

WORLD PRESS PHOTO

TECHNICAL REPORT

2020 PHOTO CONTEST

Foreword

This report is designed to enable informed conversation within our community of professional visual journalism and storytelling.

This is the fifth edition of the World Press Photo Foundation's technical report reviewing the annual photo contest. Each year our commitment to transparency means we make public data on the contest related to issues of diversity, representation, and verification.

This report is designed to enable informed conversation within our community of professional visual journalism and storytelling and is not intended to be a comprehensive presentation of all aspects of all the relevant issues.

Over the past year, we launched two new programs to encourage a more diverse and inclusive representation of the world: the Solutions Visual Journalism Initiative (SVJI) in partnership MIAP, the Message in a Photo foundation and the Solutions Journalism Network, and The West Africa Visual Journalism Fellowship in partnership with the Chocolonely Foundation.

In the years to come we are committed to continue expanding our efforts to support and encourage an inclusive, diverse visual journalism industry.

The World Press Photo Foundation and the World Press Photo Contest

The annual World Press Photo Contest is one of the World Press Photo Foundation's most important and best-known programs.

The contest rewards photographers for the best single exposure pictures contributing to the past year of visual journalism. Whether entered as singles or stories, these pictures are judged in terms of their accurate, fair, and visually compelling insights about our world.

The foundation sets the contest categories and rules, requires entrants to accept the contest [code of ethics](#), and selects the jury. Once appointed, the jury, chair, and secretary are independent of the foundation, and no member of the foundation has a vote on which image or story wins. This year, 17 professionals – nine women and eight men coming from various photography backgrounds, with representation from six global regions – selected the winning images.

Once the winners have been selected and announced, they are all presented to the world via the foundation's website and social media channels, and are included in our annual exhibition and yearbook. These showcases mean many millions of people around the world will see the images, often for the first time.

World Press Photo is a platform that connects professionals and

the global audience through high quality, non-fiction reporting and storytelling that can be trusted.

Being a global platform gives the foundation the responsibility to present the best, most accurate and compelling work, even though the foundation has not directly chosen this work. As such, without restricting the jury's decisions, the foundation asks the jury to consider issues of representation when it was deliberating on the entries:

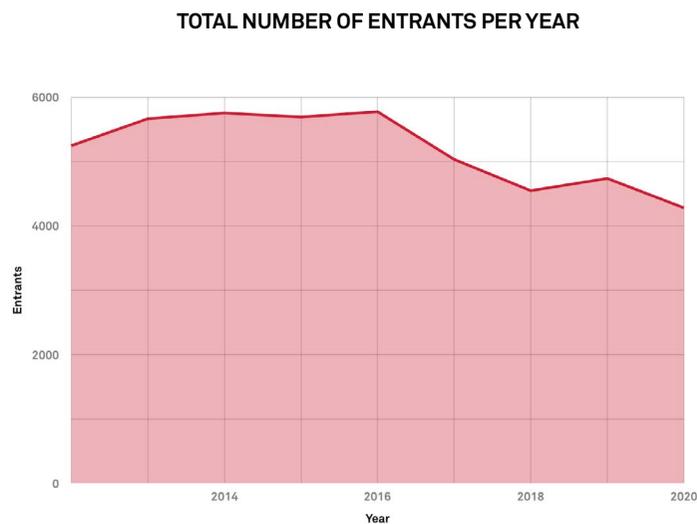
- Whether the images and stories under consideration repeat well-known examples or are distinctive
- Whether the images and stories under consideration reinforce or challenge stereotypes
- Whether graphic and violent photographs are appropriate for the story presented, especially when they involve vulnerable people
- Whether issues of the subjects' consent appear to have been appropriately handled by the photographer

The foundation recognizes these are often matters of judgment, but they indicate some of the issues World Press Photo deals with as it presents the visual stories that matter to the world.

The number of entrants and submitted photos 2012 - 2020

The 2020 Photo Contest saw 4,282 photographers from 125 countries enter 73,996 images.

