

Showcase Your Vision! EDITING RULES

About editing...

This challenge is definitely an exercise in creativity, but we also want you to adhere to the integrity of the photo's subject matter. That being said, digital adjustments are absolutely allowed and encouraged to adhere to your vision.

Here's a little something I 'borrowed' and paraphrased from the rules section for the NLPA competition website.

— t h e g o l d e n r u l e —

This is the Golden Rule which you should refer back to if you are unsure on any particular process. Another way to look at this would be to say that: A viewer familiar with the landscape and photographic process should not feel deceived if they were shown the original scene and raw file. Post-processing remains a critical part of realizing the potential of an image and the vision of the photographer.

Most techniques that photographers use are permitted, such as adjusting white balance, exposure, color and contrast, as well as dust spot removal and flare corrections. These changes can be made globally or locally (such as dodging and burning). Also allowed is stitching (a form of image blending) for panoramic photos, or stacking for focus blending or exposure blending, even in some cases time blending. But we'll talk more about that below. Black and white conversions are also allowed. Heavy cropping is also allowed, as long as the integrity of the image is still viable (watch your pixels!).

Processing techniques that are **NOT** acceptable are:

- 1) **Adding new elements into a photo**, sometimes called “**compositing**”, either from one of your images, or from an outside source image, is prohibited. Such examples are sky replacements, the addition of birds, fog, the sun (including sunrays) or moon, rainbows, or anything else that wasn't there at the time of the capture, is prohibited.
- 2) **Heavily stretching or distorting elements for the “wow” factor**. While we do allow for corrections due to lens distortions or warping due to panoramic stitching, we do not allow for the stretching of mountains, trees, or buildings (or any other elements) just to make them look more majestic and dramatic than they really are.
- 3) **Extreme focal length blending**. I don't foresee this being an issue for us, but it needs to be stated. Due to the use of ultra-wide angle lenses (which is their inherent nature to distort) which makes the foreground look large but shrinks anything in the background. We do allow for minimal focal length blending to correct for that. But only to the point where it looks normal to the naked eye. Say you are shooting a wildflower/mountain scene with a 14mm wide angle lens, and you blend it with a 24mm shot of the background. That would be allowed. But photographing a foreground with a 14mm and blending it with a 50mm or higher is not acceptable. The type of blending allowed here is only to correct, not to add.

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4) **Combining images taken at significantly different times.** This was what was discussed in #4 of the above rules. Doing an exposure blend, where one image is taken at a different exposure than the next, but within seconds or minutes of the original, are ok. That's how we're able to capture a high dynamic range image of a bright sky and dark foreground. What's not acceptable is the taking of one image at a particular time, then blending it with another image taken several minutes to hours later. For example, taking an image of the foreground during twilight (shortly after sunset or before sunrise) and blending it with a shot taken at midnight, many minutes or hours later. The images must be shot consecutively and within reasonable time limits to the subject and conditions at hand.

SPECIAL RULES FOR NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

We have special considerations for night photography. Night photography introduces various technical challenges which are commonly solved through processing, so we have given additional consideration to this category. Again, we revert back to the golden rule – “the integrity of the subject should be maintained.”

What about the use of Star tracking mounts?

Images made using tracking devices are acceptable as long as the golden rule is met. We recognize that using a star tracker requires the use of compositing techniques to blend the tracked night sky with the landscape; however, the section of night sky should be the same in both shots.

What about Blue Hour blends?

If more than one image is taken, they all must be taken within moments of each other without the camera or tripod moving.

What about “Deepscapes?”

“Deepscapes” are essentially the combination of deep sky objects such as nebulae and galaxies, which are combined with a landscape element and require special techniques and processing to create. If the “Deepscape” was created using allowable techniques above such as with a star tracking mount, they are allowable as long as they adhere to the golden rule of the competition.