



Photo Travel Division

Updated May 2021

GUIDE FOR JUDGES AND CHAIRS OF PSA-RECOGNIZED EXHIBITIONS WITH PHOTO TRAVEL SECTIONS.

This guide should be studied by the exhibition chair, the PT section chair and the PT judges before any judging and should be closely adhered to. This update will be in effect for PT exhibitions with closing dates in 2021 and beyond.

Photo Travel Definition.

A Photo Travel image expresses the characteristic features or culture of a land as they are found naturally. There are no geographic limitations. Images from events or activities arranged specifically for photography, or of subjects directed or hired for photography are not permitted. Close up pictures of people or objects must include features that provide information about the location.

Techniques that add, relocate, replace or remove any element of the original image, except by cropping, are not permitted. The only allowable adjustments are removal of dust or digital noise, restoration of the appearance of the original scene, and complete conversion to greyscale monochrome. Other derivations, including infrared, are not permitted. All images must look natural.

Purpose of the Photo Travel Definition.

The PSA Photo Travel Division (PTD) is *reality-based*, like the PSA Photojournalism and Nature Divisions. The objective of PSA Photo Travel (PT) is to show the world *as it is found naturally*. The purpose of the PT Definition is to guide PT photographers towards making images that show *how our world really is*, rather than to arrange it and manipulate images to obtain the “best” photographs. *PT images should be a true record of that scene. The PT Definition is also a guide for exhibition judges to ensure that images that violate the definition are not accepted.*

When assessing Photo Travel images judges have to take into account:

- The content requirement. The image must express the characteristic features and/or a culture of a land.
- Staged/set-up images are not permitted in Photo Travel. Judges need to review the Gallery of staged images on the PSA website:
<https://psaphoto.org/index.php?staged-travel-images>
- Close-up pictures of people or objects should contain some elements of the main subject's surroundings or environment that show the image was not a studio composition.
- The editing/processing of the image must adhere to the Photo Travel definition.
- The image must look natural.
- If there is a Themed Section, the image must first meet the Photo Travel definition.

Below are the individual sections of the PT Definition *in blue*, illustrated Examples and comments:

PT 1. Characteristic features.

A Photo Travel image expresses the characteristic features or culture of a land as they are found naturally.

In the case of landscapes or buildings, it is not necessary to know ‘where the place is’. The image only needs to have identifiable features so that the place can be recognized by someone visiting it.

Further information on characteristic features in PT can be downloaded from the Photo Travel’s Education page: <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?ptd-educational-resources>



The characteristic features in the following images are generic and do not help to identify a land. None of the images are suitable for entry into Photo Travel.





PT 2. Culture.

A Photo Travel image expresses the characteristic features or culture of a land as they are found naturally.

The culture presented in a Photo Travel image showcases how different people are in our world. The culture illustrated in the image should identify a people of a region or of a community and should be connected to a land. In a Photo Travel image, the culture portrayed should not be a culture that is found around the globe.

Further information on culture in PT is available for download from the Photo Travel's Education page: <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?ptd-educational-resources>

The activities portrayed in the following images are generic and do not help to identify a land or culture. None of the images are suitable for entry into Photo Travel.



PT 3: No geographic limitations.

There are no geographic limitations.

There are no restrictions as to where the image could be taken. A Photo Travel image can be captured from outside one's front door or on the other side of the world.

PT 4. Staged or Set-up Images are not permitted in Photo Travel.

Images from events or activities arranged specifically for photography, or of subjects directed or hired for photography are not permitted.

PT is about images that show the truth of a culture and/or of the characteristic features of a land as they are found naturally. Images from arranged situations cannot be entered into PT. It is not always easy for a judge to ascertain whether an image has been staged but they should always ask themselves if the scene looks genuine.

During the scoring, if a judge or chairman is certain an image is staged then he/she should stop the proceedings and notify his fellow jury members.

Judges should do their best to keep staged images out of PT.

Set-ups can be identified when many images of the same or similar scenes are submitted to exhibitions, or when they depict unnatural actions or behavior by the people shown in the photo.



The photo below confirms that the picture of the boys throwing water is a “setup”, it is staged.



Determining whether a suspect image is staged is left to the discretion of the judge, based on their own opinions and experiences.

