TECHNICAL REPORT
2019 PHOTO CONTEST

Foreword

This report is designed to enable informed conversation within our community of professional visual journalism and storytelling.

This is the fourth edition of the World Press Photo Foundation's technical report reviewing the annual photo contest. Each year our commitment to transparency means we make public data on the contest related to issues of diversity, representation, and verification.

This report is designed to enable informed conversation within our community of professional visual journalism and storytelling and is not intended to be a comprehensive presentation of all aspects of all the relevant issues.

To spotlight more of the stories that matter, this year we introduced a new headline award to the annual photo contest: in addition to the 'World Press Photo of the Year' we awarded the 'World Press Photo Story of the Year'.

Whilst important steps have been made since 2015, when we first publicized contest entrant data to call attention to the need for greater diversity, we must continue the work to achieve an inclusive, diverse visual journalism industry.

The World Press Photo Foundation and the World Press Photo Contest

The annual World Press Photo Contest is one of the World Press Photo Foundation's most important and best-known programs.

The contest rewards photographers for the best single exposure pictures contributing to the past year of visual journalism. Whether entered as singles or stories, these pictures are judged in terms of their accurate, fair, and visually compelling insights about our world.

The foundation sets the contest categories and rules, requires entrants to accept the contest code of ethics, and selects the jury. Once appointed, the jury, chair, and secretary are independent of the foundation, and no member of the foundation has a vote on which image or story wins. For the 2019 Photo Contest, the independent jury consisted of 17 members and two secretaries - an equal number of men and women from six global regions covering a wide range of photography backgrounds.

Once the winners have been selected and announced, they are all presented to the world via the foundation's website and social media channels, and are included in our annual exhibition and yearbook. These showcases mean many millions of people around the world will see the images, often for the first time.

World Press Photo is a platform that connects professionals and the global audience through high quality, non-fiction reporting and storytelling that can be trusted.

Being a global platform gives the foundation the responsibility to present the best, most accurate and compelling work, even though the foundation has not directly chosen this work. As such, without restricting the jury's decisions, the foundation asks the jury to consider issues of representation when it was deliberating on the entries:

- Whether the images and stories under consideration repeat well-known examples or are distinctive

- Whether the images and stories under consideration reinforce or challenge stereotypes

- Whether graphic and violent photographs are appropriate for the story presented, especially when they involve vulnerable people

- Whether issues of the subjects' consent appear to have been appropriately handled by the photographer

The foundation recognizes these are often matters of judgment, but they indicate some of the issues World Press Photo deals with as it presents the visual stories that matter to the world.

The number of entrants and submitted photos 2012 - 2019

The 2019 Photo Contest saw 4,738 photographers from 128 countries enter 78,801 images.

| YEAR	ENTRANTS	COUNTRIES	SUBMITTED PHOTOS
2012	5,247	124	101,254
2013	5,666	124	103,481
2014	5,754	132	98,671
2015	5,692	131	97,912
2016	5,775	128	82,951
2017	5,034	126	80,408
2018	4,548	125	73,044
2019	4,738	128	78,801

