

North Bethesda Camera Club – Photo Essay 2020-2021

PHOTO ESSAY PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

The NBCC Photo Essay 2020-2021 program will be held virtually in the Spring of 2021. All members, and emeritus members, are invited to submit essays.

For more information, see the articles and links on the Photo Essay web page.

This document offers detailed information for submitters and participants. Questions should be directed to the Photo Essay 2020-2021 committee:

- Stu Mathison (Chair)
- José Cartas
- Stan Collyer
- David Davidson
- Mark Segal
- John Willis *
- Nancy Wolejsza

* available for consultation with Mac users

The team will keep the program at a reasonable length and uphold our high standard of quality. Therefore, the number and length of essays in the program will be limited, and the essays will be selected on a competitive basis.

All members are encouraged to submit essays, either individually or as part of a small group (e.g., from a field trip). Each candidate essay is carefully evaluated and discussed by the review team. Any suggestions for possible improvement are documented for the maker's benefit. Some candidates may be accepted as-is (with only optional changes recommended), while others may be conditionally accepted depending on whether mandatory improvements can be made before the final submission deadline. It is expected that some candidates will not be selected, but constructive feedback will still be offered to the maker. Essay selection criteria include:

- Variety in the overall program. Participants are encouraged to create unique and interesting presentations.
- Image quality and appeal. The Photo Essay Program is first and foremost an exposition of photographic excellence. Any essay should start with great photos, and an essay featuring mediocre photographs will almost certainly be rejected.

- Essay composition. Selected essays will demonstrate proficiency in the art form. New essayists should study and understand the article “How to Create Photo Essays”. Experienced essayists are advised to re-read it while self-evaluating their essay during development.
- Theme. Good essays start with a coherent theme of interest to the general audience. Most successful essayists spend considerable time and effort on developing and refining their theme.
- Music must be appealing and appropriate for the essay topic. Soothing music can be a pitfall, however, as it becomes soporific and bores the audience into sleep.

Submission Schedule

The submission process begins by selecting your essay theme, and notifying the Photo Essay Committee of your intention to participate and your proposed theme (to avoid duplicate essays), as early as possible, typically in September or October. If you are new to making essays, you are encouraged to join the Photo Essay Study Group, which begins in September, and will be offered virtually in the fall of 2020. Please sign up through the Education Committee. Also, new essayists should talk with any essay committee member to get personal assistance, as needed.

Your draft essay will be due not later than December 31, 2020. Early submissions are encouraged. Your draft essay should contain 20-40 images (depending upon the pace) and, optionally, short video clips, along with music. The essay should be 3-5 minutes in length. Shorter is better, although essays with exceptional images, videos and music may be up to five minutes long. The essay is essentially a “body of work”. The best essays “tell a story”. Imagine that you are presenting an exhibit of your best images of a favorite subject, ideally in an engaging way.

Your draft essay should include a title, an introduction, and end credits (for the music and photographs).

Essays should be submitted as videos, in mpeg4 format (more details below).

Constructive feedback on the draft essay will be provided to all authors to share knowledge and make the essays as good as they can be.

Final essays are due by February 28, 2021. This version of your essay should be as complete and final as you can make it and should reflect the suggestions for improvement provided by the review panel. There will not be much time for any changes after this date, so please submit earlier if you can.

Numerous club members have volunteered to assist members in the creative and technical aspects of essay development and in the use of Lightroom (slideshow module), ProShow, Photopia, and various Mac software for creating slideshows. We highly recommend that you start work early and take advantage of this assistance in optimizing your show prior to submission. Please contact any committee member for referrals.

Program Objectives

Our overall objective is to provide members with another outlet for sharing their images and “bodies of work”, and to educate members in the photo essay art form. We seek to replicate the successful elements of prior year programs, while continuing to make improvements to the presentations.

Photo Essay Participation

Each essay must be primarily the creation of one or more NBCC members. Non-member contributors, limited to the family and/or significant others of NBCC members, may supply a minority of the photographs and may assist in development of the essay. Such non-member contributors must be given appropriate credit within the essay but will not be named as co-authors in the program.