YEAR	ENTRANTS	COUNTRIES	SUBMITTED PHOTOS
2012	5,247	124	101,254
2013	5,666	124	103,481
2014	5,754	132	98,671
2015	5,692	131	97,912
2016	5,775	128	82,951
2017	5,034	126	80,408
2018	4,548	125	73,044
2019	4,738	128	78,801
2020	4,282	125	73,996

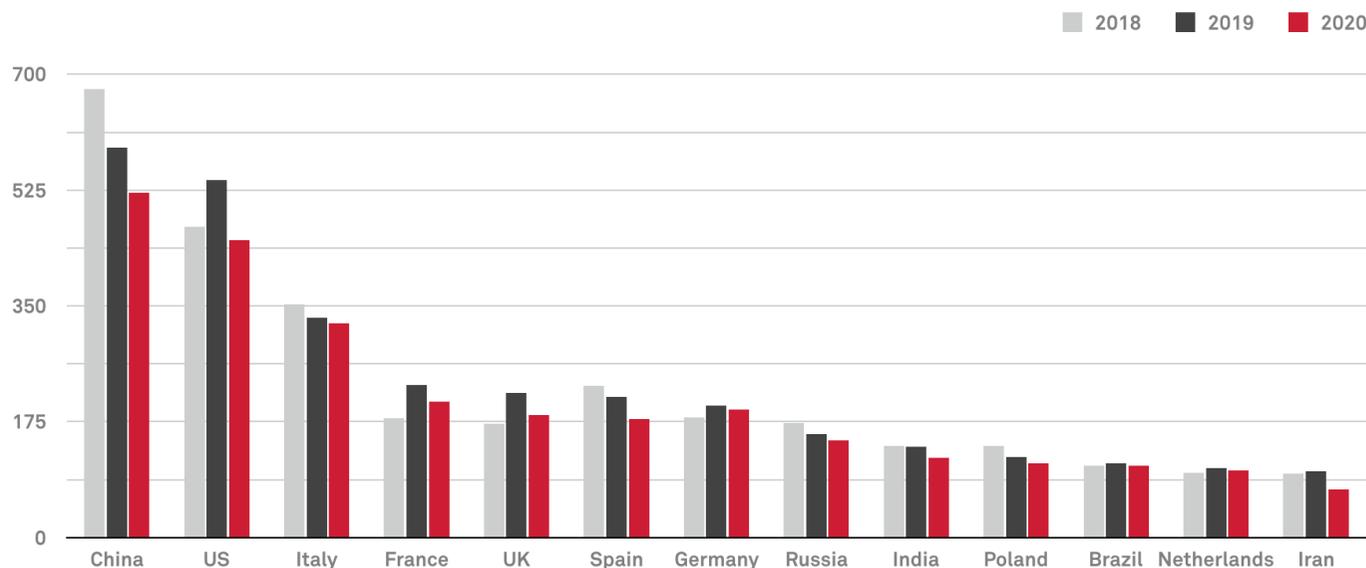


In 2020 we saw a 456 decrease in the number of entrants from 2019.

The top countries with 100 or more entrants 2018 - 2020

COUNTRIES WITH MORE THAN 100 ENTRANTS	2018	2019	2020
China	678	589	521
United States	470	540	449
Italy	353	332	324
France	180	230	205
United Kingdom	172	219	185
Spain	229	213	179
Germany	182	200	193
Russia	173	156	147
India	139	137	121
Poland	139	122	112
Brazil	108	112	108
Netherlands	98	105	102
Iran	97	100	73