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENTRANTS PER YEAR

TOTAL NUMBER OF SUBMITTED PHOTOS PER YEAR
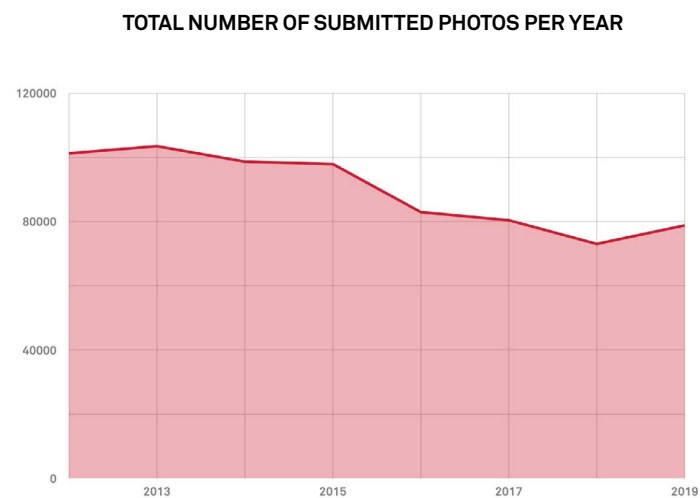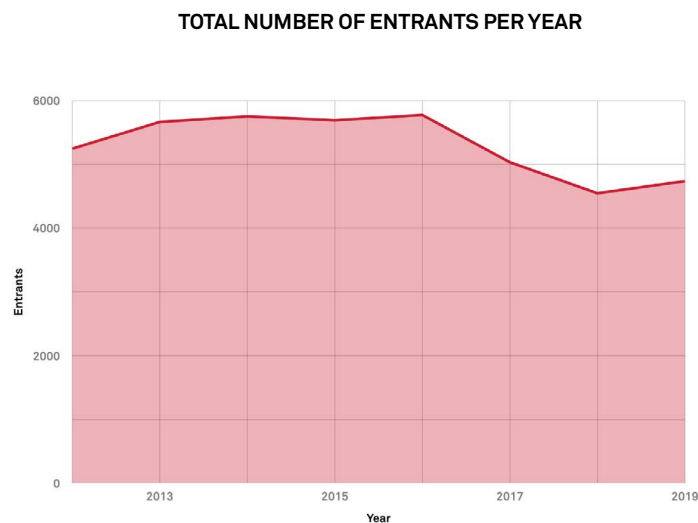
From 2018, we saw 190 more entries submitted from 3 more countries.

The top countries with 100 or more entrants 2017 - 2019

COUNTRIES WITH MORE THAN 100 ENTRANTS	2017	2018	2019
China	799	678	589
United States	503	470	540
Italy	416	353	332
France	206	180	230
United Kingdom	200	172	219
Spain	222	229	213
Germany	199	182	200
Russia	154	173	156
India	136	139	137
Poland	164	139	122
Brazil	105	108	112
Netherlands	127	98	105
Iran	106	97	100

**THE TOP THIRTEEN COUNTRIES BY ENTRANTS 2017 - 2019**
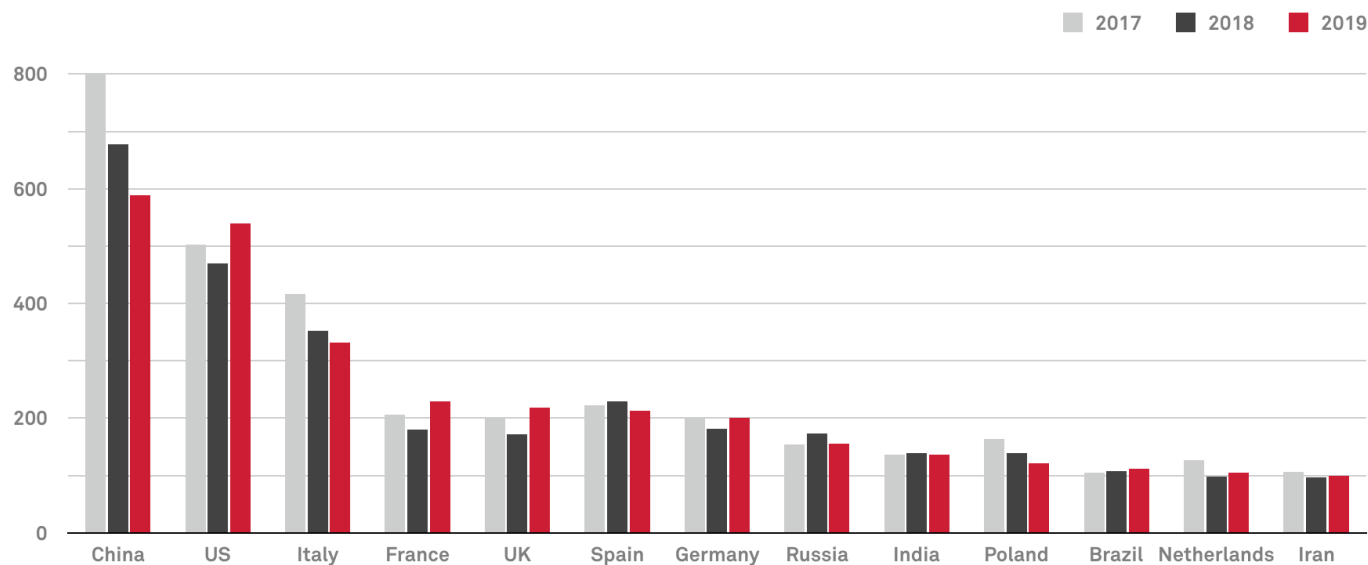
The geographic distribution of entrants is weighted towards Europe and Asia, with the 2019 data showing 46.6% of entrants came from Europe and 23.7% from Asia. North and Central America was the source of 15.8% of entrants, 6.2% were from South America, 2.8% from Africa, and 5.0% from Southeast Asia and Oceania. From 2018, there was an increase in the proportion of entrants from Southeast Asia Oceania (+3.0%), South America (+0.2%), Africa (+0.8%) and North and Central America (+0.8%). There was a decrease in entrants from Asia (-5.3%), and Europe (-0.4%).

