

What is an Eligible Photojournalism Image?

Because photojournalism (PJ) excludes set-up images, many members continue to question, "What is considered a set up shot?" For the purposes of judging photojournalism images, a good rule of thumb to determine a set-up would be "something that probably would not have occurred had a photographer not been present."

Another inappropriate subject for PJ competitions is that which does not reflect the real story. For example, if a demonstration of first aid procedures is pictured to clearly illustrate the teaching activity, that's fine. But if it is misrepresented as a spontaneous response to a real emergency, that is deceptive, and completely unacceptable in any PJ competition, same as it would be in any respectable newspaper. Likewise, if sports action is a practice situation, that should be evident to the viewer and not portrayed as a competitive event.

The statement on manipulation also seems to cause confusion. Photojournalists are limited to simple corrections that bring the subject back to what was seen when the photo was taken. Several news pros have been fired recently for failing to resist the temptation to use Photoshop® software to "improve" an image with a little cloning or a color change, which are techniques well beyond the accepted darkroom practices of cropping or lightening and darkening.

Ethical considerations demand responsible behavior. Just as the public needs to be able to rely on the credibility of what they see in a newspaper, PJ judges should be able to trust the honesty of the entrants. It is not their responsibility to try to determine whether someone is trying to slip something past them; it requires integrity on the part of the photographer.

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Ethics Statement of Photographic Society of America

revised September 2004

A member of the Photographic Society of America shall act in accordance with all PSA policies. A member shall be honest in performing and reporting service to the Society. A member shall be ethical in making and presenting photographic images. Members not in compliance with this ethics statement will be subject to loss of PSA membership and/or awards and honors.

Photographic Society of America Ethics Standards Policy

- Images submitted for competition shall originate as photographs by the entrant on photographic emulsion or acquired digitally. By virtue of submitting an entry, the photographer certifies the work as his own.
 - Any image accepted in a PSA-recognized exhibition shall not be re-entered in the same format in the same section of the exhibition by using a different title or a like in-camera duplication or a reproduction duplication. An accepted image may not be re-titled for entry in the same section of the same division of any other PSA-recognized exhibition.
 - Images submitted in internal (PSA members only) competitions, contests, workshops, study-groups and the like shall strictly follow these standards, both written and as obviously intended, without reservation.
- Information included in honors and awards proposals shall be exact and true.
- Material submitted for possible publication in the *PSA Journal* and/or the *PSA Website* shall be solely the work of the author(s). Quotations from other material or gathered orally shall be carefully cited with credit given for all illustrations used, and permission to use copyrighted material must be obtained by the author.