This award from Daylight Books is a great opportunity for photographers of all levels to share their work directly with photography industry leaders, for cash prizes and digital exhibition.

Head On Photography Prize

Australia’s premier photographic competition and one of the most prestigious competitions in the world. Multiple categories, cash and equipment prizes, and exhibition at Sydney’s Head On International Festival of Photography up for grabs.

Istanbul Photo Awards

An international news photography contest from Anadolu Agency that rewards endeavors of courageous and talented photojournalists from around the world.

LensCulture Portrait Awards

On a mission to discover a full range of 21st century portraits, this award is open to all ideas of portraiture from anywhere in the world. Cash prizes and exhibition opportunity for winners.



JANUARY
FEBRUARY
MARCH

LensCulture Critics' Choice Awards

This competition is unique in several ways. It is open to all kinds of photography and all levels of photographers, from professionals to students and amateurs. Each year, 20 international photography experts are invited to participate (they come from influential media, museums, galleries, publishers and festivals around the globe). From the submissions, each of the 20 experts then chooses three photographers to receive their Critics' Choice Award (so, up to 60 photographers can be highlighted each year). It's a great opportunity to get your work in front of a lot of influential people all at the same time.

FOAM Talent Call

Foam Magazine is one of the photography industry's most respected magazines. The bi-annual Foam Talent Call is a search for exceptionally talented photographers between 18 and 40 years, from all across the world.

Nikon Photo Contest

Held by Nikon Corporation since 1969 to provide an opportunity for photographers around the world to communicate and to enrich image-making culture for professionals and amateurs alike.

JANUARY
FEBRUARY
MARCH

Pictures of the Year

International (POYi)

A photographic contest hosted by School of Journalism at the University of Missouri-Columbia designed to pay tribute to press photographers and preserve a collection of the best in press pictures each year. Prizes given in categories from sports to natural disasters to everything in between.

Sony World Photography Awards

Professional, amateur, youth and student photographers from across the world can enter their best work for free. Photographers compete for a range of cash prizes and the latest cutting edge digital imaging equipment from Sony. Overall winners will be announced at a gala ceremony held in London.

The Fence @ Photoville

Brooklyn's premiere outdoor photographic exhibition invites photographers to explore and define the meaning of community across cultural boundaries and geographical lines. Presented in 3 cities (Brooklyn, Boston, Atlanta), THE FENCE reaches an audience of 1.5 million visitors each summer.

World Press Photo Awards

The world's leading competition for professional press photographers, setting the standard for the profession. Photo of the year wins 10,000 euros and a professional Canon camera. Winning pictures are presented in a large and widely-seen exhibition that travels worldwide.



Aperture Summer Open

An annual open-submission exhibition, featuring a wide variety of work by photographers and lens-based artists from around the world. Selected by a jury of leading editors, curators, and writers, the exhibition seeks to reveal and report on key themes and trends driving contemporary photography.

Leica Oskar Barnack Award

An international jury awards this award to professional photographers whose unerring powers of observation capture and express the relationship between man and the environment.

LensCulture Street Photography Awards

These awards seek out the globe’s finest street photographers who capture exceptional moments of life in all of its vibrant forms.



© Michael Schnabel



© Price Harrison

Critical Mass

PhotoLucida's Critical Mass is about exposure, connection, and community. Awards include a monograph publication, an artist residency, a solo exhibition, and an international group exhibition selected by 200+ jurors.

International Photography Awards

An annual photography competition juried by more than 80 photo editors, art directors, curators, buyers, and other professionals from around the globe. Winning photographers are recognized at the Lucie Awards and category winners go in the running for International Photographer of the Year and Discovery of the Year.

LensCulture Emerging Talent Awards

An international competition showcasing outstanding new voices in photography, regardless of age or location. Cash prizes and exhibition offered to top photographers awarded.

OCTOBER
NOVEMBER
DECEMBER

**LensCulture Black
and White Awards**

Our world exists in vibrant color, but it was with black & white images that we first documented and responded to it. These awards recognize photographers playing with the dynamic relationship between light and dark across all genres.

**LensCulture Art
Photography Awards**

Discovering the diverse and creative ways photographers are pushing the medium and reinventing definitions of art photography.

Smithsonian Photo Contest

An annual competition is dedicated to a broad cross-section of science, history, art, popular culture and innovation.



© Gregor Kallina



© Natan Dvir

LensCulture is one of the most popular and far-reaching resources for discovering the best in contemporary photography around the world.

We believe that recognition and exposure are key for photographers of all levels to move forward creatively and professionally. Our mission is to help photographers succeed and, after nearly 15 years, we're proud to offer career-changing opportunities alongside advice, inspiration and recommendations through our awards, online magazine and free guides like the one you've just read.

**Go on, get out
there and find your
perfect opportunity.**

lensculture.com

