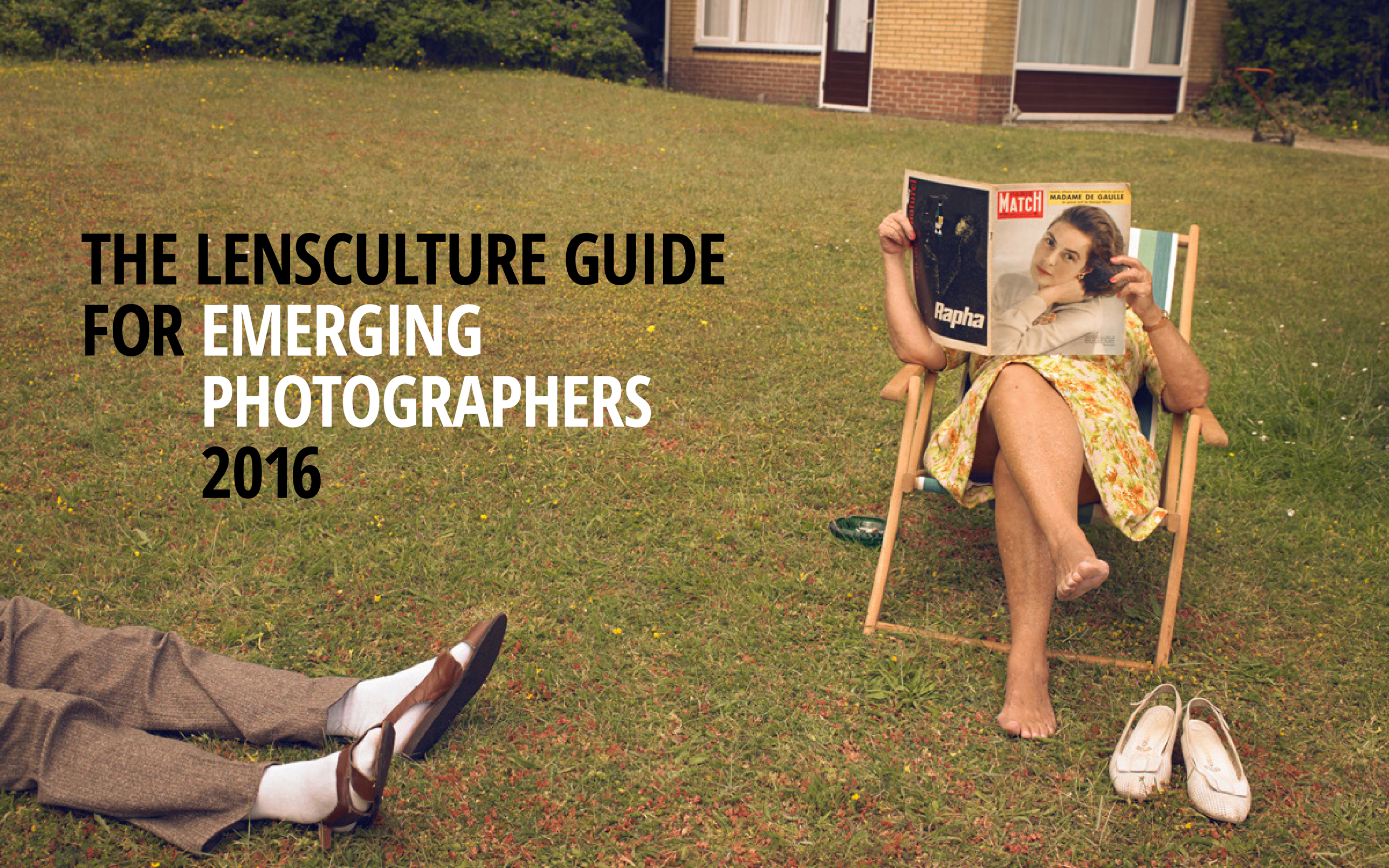
THE LENSCULTURE GUIDE FOR EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHERS 2016



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Winner / Emerging Talent Awards 2015

Helping photographers move forward creatively and professionally is at the core of what we do at LensCulture. Over the years we have worked hard to develop resources, tools and opportunities to do just that.

To create this guide, we asked our network of photography industry professionals to offer their advice on photo competitions, portfolio reviews and marketing for photographers. We also collected all of the previous resources and words of wisdom we gathered in the past and put them into this master guide for emerging photographers.

This guide is chock-full of expert insight and lists of resources for you to use right now. We have also included fellow photographers' stories for further inspiration! Before diving in, we should mention that our annual Emerging Talent Awards is now open for entry—a great opportunity to share your work, receive critical feedback and advance both creatively and professionally. Don't miss out!

We hope you find lots of useful information in this guide. Cheers and happy shooting!

EMERGING TALENT 2016

© EMILY SHEFFER
Winner / Emerging Talent Awards 2015

PARTICIPATE. ENGAGE. SHARE. CONNECT.

We believe that competitions are one of the best ways for photographers to gain valuable international exposure and connect with the photography marketplace. That's why we invite you to enter our 4th annual Emerging Talent Awards, which are dedicated to discovering the best emerging photographers from all over the world.

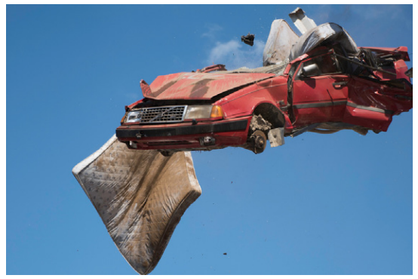
Awards will include a digital gallery exhibition at the International Center of Photography Museum in New York City; $20,000 in grants; opportunities for exposure at over 50 international photography festivals; inclusion in the upcoming photobook, *The Best of LensCulture Today: 150 Contemporary Photographers,* which will be distributed and sold worldwide and so much more. Don't miss this opportunity to expose your work to a global photography community of over 2 million!

