

A Guide to Monthly and Annual Competitions

There are seven **Standard** Competitions. Each year two of these are replaced by two **theme** competitions, one chosen by the HPS Committee, the other chosen by the President. In the most cases competition titles are “**targeted**” competitions. Some are “subject specific” such as Nature, Landscape, Man Made. Others are NOT subject specific Whilst in all cases the goal is to create a pictorial image, one that is aesthetically pleasing, in some instances what is required is that the image should be an accurate depiction of the subject ie a **documentary**. This guide gives information of all the standard competitions plus details of the theme competitions. Past Theme Competitions may be viewed on the CLUB web pages. The Standard competitions are arranged alphabetically, and the current Competitions are highlighted in **yellow**

Standard Competitions

Illustrative 2026-27 – Hand In – December 11th

Any **factual** photo which could be classed as **documentary**. Images should not be manipulated in such a way as to alter the truth of the original subject, although minor adjustments are permitted e.g. dust spot removal, correction of horizon etc.

Illustrative includes:

- photojournalism where the story telling aspect is the most important feature.
- records of events such as sports or people involved in activities e.g crafts, skills
- this wide brief, includes street scenes, domestic animals, garden flowers, scientific subjects, industrial scenes,
- re-enactments and performances.

What is important is that a "story" is being told, information is being given. If the image is also aesthetically pleasing it is a bonus, but it is the **factual nature** of the image which is the more important. A beautiful image will not be rewarded, if it does not give factual information! Images depicting an activity are appropriate here - people "doing things". Pure Nature shots should be entered in Nature rather than Illustrative.



Repairing the Boat – Alan Hooker



Singing with the human showers – Lorraine Pinder

Landscape- Hand In – Mach 19th 2027

Land, sea, river, sky or town subjects treated pictorially.

Human figures, or animals, if present, should be of secondary importance



Bow Fiddle Rock John Sixsmith



Upper Yosemite Valley – Mike Waring

Man-Made 2026-27 – Hand In – October 18th 2026

This competition used to be called Architecture and Record. The principal aim is the accurate representation of a building, group of buildings or external or internal details of a building; also, statues, ceramics, glass, fabrics, furniture, cars, planes, any construct made by man etc. Generally, human figures and other surroundings should be excluded. Pictorialism is desirable but is secondary to the factual representation of the selected subject. The subject of the image should be man-made. Although accurate representation is required, there is no restriction on imaginative ways of viewing the subject.



Handle with care – Ian Chantler



Pier Head from the Side – Judith Dundas

Nature

We follow the **PSA/FIAP definition of Nature**

Content Guidelines

Nature photography records all branches of natural history except anthropology and archaeology. This includes all aspects of the physical world, both over water and underwater. Nature images must convey the truth of the scene. A well-informed person should be able to identify the subject of the image and be satisfied that it has been presented honestly and that no unethical practices have been used to control the subject or capture the image. Images that directly or indirectly show any human activity threatening a living organism's life or welfare are not allowed.

The most important part of a Nature image is the nature story it tells. High technical standards are expected and the image must look natural.

Objects created by humans, and evidence of human activity, are allowed in Nature images only when they are a necessary part of the Nature story. Human-made elements are permitted under the following circumstances:

a) When they are an integral part of the nature story, such as a songbird singing atop a fence post, a manmade object used as nest material, or a weather phenomenon destroying a man-made structure.

b) When they are a small but unavoidable part of the scene, such as an unobtrusive footprint or track in the background.

c) Scientific tags, collars, and bands are specifically allowed.

Photographs of human-created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domesticated animals, human-created hybrid animals, and mounted or preserved zoological specimens are not allowed.

Photographs made where the scene is natural and the animal is unharmed in a carefully managed environment, such as Zoo, rescue centres, and ethically managed natural environment farms are permitted.

Attracting or controlling subjects through the use of food or sound for the purpose of photographing them is not allowed. Maintained situations such as provided supplemental food due to hardship caused by weather conditions or other conditions beyond the animals' control, where photography is incidental to the feeding of the animal does not fall under this provision.

Controlling live subjects by chilling, anaesthetic, or any other method of restricting natural movement for a photograph is not allowed.

Human-made elements are permitted under the following circumstances:

a) When they are an integral part of the nature story, such as a songbird singing atop a fence post, a manmade object used as nest material, or a weather phenomenon destroying a man-made structure.

b) When they are a small but unavoidable part of the scene, such as an unobtrusive footprint or track in the background.

c) Scientific tags, collars, and bands are specifically allowed.



