



# 2025

## OCCC INTERCLUB OPEN CHALLENGE RULES & GUIDELINES

Version	Release Date	Description of change
Version 24.1	December 12, 2024	Release of completed 2024-25 version
		- General update throughout.
Version 24.2	January 7, 2025	Update on AI and on specific rules regarding Expand
Version 24.3	January 12, 2025	Fine tooth comb
Version 25.1	January 13, 2025	DataManager Comments
Version 25.2	January 31, 2025	Update on AI section, plus update on AI expansion in categories.
Version 25.3	February 1, 2025	Update on AI section, plus update on categories.
Version 25.3.2	February 13, 2025	Rewording of image sizing rule; no change to the rule, just clarification.
Version 25.3.3	February 16, 2025	Removal of 2 MB maximum limit on images.

Questions and inquiries about contest rules can be emailed to [competitions@o3c.ca](mailto:competitions@o3c.ca)

Recommendations for changes and modifications can be emailed to [competitions@o3c.ca](mailto:competitions@o3c.ca)

*Please obtain the latest version of these guidelines available on the O3C OLIS site at <https://olis.o3c.ca/>*

*Dedicated to the Promotion of the Art of Photography and Serving the Photographic Communities of Ontario*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

### **Competition Purpose**

*The goal of this competition follows OCCC's mandate to promote the art of photography by encouraging O3C Clubs, and their Club members, to share and showcase their art among peers. Clubs, and their members, may be recognized through various individual and club awards.*

***This is a Club centric Competition and not open to individual member submissions.***

### **Judging**

- Images will be judged on overall impact, composition, technical excellence, originality and artistic merit.
- Judging will be conducted individually online with final tie breaks & awards in a group deliberation
- Judging will consist of scores only, 0-10, in half point increments. No comments
- Each category will be judged by a team of 4 judges with the final total consisting of the 3 highest scores
- OCCC strives to achieve excellence in judging. All judges are accredited O3C Judges.

### **Disclaimer**

- The most current version of this document shall be considered the Official Rules. None of the Rules & Guidelines from previous competitions carry over to this year's competition. To ensure you always have the most current version, please reference the **O3C OLIS site at: <https://olis.o3c.ca/>**.
- All decisions of the OCCC and its Judges are final.
- Disqualified images will not receive a reimbursement of the entrance fee.
- OCCC will take all reasonable steps to protect the integrity of all entries; however, we cannot assume responsibility for damage to any entry, howsoever caused.
- Any or all entries may be presented with or without entrant identification at the Awards Presentation. However, because of time and space constraints, the OCCC reserves the right to not display or present all images.
- By submitting an image to this competition, the entrant warrants that he or she is the rightful owner and exclusive author of the image and grants the following non-exclusive rights and permissions to the OCCC, specifically that:
  - The image may be displayed on any media for the purposes of competition judging and may be displayed without restriction in any subsequent presentations by the OCCC.
  - The maker retains ownership of the image and all other rights to its subsequent use.
  - Gives the OCCC express approval for use of images in publication, education purposes, presentation and/or use in promotional material for the OCCC.
  - By submitting content, you acknowledge and agree to the terms.

# OCCC Interclub Open Challenge Rules & Guidelines

## Important Dates

<b>January 2025</b>	Data Manager to send out Submission Information Package to Club Reps. Instructions to fill our Member/Club Forms and Instructions to upload files.
<b>January 2025 (Mid)</b>	Zoom Q&A Session with Comp Committee and Clubs to address any questions
<b>February-March 2025</b>	Open Challenge Promos, Acquire Judges
<b>May 1, 2025</b>	Submission Date for digital images. All digital files are to be uploaded by Club Reps to OCCC by 11:00 pm.
<b>May 1, 2025</b>	All entry fees are due at the OCCC together with copy of the Club's completed Consolidated Entry Form. Option of Paypal Invoice or eTransfer to <a href="mailto:treasurer@o3c.ca">treasurer@o3c.ca</a>
<b>May 2025</b>	File Prep & Administration, Online Judging of Digital Entries
<b>June-Aug 2025</b>	Tie Breaks & Award Assignments (Closed session with Judges) Create AV Shows & Show Options (Live or Online)
<b>Sept/Oct 2025</b>	Tentative Awards Day (to be confirmed). Location TBA. Or this may be a Virtual Event
<b>Note:</b>	Timelines subject to change based on number of entries received.