These tell-tale signs are provided as a guideline only:

- Unnaturally symmetric, regular or lined up arrangements of objects or people performing tasks.
- Actions performed in unison or simultaneously by different people when simultaneity is clearly not required for the task.
- Selective lighting of parts of the scene that looks unnatural.
- Unnatural fog, especially in combination with sun rays.
- Workers/labourers all dressed in festive clothes while performing ordinary, everyday tasks. Be mindful, however, that women in India wear colorful saris even while performing menial tasks such as road construction, and that tribal women in southern China and Vietnam wear colorful costumes while working in the field or going to the market.

Images which are known to be staged or strongly suspected of having been staged should be scored low.

The Photo Travel Division has a Gallery of ‘Staged Images’. Judges and chairmen should review this Gallery before scoring images: <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?staged-travel-images>

There is a document titled ‘Staged Images’ which is available for download from the PSA website: <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?ptd-educational-resources>

Important information on the ethics of Photo Travel photography:
<https://www.picsofasia.com/the-library-of-fake-travel-photos-in-asia/> (the images in this article should be reviewed)
<https://www.picsofasia.com/stage-in-travel-photography/>

PT 5. Close-up images.

Close-up images of people or objects must include features that provide information about the location.

Close-up pictures of people or objects should contain some elements of the main subject’s surroundings or environment that show the image was not a studio composition.

The following two images do not meet the requirement: Although the people portrayed in each image wear clothing that identifies them as being members of a particular culture, the images do not contain elements of the subjects’ surroundings or environment.



By contrast, the following photographs meet that requirement to a much better degree: In each of the images below, there are some elements of the subjects' surroundings and environment that show the images are not studio compositions.

It is not necessary that that elements be so specific that we know where the image was taken. It is only necessary that there are such elements in the photograph.



There is further reading on close-up images on the Photo Travel Education page: <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?ptd-educational-resources>

PT 6. Editing techniques in Photo Travel.

Techniques that add, relocate, replace or remove any element of the original image, except by cropping, are not permitted. The only allowable adjustments are removal of dust or digital noise, restoration of the appearance of the original scene, and complete conversion to greyscale monochrome. Other derivations, including infrared, are not permitted. All images must look natural.

Post processing of an image is restricted to only allowing the author to show, as closely as possible, what was actually seen when the shutter was pressed.

Further information on allowed and non-allowed editing techniques is available from the Photo Travel's Education page: <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?ptd-educational-resources>

There is a video on 'Editing Techniques' available for viewing on the Photo Travel Education page: <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?ptd-educational-resources>

PT 6 a) Conversion to complete greyscale monochrome.

Entries can be entered in Photo Travel in colour as in image 1 or converted to complete greyscale monochrome as in image 2. Images cannot have some sections of the image converted to monochrome as depicted in image 3. Neither can the image show partial desaturation as in image 4. The image can be presented in tones as per images 5 and 6. Only complete conversion to greyscale monochrome is permitted.

Image 1:



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Image 6



PT 6 b) Oversaturated images should be given lower scores.



PT 6 c) Over-sharpening where unnatural artifacts appear such as halos should be scored low.



6 d) Techniques that add, relocate, replace or remove any element of the original image are not allowed.



PT 6 e) Noticeable vignettes are not allowed.



PT 6 f) Darkening selected areas of the image is not allowed.



PT 6 g) Decorative/wide borders are not allowed. A fine, single, stroke (max 5 pixels) is permitted if the Exhibition allows this in their 'Conditions of Entry'.



PT 6 h) The addition of textures or use of filters is not allowed.



Images with obvious signs of overprocessing should be scored low to ensure they stay out of the PT (a score of 1 is recommended). Such images should be excluded from the Awards. Image manipulation by removing, moving or adding objects is often difficult to spot and to prove. When judges suspect a violation, it should be investigated.

PT 7. All images must look natural.

The Photo Travel image must look natural to the eye, therefore images taken with an extreme fisheye lens are not allowed in PT.



PT 8. Images taken at shows, re-enactments, dance or music performances.

Images taken during performances, re-enactments or shows are suitable for entry into Photo Travel sections as long as the event was not arranged specifically for photographers.

The basic rule of content applies i.e. the image should express the characteristic features or a culture of a land as they are found naturally.



PT 9. Themes in Photo Travel.