Wolf – Cynthia Sadler



Shaggy Parasol Fungi – Anthony Clarke

Open 2025-2026 Hand-In September 18th 2026.

Open means anything counts. There are no restrictions on subject matter. Manipulation is permitted **BUT NOT USE OF AI!**



Polygons Café – Susie Freeman



Ballerina – Diana Magor

People

Images may be formal or informal, single or group, human portraits or figure studies taken indoors or outdoors. Animal studies are not eligible. This is wider than just studio portraits, and may show people in all walks of life, doing a variety of things



Lost in thought – Robert Devenish



Dazzle Day Out – Susie Freeman

Pictorial

Some of our competitions are subject specific such as Nature, Man made, People. **Pictorial** is not subject specific. Any subject will do/ Pictorial is derived from the word – picture – so all images are potentially pictorial. What makes an image **pictorial**, as opposed to **representational**, is its **aesthetic quality**. Is it well composed and aesthetically pleasing? This is the only competition which is judged **solely** based on an image's **composition** and **attractiveness**, rather than its **subject matter**. **Compositing** is permitted but will be judged **solely** on its **pictorial** nature **not** its creative skills, imagination or humour. Nature shots will be judged on their pictorial quality only.



Impressionist selfie in the rain – Brian Magor



Great White Egret – John Sixsmith

THEME COMPITIONS

President's Theme: - British Woodlands November 6th 2026

Any **British** Woodland scene. It could include images of woodland animals, birds, flowers, fungi etc but the woodland setting **must** be evident. Human activity is allowed, but it must be a minor feature of the scene.



Red Squirrel on branch – Margaret Sixsmith



Autumn in Gold – Ian Chantler



VW Sirocco Wheel hub Ian Chantler



Raindrop – Diana Magor



Lily – Lynette Ryajin



Spider – Les Pictstock

Types of Close Up Photography

Close up photography is a versatile genre with several subcategories. Each type of close up photography has its own specific subjects, techniques and equipment requirements. Figure out which niche interests you more and hone your skills.

Nature Close Up

Subjects: Flowers, insects, plants, leaves, water droplets, and small animals.

Close up nature photography reveals the hidden world of textures and details. By zooming in on flowers, leaves, and insects, we can discover a world of textures and patterns that are often overlooked. It's a rewarding but challenging field of nature photography that requires patience, attention to detail, and a love for the natural world.

Close-up flower photography is a fantastic choice for beginner photographers. Thanks to their vibrant colours and textures, you can easily find focus, while their stillness means you can take your time to compose a shot. To achieve success in close up flower photography, shoot flowers at eye level and use soft, diffused lighting to highlight their petals.

Still Life Photography

Subjects: Everyday objects, food, textures, fabrics, jewelry, or any inanimate object.

Close-up still life photography is aimed at showing minute details of objects and scenes. It's a popular technique in commercial photography, used to showcase products and materials in a visually appealing way.

Photographers can control the lighting and composition, thus, emphasize the textures, shapes, and fine details of their subjects.

Portrait Close up

Subjects: Faces, hands, eyes, or any part of a person's body.

Portrait photography when combined with a close up shooting technique is a powerful way to capture the essence of a person. By focusing on their facial features or other body parts, photographers can convey emotions, textures, and expressions in a way that's both intimate and compelling. Close up portraits are often referred to as headshots and used in professional photography to create memorable and emotionally resonant images.

Many experts are fond of eye photography because they believe the eyes are a window to the soul. To achieve impressive close up eye photography results, use a standard zoom lens and a shallow depth of field. Thus, you can isolate the eye, making it the central part of a photo. Check out images so there is no camera reflection in them.

Abstract Close Ups

Subjects: Any object or surface that creates patterns, textures, or unusual forms when viewed closely (e.g., fabric, metal, glass, or skin).

Abstract close-up photography takes a subject and zooms in so closely that it's hard to recognize. Instead, viewers see the details like textures, colors, and patterns. This creative style encourages us to look at the world in a new way. architecture photography is a great example of abstract close-ups.

When photographing interiors, it's important to highlight the space's most attractive and unique features. Whether you are taking photos for real estate listings to personal projects, get the most out of natural light. If you happen to work in low-light conditions, use a wide aperture and a standard zoom lens. Thus, you can still receive clear, detailed shots.