



Plano Photography Club

Description of Contest Themes

For the 2019-2020 Contest Year

The Plano Photography Club board uses themed contests to encourage the photographers in the Club to extend their skill sets and to broaden their experience. Contest themes fall into various categories. Technical themes encourage photographers to become more familiar with the capabilities of their camera. Compositional themes teach the elements that make a photograph outstanding. Photojournalism allows photographers to extend their ability to communicate and tell stories through their photography. Creative themes provide freedom for imagination and interpretation. Of course, many themes fit into more than one category.

March 2019 – Panoramas (print)

The print must have an aspect ratio of 2:1 or greater. That is, one dimension must be at least twice that of the other. The usual way to present a panorama is an image that is much wider than it is tall, but vertical panoramas can also be effective and surprisingly creative.

May 2019 – Breaking the Rule of Thirds

It's said you have to know the rules in order to break them. The rule of thirds may be the most well-known compositional rule for visual art. But, some critics say the rule of thirds is overused and can produce boring, clichéd images. Some ways to effectively break the rule of thirds are:

- Place the subject in the exact center of the image either vertically, horizontally, or both. Or use a dividing line, such as a horizon, that perfectly bisects the image.
- Use the edges and corners. Push the horizon line almost to the top or bottom of the image. Or put your subject near an edge with plenty of space for the eye to explore the background.
- Find a scene – a repetitive pattern or an abstract, for example – that has no particularly strong focal point and is best viewed as a whole.

July 2019 – High Key/Low Key

A high-key image is one that is almost entirely very bright with very little or no dark shadows present. This is usually done to create a bright, airy, pleasant mood. A good photographer knows how to use not just lighting, but also pose and composition and other elements to create an impactful high-key photograph. It may sometimes be as easy as over-exposing an existing scene by two or three stops, but more often a proper high-key image requires careful attention to the balance of light between subject and background, often preserving detail in the subject while nearly or totally blowing out much of the background.

Low-key images are dark and contain few highlighted areas. The main use of low-key lighting as a creative visual tool is to accentuate the shape and contour of a subject, by leaving additional lighting (fill light, for example) at a bare minimum, or omitting it entirely. Low-key lighting is also often used to create dramatic, romantic, or moody effects.



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September 2019 – Texas Historical Sites

This month we celebrate the wide-ranging sweep of Texas history. Visit any historical site within the state of Texas and create an image that fills us with pride for our state. Sites could be local, such as the State Fairgrounds or the Dallas Heritage Village, or you could trek to the far corners of the state.

November 2019 – Music

Capture an image that has something to do with music. It could be a musician or a group of musicians, a person enjoying listening to music. You might create a composition using a musical instrument or equipment used in the recording or production of music. Make your photograph sing visually and you'll be sure to win honors!

January 2020 – Down Time

People use the phrase "down time" to indicate a period in which someone or something is not working or not busy. But, your interpretation of the phrase for this theme is entirely up to – "ahem" – is entirely down to you.