Essay Duration = Three to Four Minutes; Five Minutes for Exceptional Essays

To broaden member participation and to keep audience interest levels high, essays are required to be short. The duration -- including introduction, title slides, and end credits -- should be at least three minutes, but no longer than four minutes and 30 seconds. It is better to leave the audience “wanting more”, than having the audience become bored with an overly long essay.

As a rough guideline, we suggest a pace of six seconds per photo, so a four-minute essay would require less than 40 images. Images with substantial detail and interest, and images with motion and special effects (e.g., panoramas, zooming and panning), may require more than six seconds/image. Images with little detail or dramatic subjects may require less than six seconds. The duration for each image may vary through the essay. The energy and pace of the music may influence the duration of each image, especially if the images are synchronized to the music. Fast-paced essays, with energetic music, might devote only 3-4 seconds/image, and have as many as 60-80 images over four minutes.

Condense your available “body of work” photo collection by removing duplicate images, and selecting only the absolute best, and make a powerful and concise essay from those. This is always much harder than it would seem because we all grow emotionally attached to our own images. The opinions of others can be valuable in culling your best essay images, and Photo Essay Committee members are willing to aid you in choosing which of the images are least necessary to illustrate your story.

Essays that run longer than the time limit above will be evaluated as submitted by the committee but would need to be truly exceptional to overcome the negative of excess duration. Group essays with many strong images may be slightly longer, if merited.

Almost any music can be edited down to a shorter version (or composite) less than four minutes long. Often the music needs to be extended. We can assist in generating a seamless soundtrack from your final music choices, using sophisticated music production software.

Essay Format = Video

All essays should be created in widescreen 16:9 aspect ratio (such as 1920 x 1080 pixels). Do not use the older 4:3 aspect ratio, which may be the default in older software; if you do, your essay will appear significantly smaller on screen than the others, losing impact for our audience. We chose 16:9 because that is the standard high-definition (HD) video format. 16:9 is a perfect match for HDTVs, as well as HD projectors and many computer monitors. This is also a standard format for DVD, Blu-ray Disc (BD), and on-line video.

We accept essays as “full HD” video files from all participants (both Mac and PC users). Deliver your essay as a video file (not a disc for set-top DVD/BD players). Recommended output video settings are::

- Resolution = “full HD” at 1920 x 1080 pixels
- 24, 30 or 60 frames per second

- maximum render quality, and
- high bitrate (30 megabits per second)

Essays may be prepared using the software of the members choice:

- Adobe Lightroom Slideshow module, for basic essays (PC or Mac)
- Photodex ProShow software (Gold or Producer) for those members who licensed this software before Photodex terminated its business operations (PC only)
- Photopia Creator software (PC and Mac). Photopia acquired the principal developers from Photodex, and the Photopia software is compatible with ProShow files (i.e., can import ProShow files); Photopia can be acquired only on a subscription basis.
- iPhoto, iMovie, and Aperture (Mac)
- Other

PC essays can also be delivered in ProShow “Collected Show Files” format, and we will convert them to HD video for the essay presentation. Use the Collect Show Files tool in ProShow so that all your source files are consolidated in one folder. Copy the resulting folder and post it online (e.g., Dropbox) or put the folder on portable media (CD, DVD, USB drive) and submit that. All ProShow variants are accepted: Basic, Gold, and Producer. Volunteers, as noted above, are ready to assist those without access to ProShow, or those who need some help with the ProShow software settings.

All essays should begin with a silent, blank slide (about 1 second) and end with a silent blank slide (about 2 seconds). These serve as spacers from one show to the next and avoid any glitches at the beginning of video playback. Please be sure to include these in your original essay design. Tip: delay the start of the music past the opening blank slide by entering an offset (typically 1 second) on the (first) music track.

Do not forget that the opening blank slide also lets you transition (fade in) to your first image, so that it does not just pop onto the screen with no finesse.

