COMPETITION READINESS

Steve Proctor – October 2017

OPENING STATEMENT !

This presentation is not intended to tell you how to take a great photograph.

It contains things that I have learned by:
- ❑ Listening to judges feedback and being open to critique.
- ❑ Looking at images in exhibitions.
- ❑ Entering competitions and exhibitions.
- ❑ Going online to view other images.
- ❑ De-constructing other images.

SUBJECTS

1. Preparing the Image

2. Selecting a Category for the Image (annual comps)

3. Guidelines for Categories.

4. Compositional Tips.

Note: There a very few rules !

PREPARING THE IMAGE

❑ 1600 x 1200 – Maximum of 1600 pixels wide and 1200 pixels high.

 ❑ Applies to RDCC, L&CPU, ICPA competitions.

❑ Filling the image with Black is not necessary.

❑ Colour space should be set to sRGB.

❑ File size should ideally not exceed 2Mb.

❑ Adding a large / bright / coloured / artistic border can be distracting.

 ❑ 1 pixel wide in a light grey colour does the job.

 ❑ Similarly, colourful Mountcard can be counter-productive.

PREPARING THE IMAGE – COLOUR SPACE
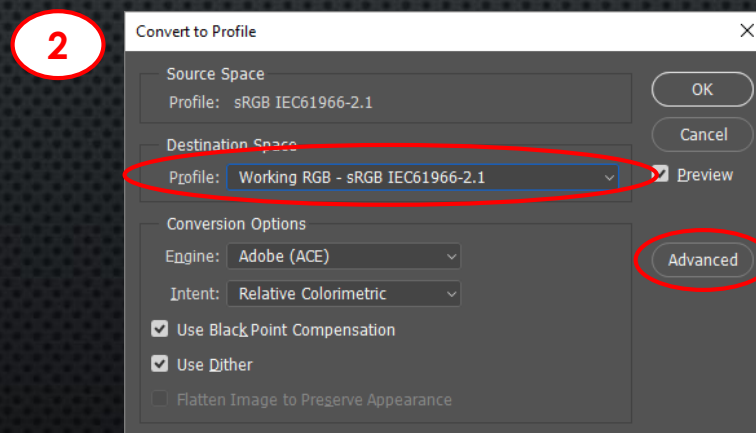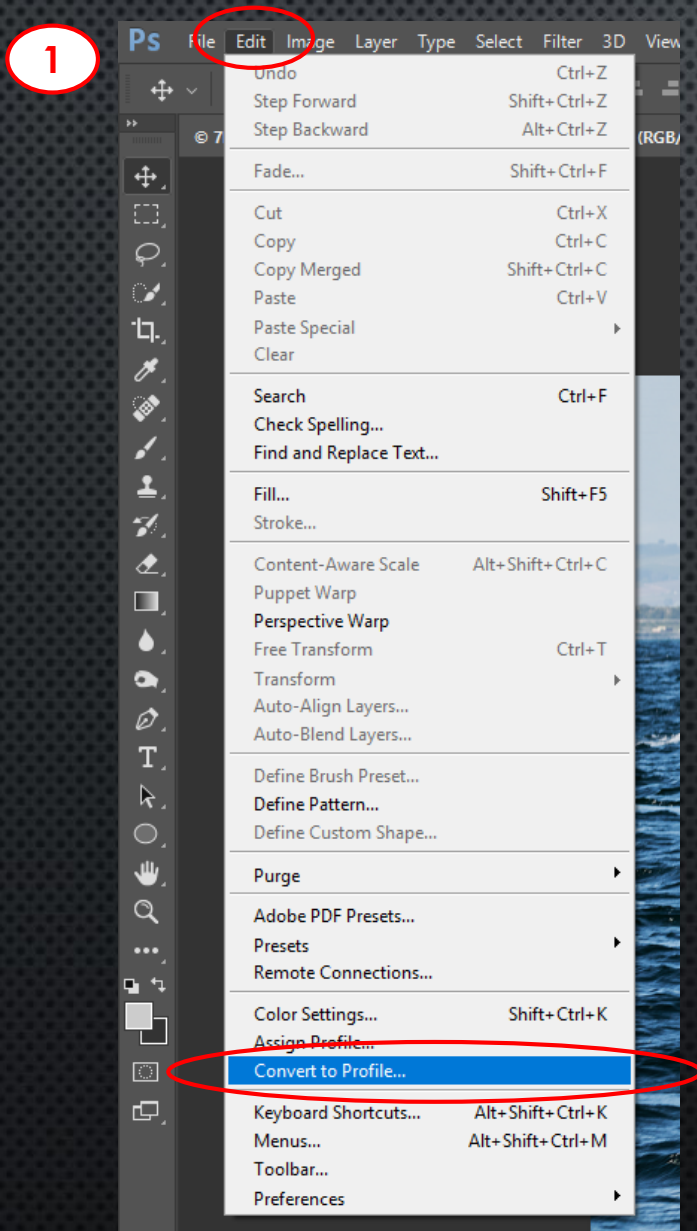
1. PREPARING THE IMAGE – DIMENSIONS
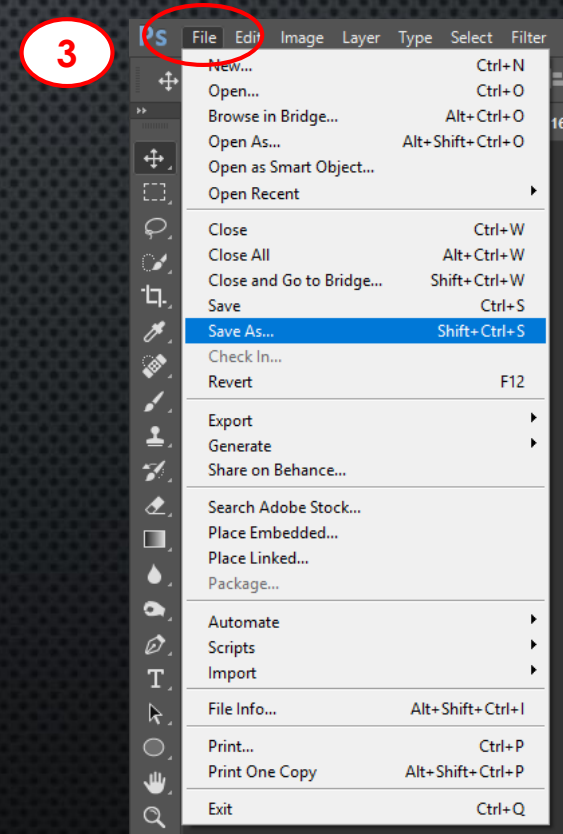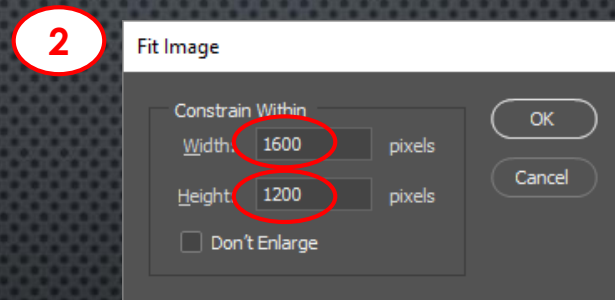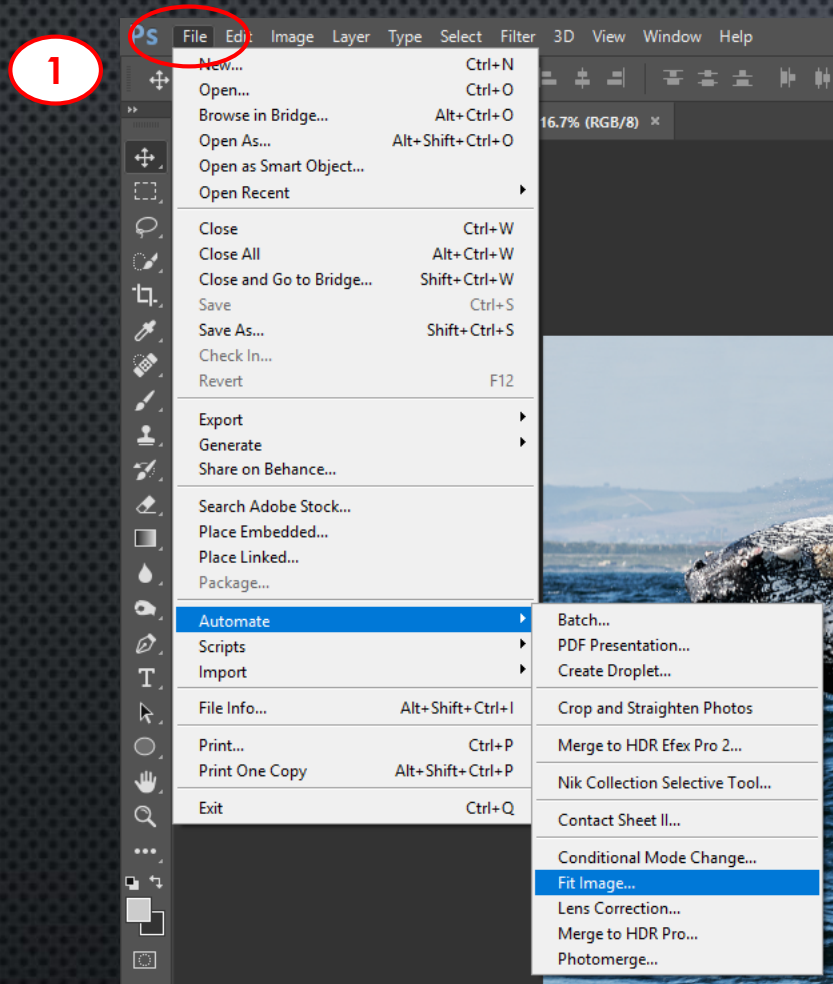
2. SELECTING A CATEGORY (ANNUAL COMPS)