THE TOP THIRTEEN COUNTRIES BY ENTRANTS 2018 - 2020

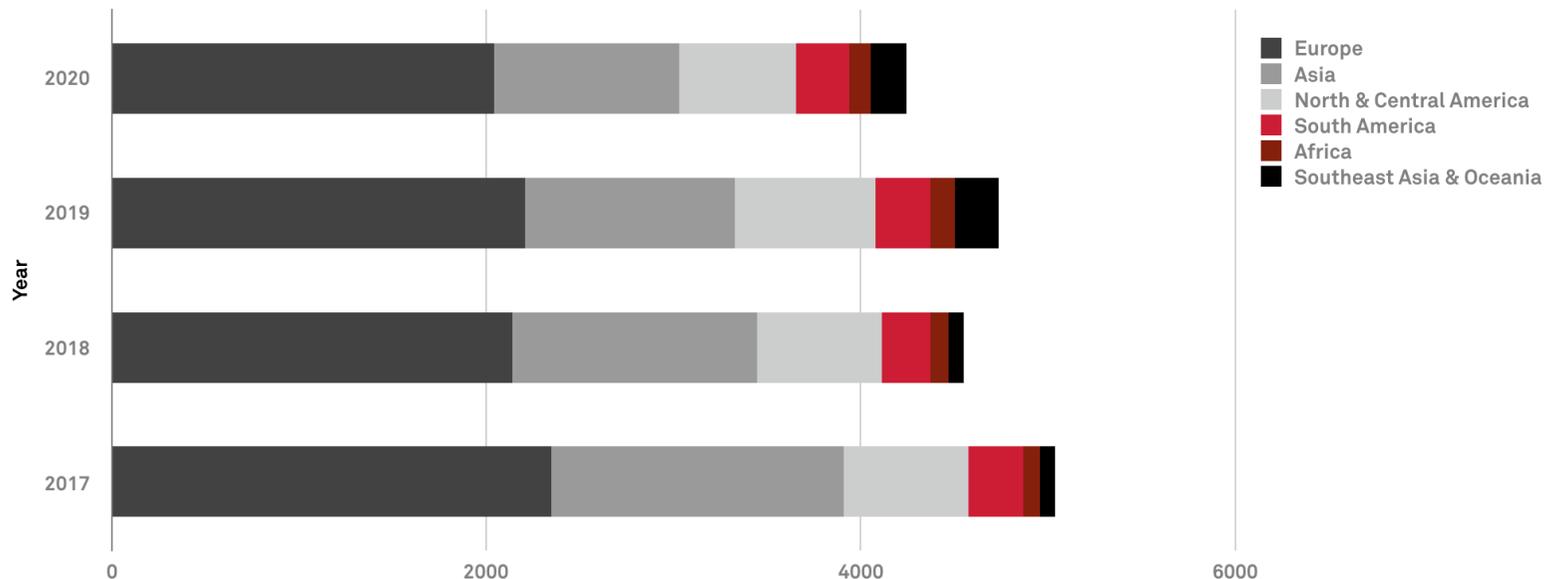


The geographic distribution of entrants is weighted towards Europe and Asia, with the 2020 data showing 47.7% of entrants came from Europe and 23.1% from Asia. North and Central America was the source of 14.5%

of entrants, 6.6% were from South America, 4.5% from Southeast Asia and Oceania, and 2.7% from Africa. From 2019, there was an increase in the proportion of entrants from South America (+0.4%) and Europe (+1.1%). There

was a decrease in entrants from Asia (-0.6%) Southeast Asia Oceania (-0.5%), Africa (-0.1%) and North and Central America (-1.3%).

ENTRANTS BY CONTINENT



Encouraging a more diverse and inclusive representation of the world is a major goal for World Press Photo and we campaign all year round to attract new visual storytellers to enter the contests.

As part of our 2020 Contests outreach campaign, we organized meetups with photographers in Nairobi, Kenya; Dar es-Salaam, Tanzania; Siem Reap, Cambodia; Bangkok, Thailand; Hanoi, Vietnam; and Maputo, Mozambique. We also reached out to organizations and individuals as part of an extensive online outreach effort focused on attracting female entrants and

photographers from African and South American countries - previously underrepresented - to enter the contest.

In addition to the 6x6 Global Talent Program, the African Photojournalism Database and the Joop Swart Masterclass, over the past year we expanded our Develop programs to include two new initiatives: the Solutions Visual Journalism Initiative supported by the MIAP Foundation to promote and produce visual journalism with a solutions focus and the West Africa Visual Journalism Fellowship in partnership with the Chocolonely Foundation to support three emerging visual

journalists and storytellers from Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire. We work regularly with Women Photograph, Everyday Africa, Foto Feminas, the editors of Depth of Field, and other organizations bringing different representations of the world that are often overlooked to the audience, giving them a platform in our online magazine Witness and Instagram account.