ENTRANTS BY CONTINENT

Legend:
- Europe
- Asia
- North & Central America
- South America
- Africa
- Southeast Asia & Oceania
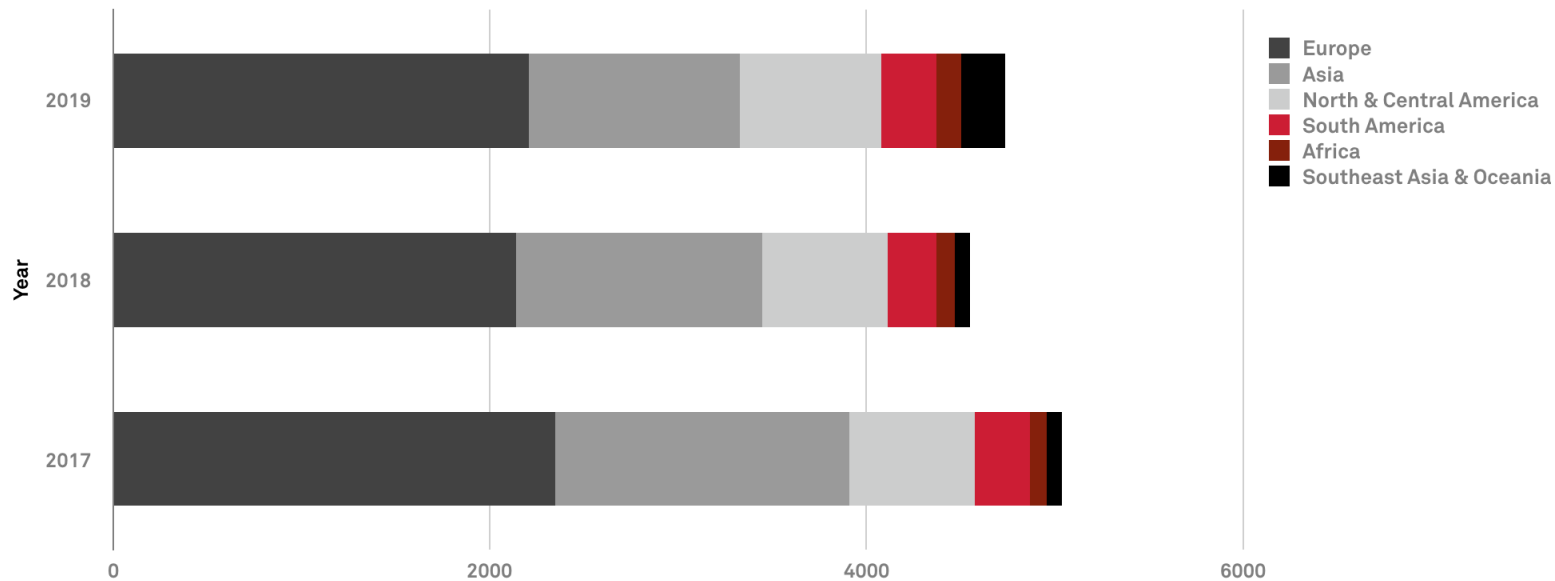
Encouraging a more diverse and inclusive representation of the world is a major goal for World Press Photo and we campaign all year round to attract new visual storytellers to enter the contests.

As part of our 2019 Photo Contest outreach campaign, two ambassadors were selected to highlight the importance of diverse entrants, with an emphasis on female photographers, photographers from Africa and Latin America and environment photography: Joana Choumali (photographer, African Photojournalism Database (APJD)

member and 2018 Photo Contest jury member) and Cristina Mittermeier (photographer and 2015 Photo Contest Jury member). To promote the 2019 Photo Contest we shared the ambassadors' work on our website, social media channels and via the press, as well as in our online publication Witness.