© DELPHINE SCHACHER
Finalist / Portrait Awards 2014

© DAVID FAVROD
Winner / Exposure Awards 2013

© FABIAN MUIR
Finalist / Magnum Awards 2016

© SIAN DAVEY
Juror's Pick / Emerging Talent 2014



© PASI ORRENSALO
Finalist / Exposure Awards 2015

WORDS OF WISDOM FOR EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHERS

DAVID ALAN HARVEY

Photographer,
Magnum Photos

Why not go for the edge? Life is short. The biggest risk you can take is to wait, instead of doing what you love. **You can't plan anything anyways, so you might as well take a chance on something you're passionate about**...Tap into your own feelings, strike a chord in the viewer. Tell a story and reach down to express some real emotion.

To take photographs means to recognize — simultaneously and within a fraction of a second — both the fact itself and the rigorous organization of visually perceived forms that give it meaning. It is putting one's head, one's eye and one's heart on the same axis. — HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

BRONWEN LATIMER

Deputy Director of Photography, *The Washington Post*

Owning a topic, or a technique, is usually what sets new photographers apart from the crowd. To do this, you have to have a passion for your subject and the confidence to keep working at it—no matter what people tell you.

CRISTINA DE MIDDEL

Photographer, INSTITUTE

Be honest—about your passions, about your position, about what you have to say. Imagine that I'm walking down the street and you, a complete stranger, stop me. Before you do, think about why you are coming to me, why you are telling me this? It can be a small subject or the whole world, it doesn't matter, but you just need to be a legitimate speaker for whatever subject you choose. I will be interested if you are honest.

PHOTOGRAPHERS' SUCCESS STORIES

FLOODLIT FOOTBALL GROUNDS OF SUSSEX, ENGLAND AT NIGHT
Winner
Emerging Talent Awards, 2015

Being named an Emerging Talent in 2015 was the best thing that has happened to me in my 30 years as a photographer. Before that, my pictures had only really been looked at by friends, family and occasionally been shown in various publications...**but I woke up one morning to messages from friends congratulating me on having my photos in their UK morning newspapers and then they went viral online overnight**...I recommend anyone who is serious about their photography to enter this year's competition. It really does provide much needed exposure and the LensCulture team are extremely supportive. I can't thank them enough.

IAN HUGHES

Emerging Talent 2015
Photographer

SIT SILENTLY
Winner
Emerging Talent Awards, 2014

Since I was selected, I have received unparalled attention. My series was published on several websites and journals from across the world—*The Guardian*, *New East*, *Burn Magazine*, *The Calvert Journal*, *London Independent Photography*, *FK Annual* (yearbook of Latvian Photography 2016) to name just a few. I was invited to participate with the project in the Angkor Photography Festival, the Kaunas Photo festival (Lithuania), in a general exhibition of Riga Photo Month 2016 and the still ongoing Month of Photography in Minsk. Even if time has passed since this competition, I still feel guided and supported with important news, useful advice and long-lasting opportunities and benefits from the community.

KATRINA KEPULE

Emerging Talent 2014
Photographer

STREETS IN HONG KONG
Winner
Emerging Talent Awards, 2014

LensCulture is one of the most successful platforms for contemporary photography. They discover talented photographers and expose them to an international audience. **I had an exhibition in Barcelona and an artist talk in London after winning this award.** Also, many galleries later became interested in my works. I highly recommend you, my photographer friends, to try to show your works to the world.

SARAH CHOI

Emerging Talent 2014
Photographer

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITIONS

© YIJUN LIAO
Winner / Exposure Awards 2013

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITIONS

Competitions are an excellent way to get your work in front of the people who matter—influential jury members who can have a career-building impact on any photographer. That said, there are a lot of photo competitions to consider, and the quality and results vary widely. We asked hundreds of photographers who entered our competitions, as well as photography experts, to define the most important factors for choosing competitions. Here is a checklist of things to consider when entering a competition.

© HANNAH COOPER MCCAULEY
Winner / Emerging Talent Awards 2015

© EDUARDO LEAL
Winner / Earth Awards 2015

© HELGE SKODVIN
Finalist / Magnum Photography Awards 2016

© MOLLY LAMB
Winner / Emerging Talent Awards 2015

© ZORA MURFF
Winner / Emerging Talent Awards 2015

HOW TO EVALUATE PHOTO COMPETITIONS

Hosting Organization

Look for organizations that are well-known and well-respected in the international photography world. Influential organizations can provide winning photographers with meaningful exposure that can lead to career-building opportunities.

The Jury

An influential jury panel with decision-making power in the photography community can be one of the greatest assets offered to you when entering a photo competition. Think about whether or not the people on the jury can help your work be featured, published, shown or acquired.

Exposure Opportunities—Exhibitions

Exhibitions are great for your CV and can help to legitimize you in the photography community. That said, there is a wide range of exhibition prestige, so it's worth looking into where a show will be, if it's offered, and who will be in attendance.

Exposure Opportunities—Printed Publications

Having your photographs included in a printed publication of award-winning work has long lasting benefits, and can help put you and your work in front of important people who may not be able to attend an exhibition.

Exposure Opportunites—Online

The overall value of an award package should last beyond an initial cash award or press release, and provide you with continued opportunities for growth. Online promotion can exponentially increase awareness of your work in the photography community.

Cash Awards

Cash awards demonstrate that there is tangible value to the work you are doing, and the money can often help fund continued work, new projects, or publication of a book. Awards or grants can keep your practice alive and allow you to focus more attention on your photography.

Theme

Themed competitions can be helpful by offering you an opportunity that is particular to your specialty. While not all competitions have themes, you might be asked to submit to a specific category or genre. Take the time to look into themes and categories that best represent your work to maximize your shot at being selected for an award.

Eligibility

Read the rules and guidelines for eligibility carefully. Make sure you fit any requirements for age, location, themes and levels. Pay attention to instructions about the number of images you can submit, naming and numbering the photos, or adding captions and text.

Entry Fees

Often, entry fees are necessary to offer award packages and keep helpful organizations running. Compare fees with other competitions, and if they seem reasonable, make sure you understand all the costs involved. Sometimes winners will be required to pay additional fees to cover costs of exhibitions, for example, so make sure to read all the rules.

