

Clearing Up Some Confusion

PPA's Electronic Imaging Competition

Every year at the International Print Competition, there are entries in the Electronic Imaging (EI) competition section that cause the jurors to scratch their heads in confusion. This article is intended to help clear up some of that confusion.

“The purpose of this competition is to allow the entrant to demonstrate his or her electronic imaging skill and expertise in pursuit of the PPA Master of Electronic Imaging Degree. Entries will be judged for digital, artistic and technical proficiency.”

-Electronic Imaging Competition Mission Statement

What to Enter

It seems obvious that there has been a misunderstanding of the category by several entrants. In the majority of cases, it appears that the entrant thought the EI competition was the appropriate place to enter simply because the image was shot with a digital camera. In these cases, no digital correction work, aesthetic manipulation, or creative techniques have been recognized by the jurors. Additionally, if no guide images are included in the presentation, the jurors are left to assume that the image belonged in the Photographic Open competition and was entered in the Electronic Imaging competition by mistake. Most images taken with a digital camera do belong in the Photographic Open competition. An image belongs in the Electronic Imaging competition only if the entrant is submitting work to be evaluated specifically for computer-applied techniques and proficiency. Some typical entries into the EI competition include—but are not limited to—images composited in Photoshop, painted in Painter, or rendered in various 3D modeling programs.

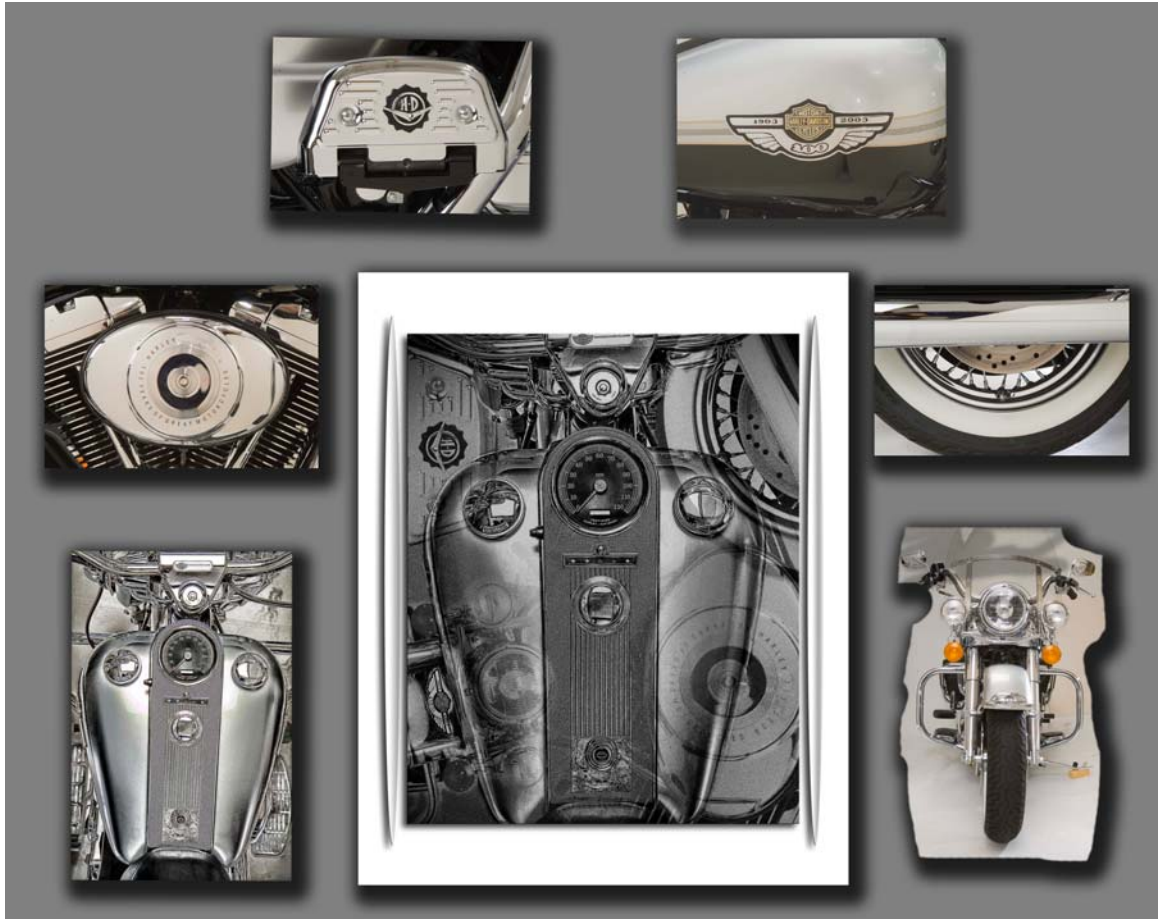
There are basically two options under the EI umbrella. In one, the entrant should include guide prints so that jurors can visually identify areas of correction easily. A perfect example of this type of entry would be a restoration of an old image (see figure 1). Guide prints would also be essential when multiple images are combined to create a new image (see figures 2, 3). **Basically, any time the entrant feels like the jurors might not easily recognize either major or minor changes within an entry, he or she should include guide prints.**