For the first time, we put together a direct outreach effort, sending over 228,000 emails to our network including past contestants and newsletter subscribers as well as photography organizations around the world and related

institutions. In addition, a press release was sent to over 1000 media contacts.

Whilst small improvements can be seen, the data shows the need for further work to attract a diverse range of entrants .

2019 Contest Outreach

"For African visual journalists, entering the World Press Photo Contest is an opportunity to break the prejudices about the continent"

2019 Photo Contest ambassador Joana Choumali, on Witness

"We need an army of visual storytellers to create bridges of empathy to wildlife and landscapes in need of protection"

2019 Photo Contest ambassador Cristina Mittermeier, on Witness

World Press Photo · @WorldPressPhoto · Nov 21, 2018

Thinking of entering the #WPPh2019 Photo Contest? You should! It's free to enter, your work is judged anonymously by an independent jury, and winners are showcased in exhibitions reaching a global audience. Entries open on 3 December: bit.ly/2AXVps1

World Press Photo · @WorldPressPhoto · Dec 7, 2018

"For African visual journalists, entering the #WPPh2019 is an opportunity to break the prejudices about the continent." Photographer Joana Choumali shares her experience as a former jury member & discusses the role of diversity in visual storytelling today bit.ly/2B2eAiT
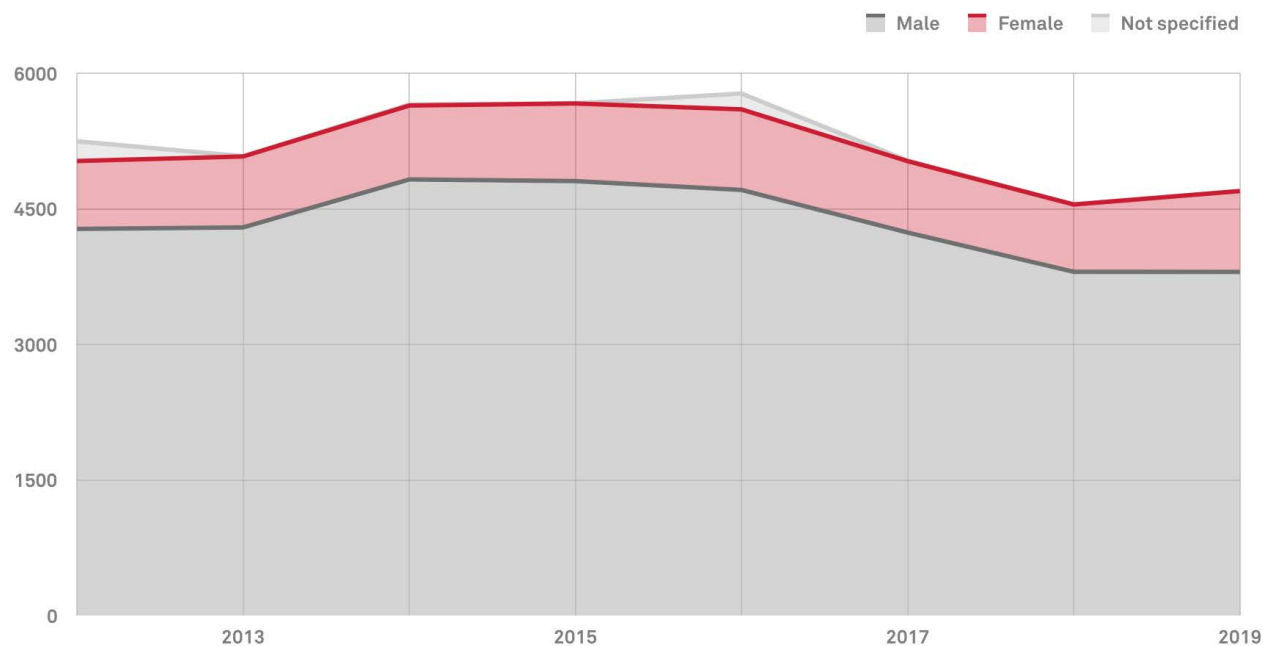