Images in Photo Travel Themed section must be in compliance with the Photo Travel Definition. Firstly, the image must meet the Photo Travel definition and secondly the image should suit the Theme. The Theme should always be subservient to the Definition.

Further information on Themes in Photo Travel is available from the Photo Travel's Education page: <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?ptd-educational-resources>

PT 10. Animals in Photo Travel

Normally images of animals would not be suitable for Photo Travel unless the animal's habitat is confined to a very specific region.

The following Text and Images are by Roy Killen APSA, GMPSA/B, EFIAP, APSEM

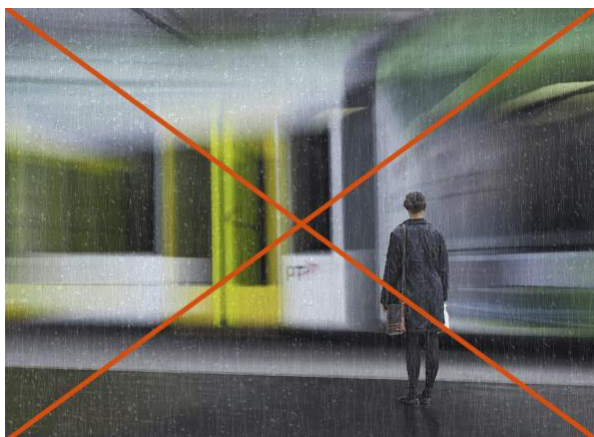
It is possible for an animal to be one of the characteristic features of a land. Here is an example:



The elephant on the left is obviously African (rather than Asian) but the image is not showing any other characteristic feature of Africa. The image on the right contains several elements (elephant, impala, typical house, typical river crossing) that collectively enable the image to show characteristic features of somewhere in Southern Africa).

PT 11. People Traveling.

Images of people travelling do not necessarily mean that those images would be appropriate for Photo Travel. The image must adhere to the content requirement of the PT definition i.e. the image should express the characteristic features or a culture of a land.



Further information on this subject is available from the Photo Travel's Education page titled 'PTD Competition Corner 1': <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?ptd-educational-resources>

PT 12. Drone Policy.

Please read the Drone Photography Rules (legal operation) available on the PSA website:
<https://psa-photo.org/index.php?psa-policies>

Judges of all PSA recognized exhibitions are urged to score down any image they feel was captured in a situation that does not follow the PSA Drone policy.

Areas that might be of concern to judges:

- Images where there are people in the scene below. (a photographer must have the written permission from everyone in the scene **before** the shot is taken)
- Drones may not be flown over large groups of people, public events or populated stadiums within three nautical miles of the stadium or venue. (FAA USA law as of Aug 2019)
- Drones cannot be used to take an image of an animal or bird.
- Drones cannot be used in wilderness areas.

PT 13. PSA Statement on Subject Matter.

PSA Statement on Subject Matter

There is one hard and fast rule, whose spirit must be observed at all times and **applies to all sections** offered in PSA recognised exhibitions.

The welfare of the subject is more important than the photograph.

This means that practices such as baiting of subjects with a living creature and removal of birds from nests, for the purpose of obtaining a photograph, are highly unethical, and such photographs are not allowed in any PSA exhibitions.

There is also a PSA policy on the use of aerial photography - aircraft, helicopters and drones. This policy can be found at <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?psa-policies#drone>.

The purpose of this policy is to prevent any interference with other individuals or animals which will or may cause a disturbance in their normal activity or disrupt the way any individuals or animals interact with their environment. Entry in this exhibition requires exhibitors to agree to this and other PSA policies

If a judge suspects that an image might have been taken where the welfare of the subject was abused, they are urged to score the image low.

Areas that might be of concern to judges:

- Bull fighting
- Eagles in Kazakh belong to actual hunters that will return the eagle to the wild.
<https://www.responsibletravel.com/holidays/mongolia/travel-guide/mongolias-golden-eagle-festivals>
- Tigers fed live pheasants in Hengdoahezi Tiger Park, Habin, China.

PT 14. Scoring Images in Photo Travel.

A score of 1 signifies the image is non-compliant with the PT Definition: it does not indicate the image should be disqualified.

THE FOLLOWING IS PROVIDED AS A GENERAL GUIDELINE:

Note that not all Exhibitions use the 1-5 scoring system.

