



STAGED IMAGES

updated July 2022

Photojournalism judges and chairmen should review this document before any images are scored in order to become familiar with ineligible set-ups.

The following examples are staged. They can be entered into PID or PPD, but not in PJD or PTD because they are a result of organized set-ups, identified as such by PTD. **PJ is all about images with informative content and emotional impact, reflecting the human presence in our world. In the interest of credibility, images that misrepresent the truth, such as those from events or activities specifically arranged for photography or of subjects directed or hired for photography, are not eligible.** In other words, PJ is about reality and images from arranged situations are not to be entered in PJ sections. This is dependent on the ethics of the entrant and the opinion of the judges.

If, during the scoring, a judge or chairman is certain an image is staged, they should stop the proceedings and notify their fellow jury members. But that is not always possible to determine, so they must decide whether or not the scene appears to be unplanned. If it is suspected that an image is from an event or activity arranged for photography, or of subjects directed or hired for photography, that image should be scored low. Attending organized photoshoots can be enjoyable and can help expand a photographer's portfolio by providing instruction and new opportunities, but images taken at events organized for photography are not eligible as PJ, and judges do their best to exclude images that appear to have been staged. Since misjudgments can be made, it is advisable not to enter anything that might appear to have been set up, even if it had not been.



The fisherman with his cormorant is a common scene that is staged. A very small number might still practice this type of fishing for self-sufficiency, but there are photography guides in Guilin, China that arrange these shots for a fee.



This scene of the farmer with his ox is set-up for photographers in Guilin.



Many versions of this scene are arranged for paying photographers in the Yang JiaXi village in Xiapu, China. It can be repeated as often as necessary. The fake fog produced by burning leaves can change the appearance of the scene.



Another organized photoshoot at Yang JiaXi is of the famous 'Drying of the Hanging Nets'. These beautiful images of an old-time practice are perfect for PID and PPD but this particular scene is arranged solely for photographers (see scene on right), and therefore not eligible as PJ.



This scene of a farmer walking across this bridge is organized for photographers. There are many variations of this set up taken at the Lishui Xiandu bridge in China.



Be on the lookout for aerial shots of women in red carrying yellow buckets across their shoulders. Similar shots are taken at Dong Bi and Xiao Hao in Xiapu, China, arranged for photographers.



Inle fishermen will sometimes pose for photographers and are paid for their time. Even if the judges did not know this, they might be suspicious of this image of three fishermen, all with baskets facing the same way, or fishermen throwing fishing cages onto the water in unison for perfectly timed splashes. Set-ups can be suspected if they depict unnatural behavior, creating scenes that do not show our world as it is found.



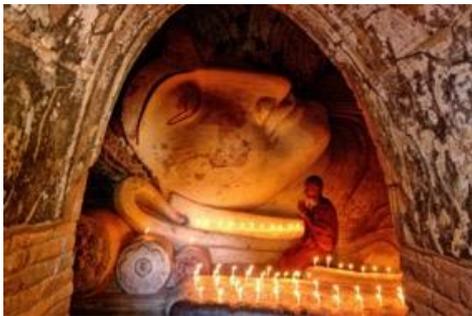
These images were taken at an organized photoshoot in Inner Mongolia. In some versions dogs are running beside the camels. A set-up can be identified when many similar images are submitted to exhibitions. But even if never seen before, one might question how the photographer happened to find two elaborately dressed men racing camels down a sand dune in perfect light. This scene is staged for photographers.



This setup scene is at Tukad Unda dam in Bali. The images are not always of boys and their bright buckets; they sometimes feature adults in costume. Usually the group is directed to perform in unison repeatedly.



In Myanmar, the walkway of the Shwezigon Pagoda in Bagan is a popular spot for staged images of monks. They do come here to receive food very early in the morning. But sometimes they are posing or walking in unison, often holding umbrellas or pots in the same position. One could even question why they would be walking with umbrellas in the shaded colonnade. They do not do this except for photos.