When including guide prints, the entrant must position them on an overall 20x24 sized board, along with the final entry. This requirement is the same whether the entry is submitted by a General member or a Master of Electronic Imaging (MEI).



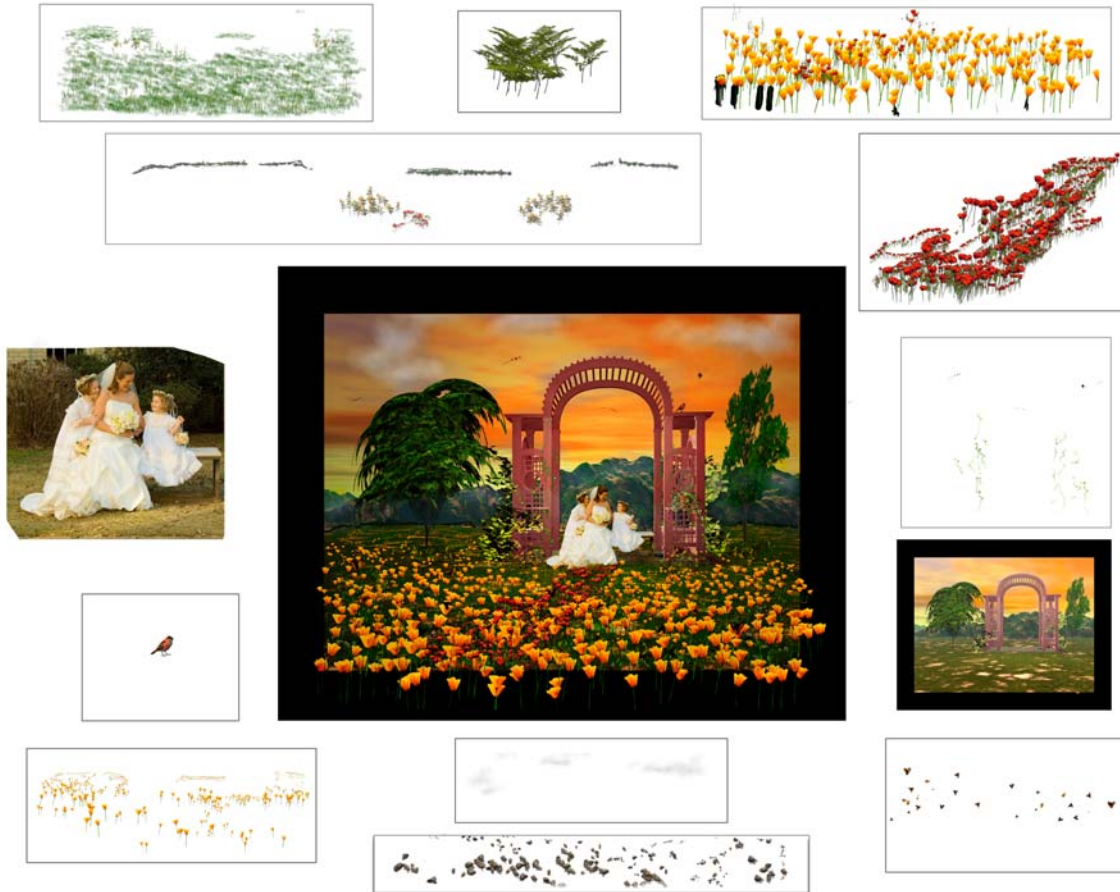
(1.)