Photographer Rights

You should always retain all copyrights to your own work. Competitions may want to use your winning photographs to help publicize you and your work (which is great!), but make sure it's done fairly. You should always be credited for your work and it should never be used without your permission.

Feedback from Previous Winners

Looking at previous winners and their experiences **after** their award announcement can be a good indicator of whether the competition is worthwhile to enter. It's always a good sign if you've seen their work displayed in other places and if they are willing to tell the world how much the competition helped them gain more recognition.

After the Competition

Sometimes competitions offer benefits for participants beyond the deadline. For example, look for awards that receive publicity from online and print media—a great way to enjoy continuing worldwide attention. There might also be follow-on opportunities for all entrants, not just the winners.

10 TIPS FOR ELEVATING YOUR COMPETITION ENTRIES WITH LAURA PRESSLEY

LAURA PRESSLEY

Ms. Pressley directs one of the most effective and outcome-driven programs for photographers in the world, CENTER's annual juried photographic portfolio review event, Review Santa Fe.

1 Put Your Best Images First

Grab jurors' attention right away and show the images with the most impact, emblematic of the project as a whole, at the beginning of the submission. Jurors view hundreds of bodies of work during the review process, and just like writing an arresting leading paragraph of a book, you want to start strong.

2 Simple, Clean Language

A clear, simple artist or project statement makes for a stronger submission. Clearly state your project's focus in the first sentence or two. Explain why the subject of your work is a unique and compelling perspective on an important, timely subject matter. Answer "Why is this important?" for the here and now.

3 Resolved Technique

The technique should be perfect or near perfect. Remember, judging is typically a subtractive process—so don't give the jurors a reason to say no. Poorly edited images will detract from the success of the submission. It's important to recognize that you are judged by your weakest, as well as your strongest images.

4 Remove Redundancies

We recommend a tight edit on submissions; remove any images that may be redundant or not as strong as the other images. It's better to have fewer strong images than dilute your message with images that are not adding new information.

5 Show Something New

There is nothing more exciting to a juror than finding work that feels fresh and shows the viewer something new about our world. Don't be afraid to submit work that feels different than most of what you see.

6 Authenticity

Show jurors why they should care about the work by sharing a bit of your personal connection to the subject matter through your statement. Jurors are looking for an answer to the question why YOU are making these images at this time.

7 Personal to the Universal

Work that is relevant to a national/international audience should go beyond the personal and speak to a moment in time (political, social, technological, emotional, etc.) on the issues of our changing world, of our future, or our collective past. If your work is very personal, explain its connection to the universal; or, if it is broad, explain your personal experience within the subject matter.

8 Time-Sensitivity

Subject matter that is relevant now tends to be most competitive. If you made work in the past and you wish to get it recognized, the best time is an anniversary of that event or when there is new information revealed to add to the understanding of the subject. Most work is in some way relevant now, as it is being created in light of the artist's engagement with the surrounding world.

9 Form Complements Content

Form is your technique and content is your subject matter. Jurors are looking for inextricably linked and complimentary form and content of the work. (An example of combining the content with the way in which the object is made would be *In The Garden* by Beth Dow. The work of the historical English garden was printed with a long-held traditional platinum/palladium process reinforcing the concept and feel of the subject.)

10 Show Truth and Beauty

The most competitive submissions tend to have an element of truth with an aestheticized approach. Work that is beautiful without a larger purpose or conversely, journalism without strong aesthetic signifiers, tend to not be as competitive as work that has elements of both.

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM COMPETITION JURORS

JIM CASPER

Editor-in-Chief, *LensCulture*

Every great picture tells a story and should be able to stand on its own, but viewers are often eager to know a little bit more about what the photo is about. **So a simple title or caption, or a few words, can make a great photo really come to life in someone's imagination.** If you've created a series of images, think of them as a story. By providing context for the story, and momentum with your edit and sequencing, you will keep your readers engaged from start to finish...and the memory of your project will linger in their minds, encouraging them to continue to think about the issues and ideas you have presented.

Look and think before opening the shutter. The heart and mind are the true lens of the camera. – YOUSUF KARSH

JAMES ESTRIN

Photo Editor,
New York Times Lens Blog

…when I judge a contest **I look for photographs that make me feel something.** Anything. I also look for stories that are original. I see thousands of stories a year and most are sadly quite similar. So a story that I haven't seen before, or a unique approach to a story that I have seen before goes very, very far. Take chances!

SARAH LEEN

Photo Editor,
National Geographic

What separates a good photo from a great photo is a feeling somewhere between what I feel physically and what I would call an 'aesthetic experience.' It's almost like the beginning of a love affair, you are just drawn to the image, you are lifted off your feet, you are moved. You just have to have it. You want to ask them to dance.

PHOTOGRAPHERS' SUCCESS STORIES

HEAVILY LOADED
Winner
Emerging Talent Awards 2014

Since I was named an Emerging Talent, I received a lot of visibility for my project. My work was exhibited in Barcelona and shortlisted by VII photographer Stefano De Luigi for a contest by *Life Framer*. I was also published in *Bloomberg Business*, the *BBC*, *Colors Magazine* and many blogs and websites...**It has been a great opportunity to move forward in the industry and to be named among the top 50—it really gave me a sense of pride and a new impulse to pursue my career.** I know that it made me feel more confident with myself and the project.