Score 1:

The image does not comply with the Photo Travel Definition and it should **NOT be Accepted.**

Reasons for this score could include:

- The image provides no characteristic features, and it does not illustrate a culture that helps identify a land or region.
- You may know that the image is a result of a set-up.
- It is a close-up of a person or object and provides no elements of the main subject's surroundings or environment that show the image was not a studio composition.
- There are editing techniques/derivations that are not allowed in Photo Travel.
- The image does not look natural.

Score 2:

The image does not comply with the Photo Travel Definition and it should **NOT be Accepted.**

OR

In the case of the image complying with the PT definition the image quality **is not of a sufficiently high standard to be accepted.**

Reasons for this score could include:

- The image provides very weak characteristic features, and it does not illustrate a culture that helps identify a land or region.
- The image appears to be a result of a set-up.
- The image has major technical flaws.

Score 3:

The image complies with the Photo Travel Definition and could be **considered for an Acceptance**.

Reasons for this score could include:

- The image provides adequate to strong characteristic feature/s and/or illustrates a culture that helps identify a land or region.
- The image does not appear to be a result of a set-up.
- It is a close-up of a person or object and provides some elements of the main subject's surroundings or environment that show the image was not a studio composition.
- The image looks natural.
- The image has no serious technical problems. If there are flaws, they are minor and compensated for by other elements in the image.

Score 4:

The image complies with the Photo Travel Definition and should be **Accepted**.

Reasons for this score could include:

- The image provides strong characteristic feature/s and/or clearly illustrates a culture that helps identify a land or region.
- The image is very unlikely to be a result of a set-up.
- It is a close-up of a person or object and provides some elements of the main subject's surroundings or environment that show the image was not a studio composition.
- The image looks natural.
- This is a very strong image. The image is technically correct and the elements all work well together.
- Effective control of exposures, appropriate selective focusing and depth of field, as well as other advanced photographic techniques would be expected of this score.
- If there are flaws, they are minor and hard to find.

Score 5:

The image complies with the Photo Travel Definition and it should be **Awarded**.

Reasons for this score could include:

- The image provides strong characteristic feature/s and/or clearly illustrates a culture that helps identify a land or region.
- The image is very unlikely to be a result of a set-up.
- It is a close-up of a person or object and provides some elements of the main subject's surroundings or environment that show the image was not a studio composition.
- The image looks natural.
- This is an exceptionally strong image that shows true photographic excellence.

IT IS STRESSED THAT SCORING OF A PHOTO TRAVEL IMAGE MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

- the strength of the characteristic features AND/OR the culture portrayed helps identify a land.
- the requirement for close-up images.
- possible staged/set-up images.
- compliance with restricted editing techniques.
- the image must look natural.

If the image adheres to the Photo Travel definition then the judge will need to assess the artistic and technical qualities of the image.

Extract from 2021 Exhibition Standards ES-F5:

The judges must be given instructions just prior to the commencement of judging regarding any pertinent restriction or requirement, including information on medals and other awards.

i) Instruction must include a reading of the definition for that section being judged and an explanation of the method of judging to be used. Particular care must be taken that images presented in any theme within a particular star path conform to that Star Path's definition.

ii) Instructions must include no discussions between the judges until determining awards. The only exception allowed is discussion concerning whether an image conforms to the applicable definition.

iii) **Nature, Photojournalism and Photo Travel Divisions are producing Guidelines for judging these divisional sections. Where these are available, Chairs must make sure that judges had read and understood these guidelines. In addition, the chairs of these judgments must make sure that judges are following the guidelines, and if necessary, intervene to require re-scoring, if the guidelines are not being followed.**

Authorship:

Tom Tauber APSA, MPSA
Nadia Filiaggi MPSA

Distribution of this guide has been approved by the Chair of PSA's Photo Travel Division, Stan Bormann APSA, MPSA.

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If this Guide is printed it should be printed in colour to preserve the information provided.

The PT Division now have an 'Advanced PT' course which explains the PT definition. PSA members can register after log-in: <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?education-online-courses>

For more information about this guide or about the judging of Photo Travel competitions please contact PSA's Photo Travel Exhibition Standards Director, Nadia Filiaggi MPSA, ptd-esd@psa-photo.org