

Submission Deadline: Monday 1 September 2025, 23:59 BST

An **international open award** for photographers and image-makers, of all ages, focussed on **documentary and visual storytelling**. Submissions are encouraged from new, emerging and established photographers on any story or topic, from global issues to personal experiences. This is an opportunity to take part in a group exhibition in a UK touring exhibition, and to present work to a worldwide audience through a complementary series of online talks and online media hosted by the RPS.

General

The **Documentary Photography Awards (DPA)** is organised and managed by The Royal Photographic Society (RPS) Documentary Group. Earlier editions were known at Documentary Photographer of the Year (DPOTY). Entry is open to anyone, of any age or level of practice. You do not have to be a member of the RPS to enter your work.

1 - Competition categories

1.1 - Open – open to anyone.

1.2 - Student – open to anyone enrolled on a full-time or part-time programme with a formalised photography course or credit or module or foundation which is taught at higher education level, within a diploma, Bachelor's or Master's degree (entrants will need to submit academic institution information). Students who have finished their course during the 2024-25 academic year are eligible to enter.

1.3 – RPS Member – open to **all RPS members** (entrants will need to submit a valid RPS Membership number), and must hold a valid membership at the time of submission. Those directly involved in managing the Awards process are prohibited from entering, other volunteers may enter.

Note - you may enter more than one category, provided you are eligible, but may only be a selected and exhibited entrant in one category (see clause 5).

2 - Entry Process

2.1 – Categories and entry fees are: Open - £20, Students - free, and RPS Member – free.

2.2 - Concessions are available on request (please see entry website).

2.3 - Entry is online via the RPS **Entry Platform** portal following registration with the RPS to access the system. The email used to register must be used for all entries and any correspondence.

2.4 - Images must be submitted through the online Entry Platform portal.

2.5 - Entrants may submit a series of images from the same project.

2.6 - Multiple entries (up to a maximum of three (3)) are permitted

2.7 - Additional entry information must be complete, true, and accurate.

2.8 - Entry will open at 12:00 BST on Monday 30 June 2025

2.9 - Entry will close at 23:59 BST on Monday 1 September 2025

2.10 - Current members of the RPS Documentary Awards organising team (namely, the Chair and DPA Exhibition lead) are not eligible to enter. Other volunteers are permitted to enter.

3 - Images

3.1 - Each entry must be a minimum of 10 and maximum of 15 images from the same project, in sequence order.

3.2 - Files must be no more than 10MB in size. All images must be submitted as JPEG files, in sRGB colour space. Any files submitted in any other format (including TIFF, PSD etc) will not be accepted by the system. Files should be of sufficient size to allow digital projection for judging (a minimum of 2 MB is recommended).

3.3 - Images must be the sole work of the entrant. Images must not infringe the copyright or the intellectual property right of any third party.

3.4 – Each project must be accompanied with a project **Title** (up to 200 characters max, mandatory) and **Statement** (up to 2000 characters max, mandatory)

3.5 - Images may be titled and captioned (up to 500 characters max, optional)

3.6 - Submissions must be anonymous and must not include the photographer's name in an image title, description, caption, artist statement or as a watermark.

3.7 - Images can be made using film or digital and may be colour or monochrome but must be submitted as a digital image. Manipulation of images using software or in a darkroom is permitted. But entries should not incorporate extensive post-processing. Manipulation that significantly alters the 'truth' or 'actuality' of an image or subject is not permitted. The use of AI-generated imagery of any kind is explicitly prohibited. *To clarify, adjustments to exposure, contrast, cropping, spotting, burning and dodging or digital equivalent that do not involve use of generative-AI are acceptable.*

3.8 - There is no time restriction set on when photographs were taken.

3.9 - The RPS reserves the right to reject any entry at its discretion without refund.

3.10 - The RPS may request original files to check authenticity.

3.11 - The RPS may exclude any images or entries which, in its opinion, could cause offence.