(The Honorable Sam Hutchins - Kaye L. Frey @2006)



(2.)

("Bikers Dream" – Robert Cleere ©2004)



(3.)

("Fantasy Wedding" – Robert Cleere @2008)

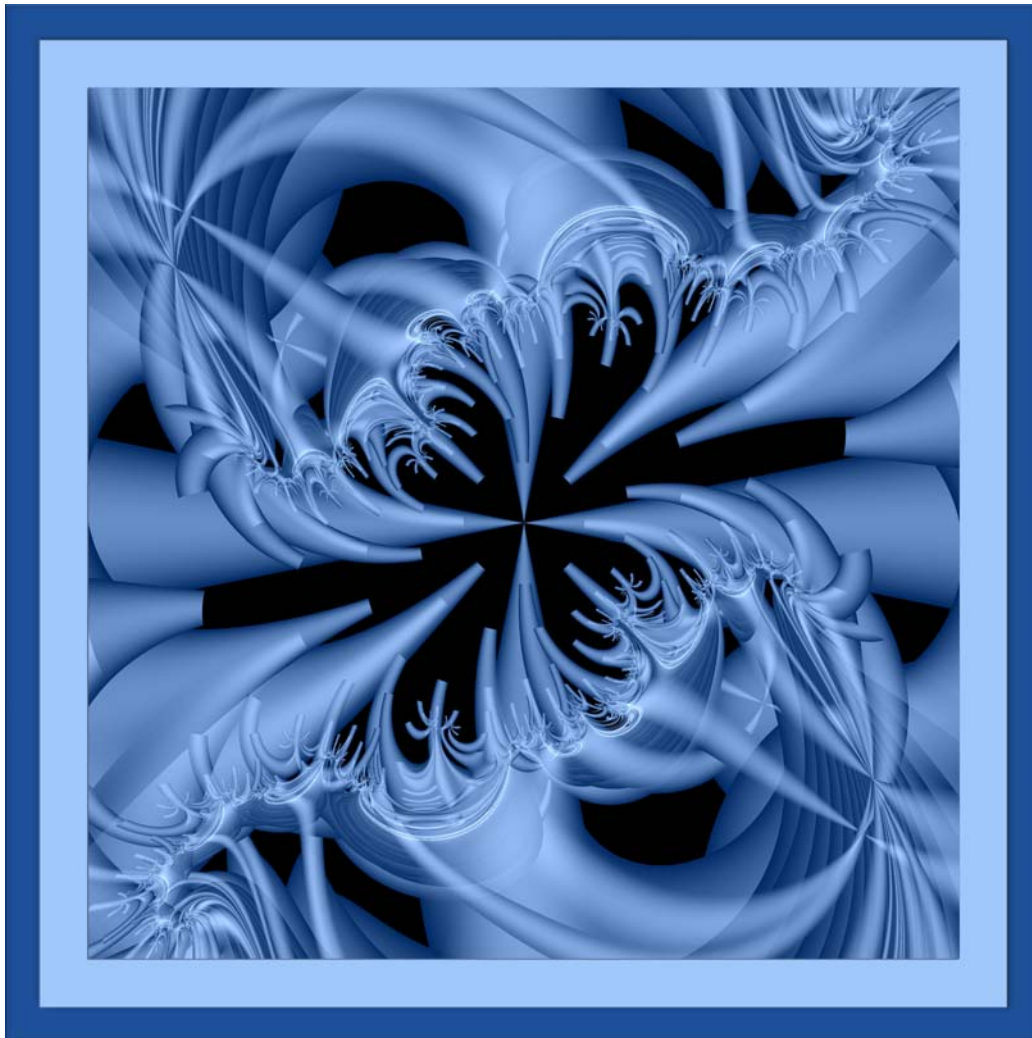
The second option is for images where the creation or change to an image should be obvious to the juror without the aid of guides. Computer-generated images, such as fractals, are a good example. Other examples might include images rendered in Poser or Bryce. Note that at this time, the Electronic Imaging competition rules allow entries that are completely created within digital art software programs. Photographic elements may or may not be included in these entries (see figures 4,5).