Does the image predominantly feature a person or creature?	Does the image contain only one colour other than white?	Does the image contain unmanipulated natural forms & species?	Does the image record, in detail, a man-made structure?	Has the image been significantly manipulated or show a unique technique?	If it does not the other categories then put in the colour section.

or   or   or   or   or

Portrait   **Mono**   **Nature**   **Record**   **Creative**   **Colour**

IMAGE GUIDELINES – PORTRAITS

❑ Can be colour or mono.

❑ Eyes must be in focus and sharp – ensure that they are bright enough.

❑ Highlights in the eyes are generally attractive

❑ Eye contact tends to score well but is not always necessary.

    ❑ Try taking two photos one with eye contact & one without.

❑ Take care when cropping through limbs – try not to cut at joints.

❑ Be wary of hand positions – they can be distracting or awkward.   } *Unless there is a reason!*

❑ Try not to have hands that 'appear from outside the image'.

❑ Check for deep shadows on the face caused by hair or hands obstructing the light source.

❑ Research good poses then create your own versions.

❑ Create 'Mood Boards' to collect ideas before a shoot.

IMAGE GUIDELINES – PORTRAITS

IMAGE GUIDELINES – PORTRAIT MOOD BOARD

IMAGE GUIDELINES – MONO

❑ Must be only one colour other than white.

❑ Toning of the whole image is acceptable.

❑ Selective colouring is not acceptable.

❑ Can be any subject matter.

❑ Try to avoid the '50 shades of grey' – is there enough contrast in the image?

❑ Mono images benefit from good texture or detail.

❑ Washed out or softer images can also work well in mono.

Credit: Ansel Adams

ANSEL ADAMS ZONE SYSTEM

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pure Black	Near Black slight tonality no detail	Dark Black slight detail in shadows	Very Dark Gray distinct shadow texture is visible	Medium Dark Gray slightly darker black skin, dark foliage, landscape shadows	Middle Gray 18% gray darker tan white skin, lighter black skin, light foliage, dark blue sky	Middle Light Gray average white skin, light stone, shadow areas on snow	Light Gray pale white skin, concrete or gray asphalt in sunlight	Gray/ White pale detail in highlights, white wall in sunlight, bright surfaces	Bright White slight detail in highlights, white paper, snow, white water	Pure White no detail light sources, specular highlights

IMAGE RULES – NATURE (PAGB/RPS/FIAP)

Allowed

1. Living subjects that are wild.
2. Living subjects in a zoo or similar.
3. Wild plants.
4. Dodging and Burning.
5. Sharpening.
6. Colour correction.
7. Mono conversion.
8. Photo Stacking.

