



RHS PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2021 - PORTFOLIO

A GUIDE FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

WHAT IS THE PORTFOLIO CATEGORY ALL ABOUT?

The Portfolio category (category 10) of the RHS Photographic Competition offers all entrants a unique opportunity to have your photography judged for an RHS Medal.

In the other 9 categories of the RHS Photographic Competition, entrants submit individual images which are judged by a panel that selects the winners

The Portfolio category is different because it offers entrants the ability to:

- Submit a portfolio of work based on a minimum 6 images. The submission must form part of an overall series OR have a distinct common theme. It should include a hanging plan with a 250 word statement describing the work.
- From entries submitted, an initial shortlist is created having been assessed by our panel of portfolio judges.
- All photographers shortlisted for the portfolio category, are then invited to prepare their work in print, ready to hang their entry for exhibition at an RHS show
- Exhibits in the portfolio category are judged as a whole against a set of RHS criteria at a designated RHS show.
- The RHS medals offered are (Gold, Silver Gilt, Silver and Bronze)
- A 'best Portfolio Photography exhibit' with a prize is awarded to the most outstanding exhibit.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR ENTERING?

The process for entering the Portfolio category is also a bit different;

- Entries are initially submitted by email (entry is free). Send your image files (minimum of 6 jpegs of 4-10MB in size) with your hanging plan and written statement explaining your motivation for the images, techniques used and any other relevant information via a file transfer site such as WeTransfer to Photoportfolio@rhs.org.uk
- Entries must be submitted by the deadline of **10am (UK time) on 1st February 2021**
- All entries are assessed by members of the Photographic Art Portfolio Judging Panel
- A shortlist is created and shortlisted photographers are invited to exhibit at the RHS Botanical Art and Photography show in April 2020
- Judging takes place at the show and considers all aspects of the entry against RHS criteria including how it is displayed
- Medals are then awarded and the 'best Portfolio Photography exhibit' selected (note that Portfolio entrants are not eligible for the overall winner of the RHS Photographic Competition)

WHY SHOULD I ENTER?

Entering the Portfolio category brings a variety of benefits for professional and hobbyist photographers alike. All submitted entries are carefully reviewed by the judging panel and feedback is provided on request, whether or not you are shortlisted.

If your work is shortlisted and selected for exhibition, it will be seen by visitors to the show including potential buyers and commissioners. You have the opportunity to sell your work and distribute marketing materials at the exhibition. In addition, a selection of Portfolio entries will be part of the RHS Photographic Competition exhibition at RHS Gardens, bringing your work to an even larger audience.

The RHS is also committed to sharing the best images from Portfolio in *The Garden* magazine, bringing your work to an audience of over 450,000 RHS members.

PORTFOLIO RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. IMAGE REQUIREMENTS

- 1.1. All photographs must be mainly of plants, flowers or gardens or some aspect of botany or horticulture, including fungi and lichens. This may include people in a horticultural environment. Images which include other aspects of garden wildlife such as birds, mammals or invertebrates must ensure that they are balanced with sufficient plant content and that the wildlife content is not dominant.
- 1.2. Photographs that have been enhanced digitally will be permitted, but photographers must indicate where digital enhancements have been used in their initial submission statement and, if shortlisted either on literature or interpretation to support their display.
- 1.3. All aspects of every submitted photograph must be the photographer's own work.
- 1.4. Black and white or colour photographs are accepted but not a mixture of both.
- 1.5. Judges will not favour any one photographic style over any other. However, they will expect photographers to use their chosen techniques with awareness and sensitivity.
- 1.6. Images which have been previously exhibited at an RHS show are not permitted.

2. SERIES REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1. A minimum of six images in a series of on a distinct common theme.
- 2.2. The choice of subject is left to the photographer. This might be as general as 'Winter' or as specific as 'The genus Dahlia'.
- 2.3. There must be a stylistic integrity throughout the display.

3. PRE-SELECTION FOR PREVIOUS MEDAL WINNERS

- 3.1. Pre-selection is no longer available for previous winners of medals in RHS Portfolio.
- 3.2. All entrants, including past winners, must submit their entry for shortlisting by the deadline of 10am (UK time) on **1st February 2021**.

4. EXHIBITION REQUIREMENTS

Shortlisted photographers will be invited to print and hang their entry at the RHS Botanical Art & Photography Show (dates to be confirmed) order to be judged for RHS medals. The following rules relate to the exhibition.