EUGENIO GROSSO

Emerging Talent 2014
Photographer

UCP-UMCG
Juror's Pick
Emerging Talent Awards 2015

It started with an e-mail from the *Daily Mail*, after they had seen the article on *LensCulture* and *Spiegel*. They asked a couple of questions and put it on their website. After that, a bomb exploded in my mailbox. I got interviewed by *The HuffingtonPost*, *Redbook*, *Feature Shoot, Refinery29*, *WunderWeib* and many more. Then, I found myself on the frontpage of *Yahoo*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Marie Claire*, *Empowering Women* and so many more...**This media attention resulted in the sharing of my story world-wide as well as selling many prints and books. I've even been offered an opportunity to exhibit in New York City!**

LAURA HOSPES

Emerging Talent 2015
Photographer

NORTHWOODS JOURNAL
Winner
Emerging Talent Awards 2015

It's been a really busy and fantastic year...biggest of all, my "Northwoods Journals" book was released in November! It's been mentioned in a few year-end / best of list — most notably by *Photo Eye*, *Lenscratch* and *Flak Photo*. Also, just yesterday, *American Photo* featured the project on their front page! So that's just a few things...all very exciting!

KURT SIMONSON

Emerging Talent 2015
Photographer

10 PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITIONS TO ENTER

1. **Aperture Portfolio Prize**

   VISIT THE SITE »

2. **Wildlife Photographer of the Year**

   VISIT THE SITE »

3. **CENTER Choice Awards**

   VISIT THE SITE »

4. **International Photography Awards**

   VISIT THE SITE »

5. **Communication Arts Photography Competition**

   VISIT THE SITE »

6 **LensCulture Competitions**

VISIT THE SITE »

7 **Photolucida Critical Mass**

VISIT THE SITE »

8 **World Press Photo**

VISIT THE SITE »

9 **Sony World Photography Awards**

VISIT THE SITE »

10 **FOAM Talent**

VISIT THE SITE »

03

SUBMISSION
REVIEWS

© JULIA FULLERTON-BATTEN
Finalist / Magnum Photography Awards 2016

LENSCULTURE SUBMISSION REVIEWS

We believe that every photographer who enters competitions deserves thoughtful feedback on their work. That's why we designed our Submission Review service to help you be more successful in future photo competitions. This is a service for you to receive critical and constructive feedback on your photography from top photo editors, curators, publishers, gallerists, educators, critics, consultants, and other industry professionals. This continues to be one of the most valuable services we offer for photographers—read on to learn more!

© CHERYL MEDOW
Finalist / Earth Awards 2015

© PATRICK WILLOCQ
Winner / Emerging Talent Awards 2014

© EL RONO
Finalist / Portrait Awards 2015

© JORGE DE LA TORRIENTE
Winner / Emerging Talent Awards 2014

© JENNIFER MCCLURE
Winner / Emerging Talent Awards 2015

PHOTOGRAPHERS' FEEDBACK ON THEIR SUBMISSION REVIEW

Submission Review - Visual Storytelling 2015 – Series Category by Christian Bobst

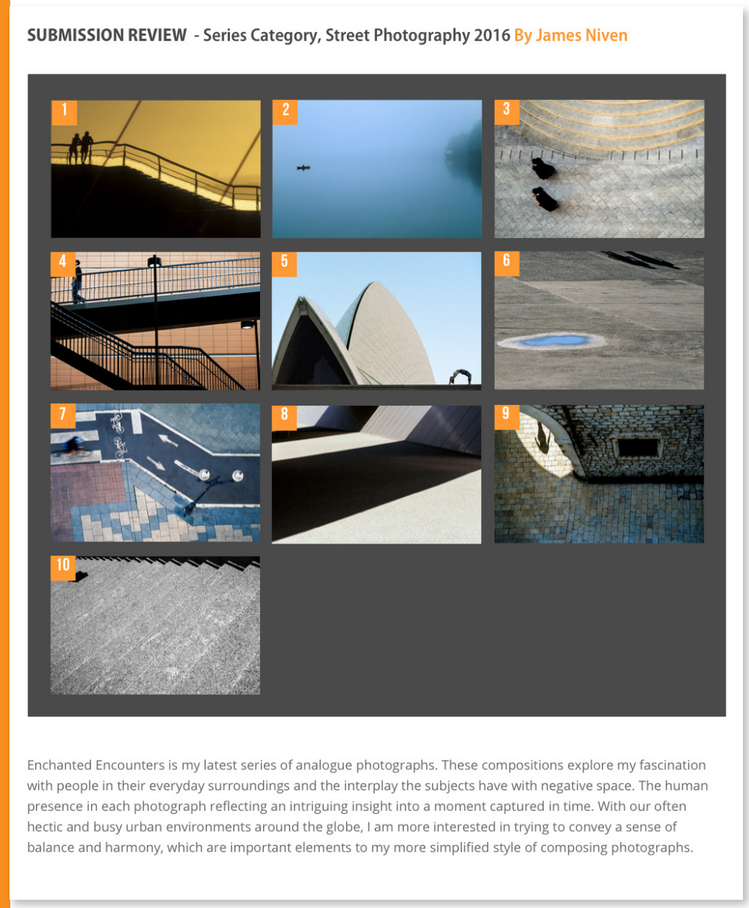
Senegalese Wresling is called "la lutte senegalese" in French and "lamb" in the local language Woloff. It´s the most popular sport in Senegal. In fact it´s even more popular then soccer. Everyone, from boy or girl to grandmother and grandfather gathers in front of a TV when the big tournaments are taking place in the biggest sports arena in the capital Dakar. Senegalese wrestling is quite similar to wrestling in many other countries, with one remarkable difference: black and white magic play a major role in the fights and the wrestlers pay a fortune for amulets, spells and magic fluids from wizards who are called "Marabouts". The magic amulets are proudly presented by the wrestlers before the fight, and the preparations with the Marabouts are an important part of the show, along with ritual drums, dances and hypnotically chants. In the last few years senegalese wrestling drew the attention of big sponsors, mostly telecom companies, and the trophy money increased dramatically. Nowadays the winner of a big tournament can get around three to four hundred thousand Euros for just one fight. Therefore, many young Senegalese are dreaming of a career in wrestling, and over twenty thousand men in Dakar have already registered to fight as professional wrestlers, while the number is growing every day.