## CATEGORY SUBMISSION STANDARDS

### Entry Eligibility

The OCCC Interclub Open Challenge (hereafter referred to as "the Competition") is open to members of OCCC Member Clubs. This is a Club centric Competition and not open to individual member submissions.

### Entry Fee

The entry fee for digital and print entries is \$2 per image. No Discounts. Entry fees to be submitted to the O3C Treasurer by the deadline date. Paypal invoicing or eTransfers to [treasurer@o3c.ca](mailto:treasurer@o3c.ca) Attn: Bill Traynor.

### Number of Entries per Maker

The total number of allowable images for each entrant is limited to a **maximum of twelve images** constrained by:

- A maximum of 12 entries can be submitted into any category.
- No entrant shall submit more than 12 images regardless of the number of clubs to which the entrant belongs. If the maker exceeds these limits by submitting through more than one club the entrant will be disqualified from entering images for the current competition year.
- The maker is not required to enter multiple categories unless they are competing for the Diversity Photographer of the Year Award.

## Method of Entry Submission

All entries are to be submitted on behalf of the O3C Member Club. An individual club member cannot enter or submit independently to this competition.

- The O3C Data Manager will supply the Club Reps with an Instruction Package detailing entry forms and file upload instructions by January 2025
- Please consult with the Data Manager if alternate means of submission are required
- All entries must be uploaded to the Data Manager by the deadline date

## Use of AI / Artificial Intelligence

### What's Not Allowed:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated imagery that uses generative processes that draw from an external, cloud-based database of photographs – content not owned by the maker -- is not allowed for any portion of a photo entry whatsoever (e.g. Adobe's 'Generative AI' features in Lightroom and Photoshop). This includes Text-to-Image or Image-to-Image generative processes; it also includes AI tools without the use of text-prompts when such tools draw from an external source not owned by the maker. Such AI tools are not acceptable for use on original images for competition submissions.
- The use of neural filters, many of which rely on AI algorithms, is also not allowed for use on original images for competition submissions. This specifically omits the following (not a comprehensive list) from use: smart portrait, makeup transfer, landscape mixer, style transfer, and super zoom.

### What's Allowed:

- On the other hand, AI assisted enhancement tools are allowed as part of post production for composition submissions; these include tools for sharpening, denoise, object selection, cloning, content aware fill, object removal (with generative AI off), spot healing, canvas expansion and auto correction. Such tools, which are not drawing from the cloud, are widely available in many software applications.
- Sky replacement is allowed provided that it is the maker's own image and not drawn from the cloud or other external sources (eg. installed software package).

### Detection:

- For this competition, the O3C will employ any tools available for detection of AI generation. Should there be a question about an image's inappropriate use of AI, the Competition Committee will give the member the opportunity to submit their RAW/Jpeg files that were used to produce the submitted image or risk disqualification.
- Since AI technology, as well as the tools available to detect AI generation, are rapidly changing, these rules are subject to change.

## Digital Manipulation

- Some Competition categories allow Digital Manipulation, and some do not. Full details regarding digital manipulation are found in the category descriptions. It is recommended that makers read the descriptions carefully to obtain a clear understanding of how much, if any, digital manipulation is allowed in each category. Full details and examples of acceptable allowances are noted in the category description.

## Image Qualification

- Images submitted may not be the same as, or substantially similar to, another image submitted to an OCCC competition in a current year or any previous year's categories either as a digital image or a print. This includes images submitted under OCCC's previous name, the Greater Toronto Council of Camera Clubs (GTCCC), and images previously disqualified for any reason.
- Monochrome images are acceptable in all categories.