It is clear from the data that further work is needed to improve diversity. It will take time, and we are committed to it.

2020 Contest Outreach



Photographers meetup in Dar es-Salaam, Tanzania, 2019



Photographers workshop in Hanoi, Vietnam, 2019



Photographers meetup in Siem Reap, Cambodia, 2019

W World Press Photo @WorldPressPhoto · Nov 11, 2019
 (1/2) "I would love to see more submissions by photographers from outside of Europe and North America & more time for jury members to share views on diversity before the judging commences." - Lekgetho Makola, on chairing the #WPPH2020 Photo Contest jury: worldpressphoto.org/news/2019/2020...



W World Press Photo @WorldPressPhoto · Dec 2, 2019
 Calling all visual storytellers! Have you shot compelling stories, or made great videos or interactive productions in 2019? The #WPPH2020 Contests are open for entries! Enter now for your chance to win €10,000 and to showcase your work globally: bit.ly/2020contests



W World Press Photo @WorldPressPhoto · Dec 13, 2019
 Did you know that the #WPPH2020 Photo Contest recognizes images and photo series in eight categories? The awarded images are showcased in +120 exhibitions and included in our annual yearbook. Enter now: bit.ly/2QYDDgy



W World Press Photo @WorldPressPhoto · Dec 24, 2019
 .@womenphotograph is sharing a selection of images from their 2019 Year in Pictures, curated by Preston Gannaway (@PGannawayPhoto), on our Instagram account this week. Take a look: bit.ly/2DjrliY



W World Press Photo @WorldPressPhoto · Jan 2, 2020
 Just one week left to register to enter the #WPPH2020 Photo Contest! Take a look at some of the awarded images in the eight categories of the contest from 2016-2019 on our Instagram account this week: bit.ly/2Ts0zDU