I really have to say thank you (BIG TIME!) to the LensCulture team: first of all, for the submission review I received after the LensCulture Award — it really helped me to re-edit the 8 pictures for the World Press Photo Award submission, where I then won 2nd prize! Second, for the publication of this story on the front page of LensCulture. Your article went online just a few days before the judging process, so it's very well possible that that was also helpful for convincing the jury. Keep up the great work at LensCulture, you do an amazing job for photographers and the photography world!

LEARN MORE ABOUT SUBMISSION REVIEWS »

CHRISTIAN BOBST

LensCulture Visual Storytelling 2015 Finalist



Not in my wildest dreams did I expect such a positive response! Thank you! It gives me validation to continue on my photographic journey, always being honest and true to what I see and feel. Besides this, I received a very encouraging and thorough critique of each image. Also noted and appreciated were all the relevant and further reading links. Thanks so much.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SUBMISSION REVIEWS »

JAMES NIVEN

Photographer

I found the comments most perceptive, precise and accurate. I will certainly bear them in mind when resuming this project (or other projects of a similar stylistic profile). I appreciate the fact that the reviewer meticulously analysed all the technical details of the photos, as well as the general idea underlying the whole series. Thank you very much!

LEARN MORE ABOUT SUBMISSION REVIEWS »

ALICJA DYBOWSKA

Photographer

ADVICE FROM THREE SUBMISSION REVIEWERS

Practice, practice, practice. We all start somewhere, and understanding your gear and your own vision is imperative towards creating images that will draw the viewer in as well as make you want to push your skills further. **Read books on photography. The library has nothing but free books and seeing the images in print will give a more tangible experience towards the reason we take photos.** When you get butterflies from an image you took, that is the style that will drive you.

To me, photography is an art of observation. It's about finding something interesting an ordinary place... I've found it has little to do with the things you see and everything to do with the way you see them. — ELLIOTT ERWITT

Always take your camera with you. Shoot constantly, edit later. And then ask yourselves these questions: What do you want to communicate? Who is your target audience and how are you employing subject matter, composition and technique to communicate content? What is your end goal? Are you striving to be a fine artist? Photojournalist? Portrait artist? Supplier of web content? Will you be printing and selling your photographs, selling online, etc.? How have photographers you admired reached their goals? Look at the CVs of photographers you admire or those who take similar images. Where have they exhibited? Where are their images published?

Do something because you love it. Practicing photography, in any capacity that you find, may or may never lead to the kind of audience you hope it might—so *you* have to decide for yourself if you care enough to look when no one else does. And if you still want to, then go for it... **Love, passion—these words have become endlessly conceptualized but their intention is to discover the root of what you care about most.** Go right into the darkest, deepest foundation you have and you will find yourself progressing toward a path of making the work that gives back something beyond anything you could imagine.

© BENOIT PAILLÉ
Winner / Emerging Talent Awards 2015

PORTFOLIO REVIEWS

We asked the LensCulture community what information would be the most useful in order to help photographers move forward in their careers. One of the top requests we received was for further insights into the portfolio reviews happening around the world and how to best prepare for them.

To help you, we tapped into our network of portfolio review organizers and gathered insider tips and advice on how to present work at portfolio reviews. Read on for the most valuable information that we found.

© CAROLINA SANCHEZ-MONGE
Finalist / Exposure Awards 2015

© MIKA SPERLING
Winner / Emerging Talent Awards 2015

ÁLVARO CALVO
Winner / Emerging Talent Awards 2015

© GARETH BRAGDON
Finalist / Magnum Photography Awards 2016

© KARMEN AYVAZYAN
Winner / Visual Storytelling Awards 2015

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A PORTFOLIO REVIEW

Before a Portfolio Review

GET TO KNOW THE REVIEWERS. Nearly all the experts we asked said doing a little research to get to know the personality and taste of your reviewers is a step you simply can't skip in preparing for a portfolio review.

EDIT YOUR PORTFOLIO SMARTLY. No matter what body of work you want reviewed, take the time to edit your portfolio carefully and organize it for easy viewing. Also, make sure to be focused on a particular project (or two) instead of showing scattered, general examples of the work you do.

PREPARE YOUR MATERIALS. In addition to bringing along your portfolio, a common recommendation is to prepare materials to leave behind for your reviewers. Your "leave-behinds" should be small enough to fit in a pocket and include an image that makes it easy for your reviewer to remember your project when they look back on all the work they reviewed that day.

During a Portfolio Review

KEEP TRACK OF TIME. Most portfolio reviews are limited to around 20 minutes, so make sure you leave time after your presentation for your reviewers to speak and give you feedback.

BE OPEN TO FEEDBACK. Remember that you attend portfolio reviews to get valuable feedback from people in the industry, so keep an open mind!

TAKE NOTES. It's a good idea to bring a pencil and pad of paper so that you can take notes from the feedback your reviewers give you. You can also record the conversation, which will allow you to focus more clearly on what the reviewer is saying. Often, it is easy to forget the details of a conversation without some tidy notes to jog your memory!

After a Portfolio Review

FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR REVIEWERS. You should always send a thank you note, when possible, and follow up with any additional materials your reviewers requested.

EDIT YOUR WORK. Take the feedback you received and use it as an opportunity to re-edit your work with a fresh set of eyes and a new perspective.

STAY ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY. Remember that meeting experts and photographers in the industry is a chance to grow your network and stay connected. Those connections you make are meaningful!

TIPS FROM EXPERIENCED PORTFOLIO REVIEWERS

LAURA MOYA

Executive Director,
Photolucida

Attending a portfolio review is perhaps the most efficient investment you can make in marketing your work. Sitting face-to-face with industry professionals who you would not usually find accessible can be priceless—they are there to specifically offer opportunities and/or feedback in a supportive environment. Portfolio reviews are an intense experience, both for the reviewers and photographers. Professional and personal relationships are forged, networks are strengthened, and the immersion in all things photographic around the clock can be a cathartic, inspirational adventure!