Images and Video Clips

While essays have historically consisted of still images in a slideshow, modern digital cameras and smartphones can easily capture HD video, and a few members have integrated video clips into their essays. Video clips can enhance an essay, but individual video clips (segments) should be kept short (5 seconds as a guideline, and no more than 10 seconds). Video clips work best for scenes with motion (e.g., waterfalls, dance, sports, aerial photography from drones, etc.). Video clips will be evaluated by the committee just as still images; that is, they must support the essay theme, have good artistic value (e.g., composition), and exhibit no glaring technical issues (focus, exposure, color). The use of sound from the original video capture should be muted or suppressed if it competes with your essay music, but original sound can also be a powerful element for enhancing realism.

Essay Introduction

Essay introductions may be prepared by the member or by the production team, or as a joint development.

Essay authors are encouraged to create their own introduction, about 20 seconds in duration and integrated into the beginning of the essay. Introductions narrated by the author are preferred, but we

can also provide audio narration from your script. The focus should be on the essay and its topic but may provide brief and relevant author biographical information if those directly support the essay.

Alternatively, you can choose no introduction, or request that the committee generate an introduction for you. For the latter, submit photos of the essay author (preferably related to the essay topic, such as photos taken on location) and a script (e.g., very short artist statement or bio, plus some brief information about the essay topic). The intro photos do not need to be self-portraits but should relate to the author and preferably the essay topic too.

Introductions will typically be narrations over various introductory slides. Hint: this is a good way to showcase some of your favorite images that did not fit into the essay sequence. Narration by the author is preferred, and assistance in the process (including script development) is available from the production team. When writing the script, consider what insights the audience might need (or ask) about the subject and about you as the essay author.

Please do your research when developing your introduction. Ensure that your statements are factual. You might also dig up information that will be quite interesting to the audience and thus inspire thoughtful attention to your essay.

Typical introduction slides include photos of the author on location, maps, and overview images to set the scene for the essay's tale. Authors should be creative but not radical: the purpose of the introduction is to inform and intrigue the audience, not distract them from the essay or set incorrect expectations. Internet images, such as maps and aerial views, are permissible in the introduction.

Titles within Essay

The essay title is one area we feel authors may desire individuality, not standardization. For example, you may not want any title in the body of your essay, since your essay may follow a separate introduction (which does include the title). Or you may want a title to appear after a few introductory slides instead of at the very beginning. For a professional look, integrate any titles smoothly with the flow of the essay – not just a text slide with a blank background, jammed into the front. We offer the following guidelines for titles:

- Titles are optional and should only be used when they enhance the essay. Remember that “a picture is worth 1000 words,” so only fill in the gaps if necessary.
- Avoid repeating the same information as presented in the introduction, which the audience will have just viewed.
- A simple title along with a subtitle can be effective.
- Minimize the number of words for best impact – do not expect the audience to read much, and there is no need for dozens of words here.
- Your name should probably be included on your title page. Please do not use honorific prefixes and suffixes like Dr., Professor, M.D., Esquire, Her Majesty, etc. In this context you are a photographer – just use your name as you would sign it on a photographic print. Some authors may prefer to include their names only in the end credits: e.g., Photographer: Sam Smith
- Please use a font (typeface) that is easy to read (e.g., not Olde English, or wild script typeface).

- Make the font size large enough to read, but do not use gigantic lettering which looks awkward and amateurish.
- Opening title slides can be more interesting when they include background photographs. But watch out for some pitfalls. Ensure the text contrasts with the background so it is easily readable, and perhaps use drop shadow or stroke to add contrast. Consider displaying the text for only part of the slide duration, so the audience can also appreciate the background image.
- Text effects such as fading in or out can be very classy, but more extreme effects such as spinning exits should be used with caution to avoid the amateur look.
- Avoid displaying text in the middle of the essay, as captions on your photographs may ruin the visual spell your photographs were weaving over the audience. The audience cannot read the captions and look at the images at the same time. Narrations are preferred rather than captions during the essay, if they are necessary for telling the story.