Not Allowed

1. Significant man-made elements that are not part of the natural environment.
2. Vignette in software.
3. Removal of parts of the image other than by cropping.
4. Blurring the background in software.
5. Addition of parts not in the original image.
6. Cultivated plants where they are a key part of the image.

IMAGE GUIDELINES – NATURE

❑ Try to get at eye-level with your subject – this often means getting on the floor.

❑ Focus on the eyes but ensure that enough of the subject is acceptably sharp.

❑ Behavioural shots tend to be rated higher than static shots

  ❑ Mating

  ❑ Fighting

  ❑ Hunting / Eating

❑ Look for the best angle to create a suitable background.

❑ Try to have the background suitably blurred (unless you are deliberately showing the environment.

❑ Give the subject space to look or move into.

IMAGE GUIDELINES – NATURE BACKGROUNDS

IMAGE GUIDELINES – RECORD

❑ Generally intended to record a detailed copy of a man made subject.

❑ Natural or living subjects are not suited to this category.

❑ Subject should be sharp all over.

❑ Image should not have creative techniques applied - unless this is

to bring out detail.

❑ Lighting should be even throughout.

GODS·PROVIDENCE·IS·MINE·INHERITANCE

IMAGE GUIDELINES – CREATIVE

❑ Creativity should ideally be more than adding a filter or pre-set to an image and should represent some form of 'Altered Reality'.

❑ The creativity can be added in camera or in post-processing.

❑ The image must obviously display a change in natural colour, form, shape, or any combination of these three.

❑ Creative images are often montages (a blending or composite of multiple images).

❑ High Dynamic Range (HDR) images without further changes are not considered 'Altered Reality'.

❑ Artwork or computer graphics generated by the entrant may be incorporated.

❑ Creative images entered in this Class may be colour or monochrome.

❑ Non-creative images are not eligible for this Class.

IMAGE GUIDELINES – COLOUR / GENERAL

❑ Don't introduce competition for the main subject.

❑ The eye is usually drawn to light areas.

❑ Titles matter, particularly in Nature sections.

❑ Don't give a judge anything simple to pick-up on.

❑ Avoid cluttered or busy images.

❑ Don't cut things off unnecessarily or unintentionally.

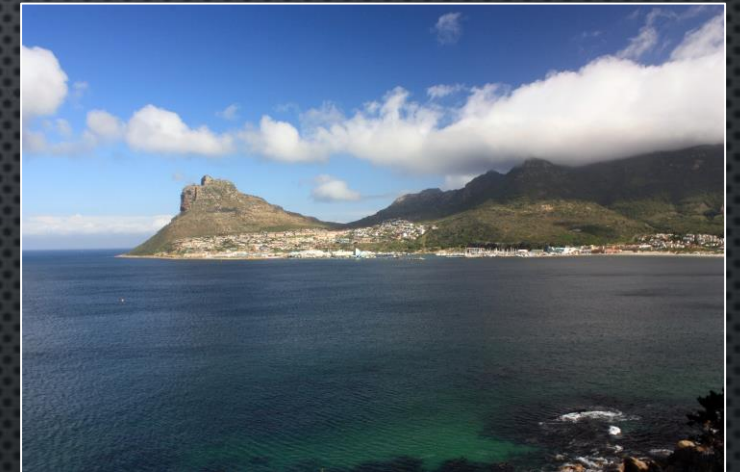❑ Be careful with over-applying filters and/or effects.

KISS !

COMPOSITIONAL TIPS

❑ Try to ensure that the horizon is level

❑ Check the edges of the frame.

❑ Try not to cut the frame in half, either horizontally or vertically.

COMPOSITIONAL TIPS – THE VIEWPOINT

Same shot, taken from 2m to the left.

COMPOSITIONAL TIPS

❑ 3 is the magic number.