World Press Photo · @WorldPressPhoto · Dec 21, 2018

"We need an army of visual storytellers to help us create bridges of empathy to wildlife and landscapes in need of protection." Read interview with conservation photographer Cristina Mittermeier (@cmittermeier), on Witness: bit.ly/2QFvYor

World Press Photo · @WorldPressPhoto · Dec 31, 2018

#WPPh2019 Photo Contest Jury Chair, @whitneycjohnson, will be joined by 18 professionals from around the world, to select the best images contributing to the past year of visual journalism. The judges can only judge what is entered: register by 3 January bit.ly/2ESpn3L

World Press Photo · @WorldPressPhoto · Dec 14, 2018

The independent juries of the 2019 World Press Photo Contest & Digital Storytelling Contest can only judge what is entered, so if you want to see someone or something recognized, now is the time to get them to enter! bit.ly/2Q4lEpJ

World Press Photo · @WorldPressPhoto · Dec 18, 2018

To put the spotlight on the stories that matter, we are introducing a new award for the 'World Press Photo Story of the Year' to the #WPPh2019 Photo Contest. Find out more about the prizes and how to enter: bit.ly/2UPcLz8

World Press Photo · @WorldPressPhoto · Dec 24, 2018

The #WPPh2019 Photo Contest - now open for entries - rewards photography in 8 categories: Contemporary Issues, Environment, General News, Long-Term Projects, Nature, People, Sports & Spot News. See last year's winning images from the Environment category: bit.ly/2HeuJqW

Gender of contest entrants 2012-2019

GENDER OF ENTRANTS

In total, 80.8% of the 2019 Photo Contest entrants identify as male, 19% identify as female, and 0.3% prefer not to say or identify with another gender. The number of female entrants has started to increase over the past five years. In 2015, the proportion of female entrants was 15%.

One hindrance to clarity on this topic is the fact that we do not know what proportion of the professional photojournalism industry is female, so we cannot confirm whether or not the proportion of female entrants is reflective of the industry.

Contest entries by category

CATEGORY	SINGLES	STORIES
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES	3742	1545
ENVIRONMENT	1511	553
GENERAL NEWS	2609	589
NATURE	1630	214
PORTRAITS	4738	976
SPORTS	3401	500
SPOT NEWS	846	164
LONG-TERM PROJECTS		487
	18477	**5028**

NUMBER OF PHOTOS ENTERED AS SINGLES OR STORIES PER CATEGORY
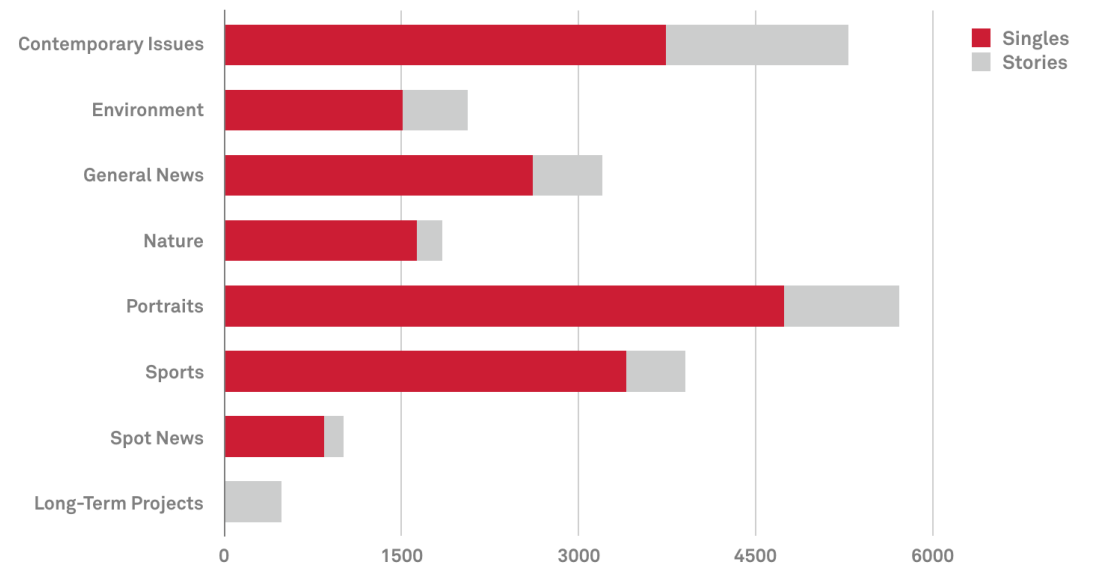
Award nominees by country

