

2026 Photo Contest Rules

1. All member studios entering the contest must supply a THUMB/FLASH DRIVE of all images entered. All images on the drive must be the same “color” as the photo entered in the contest. No category is exempt. The association needs these images to promote our organization and your studios. Please make sure that the drive is clearly labeled with the company member’s name. The drive will be returned to you before the end of the convention.

a. **All file names must include:**

- i. **# Category**
- ii. **Entry A or B** (you are allowed to enter two images per category with a maximum of 40 total entries, this should match the contest entry form please)
- iii. **Studio name** (abbreviate, some programs do not handle long file names well)
- iv. **Year (2026)**
- v. **Photographer’s name**

Example: 1_A_DocWenzels_2026_JeffMulvihill.jpg

- vi. **If you enter Category 26 Digitally Enhanced, your original unedited “subject proof” file must be lettered A1 or B1 corresponding to the final work (see Category 26 for more information)**

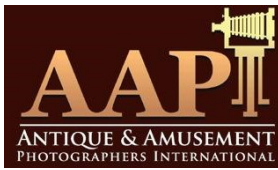
Example: 26_A1_DocWenzels_2026_JeffMulvihill.jpg

2. Any AAP member company in good standing may enter the contest. **Each member company is allowed to enter up to two (2) entries per category, with a maximum of forty (40) total entries.**
3. Enter as many or as few categories as you wish; however, entrants must submit a separate entry form for each photo entered in the contest.
4. **Entry Procedures:** Entries from a company duly registered and with representation at the convention may include photos taken by any employee of that company, regardless of whether that particular employee / photographer is a convention attendee. Entry validation stickers may be purchased on Monday, January 26, from 11 A.M. - 4 P.M. at the AAP registration desk and from 8 P.M. - 10 P.M. at the hospitality suite. The fee for each validation sticker will be \$7. If you enter the maximum number of entries of 40 entries, you will receive a 10% discount.

The photo contest committee requires you to use the downloadable entry forms found on the AAP website (**DON’T FORGET YOUR ENTRY FORMS**). All completed photos and entries must be submitted no later than 10 P.M. on Monday, January 26, 2026. **Please note this requirement to submit your entries on the day before the convention. Call the AAP office for instructions, should your flight be scheduled to arrive on Tuesday, January 27, 2026.**

AAP member companies in good standing, but not registered or in attendance at the Convention, may enter the photo contest for a prepaid \$50 processing fee plus additional fee(s) of \$7 per photo entered, due by December 27, 2025. Non-attending member companies must download and fill in entry forms from the AAP website, and mail the completed entry form, photo, and mat (where required) to **Scott Henry, 3342 Wooded Lane, Baileys Harbor, WI 54202** postmarked on or before December 27, 2025.

5. Any photographic process may be used. Prints may be, but are not limited to, sepia, black and white, full color, or hand tinted.



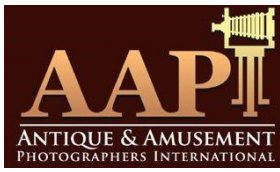
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6. Entry Preparation Instructions:

- a. Photos must be 8x10 inches, except category 26, Digitally Enhanced.
 - b. Photos must be matted except category 26. The maximum outside size of mattes is 11x14 inches except categories 22 and 26 which can be up to 12x18. Mats must be free of any wording, except categories 22 and 26. **Mats MUST be supplied by the entrant's company and may not include studio names or locations.**
 - c. Only category 26 may have a digital border. The digital border may include wording as long as it does not include studio names or locations.
 - d. Please secure the photo in the mat and tape the mat closed in each corner. Mats need to stay closed, **MAKE SURE YOU TAPE EACH CORNER SECURELY.** We suggest double sided or ATG tape.
7. All portraits entered in the contest must have been taken no earlier than January 31, 2025, and no later than Monday, January 26, 2026 (making it contest to contest).
 8. No subject (person or animal) may appear in more than one photo entered in the contest, with the exception that employees may appear in "Best Self Portrait", "Best Staff Portrait", "Digitally Enhanced" or "Murder On the AAPI Express", and may appear in multiple staff photos, but no other category.
 9. All submitted entries remain in the possession of the Photo Contest Committee until released at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, January 29, 2026. All FIRST PLACE WINNERS AND TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE WINNERS remain with the committee until the conclusion of the Backless Ball on Thursday, January 29, 2026. The digital file of each first-place category photo shall become the property of AAPI (submitted on a flash drive as per rule #1). This image may be published in publications, including website publications associated with AAPI, may be used in AAPI news releases, and may be maintained in the archives of the association.
 10. Subjects in photos entered (including re-enactments or entertainers) must be clients of the AAPI Member Company for the photo session (excluding categories 26 (digital), 27 (self), 28 (staff) and 30 (murder))
 11. Artificial Intelligence or "AI" imagery is ONLY allowed in Category 26, Digitally Enhanced. Subject must be real, not AI generated. Must provide original unedited "subject proof" digital file on your THUMB/FLASH DRIVE per Rule 1.
 12. No submissions may violate any Federal, State or Local law on pornography and decency. Entrant companies are responsible for making this determination.
 13. All registered convention attendees are allowed to vote in the contest. Each attendee voting will be required to vote for their choice of best photo (given a weight of 5) and their choice of second-best photo (given a weight of 2) in any given category. You must vote for two different photos in each category. Ballots containing only one vote in a category, the same photo twice, a vote for a photo from a different category, or illegible handwriting will void the votes for that category.

All registered companies represented at the AAPI Backless Ball on Thursday, January 29, 2026, may cast one company ballot for the Best of Show Photo. The Best of Show ballot will require two votes; one for a company's choice of best photo (receiving a weight of 5), and a second vote for the company's choice of second-best photo (receiving a weight of 2) from among those presented. Ballots containing only one vote or voting for the same photo twice will void that company's ballot.

The Photo Contest Committee may employ the use of an outside judge(s) as a part of a data gathering process requested by the AAPI board. Outside judge(s) will not affect the results of the 2026 contest.



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14. The member company winning Best of Show will be awarded a ribbon, a Plaque, and a cash prize of \$100.00. Photos placing First through Honorable Mention in each category will receive ribbons. Certificates for First through Honorable Mention are available from the AAPI Office at \$15 each.
15. Entry photos should not be pre-exhibited except for appearing in the normal course of business in the entrant company's studio, on the entrant company's website and/or on the entrant company's social media page(s). Entry photos may not be used or shown in AAPI convention seminars or activities during the current Convention year.
16. All companies will be required to sign a statement on the entry form that absolves the association of responsibility for the company's failure to obtain a proper model release.