End Credits

End credits are strongly recommended as the final slide(s) of your essay. These are an opportunity to pay tribute to your music source(s). The music artist and publisher deserve presentation of accurate and complete information. This also facilitates audience members purchasing the music for their own collections if they wish. Please include the official title as published, the composer's full name, any performance credits (e.g., London Philharmonic Orchestra), the album name (don't guess, look it up and get it right), and music publisher (usually the copyright owner). Additional information can also be included, such as dates.

Example:

Music excerpted from "Appalachian Spring" by Aaron Copland

New York Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Bernstein

Album: Bernstein Century (Sony Classical)

There are numerous options for incorporating end credits into your essay, and we leave these to you. Or the production team can create the end credits for you based on information you provide. If you create your own end credits, we offer the following guidelines:

- You may include photos of the essay maker(s) in the end credits, rather than the introduction.
- Include the end credits as part of your essay – recommended – or display them separately (say, after a short-duration black slide) at the end of the essay. Either way, the end credits will be a strong cue that the essay is ending.
- If you want to use sound effects at the end of your essay, put them before the apparent end of your essay (e.g., before final image fades out).
- The end credits should be displayed long enough for the audience to read all the information (typically about six seconds, but longer if you have many words).
- Use the text guidelines given above under Essay Title Slide (font typeface, size, contrast, and readability, etc.).

- Please do not repeat text from the essay title slide (e.g., your name) on the end credits.

It is unnecessary to close the essay with slides that say, “The End”, “Thank You”, or other similar phrases. With the End Credits, the audience knows the essay is over.

Getting Help

The Photo Essay team and other NBCC members stand ready to assist you on a one-to-one basis with essay completion and fine tuning. Arrange and complete this collaboration well before the submission deadlines! We want the program to be truly excellent, and we encourage you to seek help if needed and to seek feedback from the experts even if you do not need help. (The Photo Essay Team is also willing to help members learn how to develop essays for personal use outside of the annual NBCC Photo Essay Program.) Here are some areas where we may be able to contribute.

- **Artistic Critique.** Sometimes another set of eyes can spot improvements you could make or can help you resolve some difficulty in your essay composition. For example, those who were not with you on a photo trip can instantly recognize that a photo does not contribute to the essay theme, even though you are emotionally attached to the image. Any respected photographer could assist, but the most experienced essayists in the club would be happy to review your work prior to the formal selection process. And if you receive Photo Essay team comments you do not understand, please ask for an elaboration – do not just ignore them.
- **Audio Editing.** You do NOT need to select musical accompaniment which is four minutes in duration – the original can be shorter or longer, or you can draw from multiple audio tracks. See the ProShow User Manual and Photodex website for information on “fading and trimming” audio tracks. ProShow provides particularly useful audio capability, but it is not always easy to use. Most essay software provides audio editing and trimming capability. For more sophisticated requirements, we have access to an extensive audio production suite and would be happy to assist you in getting your music track(s) to the necessary length. The most common task is changing the length of a piece by extracting and seamlessly blending portions of the original audio.
- **Adobe Lightroom.** Lightroom software provides the basic tools for making photo essays, using the Slideshow Module. Committee members can assist in explaining what the Slideshow Module can, and cannot, do.
- **ProShow.** If you need help with your work in ProShow, please ask. First you should read the excellent software manual and look in the program’s Help section for answers. We can either assist you in accomplishing your objectives, or we can take over and complete things according to your instructions. Photodex (the company) is no longer available to provide email or phone support.
- **ProShow website tutorials.** Although the Photodex website is gone, there is an extensive collection of ProShow YouTube tutorials available.
- **ProShow Enthusiasts website.** This site contains Tutorials, Tips and Tricks and Sample Photo Essays. Note that there are separate sections for ProShow Gold and ProShow Producer users. See: <http://www.proshowenthusiasts.com/>
- **Photopia.** Photopia is the successor to ProShow and can import ProShow files. In some areas it offers more capabilities than ProShow, but in other areas it is weaker (e.g., Photopia does not yet have a User Manual. All training is in the form of video tutorials). The essay committee is

becoming familiar with Photopia and can assist members who are new to Photopia software. Photopia software works on both PCs and Mac's. It is only available through a monthly subscription (which can be activated or deactivated, by month, as needed).