This table shows the number of awards per country from 2012-2019, not the number of winning photographers. For 2012-2017 it shows winners and for 2018-2019 it shows nominees. This means if a photographer is nominated for or awarded a prize in two categories, the country is counted twice. The table does not include either nominees for or winners of World Press Photo of the Year and Story of the Year. Note also that the nationalities of the nominees and winners are provided by the entrants when they submit, and on occasion the nationalities have changed after announcement, when dual nationalities are sometimes declared by photographers. 0.5 indicates dual nationality. As entries are judged anonymously, the country of entrants is not a visible factor during the judging process.

COUNTRY	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	TOTAL
USA	7	4	11	9	9	5	10	10	65
ITALY	7	6	3	9	2	4	5	3	39
CHINA	3	4	3	6	2	1	1		20
GERMANY	1	1	3	2	2	3	5	1.5	18.5
RUSSIA	3	1	3	3	2	4	1	1	18
FRANCE	4	1	4	2	1	2	1	2	17
AUSTRALIA	1	2	2	1	4	2	2	3	17
SPAIN	2	3	2		2	3	1	1.5	14.5
SWEDEN	3	1	1	1	4	1	2	1.5	14.5
UK	2	1	4	1		2	2	1.5	13.5
THE NETHERLANDS	5	1	1				3	1.5	11.5
IRAN	1	3	1	2	1	1		2	11
SOUTH AFRICA	2	1	1		1	1	1	2.5	9.5
POLAND	2	2	3	1					8
DENMARK	2	4		1			1		8
CANADA	1	1			2	2	1	0.5	7.5
MEXICO	1	1	1		2			2	7
BRAZIL		1			2	2		1	6
TURKEY		1		2	1	1		1	6
BELGIUM		2		1			1	1	5
SYRIA					2	2		1	5
IRELAND	1			1			2		4
JAPAN	3				1				4

Award nominees by country

COUNTRY	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	TOTAL
BANGLADESH			2	1			1		4
CZECH REPUBLIC		1	1			1		1	4
ARGENTINA	1	1	1						3
INDIA	1	1				1			3
PORTUGAL		1			1			1	3
SERBIA		1	1				1		3
EGYPT	1						1	1	3
VENEZUELA							2	1	3
SWITZERLAND		1			1				2
HUNGARY						1		1	2
SLOVENIA					2				2
PHILIPPINES						1		1	2
CHILE		1				1			2
AZERBAIJAN			2						2
FINLAND			1			1			2
JORDAN		1	1						2
MALAYSIA		2							2
NEW ZEALAND			1			1			2
NORWAY	1							1	2
PERU		1							1
INDONESIA		1							1
AUSTRIA						1			1
PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES		1							1
BULGARIA			1						1
COLOMBIA							1		1
EL SALVADOR			1						1

Award nominees by country

COUNTRY	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	TOTAL
AFGHANISTAN	1								1
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	1								1
ERITREA				1					1
PAKISTAN						1			1
ROMANIA						1			1
VIETNAM		1							1

Verification Process

The annual World Press Photo Contest has verification processes to ensure compliance with its code of ethics and entry rules.

Photography gives us a creative interpretation of the world. However, when we want pictures to record and inform us of the varied events, issues, people, and viewpoints in our world, so they can be visual documents, there are limits to how pictures can be made so that the audience can trust them. This is why we take a strict stance on manipulation.

We are the only photo contest that has this extensive a verification process, and we are the only photo contest that can say all the nominees and winners have successfully passed an extensive verification process.

A) ENTRY CHECKS

Entry rule 10 states the contest is for single frame, single exposure pictures. This means multiple exposures, polyptychs (diptychs, triptychs, etc.) and stitched panoramas (either produced in-camera or with image editing software) are not eligible. These entries that are not eligible are removed from the contest by a team of checkers.

B) MANIPULATION REVIEW

The manipulation review implements entry rules 10, 11, 12. Entry rule 11 states *"the content of a picture can not be altered by adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame."*

There are two exceptions to this:
(i) cropping that removes extraneous details is permitted;
(ii) removing sensor dust or scratches on scans of negatives is permitted.