## Initial Vetting of Images

- All submitted images are to be vetted by the submitting Club/Club Reps for eligibility in category.
- Image file names to follow category convention or else they may be rejected.
- Images that do not fit the category are at risk of disqualification.
- Judges will also have authority to determine out of category images for disqualification.

## Honour System

- For all entries, the original image and all image elements including digital manipulation and post processing must be the work of the entrant. Original images made in workshops without significant ownership and control of the entrant may be disqualified from the competition, e.g. the maker must have directed the model, the lighting, positioning and had full control over camera settings.
- All winning and accepted entries may be reviewed to ascertain if an image is authentic to the maker or sourced from elsewhere, whether in whole or part. The OCCC reserves the right to request a maker's RAW, post-processed or other files, before awarding any prizes. If such files are not supplied in a timely manner, then the entry will be eliminated from the competition.
- It is the maker's responsibility to abide by the morals and principles of this competition.

## Naming / Titling of Entries:

- Architecture, Pictorial, People, Creative Vision, Expansive Views, People in Action and Print Entries can be Titled as it suits the maker.
- For Birds, Animals, Botany and Landscapes/Geology the Titles should be the common or scientific name of the subject. However, descriptive names as it pertains to the subject are allowed. Refrain from giving pictorial like names to images in Nature categories.
  - **Acceptable:** "Northern Blue Jay" or "Cyanocitta Cristata", or "Blue Jay Preening Chick".
  - **Not acceptable:** "Blue & White Splendor".

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- No image may display any titling or maker identification that could serve to identify the maker or club, or risk disqualification of the image.

## ~~Image Identification~~

- ~~Each digital file and print must meet the OCCC Image Identification requirements and include your Club Code, Maker ID#, Category Code and Sequence Number. Category Codes can be found in the Category & Abbreviations section and Club Codes are on the last page of this document.~~
- ~~Your Club Representative is responsible for applying the identifier for each image entry, but may request entrants apply the identifier to the filename before submitting the file to the rep.~~
- ~~Image Identifier:~~
  - ~~The image identifier consists of 9 upper case characters, for example, RH160PD01. The code structure consists of the following, sequentially:~~
    - ~~**Club Code:** 2-alpha characters which identify your club [Reference: last page of this document],~~
    - ~~**Entrant Number:** 3-numeric characters which is your individual maker # which your club rep assigns, and includes leading 0's as necessary,~~
    - ~~**Category Code:** 2-alpha characters [Reference: Categories & Abbreviations section]~~
    - ~~**Sequence #:** 2-numeric characters that identify your 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> image, includes leading 0's as necessary.~~

### ~~Examples:~~

- ~~TP005PR02: Trillium PC, maker #005, Print, entry number 02,~~
- ~~CC028PR11: Chinese Canadian PS, maker #028, Print, entry number 11,~~
- ~~ET121PD12: Etobicoke CC, maker #121, Pictorial, entry number 12,~~
- ~~RH130AR01: Richmond Hill, maker #130, Architecture, entry number 01.~~

## Image Sizing:

- Maximum image size: the maximum width of an image is to be no more than 1920 pixels wide; the maximum height of an image is to be no more than 1080 pixels high.
  - If an image exceeds these limits, it will be resized automatically to fit; the objective is to maintain the highest image and presentation quality.
- Image format: 8 bit, JPG, sRGB colour space.

## Use of Image or Keyline Borders

### *Digital Entries*

- Decorative borders such as digital picture frames are only allowed in the Pictorial category where a decorative border may be an intrinsic part of the image and it adds to the image story.
- Artistic borders such as torn edges, antique edges, grunge borders, film edges, etc. are allowed in all categories except Nature categories (Birds, Animals and Botany and Landscape/Geology).
- Keyline borders such as 1 or 2 pixel borders are allowed in any category. However, they are usually only needed for images with dark backgrounds where they can help the viewer see where the actual image frame is to judge composition. The Keyline would usually be a lighter or complimentary colour to the image.