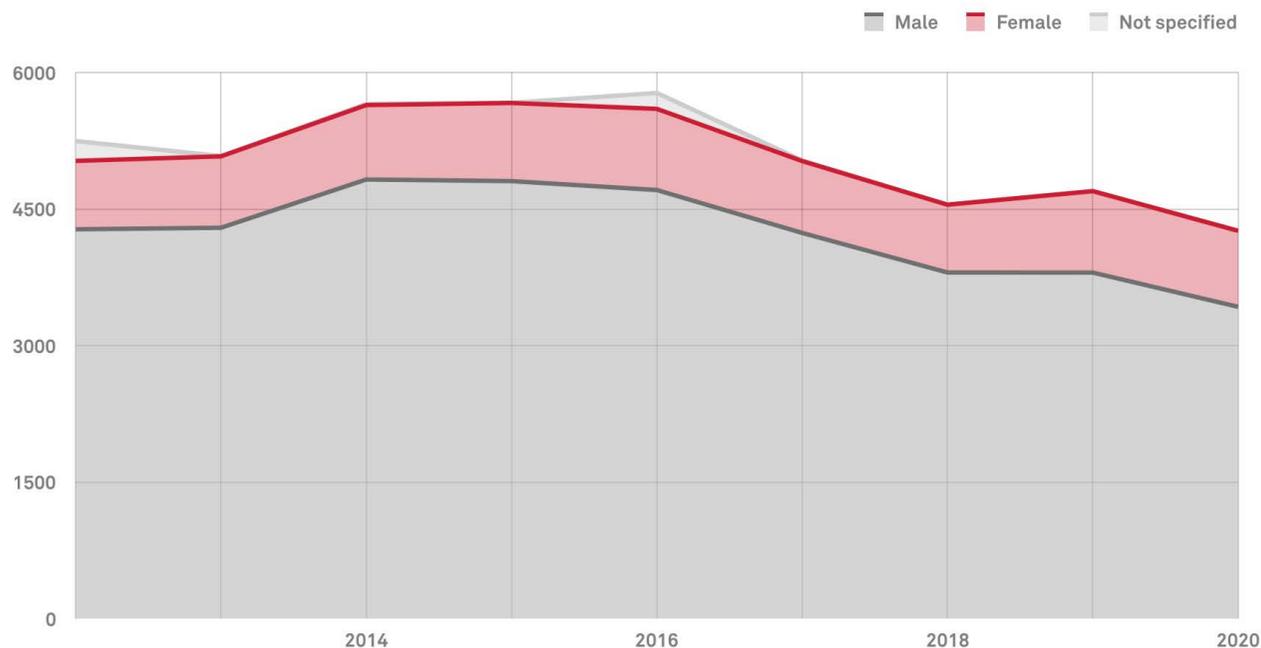


W World Press Photo @WorldPressPhoto · Jan 5, 2020
 Only 4 days left to register for the #WPPH2020 Photo Contest! We want to showcase the stories that matter and diverse representations of our world. To do that, we need to get the best submissions for the independent jury to consider, so enter now: bit.ly/2QYDDgy



Gender of contest entrants 2012-2020

GENDER OF ENTRANTS



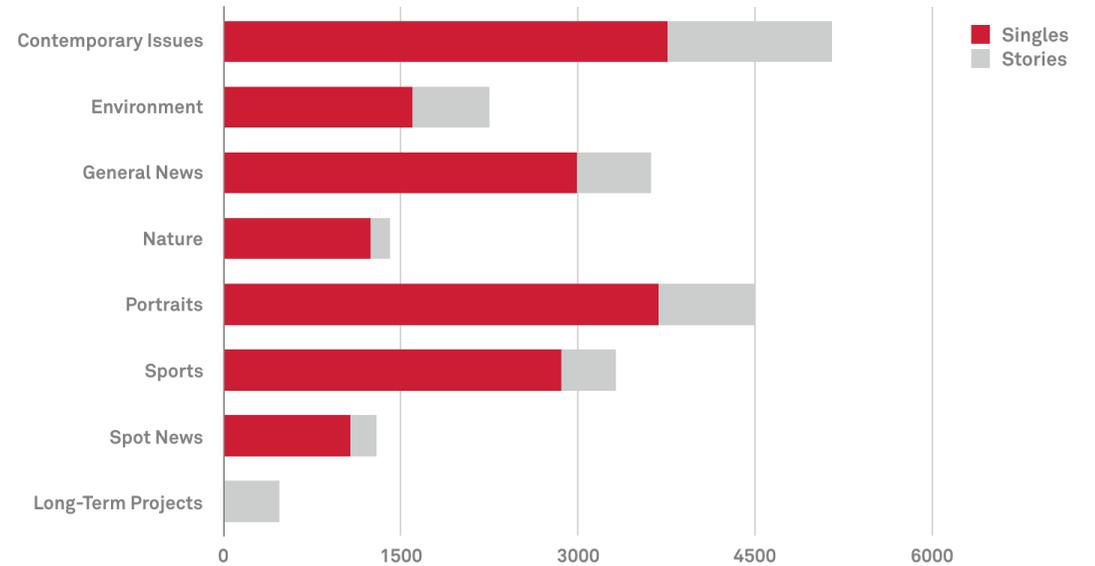
In total, 80% of the 2020 Photo Contest entrants identify as male, 19.5% identify as female, and 0.5% prefer not to say or identify with another gender. The number of female entrants has started to increase over the past five years. In 2015, the proportion of female entrants was 15%.

One hindrance to clarity on this topic is the fact that we do not know what proportion of the professional photojournalism industry is female, so we cannot confirm whether or not the proportion of female entrants is reflective of the industry.

Contest entries by category

CATEGORY	SINGLES	STORIES
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES	3759	1395
ENVIRONMENT	1597	657
GENERAL NEWS	2994	624
NATURE	1243	165
PORTRAITS	3681	822
SPORTS	2856	467
SPOT NEWS	1071	225
LONG-TERM PROJECTS		473
	17201	4828

NUMBER OF PHOTOS ENTERED AS SINGLES OR STORIES PER CATEGORY



Award nominees by country

This table shows the number of awards per country from 2012-2020, not the number of winning photographers. For 2012-2017 it shows winners and for 2018-2020 it shows nominees. This means if a photographer is nominated for or awarded a prize in two categories, the

country is counted twice. The table does not include either nominees for or winners of World Press Photo of the Year and Story of the Year. Note also that the nationalities of the nominees and winners are provided by the entrants when they submit, and on occasion the nationalities have

changed after announcement, when dual nationalities are sometimes declared by photographers. 0.5 indicates dual nationality. As entries are judged anonymously, the country of entrants is not a visible factor during the judging process.