- **Photopia website.** Lots of video tutorials available on this website. Email support is also available.
- **Photopia Phanatics website.** This is the community support website and has lots of tips and frequently asked questions.
- **ChoiceSlides website.** This site provides tutorial videos, and other items for both ProShow and Photopia users.
- **Mac Slideshow Software.** If you need help with your work in Mac slideshow software, please ask. First you should read the software manual and look in the program's Help section for answers. Helpful "how to" instructions for making essays in popular Mac software are on the NBCC Photo Essay web page.
- **Mac user assistance.** The Photo Essay Committee includes some Macintosh users (marked with an asterisk on the first page of this document) who can provide advice and assistance specific to that operating system and software tools.

Submitting your Essay

If you created the essay yourself in ProShow, please provide us the files listed below. We do not provide specific instructions since they will vary depending on your operating system and how you organized things. Generally, most Club members will provide us with a flash drive, CD, or DVD. We can also download (with your permission) large files posted in your on-line storage account (e.g., Dropbox). These files together are too large for email, but you can email the ProShow control file (filename.psh). Call if you need any help.

For ProShow users:

- Submit all the image files as used in the essay. The images, filenames and subfolders must match those used in the ProShow essay. If you used the ProShow feature called "Collect Show Files", which we recommend, your images will all be in a subfolder called "images".
- All the music / audio files as used in the essay. Again, the audio, filenames and subfolders must match those used in the ProShow essay. If you used Collect Show Files, your music and sound files will all be in a subfolder called "audio".
- The ProShow control file (filename extension ".psh"). Many people create more than one version of the essay as they try different things – be sure to send us the correct version (usually your latest). This is the version that will be evaluated by the committee and possibly shown to the audience.
- Optional: if you wish, you can also submit the executable file (.exe). We rarely use it, since we make our own executable first thing (to make sure your files are all here).
- There is NO NEED to submit the ProShow cache (.pxc) or backup control files (.b01, .b02, etc.). Those files can be moved to the Recycle Bin if you wish, and it will not affect your essay.
- Your video file.

ProShow software provides an easy mechanism for collecting all the necessary files. Under the “Tools” menu you will see a command called “Collect Show Files”. If you click on this command, ProShow will open a window and ask you where to put the collected files. You can select “burn them to a CD or DVD” or save them in a folder to be zipped and transferred via flash drive or Dropbox. Submit that CD. Or bring the files to us on a USB flash drive. Put your name on the flash drive so that we can return it to you.

Adobe Lightroom, Photopia, iPhoto, iMovie, and Aperture users:

- Submit your video file, your image files and your music files via CD, USB drive or Dropbox.
- We request the image files in case we need to use selected images for promotional purposes (e.g., in articles in *The Lens and Eye*).

General Advice for Essays

Aspect Ratio. Our projector has native aspect ratio 16:10 (1920 x 1200 pixels), but standard HD video is 16:9 (1920 x 1080 pixels). You can use either setting, but 16:9 is more universal in case you want to make a DVD or Blu-ray Disc. Be sure to start your essay development by setting the aspect ratio to 16:9 or 16:10. If you start with 4:3 and later change to widescreen, captions and slide animations may shift from where you originally placed them on screen.

“Fit-to-Frame” or “Fill-Frame” or “stretch-to-frame”. Most essay software defaults to “fit to frame”, so that your image fills the frame as much as possible without cropping any of the image. This is the preferred mode. Choosing “fill frame” will do exactly that, which may crop some of your images if they are not the same aspect ratio as the frame. “Stretch-to-Frame” will stretch your images to fill the frame, and would only be appropriate, perhaps, with abstract images which look good stretched to a 16:9 aspect ratio.