## COMPETITION CATEGORIES

### Overview

- The Open Challenge has a total of 11 (eleven) categories comprised of digital images only for 2025.
- Any image that fails to meet the criteria of the category may be declared ineligible and could be disqualified from the competition.
- To maximize the scoring potential, the member should take care to ensure the image is strong in the category to which it is entered.
- The topic of the Theme Category will change each year and OCCC invites all members to submit topic suggestions.

### Categories & Abbreviations

Category	Category Type	Abbreviation	Category Title
1.	Digital	BR	Nature Birds
2.		AN	Nature Animals
3.		BO	Nature Botany
4.		LG	Nature Landscape / Geology
5.		EV	Expansive Views
6.		PE	People
7.		PA	People in Action
8.		AR	Architecture
9.		PD	Pictorial
10.		CV	Creative Vision
11.	Theme (Digital)	TH	Theme Topic – <b>“Canadiana”</b>

### Category Descriptions

#### 1. Nature Birds

- This category is open to any type of bird, domesticated or wild.
  - E.g. ducks, geese, herons, raptors, song birds, sea and shore birds, etc.
- Images may be shot in a studio, zoo setting or in the wild.
- Artificial backgrounds ARE permitted either in studio or the wild.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural
- Large areas of black/solid/manipulated background are permissible.
- Hand of Man is allowed.
- No artificial or taxidermy specimens.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker’s own work.

## 2. *Nature Animals*

- This category is open to any type of animal; domesticated or wild.
  - E.g. mammals, amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates, crustaceans, fish, insects, family pets, etc.
- Images may be shot in a studio, zoo setting or in the wild.
- Artificial backgrounds ARE permitted either in studio or the wild.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural.
- Large areas of black/solid/manipulated background are permissible.
- Hand of Man is allowed.
- No artificial or taxidermy specimens.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

## 3. *Nature Botany*

- This category is open to any type of botany subject whether wild or cultivated.
  - E.g. flowers of any type, mushrooms, trees, seed pods, etc.
- Image may be shot in a studio or in the field.
- Artificial backgrounds ARE permitted either in studio or the wild.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural.
- Large areas of black/solid/manipulated background are permissible.
- Hand of Man is allowed.
- No artificial or taxidermy specimens.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

## 4. *Nature Landscapes & Geology, no HOM*

- Landscapes, Seascapes, Skyscapes, Natural phenomena, Geology, Astronomy
  - Landscape is described as an expanse of scenery that can be seen in a single view.
  - Seascape is described as an expanse of water in which the water or waves predominate. Coastal features or the shoreline may be included.
- Natural Phenomena refers to an observable event which is not man-made
  - Examples include: sunrise, weather, tornadoes, biological processes, decomposition, germination, physical processes, frost, ice patterns, snowflakes, wave propagation, erosion, tidal flow and natural disasters such as electromagnetic pulses, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural.
- **No Hand of Man is allowed.**
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

## 5. *Expansive Views, HOM allowed*

- Landscapes, Seascapes, Skyscapes, Natural phenomena, Geology, Astronomy
  - Landscape is described as an expanse of scenery that can be seen in a single view.
  - Seascape is described as an expanse of water in which the water or waves predominate. Coastal features or the shoreline may be included.
- Natural Phenomena refers to an observable event which is not man-made



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- Examples include: sunrise, weather, tornadoes, biological processes, decomposition, germination, physical processes, frost, ice patterns, snowflakes, wave propagation, erosion, tidal flow and natural disasters such as electromagnetic pulses, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural.
- **Hand of Man is allowed.**
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

## 6. People

- This category is limited to images of human subjects only as the primary subject.
  - E.g. Portraits, Group Portraits, Environmental Portraits, Photo Journalism, Posed or Candid, etc.
- Can be photographed in a studio setting or any other environment.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural. If the image is highly *or* creatively altered it may be more suitable in the **Creative Vision** category.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