COUNTRY	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
USA	7	4	11	9	9	5	10	10	5	70
ITALY	7	6	3	9	2	4	5	3	6	45
GERMANY	1	1	3	2	2	3	5	1.5	2	20.5
AUSTRALIA	1	2	2	1	4	2	2	3	3	20
CHINA	3	4	3	6	2	1	1			20
RUSSIA	3	1	3	3	2	4	1	1	1	19
FRANCE	4	1	4	2	1	2	1	2	2	19
SPAIN	2	3	2		2	3	1	1.5	3	17.5
SWEDEN	3	1	1	1	4	1	2	1.5		14.5
UK	2	1	4	1		2	2	1.5	1	14.5
SOUTH AFRICA	2	1	1		1	1	1	2.5	3	12.5
THE NETHERLANDS	5	1	1				3	1.5		11.5
IRAN	1	3	1	2	1	1		2		11
CANADA	1	1			2	2	1	0.5	2	9.5
POLAND	2	2	3	1					1	9
DENMARK	2	4		1			1		1	9
MEXICO	1	1	1		2			2	1	8
BELGIUM		2		1			1	1	2	7
TURKEY		1		2	1	1		1	1	7
BRAZIL		1			2	2		1		6
JAPAN	3				1				2	6
IRELAND	1			1			2		1	5
SYRIA					2	2		1		5

Award nominees by country

COUNTRY	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
BANGLADESH			2	1			1			4
CZECH REPUBLIC		1	1			1		1		4
ARGENTINA	1	1	1							3
INDIA	1	1				1				3
PORTUGAL		1			1			1		3
HUNGARY						1		1	1	3
SERBIA		1	1				1			3
EGYPT	1						1	1		3
VENEZUELA							2	1		3
SWITZERLAND		1			1					2
PERU		1							1	2
SLOVENIA					2					2
PHILIPPINES						1		1		2
CHILE		1				1				2
AZERBAIJAN			2							2
FINLAND			1			1				2
JORDAN		1	1							2
MALAYSIA		2								2
NEW ZEALAND			1			1				2
NORWAY	1							1		2
AUSTRIA					1				1	2
INDONESIA		1								1
BELARUS									1	1
PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES		1								1
BULGARIA			1							1
COLOMBIA							1			1

Award nominees by country

COUNTRY	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
EL SALVADOR			1							1
AFGHANISTAN	1									1
ALGERIA									1	1
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	1									1
ETHIOPIA									1	1
ERITREA				1						1
LITHUANIA									1	1
PAKISTAN						1				1
ROMANIA						1				1
SOUTH KOREA									1	1
VIETNAM		1								1

Verification Process

The annual World Press Photo Contest has four verification processes to ensure compliance with its code of ethics and entry rules.

Photography gives us a creative interpretation of the world. However, when we want pictures to record and inform us of the varied events, issues, people, and viewpoints in our world, so they can be visual documents, there are limits to how pictures can be made so that the audience can trust them. This is why we take a strict stance on manipulation.

We are the only photo contest that has this extensive a verification process, and we are the only photo contest that can say all the nominees and winners have successfully passed an extensive verification process.

A) ENTRY CHECKS

Entry rule 11 states the contest is for single frame, single exposure pictures. This means multiple exposures, polyptychs (diptychs, triptychs, etc.) and stitched panoramas (either produced in-camera or with image editing software) are not eligible. These entries that are not eligible are removed from the contest by a team of checkers.

B) MANIPULATION REVIEW

The manipulation review implements entry rules 11, 12, 13. Entry rule 12 states *“the content of a picture can not be altered by adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame.”*

There are two exceptions to this:

- (i) cropping that removes extraneous details is permitted;
- (ii) removing sensor dust or scratches on scans of negatives is permitted.