Music Source and Selection. Good music is a very important part of a good essay!! Your music should be the soundtrack to your excellent photographs. It is not “background music.” Background music is for elevators and putting people to sleep. We strongly recommend that you avoid music that is dreamy and soporific, as your audience will soon be snoring and miss your fine photography. Music with long quiet passages will be “lost” during the essay, causing your audience to disconnect from your show. Pick music that attracts and holds interest. Music with energy generally works best.

Consider how music complements the mood in movie scenes. Majestic, dramatic, edgy, happy, uplifting, rhythmic, somber, cheerful, patriotic, sad, nostalgic, romantic, funny, mystical, religious, etc. Often cinematic themes are good music sources for essays.

For travel essays, local music sources are also often useful, including music which you may record yourself from an event (e.g., a parade or a local dance).

Your music can be instrumental or vocal. Please make sure that vocal music is complementary (i.e., related to the images) or perhaps in a foreign language which is not distracting.

Please ensure that your music is from high-quality sources – CDs or good digital (download) files. If you capture music from CDs using ProShow, please do not use the ProShow default “OGG” format: it is

difficult to work with and sometimes exhibits audible defects. Instead, choose highest quality MP3 format in ProShow, ideally 320kpbs stereo.

Digitized music from cassette or LP records will be quite obviously inferior when played back on a big auditorium sound system and may be rejected during essay review. Music downloaded from iTunes and other on-line sources is acceptable, though these tend to be lower fidelity than a top-quality MP3. Some auditoriums/PCs do not have stereo sound reproduction, so please do not depend on left/right effects.

Image Preparation. Generally, prepare images as you would for an NBCC electronic projection competition (i.e., jpegs -- see: "How to Prepare Images for Electronic Presentation"). Alternatively, ProShow and other essay software will accept Photoshop PSD formats. Be conscious of aspect ratios, since your essay should not jump back and forth between portrait and landscape formats. Be sure to read all the sections below, including Image Sharpness.

During image prep, it may be desirable to remove distractions (such as telephone wires) and to perfect your compositions with the appropriate alterations. There is no limitation on the extent of alteration you may do to improve your images.

Image Size for Panning and Zooming. If you will be using motion effects (zooming and panning), you may need higher resolution in your source image. For example, if you will pan left to right one full frame, then your width should be 3840 pixels (twice the projector width of 1920 pixels). Because ProShow and other essay software compresses big images (to reduce file size and prevent stuttering on slower computers), we recommend that you do NOT zoom beyond 200% or so. The resulting image quality will deteriorate noticeably, losing detail that was perfectly clear in your original image file.

Artistic Considerations. Review the comprehensive companion article "How to Create Photo Essays".

Transition between Slides. ProShow, Photopia, iMovie and other essay software offer hundreds of special-effects transitions. These can be helpful to bridge dissimilar slides, but they can also detract from your photographs. Special transitions (such as "explosions") can be extremely distracting and take away attention from your beautiful photographs. Overuse of other not-so-subtle transition effects (especially random effects) can also ruin your work. Exercise good judgment: use specific transitions for a specific reason, but do not misuse transitions. The ProShow/Photopia/iMovie default transition is to have one slide "dissolve" gracefully into the next slide. (Note that to increase the "pace" of an essay, "cut" transitions can be used. The "cut" is a transition of "0" duration. However, this only works where you wish to jump suddenly from one image to another.)

Motion Effects (Zooming and Panning). Slide motion such as zooms can be useful to direct audience attention. But zooms can obscure the good photo that you made because it is constantly moving and fading. If you need to zoom way in to see something in greater detail, be sure to allow the audience time to see that detail by leaving it still on the screen for a while. We recommend against sudden, dramatic zooms, as they can be distracting and even disorienting for your audience. Fast zooming will blur the image. Therefore, very slow zooming works best.

When panning (e.g., scanning across a panoramic image), be sure the initial and final display positions of the photograph are good compositions. That is, do not display a bad crop of your image as the start or end of a pan.

