



PREPARING A COMPETITION ENTRY

By Tony Bishop

Preparation for the entry

Check carefully on the closing date for the competition or exhibition. If it is a national or international event, aim to have your entry delivered a week before the closing date. This way any delays in shipping can be handled, and you are not rushing to meet a 'later than you think' deadline. Read the instructions for submitting your entry and ensure that you follow all the conditions.

It helps to tick each item off as it is completed.

Fill in the entry form clearly and in capital letters or printing rather than script. This makes for easier interpretation of the title and importantly, your name and address. Use a black pen for preference, as this photocopies better

Slides

Titling & spotting. Slides should be titled and spotted correctly for projection. The spot should be on the lower left corner when the slide is hand held in the normal viewing position. The title should be on the front of the slide, the way you want the selector to view this image. There are various opinions as to which way up the title should be. The projectionist would like it on top when in the projector tray, while the Secretary would like it the other way up. So this is a matter of opinion. Your name must be on the back of the slide.

Labeling. If you intend to use sticky labels, use the permanent type. Avoid handling them with your fingers. Fingers on the glue limits the strength of the adhesive and after a time the heat of the projector will cause the labels to loosen. They both fall off completely or partially and then jam in the projector. The other way to label is with a permanent marker. A 'Sharpie' extra fine point works fine on the white plastic mounts, and is permanent. Some markers are not. Check them first.

If you are using glass mounts, ensure your slides are clean on the inside. The Exhibition Secretary does not have time to clean your work. The outside is usually given a 'going over' prior to judging.

Sometimes it helps to mask an image, in which case try to centralise the picture in the frame. Nothing looks worse than images. projected in sequence, darting about the screen. If you are moving the slide in the mount, make sure that the slide sits clear of the guide lugs in the slide frame. This is particularly important if you are using a cover mask and not aluminium cooking foil. A number of slides in recent national exhibitions were mounted without care of location, and after handling once or twice, the plastic mounts parted company, some sticking in the projector. The exhibition secretary or the selectors could reject your slides if they are in this condition.

Glass mounting of slides can prevent fingers contacting the slide during handling but the risk is that the glass may break and damage the slide anyway. So pack your exhibit carefully. Glass mounts are usually only acceptable if they are slim enough to project in modern projectors. Check the rules to see if mounting systems are specified.

If you are not sure how to mount a slide correctly, contact one of the more senior members in your club, or alternatively request the program organizer to have a workshop on mounting and slide presentation.

Prints

The title of the print may be on the back or the front of the exhibit. Your name, depending on the rules of the competition, may be on the back or the front of the print mount.

If you are mounting and matting your entry, use a reasonable weight of mount board. Some of the exhibits entered in NATEX were on very thin card, and this made the print difficult to handle, and certainly did little to enhance the exhibit. Many prints now are mounted onto a polystyrene filled board. Care is needed to cut this cleanly and please appreciate the extra thickness when packing your prints.

Check the rules to see if mounting of prints in the competition is permitted as well as minimum and maximum sizes of prints. Some overseas exhibitions specify unmounted prints. Disqualification from competition or rejection from exhibition may occur if the rules are not followed exactly.

If you are not sure how to mount a print correctly, contact one of the more senior members in your club. Alternatively request the program organizer to have a workshop on mounting and print presentation.

Digital entries

Check the conditions of the entries into the competition but generally, these will be similar to the following:

Digital images are usually supplied on a CD or DVD in jpeg format.

Images to be saved in a folder titled with your name and distinctions, the file names being numbered followed by the title—as shown on the entry form. (eg. 12_Accident aftermath.jpg)

Identification:-Images may be titled as above, but the author's name should not be included in the file name.

The Disc and the Disc Case must have the author's name, the sections entered and the number of images in each section shown legibly.

Images will be displayed using a data projector operating at a resolution of 1024 pixels x 768 pixels. It is therefore recommended that image size should be a maximum of 1024 pixels wide for a horizontal format or 768 pixels high for a vertical format to avoid down sampling by the computer used for projection. (This is the usual resolution at the time of writing.)

Images generated purely by electronic means (ie. Fractals) are not usually accepted.

General

Titling

When titling your exhibit, and writing on the entry form ENSURE that the titles are the same on both. ENSURE too that you use block lettering to show the titles. Hand writing rather than lettering makes it particularly difficult to determine even the exhibitor's name and address, let alone the title of the exhibit. Natural History titles are the most difficult to decipher if not clearly labeled. Not everyone is an expert on the Latin names of the subject matter of a natural history image.

Packing your entry

If you value your work, ensure that you pack it securely. Poor packaging includes prints sent in nothing better than wrapping paper, slides wrapped only in paper in an envelope. Because of poor packing, or maybe pre-pack handling, some prints may get marked, bent or damaged on the corners. This information is recorded on the entry form when the exhibit is received. Glass mounted slides poorly packed can be found broken on receipt. Not a good start for an exhibition!

Dispatch of your entry

Check out the most economical way of sending your entry to the exhibition. Some entries have been received a week before the deadline and sent overnight courier at high cost. Some courier companies have a lower rate for a slower delivery. (Two to three days between North and South Islands.)

Some slide workers use sheets of matt board cut to hold the slides and fitted into a standard envelope. This costs 50 cents at time of writing. Sending slides in a box as a small parcel (up to one kg rate) has changed a lot recently. Check with your Post Shop or on line for the rate that would apply for sending your entry.

Cost of posting prints will vary considerably depending on the pack size dimensions. It may be economic to use a Courier service. Check the rates on the web or at your local Post Shop or Courier depot. Remember that Overnight courier can cost \$20 plus and according to recent publicity from Courier Post, Overnight does not necessarily guarantee deliver the next day. A high postage cost added to the cost of entry preparation can be prohibitive to some exhibitors.

Digital Entry Posting

There are 'Handi Boxes' available for sending standard discs in their protective cases. The cost of postage on these is about \$1 plus the box, depending on the service required. 'Handi' also produce a CD/DVD Mailer for sending a disc. These mailers are sold in packs of three and cost 50 cents to post within New Zealand.

Now that you have spent considerable time and effort preparing an entry for a competition, consider helping your camera club prepare an entry for the annual George Chance and the Bowron Landscape Competitions or the other Inter club Competitions. As they are for a club set the presentation of the entry should be consistent and prints all the same size. If you have a specific way you want your entry presented, then the order (or arrangement) of setting out the set should be shown. Your entry must be numbered in order of presentation that you have chosen.

If you present your work in the best manner possible, you will get more enjoyment from your hobby and will show us all how good your work can be.

Tony Bishop
Cromwell
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