

What Is and Isn't Allowed when entering SPF Competitions?

MAJOR UPDATE JUNE 2023 - Due to the Recent Advancements in AI software ***

*****See additional 'AI' resource material given at the end of this document for more detail**

Entries made into all of our SPF Competitions must now comply fully with the 'ethos' contained within this guidance document, and this compliance will now appear as a 'Rule' within our competitions from June 2023. Furthermore, if the SPF is in any doubt of the eligibility of an entry, they may request RAW files or jpegs (incl. neighbouring jpegs).

This document has been put together to help you distinguish between what is allowed and what is not allowed when entering SPF and PAGB Competitions. This document is based on questions that have been asked by SPF Clubs or their members. The SPF, PAGB and FIAP all have their own statements of what is allowed.

The SPF and PAGB are currently the same with the following statement – *“Images entered must be entirely the work of the photographer. Composite Images are permitted provided all component images meet this requirement. For the avoidance of doubt, use of images from any source including, but not limited to, royalty free image banks, textures and clipart are not permitted.”*

NEW June 2023 - Additionally the SPF now states that – *“The use of AI software is allowed provided all images used have been taken by you, and only your own photographs are used in the processing. No modifications are allowed based on AI generated text input or generated using images or elements not taken by the photographer.”* *“RAW files or jpegs (incl. neighbouring jpegs) may be requested if there is any doubt of the eligibility of the entry.”* NB - At this time the PAGB have not yet made a statement on AI.

It is impossible to precisely define how interpretation of these statements may vary in different competitions by different Judges and Organisers.

NB - An entry is also still subject to any additional specific Competition requirements e.g., Nature or Monochrome Definitions. FIAP is slightly different and is given separately at the bottom of this article.

The SPF's advice is to try your best to enter images that comply with the 'ethos' or 'spirit' of this document. The following notes may also help but they are not meant to be definitive, merely a guide.

- *“Images entered must be entirely the work of the photographer”* - does not preclude trade processed prints being entered but does mean that you should have taken any photographs or made any elements used in your entry.
- *“Royalty Free Images are not permitted”* – and neither are images freely available to use for other purposes on the web, or elsewhere, or copyright images that you have purchased the right to use but did not take.
- *“Clip art”* - includes any other material available for you to use, whether free or paid for, but you did not make. This includes photographing e.g., artwork/scrapbooking/crafting material that someone else made and passing it off as your own. This does not forbid you from photographing such things as statues and other objects and works of art, provided that you use them in a way that doesn't pretend they are your work.

QUESTIONS PUT TO THE SPF

For complex Filters/Plug-Ins these first four Q&As should give you a gauge as to what is acceptable. Please pay particular attention to AI programs*** in this regard.

Q - *To use a FILTER from within Photoshop to create a rain-drop effect say - is that allowed? - as an example for simplicity*

A - Yes, provided it is only using picture material from within your photograph(s) to create the effect (as opposed to say Filter > Render > Photo Frame (or Tree) within Photoshop, for example, where a complete Photo Frame (or Tree) is imported in to your image from a selection in Photoshop's library)

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If it adds an 'image layer' that was not created from only your own work, then it's not allowed.

NB – The following also falls into the same category as above - The use of Textures, not created by you; The use of non-standard Brushes e.g., birds/snowflakes and the like, not created by yourself.

Q – *Is the use of Topaz AI Sharpen or AI DeNoise allowed within SPF competitions? – It appears to synthesise convincing detail even if not there in the original image.*

A - Yes, it is using algorithms on the original details of your picture, in the same way as all sharpening and noise reduction features are within many other image editing programs to create localised contrast, or reduce contrast, pixel by pixel as required, just in a more sophisticated manner.

Q – *Is the use of AI software such as 'Skylum Luminar AI' acceptable to use? As an example – It appears to automatically enhance the original image and skys etc. are added seamlessly without much if any input from the photographer?*

A - Yes, provided it is only using picture material from your own photograph(s) to create the effect - as opposed to say importing Skies, Planets, Mist etc. into your image from the program's library. If it adds an 'image layer' where that image layer was not created solely from your own work, then it is not allowed.