These images of Monks with candles in ancient temples were set-ups organized in Bagan and Inle Myanmar. They show an arrangement of candles in neat patterns which is unusual in normal daily life. Entries in PJ sections must show our world as it is found.



The real monks walk up to the Myatheindan Pagoda in Mingun, Myanmar under a specially built covered path. This image of monks jumping on the wave stones is staged. Even a judge who did not know this should question whether this is likely to be a found moment.



Fishermen walking on stilts carrying nets is a feature of the old days and it is not a common practice now. These days fishermen seldom use this kind of fishing net to catch fish as it is not efficient.



You have to pay a photographer's fee to photograph inside this teahouse. The performance is for the benefit of the photographers. You will see images of water sprays in 'Z' shapes, 'O' shapes and others. If photographers miss the shot, the performer can be paid to redo the water spray. Even if it is not clear that this is a performance for photographers, a judge who did not know the situation should question why the employee would be doing that. Since it is happening for the cameras, these images are not PJ.



This is a popular site in China. It is known that the scenes here are organized for photographers and the models are paid. The owner of this property charges an entrance fee for photographers to enter the area. To the right of these raised banks are colorful circle crab nets. The boatmen are paid and directed to weave their way through these circle crab nets for the photographers.



More Circle Crab Nets in China. Some property owners use colored nets for a better visual appeal for the paying photographers. This image could be entered in PID or PPD, but not in PJD or PTD



The performances of these horses galloping are staged for photographers and occur in all seasons. The organizer of this shoot is herding the horses especially to the area where hundreds of photographers are waiting. This area is called 'Ba Shang Pasture' and is located between Inner Mongolia and Beijing. Images from staged, organized photoshoots are not PJ.



The Hui'an women in Quanzhou, China, have been directed for photographers in the above scenes to mimic their traditional work. These images were taken at an organized photography tour. Images taken when the subjects are directed especially for photographers are not PJ.



Both the above images were taken in Africa where a photography tour organized the scenes. Such images can be entered into PID or PPD, but not into PJD or PTD.



Set-ups can be identified when they depict unnatural actions or behavior by the people shown in the photo. In both of the above scenes, which were organized in Vietnam, the objects (incense sticks and umbrellas) have been arranged neatly around the work space, which is not what would happen in real life. And instead of normal work clothes, the outfit in the incense stick image was chosen specifically to maximize the impact of color. The umbrellas, in the image on the right, would normally be spread out to dry in the sun and not placed in such a close and neat arrangement. Since the purpose of PJ and PT is to show reality, entrants are expected to show our world as it is found. Such images can be entered into PID and PPD, but are not for PTD or PJD competition.



Staged winter scenes in Northeast China of models in various set-ups do not show our world as it is found. Such images, posed for photographers, can be submitted into PID or PPD, but not into PTD or PJD.



The above scenes were taken at an organized photography shoot in China. Puppet shows still happen in China, but if the scene is arranged for photographers, then the images cannot be entered into Photo Travel or photojournalism sections. Set-ups can be identified when many images of the same or similar scenes are submitted to exhibitions.



You will see many variations of this scene. Sometimes the shot is taken with a birdcage as a frame. The locals do not dress up so elaborately when making these cages, nor do they work neatly surrounded by their finished products.

Here are more examples that are known to be set up for photography:









Many additional examples are displayed in this online gallery:

<https://psa-photo.org/page/mo-ptd-staged-images>

Photojournalism and Photo Travel are reality divisions, so images taken of set-up scenes or subjects that have been directed or hired are not eligible in those sections. Set-up images can be entered into PID and PPD, but in PDJ and PJD the entrants are obligated to show the world as it is found naturally.

Important information on the ethics of arranged photos is available at :

<https://www.picsofasia.com/the-library-of-fake-travel-photos-in-asia/> and

<https://www.picsofasia.com/stage-in-travel-photography/>

The information applies to both Photojournalism and Photo Travel, and should be reviewed before judging images in either section.

Staged Images written by Nadia Filiaggi MPSA, and adapted for PJD in July 2022

If you are able to contribute any other examples to this document, please email

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