## 7. People in Action

- This category must include a person, or a group of people, engaged in an activity depicting energetic physical motion. This can be related to sports, racing, gymnastics, or other energetic physical motion where the activity represented is the principle subject. Activities that depict minimal motion/action would be considered very weak in category and may be judged accordingly. The maker could consider entering those images in the Pictorial or People categories.
  - E.g. running, canoeing, bicycle riding, car or boat racing, etc.,
  - The intent is to show a person in obvious motion or action, not merely engaged in an activity in which the motion is passive or slow. Such images should be submitted to the People Category
- A physical person, or evidence of a person, must be present in the image.
  - It is not required that the person's face be visible if it is clear that there is a person engaged in an activity in which there is obvious action taking place. E.g. a skier in full gear, race car driver with helmet visible through window, a racing vehicle (such as a car or boat) would be eligible as long as there is clear evidence of a person.
  - If a driver is not visible, the entry would be ineligible.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural. If the image is highly *or* creatively altered it may be more suitable in the **Creative Vision** category.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

## 8. Architecture

- This category is limited to images of any architectural manmade structure.
- The subject must be a significant aspect of a landscape or cityscape.
  - E.g. building exteriors/interiors, architectural details, bridges, piers, etc.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed although the intent is that images look natural. If the image is highly *or* creatively altered, including HDR images, it may be more suitable in the **Creative Vision** category.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

## 9. Pictorial

- This category comprises subject matter that does not fall into any other category.
  - E.g. Still life and tabletop photography, food, man-made objects, transportation, urban or rural life
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed. If the image is highly or creatively altered it may be more suitable in the **Creative Vision** category.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

## 10. Creative Vision

- This category is limited to highly creative and artistic images.
  - E.g. altered reality, abstracts, graphical designs, conceptual art, composites, montages, etc.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed.
- Use of artistic filters or post-processing is acceptable and is, of course, encouraged.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

## 11. Annual Theme – “Canadiana”

- The subject of the 2025 Annual Theme category is “**Canadiana**”.
- For this competition we are encouraging a wide variety of subjects.
- Main subject should be focused on the Canadiana theme, broadly defined.
- For purposes of this competition, Canadiana is defined as: “those things, ideas, activities, scenery, nature, architecture and environments that concern or are distinctive to Canada, its peoples and its cultures.”
- In certain instances, makers should be sure to bring their creativity to an image, e.g. a photo of graffiti artwork, a statue, etc.; photographs of artwork and sculpture, while allowed, will not score highly unless the maker has brought creativity to the image.
- To avoid copyright and trademark infringement, care should be taken to avoid photos where the main subject itself is subject to copyright or trademark use, e.g. a close up of a Canadian celebrity (yes, a celebrity's image may be trademarked; Justin Bieber is one such celebrity); some Canadiana architectural landmarks have trademark regulations; one exception to the above is the Canadian flag.
- There are no restrictions on techniques used.
- Any form of post processing and image manipulation is allowed.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

## AWARDS

All images are eligible for individual awards by category. Additionally, individual image scores are used to determine club awards, the Freedman Trophy for the top scoring club, the Diversity Photographer of the Year and Specialist Photographer of the Year winners.

### Accepted Entries

- Accepted entries represent approximately the top scoring 25-30% of the entries in each category.
- Accepted entries will be included in the Awards Night video.

### Honourable Mentions

- Honourable Mentions comprise approximately 10-15% of the accepted entries within each category.

### Individual Category Awards

In each of the 11 categories there will be a maximum of three top awards and a number of Honourable Mentions. A maker can only be awarded one top award per category. In the event of a tie, the judges will identify the winner. However, a maker will retain all points on images if a subsequent award has to be given to the next entrant with the next highest scoring entry.

- The three top awards in each category will be:
  - one first-place
  - one second-place
  - one third-place
  - plus, Honourable Mentions
- First, Second and Third place award winners will receive a Certificate and a Medal.
- Honourable Mention award winners will receive a Certificate.

### Club Category Awards

- Awarded to the top scoring club in each of the 11 categories. Top scoring clubs are determined by summing the highest score, from 6 different makers in each club, for each category. If there is a tie, then the highest score by 7 different makers determines the winning club, etc., until a clear winner is determined.
- Club category award winners will receive a Certificate.