The process for ensuring compliance with both entry rules 11 and 12 takes place in the latter rounds of judging. Entrants whose pictures remain in the contest and could be eligible for nominations and awards are contacted and required to provide the file as recorded by the camera. These files could be:

* RAW file(s)
* Full format JPEG file(s). These must be as delivered by the camera, and provided in a series showing at least three frames before and after the contest entry
* For smartphones, the image captured with the built-in,

stock camera app, emailed from the phone to contest@worldpressphoto.org
* Unprocessed positive scans of film negative(s), plus a contact sheet to show a series of at least three frames before and after the contest entry.

Each year we find that nearly all entrants readily comply with this requirement. That is testament to their openness and commitment to transparency on how images are produced. It underlines the fact that photographers do not want to mislead either the jury or the audience.

Two independent digital analysts compare original files with contest entries to determine whether the content of any picture (either a single picture or frame in a story) has been altered. The guidance on manipulation describes and shows what alterations to the content of a picture are not allowed. We produced videos with visual examples, and they have been viewed tens of thousands of times.

This year we requested original files for 440 entries (including both singles and stories).

Two photographers were excluded because of Entry Rule 12. 32 photographers were excluded because of Entry Rule 11. One photographer was excluded due to not submitting all of their original files before the deadline. One photographer withdrew because of post-processing issues. For two photographers this was their second exclusion, so they are now banned from entering the photo contest for the next five years.

From 2018 the foundation decided that when cloning was clearly detected in entries they would be automatically excluded from the contest, without recourse to the photographers, and the jury was informed of these decisions.

This revised process followed our guidance that "altering the content of a picture by 'adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame' is manipulation and makes an entry ineligible for the final round," and was enabled by entry rule 22.

The relatively few instances of cloning involved very small, often tiny, elements being removed. A number of them replicated almost exactly the examples of what not to do shown in our guidance video on removal of content.

Entry rule 12:
Adjustments of color or conversion to grayscale that do not alter content are permitted, with two exceptions:

(i) Changes in color may not result in significant changes in hue, to such an extent that the processed colors diverge from the original colors.
(ii) Changes in density, contrast, color and/or saturation

levels that significantly alter content by obscuring or eliminating information in the picture are not permitted. The jury determines which changes are significant, following the video guidance on what counts as manipulation.

It is important to emphasize that entry rule 12 is not about processing itself. All images are processed, but the line is drawn at those instances where there is darkening or lightening of area of an image so that material content is obscured and in effect removed. This was detailed in our guidance video on unacceptable color changes. In contrast, levels of processing that produce changes within the rules are judged as aesthetic choices, and factored into the jury's general deliberations on the overall merits of an entry.

C) FACT-CHECKING

Introduced in 2018, now a standard part of the process. During the judging process an independent analyst checked the context in which each remaining image or story was produced, distributed and/or published. No problems were found via these checks.

Entry rule 9 states "all pictures must have accurate captions," and the guidance on captions details what information must be provided in captions.
The process for ensuring compliance with this rule takes place after the jury decides on the nominees. An independent fact-checking team reviewed all captions to verify the accuracy of the information given. They also examined the metadata in the picture files.

The independent fact-checking team found no problems with any of the nominated pictures, and was able to verify

their captions and metadata.

The fact-checking process is where clause 2 of the code of ethics (that entrants "must not intentionally contribute to, or alter, the scene they picture by re-enacting or staging events") is handled. Captions must explain the circumstances in which a photograph was taken.

D) STORY TEXT

Finally, once the jury has selected the nominees, the World Press Photo Foundation deploys a research team to gather background information on each image and story. While we rely on the photographers for the basic captions, which are lightly edited by World Press Photo for accuracy and clarity, we often need additional information. This is so we can provide - in the yearbook, exhibition and on the website - the full story that gives the context for each image and story. The foundation is responsible for the content of this text.

WORLD PRESS PHOTO

To access previous technical reports

2018 for download
2017 for download
2016 for download

World Press Photo Foundation
Haarlemmerweg 4,
1014 BE Amsterdam
The Netherlands

For any questions please contact the Communications Team.
communications@worldpressphoto.org