Entries without guide prints should be 16x20 inches, unless the entrant is a Master of Electronic Imaging (MEI). Masters' entries may be up to 20x24 inches. Again, this category is only for entries where the specific techniques or creative processes are obvious without guide prints for comparison.



(4.)

("None Shall Pass" – James Chagares 2004)



(5.)

("In the Beginning" James Chagares©2003)

Where to Enter

To date, the Electronic Imaging area of competition hasn't reached the number of entries necessary to justify the expense of compensating qualified affiliated jurors at all existing PPA Regional competitions. Instead, the **Southeastern Professional Photographers of America Regional competition (SEPPA)**, has graciously accepted the responsibility of holding the Electronic Imaging Affiliated Regional Judging for PPA. All entrants wanting their work evaluated for PPA merits toward their Master of Electronic Imaging degrees on a Regional level must submit their work to SEPPA.

If entrants choose to enter these types of entries at any other regional, the entries will likely be judged by affiliated Photographic Open jurors, not EI qualified jurors. If sealed, the entries must be validated by submission to the PPA International Print Competition in the Photographic Open category, and merits will be applied toward the Master of Photography degree, not the Master of Electronic Imaging degree.

Only entries awarded the Seal of Approval at the **SEPPA EI Regional** or **PPA International Electronic Imaging Competition** will be applied toward the Master of Electronic Imaging degree. To find rules, entry forms, and information about the Electronic Imaging Regional PPA Affiliated Competition, go to: <http://www.4seppa.com>.

Specific Areas of Concern When Evaluating the Images

Just as in the Photographic Open competition, jurors will reward entries that are interesting and visually appealing. Gone are the days of simple head-and-shoulder blemish removal entries. Today's entries are far more creative and sophisticated.

Jurors will evaluate how seamless corrections are made, how well composited images blend together, and whether the work is complete or falls short. When an entry is viewed by a panel of experienced EI artists, you can be sure that problems such as digital tracking, excessive sharpening, and any cut-and-paste evidence will be noted. As in the Photographic Open judging, print quality, presentation, and composition are key elements as well.

During the judging, if no challenge has been made to your entry, or if you are not in attendance, it will be hard to know exactly what areas of the entry were appreciated by the jurors versus those areas that may have been seen as a problem. If, by chance, your image does not merit, don't give up. You should try to discuss your work with jurors to find out where you went wrong. It may be that a simple correction will make a huge difference. You can enter the image again the following year, as long as it has not merited previously. At the national level, be sure to order a video critique when filling out the entry form. It is a great educational tool!

Conclusion

My hope in writing this article is to clear up some of the confusion regarding Electronic Imaging competition submissions. If there are additional questions, any member of the PPA Photographic Exhibitions Committee (PEC) will be happy to assist in answering them. We look forward to seeing your entries in the 2009 EI competition.

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PEC Committee Member***