### The Freedman Trophy

- The **FREEDMAN TROPHY** is awarded to the top scoring club overall in the competition. The summation of the highest score by 12 different makers in each club, regardless of category, determines the Freedman Trophy winning club. If there is a tie, then the highest score by 13 different makers determines the winning club, etc., until a clear winner is determined.
- Freedman Trophy winner receives a plaque.

## Photographer(s) of the Year

- **Diversity Photographer of the Year**
  - There are 11 digital categories. To be eligible for the Diversity Photographer of the Year award, the entrant **must submit at least one image in ten of the eleven digital categories including at least one in the Theme Topic**. A minimum of 10 entries is required in total.
  - The winner is the entrant scoring the highest total point count for their top scoring 10 submissions. If the entrant submits more than 10 images, only their top scoring 10 digital images will be considered. Each top scoring digital image must be from a different category.
  - If two or more entrants tie for the highest total point count, as per the criteria, multiple entrants can win the title of Diversity Photographer of the Year.
  - Diversity Photographer of the Year winner(s) receives a plaque and a certificate and receive a prize (eg. gift card).
  
- **Specialist Category Award**
  - Recognizing that there are many outstanding photographers whose excellence lies in a limited sphere of categories; this award recognizes photographers with the highest total score based on their top 6 scoring images within one category.
  - Each of the 11 categories in the Open Challenge can have a Specialist for a total of 11 Specialists.
  - If two or more entrants tie for the highest total score in a category, as per the criteria, multiple entrants can win the title of Specialist Category Award.
  - It is possible for one entrant to win Specialist Category Award in multiple categories.
  - OCCC reserves the right to withhold awards if there are less than 3 candidates eligible in a category.
  - Specialist Category Award winners will receive a medal and a certificate.

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### The 2025 Open Challenge Competition Committee:

*Gray Graffam and Randy Nickerson, O3C Competitions Co-Chairs*

*John Allman, O3C Judges Chair*

*Bharat Mistry, O3C Past President*

*Jim Camelford, O3C Data Manager*

*Ron Pettitt, Kingston Photographic Club*

*Additional Support by: Jim Camelford, RHCC*

**OCCC MEMBER CLUBS & CLUB CODES**

**Note:** The following table is for quick reference and represents all OCCC member clubs at time of publication.  
New clubs should use their approved code in submissions.

#	Current Clubs	Club Code:
1	Ajax PC	AJ
2	Barrie Photography Club	BA
3	Beach PC	BE
4	Brant Camera Club	BC
5	Brockville Area Photo Club	BV
6	Camera Club of Ottawa	CO
7	Chinese Canadian PS	CC
8	Don Mills CC	DM
9	Etobicoke CC	ET
10	Georgian Bay Photography Club	GB
11	Grand River Imaging & Photographic Society	GR
12	Grimsby PG	GP
13	Guelph Photographers Guild	GU
14	Haldimand Photography Club	HP
15	Hamilton Camera Club	HC
16	Highland Glen CC	HG
17	Jiahua Elite Photography Ass'n - JEPA	JE
18	Kingston Photographic Club	KP
19	Lanark County Camera Club	LC
20	Latow PG	LP
21	Life Institute Photo Club	LI
22	Lightchasers Photographic Society	LS
23	Mississauga CC	MI
24	Oakville Camera Club	OK
25	Orillia and District Camera Club	OD
26	Orleans Photo Club	OP
27	Oshawa CC	OC
28	Photo Arts Club of Newmarket	NM
29	Photo Historical Society Canada	PH
30	Port Franks & Area Camera Club	PF
31	Richmond Hill CC	RH
32	Sarnia Photographic Club	SP
33	St. Catharines Photographic Club	SC
34	Steve Ricketts	SR
35	Thornhill Seniors Camera Club	TS
36	Toronto CC	TC
37	Toronto Digital Photography	TD
38	Toronto Focal Forum	TF
39	Trillium PC	TP
40	Windsor CC	WC
41	Woodstock CC	WS