There is only you and your camera. The limitations in your photography are in yourself, for what we see is what we are. — ERNST HAAS

BRIAN TAYLOR

Director,
Center for Photographic Art

Try to create a consistent thread or theme in your portfolio. A consistent voice is a sign of maturity in an artist, rather than a scattered presentation of more random, “greatest hits.” Maturing as an artist and finding your own authentic voice takes time, years actually. Don’t seek fame and approval before the work is ready, or you may be setting yourself up for a lukewarm reception and disappointment. Most importantly, never let anyone take the wind out of your sails. Listen with one ear open and one ear closed! You must have thick skin in the art-world! As Henry Miller advises, “Paint as you like and die happy.”

Regardless of how you feel inside, always try to look like a winner. Even if you are behind, a sustained look of control and confidence can give you a mental edge that results in victory. – DIANE ARBUS

JENNIFER MURRAY

Executive Director,
Filter Photo Festival

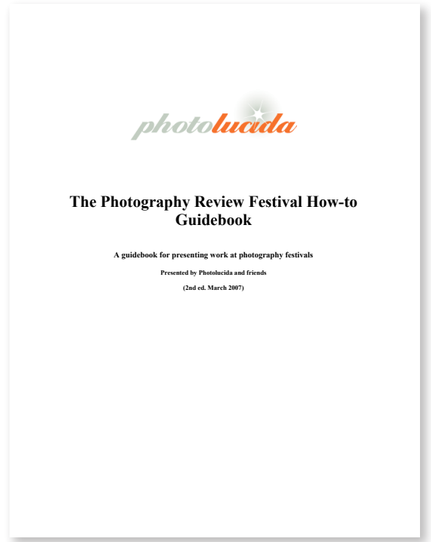
Always bring a tightly edited body of work to a review. More than one body of work is fine, but they should be separate. It is also important to have some goals in mind before the review: are you looking for opportunities to exhibit or looking for feedback on a new project? **The best way to prepare for a portfolio review is to research the reviewers. You will get the most out of the review if you know who will be a good fit for your work.** Also, a high degree of professionalism is expected: images that are well printed and easy to handle in a portfolio box (no sleeves please) and a business card so the reviewer can follow up and see more work on your website. Lastly, remember that you came to hear what others have to say about your work so be open and give the reviewer time to comment.

Be daring, be different, be impractical, be anything that will assert integrity of purpose and imaginative vision against the play-it-safers, the creatures of the commonplace, the slaves of the ordinary. – CECIL BEATON

RESOURCES FOR PORTFOLIO REVIEWS

Photolucida: The Photography Review Festival How-to Guidebook

Every other April at Photolucida, an international set of photographers and reviewers gather in Portland, Oregon for a five-day celebration of photography that includes lectures, workshops, and exhibition collaborations. Photolucida asked several photographers who frequently attend review festivals for their collective wisdom about how to make the festival experience as positive and successful as possible.

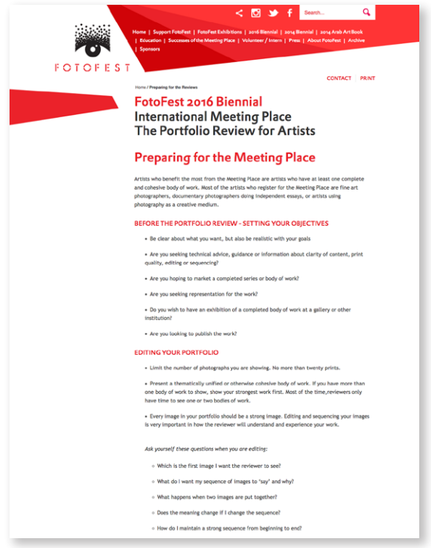


READ THEIR ADVICE ON PRESENTING WORK AT A PHOTO FESTIVAL »

FotoFest: Portfolio Reviews for Artists

FotoFest's purpose is to promote the exchange of art and ideas through international programs and the presentation of photographic art. They host the Meeting Place portfolio reviews during the Biennial.

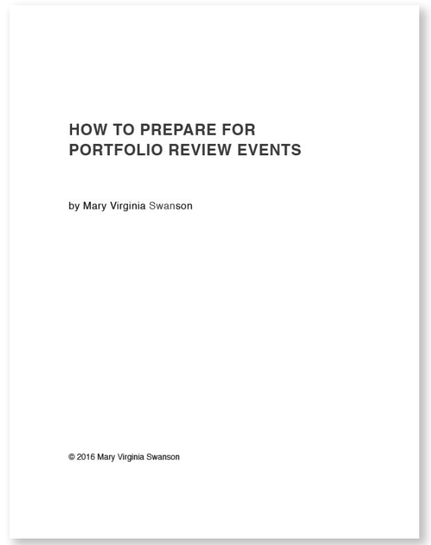
GET THEIR GUIDE ON PREPARING FOR PORTFOLIO REVIEWS »



Mary Virginia Swanson: How to Prepare for Portfolio Reviews

Mary Virginia Swanson makes it her goal to help photographers find the strengths in their work and identify appreciative audiences for their prints, exhibitions and licensing placements. Her informative seminars and lectures on marketing opportunities have proven to aid countless photographers in moving their careers to the next level.

DOWNLOAD HER GUIDE ON HOW TO PREPARE FOR PORTFOLIO REVIEWS »



05

MARKETING

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MARKETING FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

The world of marketing can be overwhelming and intimidating. With so much to cover in such a broad topic, we've touched on a few easy ways you can take your marketing efforts to the next level, including actionable tips as well as a list of resources available on the internet, for free.

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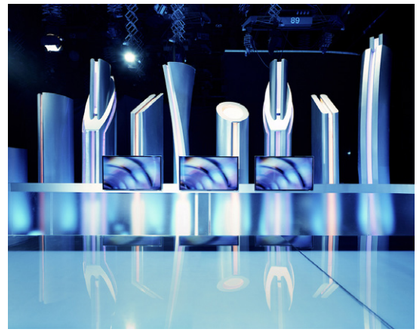

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THE BASIC MARKETING CHECKLIST

Start a Facebook Page

First, we've found that building an artist's Facebook Page is more effective than simply using your personal Facebook profile to promote your work. By building a Page, you can take advantage of a number of tools to optimize how you share your work: these include deep insights into the level of engagement your work is producing as well as which posts are doing best.