- 4.1. Photographers are responsible for the printing, hanging and removal of their exhibit but international entrants may engage a third party to hang/remove their exhibit on their behalf. Public liability insurance, valid in the UK may be required.
- 4.2. Photographers are wholly responsible for providing the necessary fixings to hang their work. Details of the fixings allowed will be provided prior to the exhibition.
- 4.3. The exhibit must fit into the allocated space. Photographers invited to exhibit will be asked to request their preferred space and space will be allocated to ensure all exhibits can be accommodated. There is no guarantee that the requested space will be available. Exhibiting Photographers will be informed as soon as possible as to what their allocated space is.
- 4.4. The exhibit must be labelled in accordance with RHS requirements - full details will be provided to shortlisted photographers. Note that wherever possible photographers should ensure they know the names of the plants, including cultivars, in their images (with the exception of garden views and landscapes where only dominant feature plants require naming)
- 4.5. Manning of exhibits - Photographers may be present during the open hours of the show. Photographers are asked to show consideration to neighbouring photographers and to avoid encroaching on their exhibit space (e.g. obscuring the work of neighbouring photographers when conducting business with prospective clients).

5. JUDGING, AWARDS & PRIZES

- 5.1. The following Royal Horticultural Society medals are available for award:
 - Gold
 - Silver-Gilt
 - Silver
 - Bronze
- 5.2. A cash prize of £500 plus an RHS gift membership is awarded to the Portfolio named Best in Show
- 5.3. Photographs are judged as a complete display so that, if one or more works are of a lower standard than the others with which they are shown, the level of award will be adversely affected.
- 5.4. Entries are shortlisted and judged anonymously with photographer's names only available to the judges after judging is completed.
- 5.5. Judges take into account the overall impression of a display, including details of presentation such as mounting, labelling and framing, the botanical and horticultural content and photographic quality.
- 5.6. Gold medals are only awarded to exhibits of the highest standards. If an exhibit is judged to be below a Bronze medal no award will be made. The judges adhere to strict guidelines and all decisions are reviewed by a Moderator to ensure consistency.
- 5.7. The decision of the judges is final.
- 5.8. Feedback is available on request after judging and is available to all photographers on the first day of the show.
- 5.9. Medal cards will be placed on exhibits. Additional cards may be ordered from the RHS at the show. Each duplicate medal card costs £5.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Is my photography good enough?

Portfolio is judged against a variety of criteria including the technical execution of the photography, how the entry hangs together as a whole, how the entry is presented and the horticultural content of the images. The only way to really know is to enter and as it's free

to submit a digital entry and every unsuccessful entrant receives feedback to help them improve - there is nothing to lose.

2. What is the timeline for Portfolio?

Portfolio entry opens in April 2020 and the deadline for entries is 10am on 1st February 2021. Shortlisted photographers will be contacted in Late March 2021 and judging will take place at the RHS Botanical Art & Photography show (date to be confirmed)

3. Isn't printing and hanging an exhibition expensive?

There are undoubtedly costs to printing and hanging your work. However there are no requirements to use expensive framing to do so and a variety of cost-effective methods of presenting your work are available to you. Work may be displayed unframed with simple card mounts, or on frameless media such as foamcore.

4. Who are the judges?

Portfolio is judged by members of the RHS Photographic Art Portfolio Judging Panel. Panel members come from a wide range of backgrounds, some are professional plant and garden photographers, others are photographers working in other fields such as architecture. Others have their background in plantsmanship or gardening but all have a keen interest in photographic art and plants. Judges are selected each year and they do change year on year depending on their availability.

5. Can I discuss my entry with someone?

If you are considering entering Portfolio for the first time and have questions which this guide does not answer please contact the RHS Portfolio Lead Sian Tyrrell on photoportfolio@rhs.org.uk.

If you have entered Portfolio we are unable to enter into discussions about your entry until after the selection meeting and provision of feedback. If you have been selected to exhibit your work and would like to discuss your exhibit please contact the RHS Portfolio Lead Sian Tyrrell on photoportfolio@rhs.org.uk.

Please do not contact members of the RHS Photographic Art Judging Panel directly about Portfolio. Any enquiries addressed to Panel members directly will be forwarded to the RHS Portfolio Lead for response.

6. When and where will the exhibition be and what if I can't make it?

We are awaiting confirmation on the dates and venue for the 2021 exhibition

International entrants who cannot make the exhibition in person may employ a third party to set up and take down their exhibit and to collect any medal awarded on their behalf. UK entrants who cannot make the exhibition have the option to defer their shortlisted entry to the following year. If you wish to defer your entry please notify photoportfolio@rhs.org.uk before 15th April 2021.

The RHS is unable to assist with the hanging of exhibits.