The process for ensuring compliance with both entry rules 12 and 13 takes place in the latter rounds of judging. Entrants whose pictures remain in the contest and could be eligible for nominations and awards are contacted and required to provide the file as recorded by the camera. These files could be:

- RAW file(s)
- Full format JPEG file(s). These must be as delivered by the camera, and provided in a series showing at least three frames before and after the contest entry
- For smartphones, the image captured with the built-in,

stock camera app, emailed from the phone to contest@worldpressphoto.org

- Unprocessed positive scans of film negative(s), plus a contact sheet to show a series of at least three frames before and after the contest entry

Each year we find that nearly all entrants readily comply with this requirement. That is testament to their openness and commitment to transparency on how images are produced. It underlines the fact that photographers do not want to mislead either the jury or the audience.

Two independent digital analysts compare original files with contest entries to determine whether the content of any picture (either a single picture or frame in a story) has been altered. We produced videos with visual examples, and they have been viewed tens of thousands of times.

This year we requested original files for 341 entries (including both singles and stories).

Six photographers were excluded because of Entry Rule 13. 27 photographers were excluded because of Entry Rule 12. Six photographers were excluded because of of Entry

Rule 11 and three photographers were excluded due to not submitting all of their original files before the deadline

From 2018 the foundation decided that when cloning was clearly detected in entries they would be automatically excluded from the contest, without recourse to the photographers, and the jury was informed of these decisions.

This revised process followed our guidance that “altering the content of a picture by ‘adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame’ is manipulation and makes an entry ineligible for the final round,” and was enabled by entry rule 22.

The relatively few instances of cloning involved very small, often tiny, elements being removed. A number of them replicated almost exactly the examples of what not to do shown in our guidance video on removal of content.

Entry rule 13:

Adjustments of color or conversion to grayscale that do not alter content are permitted, with two exceptions:

- (i) Changes in color may not result in significant changes in hue, to such an extent that the processed colors diverge from the original colors.
- (ii) Changes in density, contrast, color and/or saturation levels that significantly alter content by obscuring or eliminating information in the picture are not permitted. The jury determines which changes are significant, following the video guidance on [what counts as manipulation](#).

It is important to emphasize that entry rule 13 is not about

processing itself. All images are processed, but the line is drawn at those instances where there is darkening or lightening of area of an image so that material content is obscured and in effect removed. This was detailed in our [guidance video on unacceptable color changes](#). In contrast, levels of processing that produce changes within the rules are judged as aesthetic choices, and factored into the jury's general deliberations on the overall merits of an entry.

C) FACT-CHECKING

Introduced in 2018, now a standard part of the process. During the judging process an independent analyst checked the context in which each remaining image or story was produced, distributed and/or published. No problems were found via these checks.

Entry rule 10 states “all pictures must have accurate captions,” and the guidance on captions details what information must be provided in captions.

The process for ensuring compliance with this rule takes place after the jury decides on the nominees. An independent fact-checking team reviewed all captions to verify the accuracy of the information given. They also examined the metadata in the picture files.

The independent fact-checking team found no problems with any of the nominated pictures, and was able to verify their captions and metadata.

The fact-checking process is where clause 2 of the code of ethics (that entrants “must not intentionally contribute to, or alter, the scene they picture by re-enacting or staging events”) is handled. Captions must explain the

circumstances in which a photograph was taken.

D) STORY TEXT

Finally, once the jury has selected the nominees, the World Press Photo Foundation deploys a research team to gather background information on each image and story. While we rely on the photographers for the basic captions, which are lightly edited by World Press Photo for accuracy and clarity, we often need additional information. This is so we can provide - in the yearbook, exhibition and on the website - the full story that gives the context for each image and story. The foundation is responsible for the content of this text.

To access previous technical reports

[2019 for download](#)

[2018 for download](#)

[2017 for download](#)

[2016 for download](#)

World Press Photo Foundation

Haarlemmerweg 4,
1014 BE Amsterdam
The Netherlands

For any questions please contact the Communications Team.

communications@worldpressphoto.org