Start Networking

Getting yourself out there on social media as well as at in-person events can have a huge impact on your marketing efforts. Make sure you attend all the local events where other photographers and industry people might be, and bring along business cards or samples of your work to distribute. Collect email addresses from everyone you meet and start communicating with them regularly through an email newsletter.

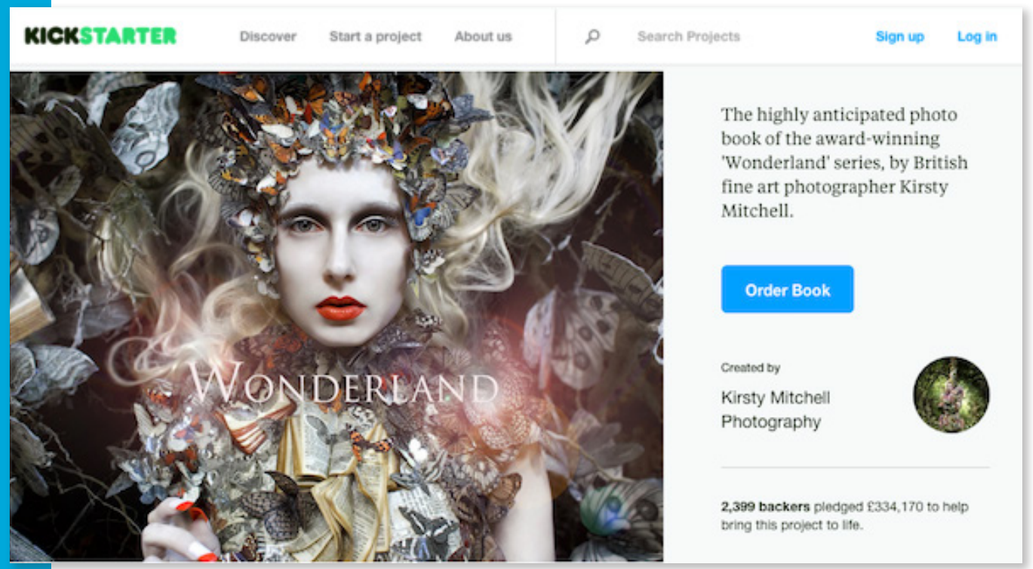
Improve Your Website

Update your website frequently to stay ahead of online best practices. Once you have a format you're happy with, putting up new work on a consistent schedule is hugely important. There are a ton of great tools available that make it easy for you to build an awesome site that is optimized for search engines, marketing, and selling your work.

Start Blogging

Frequent blog posts not only give you material to share on social media and send out to your email contacts, but it also gives you an avenue to improve the way your website performs. New posts that cover relevant topics help search engines keep ranking your website higher on search results so that more people will find you.

WHAT'S POSSIBLE WITH EFFECTIVE MARKETING: KIRSTY MITCHELL'S AUDIENCE GROWTH



LensCulture Visual Storytelling Awards 2014 Winner Kirsty Mitchell is a great example of a photographer who has built a huge audience on Facebook—currently at over 350,000 people! Her fans helped her set a record for the most successful Kickstarter photobook campaign ever, raising over $500,000 for her *Wonderland* book. Kirsty is an inspiring example of what's possible when photographers build their own audience on Facebook.

GOING DEEPER ON FACEBOOK

Creating an artist's Facebook page is a great way to stay in touch with your growing audience. This is NOT the same as just having a personal Facebook profile. If you don't have a Facebook page, you can create one here.

Your page can serve as a gathering point for all your photography on social media. Once you have created the page, start posting often and share the page with your friends to grow your audience.

For example, Alain Laboile, a photographer on LensCulture, has used his Facebook page to grow a following of over 22,000 people [shown left]. This group of people—who love and support his work—are available to him whenever he has a new photo or project to share.

Tips for Starting an Artist's Facebook Page

1. First, we've found that a **Facebook Page** is more effective than simply using your personal Facebook profile to promote your work. By building a Page, you can take advantage of a number of tools to optimize how you share your work: these include deep insights into the level of engagement your work is producing as well as which posts are doing best.

2. Make sure to select a profile photo that let's people know exactly who you are, and a cover photo that is a good representation of your work. **Update the cover photo often** to showcase different projects you're working on.

3. In the **Artist, Brand or Public Figure** page option, you should select **Photographer** or **Artist**. This will help make your page visible to those interested in the arts, specifically photography. Note that you can link your page to your personal website or LensCulture Portfolio, which will allow people to discover even more of your photography.

SHOWCASE YOUR WORK IN A PHOTO ALBUM

Photo Albums are one of the best ways to get your audience to interact with your work. Albums let you upload a group of photos all at once, providing you with a great way to focus your following on a new project, or share a competition entry that you want to get feedback on.

You can also "pin" your album to the top of your timeline (see instructions below). This means that any time someone visits your page, the album is the first thing they will see. At LensCulture, we use this strategy as a way of highlighting something new and making sure our audience doesn't miss it. Many photographers, like Alain, also use it to engage with their Facebook fans.

As most people are simply posting single images to Facebook, that means a well-curated album will set you apart. Besides your usual postings, think of albums as a different point of engagement with your fans, offering them a deeper way to interact with your work.

How to Pin a Facebook Album to the Top of Your Timeline

1. Select a group of photos that go together as a series—whether it's a new project or a competition entry that you are working on—and upload those into an album on Facebook.

2. Give your album a title representative of the project and a description that will offer helpful context for those reading the post.

3. Publish your Facebook album to your page.

4. Once the post that announces your newly published album has appeared on your Timeline, click on the drop down menu on the upper-right hand corner of the post. Click "Pin to Top" and your album will stay there until you unpin it!

