

Policy on the Integration of Photographic Art into the Buckhorn Fine Art Festival (BFAF)

Background

The definition of fine art by which submissions for the Buckhorn Fine Art Festival are measured is:

“The selective re-creation of reality, to express human perspectives and values, in a highly skilled fashion incorporating creative innovation through the medium of painting, drawing and sculpture. In keeping with the spirit of the qualities of great skill, innovation, etc., the Buckhorn Fine Art Festival also recognizes these qualities in other creative media such as jewellery, ceramics, textiles, wood-turning, photography, etc.”

This has been the criteria applied to all applicants submitting to display among the main body of exhibitors, regardless of whether the considered work was within the BFAF’s working definition of fine art being limited to drawing, painting, and sculpture. Creative works that fall outside of these specific disciplines (pottery, jewellery etc.) may be accepted depending on how closely aligned they are with the working definition that the BFAF holds as the principles of fine art.

Within the BFAF history, photography has been categorized as a class of its own and with this came certain adjustments to the selection process. While the criteria of displaying great skill in the working medium still applied, allowance was made for the mechanical operations inherent to the process, a consideration not made with other types of submissions. ‘In camera’ compositions presented as ‘pure photography’ under this system were acceptable assuming a high standard of image quality and interesting presentation of subject matter.

New Criteria for the Selection of Photographic Art for the BFAF

Within the definition of fine art that forms the mandate for BFAF exhibitor selection there are two qualifiers:

- a) The display of great skill in the working medium and
- b) Creative innovation

Under a ‘fine art first’ selection process, the photographers’ skill factor remains in place, but the quality of creative innovation becomes even more influential in the selection process. Creative innovation in this sense not only favours more unusual ‘in camera’ presentation of imagery, but places a much higher value on ‘out of camera’ techniques that incorporate manipulation made directly by hand, with the camera being used as a tool to assist in the creation of art works. Essentially, high quality in the technical aspects of photography becomes the minimal starting point in the selection process and creative innovation takes on a much more important role.

Assuming the expectation of technical skill as a minimal requirement, we look to the creativity involved that puts the stamp of the individual into the work: not just the choice of subject matter, but how that subject matter is presented, and whether or not this creates a ‘style’ of its own.