

Festive Season - Creative Challenge



"My Hometown or City After Dark this Festive Season." - Ray Evans.

The main aim of the Festive Season challenge is to use long-exposure photography techniques to capture the lively and celebratory atmosphere of towns or cities during the festive season. The focus is on a technical approach, covering correct exposure, contrast control, processing, and sharpness. Creativity is welcomed through composition and lighting, and participants are allowed to submit only one photograph.

Photographic Focus:

The challenge centres exclusively on night photography, in outdoor settings. Participants are encouraged to showcase the liveliness of their towns or cities, including streets, sidewalks, architecture, and street cafes. The challenge promotes a play between sharpness and blur to capture the essence of the festive season.

Restrictions and Guidelines:

1. No Interior Photography:

- The challenge aims to capture the lively outdoor scenes of a city or town during the festive season.

2. No Creative Multiple Exposures:

- Participants should refrain from using creative multiple exposures for artistic reproduction. However, controlled exposure using HDR (High Dynamic Range) or multiple exposure in a technical way is acceptable.

3. No Art Techniques or Overlays:

- The challenge strictly adheres to a "Pure" photography approach, disallowing physical or digital art techniques.

4. Limitations on Close-ups:

- Close-ups of individual objects, such as people, animals, benches, etc. are discouraged, the emphasis should be kept on the overall vibe of the city.

5. No Black and White Entries:

- The challenge celebrates the festive season's colours, disqualifying monochrome or black and white entries.

6. Emphasis on Technical Challenge:

- Participants are reminded that the challenge is a pure photography endeavour, requiring technical excellence in contrast control, exposure, sharpness and image developing/processing.

Photography Tips:

1. Avoid Dark Areas without Detail:

- Participants should avoid large dark areas in their compositions, ensuring there is colour or detail in the sky areas.

2. Optimal Shooting Time:

- The challenge suggests shooting during twilight for a balance between artificial city lights and natural ambient light.

3. Attention to Contrast:

- Participants are advised to be mindful of contrast control, avoiding blown-out or very dark areas without detail. Contrast can be managed through subject selection, composition adjustments, fill lighting, ambient and artificial light balance, and RAW image processing.

4. Utilise Foreground for Depth:

- Effective use of the foreground is encouraged to add depth to photographs.

5. Vantage Point:

- Photographing the entire town or city from a high vantage point is discouraged. Instead, participants should capture the vibe and mood within the town or city.

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Safety Considerations:

Participants are reminded of the importance of safety during night photography. Common-sense precautions, including avoiding no-go areas and exercising caution with tripod placement in traffic or high vantage points, are encouraged.

Technical Requirements:

- No photographs taken before December 15th, 2023, are eligible.
- Photographs should be taken in camera RAW format to record metadata for date verification.
- Entries must be developed using RAW file processing software, with only minor editing after processing will be accepted.
- A tripod and an external shutter release control are necessary to avoid camera shake.
- No AI-generated images or sky replacements are accepted.
- High dynamic range (HDR) control or technical use of in camera multiple exposures is permitted for contrast control.
- External light sources, such as fill flash or a torch, are acceptable.
- Square, horizontal, vertical, or panoramic formats are accepted.

Inspire Community Engagement:

Participants are encouraged to share their progress on the Inspire community, seeking feedback before the final submission.

Submission and Meet-up:

The challenge concludes on January 14th '24, with a meet-up scheduled for January 17th '24. Details and a link can be found in the challenge menu of the community section on the Art Photography Academy.

In Summary:

This single-entry challenge encapsulates the festive season through a technical approach to night photography, encouraging participants to capture the celebratory atmosphere and mood of their towns or cities exercising creativity through subject choice, camera placement, composition and lighting.