POST OFTEN: NEW PROJECTS, NEWS AND RECOGNITION

Do you have a special project you want to promote to your audience, like a photography book? How about an exhibition, award, media feature, etc...? Your Facebook page is a great place to post updates on your work, including photos of your book (consider including photos of book spreads), announcements of your exhibitions, even a mention of you or your work in a blog. **Don't be shy! According to Facebook, only 16% of posts reach their fans.** That means you can post as often as you have content to share.

Post About Your Exhibitions

Has your work been featured in an exhibition?

Collect photos of your work up on the walls at galleries, museums, and shows and get those shots up on Facebook!

Showing your work being featured in live events illustrates how active you are in the photography community, as well as helps to promote the event itself.

This is a great way to make your fans aware of how your career is progressing and also offers an opportunity to have industry professionals see that your work is currently enjoying real-world exposure and recognition.

Post When Your Work is Featured

When your work is **mentioned in blogs, publications or press, make sure to make that known on your Facebook page.**

Press mentions are a great way to let people know who is talking about your work, and to inform your fans on new projects or special awards you've received.

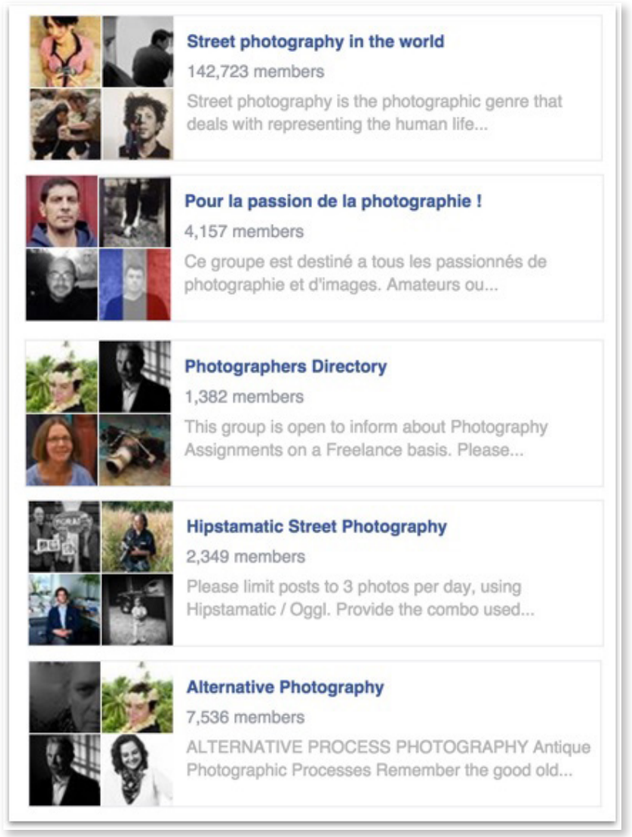
Recognition is important, and you should be proud every time you receive it! **Post links to articles that mention your work or awards you have won** so people can read about your special moments.

Post About New Projects, Photo Books, and Videos

Are you releasing a new photo book or have a new project about to launch? Get it up on your Facebook page!

Your fans want to hear about new opportunities to engage with your work, and letting them know about a new release is the best way to do that.

JOIN FACEBOOK PHOTOGRAPHY GROUPS



Facebook Groups offer access to a number of active photography communities, often focused on specific topics. We strongly recommend you join all the groups that are relevant to your work and to the topics you're interested in.

Facebook Groups are also a great place to post your work, particularly your submission to the LensCulture Emerging Talent Awards 2016. Over half of photographers who enter our competitions share their work on Facebook. You can get exposure for your work, as well as get feedback from the community on how to improve it before the deadline on Tuesday, October 18th.

How do you find good photography groups to join? **Simply search Facebook for "Groups about Photography"**—you'll even see groups your friends have joined!

ADVICE FROM A PHOTOGRAPHY MARKETING EXPERT

MARY VIRGINIA SWANSON

Executive Director of LOOK3 Festival, Educator, Author, Entrepreneur

Follow some basic rules when making your art: conceptualize your project, conduct thorough research toward its production, and title the work consistently, as this will become a system for organizing and researching your work over time. Always make the images to the highest possible standards and research the best final print output and presentation (seek professional guidance if appropriate and necessary here). Consider the market for your work when applying the price point which each series will begin selling for.

Pick a theme and work it to exhaustion...the subject must be something you truly love or truly hate. – DOROTHEA LANGE

FREE RESOURCES FOR MARKETING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY

1 **11 Ways to get Free Marketing for your Photography from Digital Photography School**

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2 **3 Ways to Market Your Photography Business in 2016**

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3 **The Photographer's Guide to Facebook from Photoshelter**

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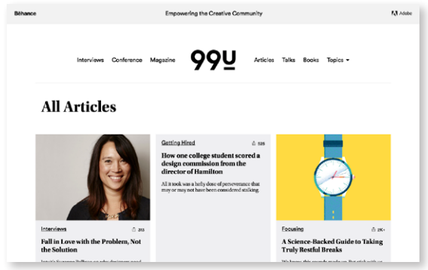

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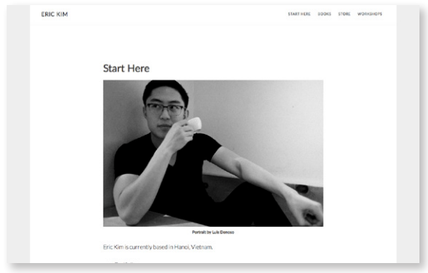

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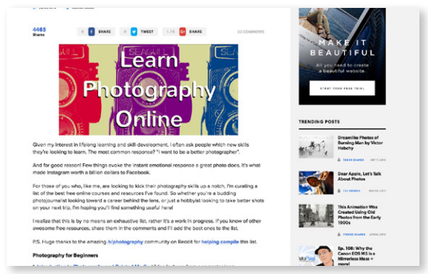

6 **Petapixel: 25 Great Online Courses & Tutorials**

LEARN MORE »

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A special thanks to all the contributors for their valuable time and advice.
If you have any suggestions for how to make this guide better, please send your ideas to editor@lensculture.com

Discover daily photographic inspiration at www.lensculture.com
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