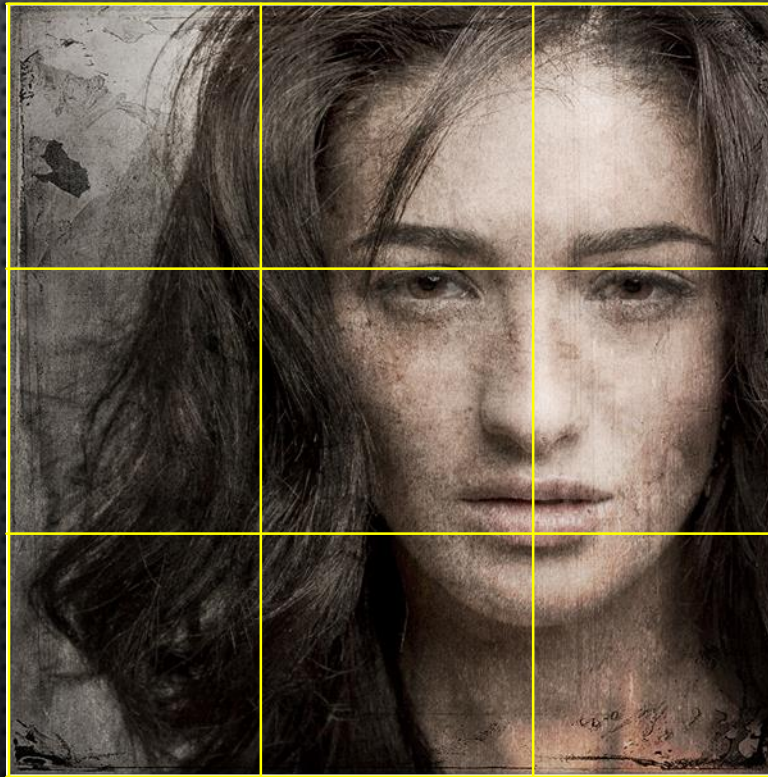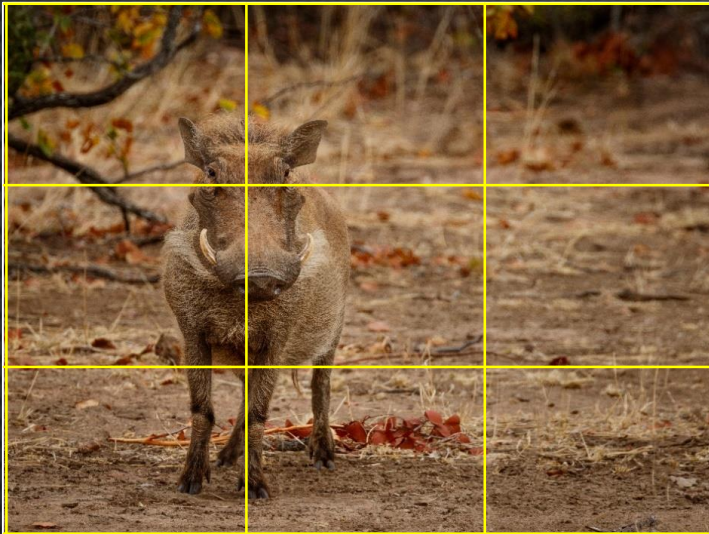❑ Try to keep a degree of separation between multiple subjects.

❑ Check the background for unwanted distractions.

COMPOSITIONAL TIPS

❑ Try using a compositional guide such as the 'Rule of thirds'.

COMPOSITIONAL TIPS

❑ Create space to look or move into.

❑ Triangles & Diagonal lines in the image can add interest.

COMPOSITIONAL TIPS

❑ Create Leading Lines.

Credit: Art Somerset Photography

WHERE TO GET FEEDBACK / CRITIQUE

❏ Ribblesdale Camera Club Competitions.

❏ L&CPU Individual and Annual Club Competitions.

❏ L&CPU Annual and KO Club Competitions.

❏ BPE Exhibitions

❏ PAGB Accreditations with a Mentor (CPAGB / DPAGB / MPAGB).

❏ Club critique nights and mentors.

❏ Online Photo groups (Facebook / Flickr / Instagram / etc…).

❏ Local / Regional Print and DPI clubs.

❏ Other respected photographers.

❏ Self Critique!

Form Good Habits !

- ❑ Do as much 'In Camera' as you can.

- ❑ Don't plan to use Photoshop to correct a poor photograph, use it to improve a good one.

- ❑ Put something of yourself into each photograph

  - ❑ Create YOUR style - don't be a clone!

- ❑ Rules can be broken but it should be for a reason.

Don't think you're making mistakes – but are just finding a way that doesn't work !!!