Q – *Is it OK to enter images created in software that uses Adobe Firefly AI?*

A - Yes, provided all images used have been taken by you, and only your own photographs are used in the processing. However, no modifications are allowed based on 'text input' or 'AI generated' using images or elements that have not been taken by you. If it adds 'elements or 'imagery' that was not taken by you, then it is not allowed.

Q – *Can I project an image from the internet onto a screen, and photograph the image, then use it in SPF competitions?*

A – No, it is not all your work, and you do not own the copyright.

Q - *To create something digitally in Photoshop like a non-existing planet - is that allowed?*

A - Yes, the PAGB and SPF allow you to create elements (graphics or artwork) to use within your images; however, this is not now allowed in FIAP Competitions unless it is solely created from your own photographs.

Q - *The use of text fonts from within Photoshop - is that allowed? - my understanding is that it should not be because that is not your font?*

A - Theoretically you are correct, although it is unlikely that your image would be disqualified for this, but this is not now allowed in FIAP Competitions

Q - *If I make the font and use that as a text font from within Photoshop - is that allowed?*

A - Yes, but this is not now allowed in FIAP Competitions

FIAP - This section is only relevant to events with FIAP Patronage - e.g., International competitions such as The Scottish Salon, Edinburgh International or FIAP Biennials and Clubs World Cup, and does not affect any SPF Competitions other than the Scottish Salon

The current FIAP rules and sanctions document (033/2021) now states that – *“All the parts of each submitted image have to be photographed by the author who must be in possession of the original unretouched 'capture' version(s) of the image and where applicable of all component parts of the image. The author must also hold the copyright to each submitted image and of all component parts of it.”*

“Participants must store and preserve intact, with no alteration, the metadata, the RAW file(s) or the original unretouched Jpeg file(s) of submitted images (and those taken immediately before and after the submitted images) for possible future motivated inspection. “- extract.

NEW (260/2023) Important information regarding pictures generated by artificial intelligence (AI)

Please note that: Pictures created by artificial intelligence are not allowed in salons run under FIAP patronage. Therefore, salon organisers are asked to include the following text into the regulations of their events: **“PICTURES CREATED BY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THIS SALON! It is**

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reminded that all parts of the image have to be photographed by the author who is holding the copyright of all works submitted. Offenders will be sanctioned for life!"

Additionally, Re Nature, FIAP say – *"In Nature Photography no techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove any element of the original image except by cropping is permitted. This means no elements of the photograph may be cloned, added, or erased"* - extract.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Photographing in Public Places/Copyright

Need information on copyright? Or where you can photograph without permission? For an interesting article on UK Photographer's Rights please visit the following Sirimo website –

<http://www.sirimo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/ukphotographersrights-v2.pdf>

(Please note that Sirimo has no connection with the SPF. This has been added here as a general resource for those Photographing in Public places, and has additional useful information on Copyright)

Plagiarism - read the following "Plagiarism" article written by Christine Widdall (L&CPU) for more on this <http://christinewiddall.co.uk/musings/plagiarism-photography/> Please note the SPF have asked permission of this author to circulate this. If you wish to do so you must do likewise, unless supplied as part of this document.

Abbreviations

The following acronyms have been used in this document for the following organisations -

SPF - Scottish Photographic Federation

PAGB - Photographic Alliance of Great Britain

FIAP - Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique

PSA - Photographic Society of America

Artificial Intelligence 'AI' Generator Software

The headlines have been dominated following the release of a variety of different 'AI Generator Software' and various comments in the media about the use of this type of software (most popular being Midjourney, Craiyon and Dall-e). Adobe already has a fully-fledged AI generator available as a beta version, called Adobe Firefly which can already be used as part of Photoshop (beta).

The SPF have had several questions raised in the past couple of months by our Clubs and Judges about AI software, and what can and cannot be used within SPF Competitions, or simply asking for advice such the following question from an SPF Judge - *"Q - My question relates to the use of AI in competitions. I think it is one thing to improve the "quality" of an image using AI plug-ins but the addition of computer elements to an image raises questions regarding whether this is all your own work. Do you know if the FIAP/PSA are looking at this and do you expect the SPF to provide any guidance to judges prior to the coming season?"*

With the situation changing weekly, we felt it wise to react to this situation sooner rather than later to make our competitions as fair, and simple as possible for all Clubs and members going forward. This has resulted in the June 2023 updates to our "What is and Isn't Allowed..." document to manage the use of 'AI generator software' within our Competitions given that the unrestricted use of this type of software would be in breach of our existing ethos and rules. Over time we may require to revisit this.