Also, when using any of these “motion effects”, it is best to use them in moderation. That is, zooming and panning a given image looks best if the zooming/panning amount is such that the motion is slow. For example, zooming from 90% to 100% will usually work better than zooming from 100% to 300%. When zooming or panning an image be sure to extend the image duration to ensure that the motion is slow.

Captions and Subtitles. Avoid use of text captions or labels during the body of your essay. Usually such text is unhelpful in the essay context – this is art, not a documentary. If your essay would benefit from explanations, consider including them in the Introduction script. There are rare occasions when a subtitle or explanation is required during an essay, such as transitioning from one city to another. Sign images are preferable to “subtitle pages”. (Hence, make it a habit to take pictures of signage when traveling or visiting national parks or events.) Alternatively, brief narrations may be appropriate in special cases.

Image Sharpness. To have sharp, detailed images in your photo essay, you must start with good photographic techniques, of course. Then, we recommend conventional sharpening processes in Lightroom or Photoshop (or equivalent). Finally, here is some special advice for retaining the original image sharpness in your photo essays:

- Build your essay starting with images of the proper resolution. For example, if you will be projecting images on the NBCC projector at 1920 pixels wide by 1200 pixels tall, your images should have enough pixels to fill one or both of those dimensions. But if you were to downsize your images to 300 by 200 pixels, the image will look very soft and lack detail when enlarged to fill the screen.
- When panning an image, you will need more resolution than for a still image. Every pixel on the screen should be derived from a pixel in your source file. So, for example, if you are panning across a wide panoramic image, the height of the panoramic image should be at least 1050 pixels to match the projector height of 1050 pixels.
- Similarly, when zooming an image, you may need more resolution than for a still image. Make sure you provide enough pixels to satisfy the greatest magnification during a zoom. For example, if you will be zooming in to 200%, your image needs twice the pixel data as the projector: 2800 by 2100 pixels. That way, at maximum zoom every pixel display on screen originates from a pixel in your image file.
- Do not over-magnify images in your slide show. If you zoom to high-magnification settings like 300%, your essay software will not render sharp detail, even though the detail is present in your original file. This is a known problem in the essay software, so it’s best to avoid such extreme zooms.

Settings for Sharp Rendering in ProShow. The default settings in ProShow seem designed for the small, low-resolution monitors common in the last decade. They will produce soft images lacking the original detail when displayed on a high-resolution monitor or projector. The photo essay production team will render final essays in such a way to maximize detail, overriding settings you may have set on your computer. We typically use the following settings in the Output Options dialog (see note below):

- Set image quality to 100%.

- Avoid zooming any image more than 150% and assume that any zooms you take beyond 200% will render soft results.

In the future, when projectors and video recordings migrate to 4K, we may have new instructions for maximizing sharpness.

PHOTO ESSAY SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Review your images before putting them into an essay:

- Every image in focus and sharp enough for big screen projection
- Every image clean (no dirt, spots, scratches)
- Every image well composed (note they do not need to be competition winners!)
- Converted to JPEG files at proper resolution (at least 1920 x 1080 or 1920 x 1200 pixels) and high-quality setting

Review your essay:

- Read and implement the aesthetic and artistic guidance offered in the companion article “How to Create Photo Essays”
- Essay run-time length is under four minutes, or five minutes for group essays
- End credits give complete and accurate information on music sources
- Use “Collect All Files” in ProShow to produce a flash drive for submission

Mac: Submit on or before the submission deadline:

- Video output of your essay (computer file, not a video disc)

PC ProShow: Submit on or before the submission deadline:

- Image files (the exact files expected in the essay by ProShow)
- Music / audio files (again, the exact files expected in the essay by ProShow)
- ProShow control file (.psh) – be sure it is the right version of your essay
- Video file
- Optional: executable photo essay (.exe)

If you have requested the Essay Committee to prepare you Introduction, then please submit your:

- Author biography and essay introduction (in a .txt or .docx file)
- Author photo files (self-portraits, in-action, on-location, etc.) for introduction in JPEG format