RPS Awards 2024

Category Descriptions and Glossary

"Art of Photography"

Photography which prioritises artistic expression and creative vision over documentation or commercial purposes. The art of photography often manifests as an ambition to explore abstract concepts, emotions, or aesthetics. It involves the use of photography as a medium for personal expression, conveying ideas, feelings, or narratives through visual imagery.

"Editorial"

Photography which is specifically commissioned (or self-commissioned) and created for publication in an editorial context, including magazines, newspapers, websites, and other forms of media. It is distinct from commercial or advertising photography in that its primary purpose is to accompany and enhance written content and provide a visual interpretation of the written narrative.

"Documentary"

Photography which chronicles and captures real-life events, environments, and people in a candid and unobtrusive manner, presented as a series of photographs or as a larger body of work. It focuses on telling stories, raising awareness, and providing a visual record of historical, social, cultural, or political issues. The work may be produced as a self- originated project, or in response to a third-party commission. In all cases, it is a tool for storytelling and documentation.

"Photojournalism"

Photography as a form of journalism (the practice of gathering and presentation news) that utilises photography as the primary means of storytelling presented as a single image or, occasionally, as a small series of images. It involves capturing and presenting news events, stories, and social issues through compelling and impactful visual images with the goal of informing, educating, and engaging the audience.

"Fashion, Advertising and Commercial"

Photography that serves as a powerful visual tool for businesses, organisations, institutions, and individuals to promote their products, services, and brands effectively. It involves a combination of creativity, technical skill, and strategic planning to create compelling images that resonate with target audiences and achieve specific marketing objectives.

Fashion

Photography that focuses on showcasing clothing, accessories, and fashion trends in a visually compelling and aesthetically pleasing manner. It is a sub-genre of commercial photography and is most often presented in fashion magazines, advertisements, catalogues, and online platforms to promote clothing brands, designers, and retailers.

Advertising

Photography that focuses on creating visually compelling images to promote products, services, or brands. It plays a crucial role in advertising and marketing campaigns, serving to capture the attention of potential consumers, convey key messages, and drive sales or brand awareness. It is a sub-genre of commercial photography and is most often presented in magazines, advertisements, catalogues, and online platforms to promote products, services, or brands.

Commercial

Photography that encompasses various types of photography used for commercial purposes, such as advertising, marketing, promotion, and sales. It involves creating images with the primary goal of selling products, services, or ideas to consumers or clients. Sub-genres of 'commercial' photography include fashion, advertising, corporate, architectural, food photography.

"Scientific Imaging"

The use of imaging techniques, technologies, and processes to capture, record and propagate visual representations of observable and measurable aspects of the natural world that are studied and analysed within the framework of scientific inquiry. Scientific imaging plays an important role in a wide range of scientific disciplines, including biology, medicine, astronomy, physics, chemistry, geology, and environmental science.

"Environmental Responsibility"

The application and use of photography to leverage the visual power of images to inform, alert, inspire, and empower individuals and communities to take meaningful action towards protecting and preserving the planet for the present and future generations. Key elements of this ambition may include:

- Documenting environmental issues, events, technologies, processes
- Creating emotional impact through the use of photography
- Promoting awareness of environmental issues
- Advocating for change
- Celebrating nature and conservation successes
- Fostering a connection with nature
- Encouraging diverse representation for environmental issues

"Technology of the Moving Image"

Any technology or component to that technology that enables the creation, transmission, and presentation of moving images across various forms of visual media, shaping the way we perceive, consume, and interact with visual storytelling. These can include technology associated with:

- Cameras and lenses (specifically for moving-image applications)
- Film and video materials and formats (analogue or digital)
- Editing and post-production
- Project, display, and broadcast apparatus
- Transmission, distribution, and archive processes
- Audio, animation, and visual effects processes and apparatus

"Social Impact"

The application and use of photography to leverage the power of visual storytelling to highlight social injustice, amplify marginalised voices, advocate for systemic change, and inspire collective action towards building a more just, equitable, and compassionate society. Key elements of this ambition may include:

- Documenting social issues
- Empowering marginalised voices
- Advocating for change
- Celebrating resilience and activism
- Educating and engaging the public in matters of social injustice
- Collaboration with social change organisations

"Photography Education"

The practices involved in the teaching and learning of the principles, techniques, and skills involved in the practice, curation, or appreciation of photography, moving image or imaging science or in the design and production of resources to facilitate this practice.

"Photography with Young People"

The practice of engaging children and young people (below 30 years of age) in activities and projects concerning or involving photography, moving image or imaging science.

"Curatorship, Criticism, Research"

This refers to the practices and processes of the preservation, conservation, scholarly examination, interpretation, and presentation of works of photography or the moving image for the purpose of enriching our understanding of artistic expression and its impact on society.

Curatorship

The selection, organisation, and presentation of photographs or works of moving image in exhibitions or collections. Curators research and interpret artworks, develop thematic or conceptual frameworks for exhibitions, and make decisions regarding the display and contextualisation of individual photographs, collections of photographs, or bodies of photographic work, from one or more photographers, to convey specific narratives or themes.

Criticism

Criticism involves the evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of photographs and examples of moving image. Art critics examine and assess the aesthetic, conceptual, and cultural significance of these works, offering insights into their artistic merit, historical, and socio-political context. Criticism can take various forms, including written reviews, essays, lectures, and discussions. It plays an important role in shaping discourse around art.

Research

The scholarly investigation and study of photographers, photographs, photography, film-makers, cinematic films, or other aspect of moving image. Researchers explore aspects of photographic and moving image history, theory, and practice to expand knowledge and understanding of photography and moving image, and its broader cultural, social, and historical significance.

"Publishing"

Any aspect of the process of producing and distributing written, visual, or audio-visual content for public consumption, contributing to knowledge sharing, cultural enrichment, entertainment, and education in the field of photography, moving image or imaging science.