To clarify what we mean by AI generator software, we are mainly concerned about software that generates images from a few text words, or from other people's images to produce an image which can look completely straight out of the camera, or be a more fantasy style composite, or look like a piece of art. Once the image is created there is no way to tell that it has been generated by a piece of software and been nowhere near a member's camera*.

Creating an image without a camera isn't really what we are all about as members of a Photographic organisation, we fundamentally are individuals who take photographs, and then compete using only our own work, as outlined in our constitution where we are *"promoting the general advancement of photography"*.

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Because much of the newer software we use to edit our images already uses AI in some form or another, including Photoshop and Topaz, we can't simply say members can't use AI software, given they already have been using it for some time**. We also have to accept that the software 'tools' available to us are getting better and more sophisticated e.g., in the way that content-aware tools help when removing or masking.

What we do want to ensure is that any AI software is only used in processing photographs taken by the author, without the addition of any elements 'AI generated' (either photographic, text or other) that have not been taken by the photographer.

Given that many of our Club members use Adobe software, please see the following about what we mean by AI generation and Firefly (other software brands advertised as AI 'generator' software work in similar ways). We have also given you statements on AI from PSA and RPS which may be of interest to you, but are not relevant to any of the SPF's events -

You can see a short Adobe AI Firefly YouTube video here which shows a few examples –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhOMnfMQpRA>

* Adobe Firefly is also introducing a level of AI ethics, which will include a level of Content Authenticity, which is currently being evolved as part of the 'Content Authenticity Initiative'. As part of this it will allow Content Credentials to be contained within an image's metadata – for more info see <https://contentauthenticity.org>

**Adobe Products have used AI technology for over 10 years. Adobe Photoshop has been using its current AI engine Adobe Sensei for a few years now which has given 100s of capabilities to its users including Noise Reduction, Sky selection and replacement, and Neural Filters.

The RPS put out their own statement in June 23, given below, and have also held a couple of online events, with more planned. The last aired was "**Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Photography**" (23rd June 2023) hosted by Simon Hill, President of the RPS and featuring Rufus Deuchler of Adobe, who discussed and demonstrated the beta version of Firefly. A recording of this presentation is openly available on YouTube –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YjWxWmnS2c>

The Photographic Society of America has brought out the following statement for all International Exhibitions that hold their Patronage from 2023 onwards –

Statement on Artificial Intelligence (AI) - Image Creation and Ownership

In all sections of the exhibition, images must originate as photographs made by the entrant. They may not incorporate identifiable images produced by anyone else (for example: clip art, replacement skies, or stock images). Images created in whole or in part by image creation software (frequently called 'AI' images) are not allowed. Editing or alteration of images is permitted within the limits specified in the relevant section definitions that are available here -

<https://psa-photo.org/page/division-definitions>

Any person submitting or attempting to submit a totally AI generated image that does not begin with a light capture from the maker, from any Photographic Society of America exhibition, social media, event, or publication, other than for editorial purposes, shall be prohibited from PSA for a period of from 3 to 5 years.

RPS guidelines on the use of AI

1. The RPS remains committed to the principle that photographs should be the original work of the creator(s), so entirely generative images, or images with material elements entirely generated by AI will not be permitted for Distinction submissions, exhibitions, and competitions. What constitutes material in this context is a grey area, and something the RPS will continue to explore with its creative community.
2. The RPS will continue to accept the use of algorithmic processing in-camera or in post-processing software, which supports digital photography for Distinction submissions, exhibitions, and competitions, on the condition that photographers are clear and open where such tools have been used. The RPS will trust in the integrity of its community but in certain circumstances may request further evidence in the form of RAW files or EXIF data, data, accepting that such evidence may itself not be definitive.
3. These principles and guidelines are effective for the remainder of 2023 only and do not constitute a final, fixed position; they will evolve as AI capabilities change and understating increases.