3.12 - Images that have previously been awarded and exhibited in RPS DPA or DPOTY exhibitions are not eligible.

3.13 - New images from a body of work that has previously been awarded in DPA (or previous DPOTY) are eligible to be selected.

3.14 - The RPS will verify shortlisted entrants' personal information (e.g. membership number or university course).

3.15 – If selected, photographers will need to have access to high resolution files for printing for the purpose of the Exhibition and publications. This should be taken into consideration when submitting images.

4 – Judging and selection

4.1 - All entries are reviewed, longlisted, shortlisted and selected anonymously.

4.2 - Images will be initially longlisted by the RPS and then shortlisted, followed by a final selection to select the category awards and projects to be exhibited.

4.4 - If shortlisted, the RPS will endeavour to contact the entrant to notify them using the details provided by the entrant and to verify they meet the category requirements. If no

communication is received from the selected photographer within 14 days of the notification, the RPS reserves the right to offer the place to another shortlisted entrant.

4.5 - In the unlikely event that a selector is unable to take part in the selection process, the RPS will invite another individual to stand in.

4.6 - No feedback will be provided on individual submissions. No individual assessments are available, and the selectors' decision is final.

5 - Awards and Recognition

5.1 – There will be three projects selected for exhibition in each category (so, in total, nine projects). You may enter more than one category but an entrant can only be selected in one category.

5.2 – Each of the selected projects will be part of a UK touring exhibition. Where there is a space limitation some projects may be digitally projected as part of the touring exhibition.

5.3 – In addition to the touring exhibition, selected projects will be considered for a limited number of additional awards including development support and memberships, to be decided at the discretion of the selectors. Not all selected projects will be offered an additional award.

5.4 - **Category Awards**- details of the awards will be posted on the RPS DPA website (<https://rps.org/groups/documentary/dpa/>).

5.5 - There will be no cash alternative to the prizes offered.

5.6 - The RPS will arrange for the selected projects to be curated, printed, mounted and framed for the touring exhibition at no additional cost to the entrant.

5.7 – As part of the exhibition production the RPS will contact successful photographers to confirm wording to be used for project statements and to obtain high resolution images for printing.

6 - Personal Data

6.1 - The RPS will hold and process personal information in connection with the DPA Awards. We will use this to keep you informed about the call-for-entries and the exhibition tour.

6.2 - Entrants agree that personal data including, but not limited to, name, mailing address, phone number, and email address may be collected, processed, stored and otherwise used for the purposes of conducting and administering the open- call and exhibition selection.

6.3 - Our privacy policy <https://rps.org/about/terms-and-conditions/privacy> explains how we store and use data.

6.4 - The RPS will pass personal data for the purpose of running the call-for-entries to third-party suppliers including, Stripe (for payment), ApplePay (for payment), AwardForce (for managing the receipt of entries), Think Publishing (RPS Journal Publisher) and, in the case of selected and commended entrants, to exhibition tour venues.

6.5 - Your personal data will not be shared with third parties for unrelated activities.

7 - Copyright and Reproduction

7.1 - The intellectual property of all entries remains with the photographer.

7.2 - Images entered to the DPA must not infringe any copyright or other intellectual property rights of any third party.

7.3 - The entrant will indemnify The RPS in respect of any third-party claims.

7.4 - Entrants licence the RPS to reproduce, without payment, any images for publicity and promotion purposes in connection with the DPA and the RPS's activities, including within *The RPS Journal*, *Decisive Moment* magazine, website, and social media, for a period up to three years after the DPA awards are announced.

7.5 - The photographer will be credited if their image is used by the RPS.

7.6 – All printed exhibition images will be destroyed at the end of the touring exhibition to protect the photographers' rights.

8 - Acceptance of Terms and Conditions of Entry

8.1 - Submission of any entry to the DPA implies acceptance of these Terms and Conditions of Entry.