

Creating a Panel

January 2015 – by Graham Robinson



Agenda

- What a Panel is
- Rules for the Digital Panel Competition
- Choosing Images
- Composition and Visual Flow
- Plan Layouts, Sizing and Borders
- Key Methods
- Making the Panel

What a Panel is

- A panel is a set of images presented as a whole
- Typically this could be a set of mounted prints presented on racks according to a 'hanging plan'
- Each image should be successful in its own right
- The whole panel should be coherent visually; and possibly thematically
- Some panels (e.g. for LRPS) can show a range of styles and themes
- Others (e.g. photo essay) might explore different aspects of the same subject
- Whatever way: the panel must be more than the sum of its parts

Rules for This Year's Competition

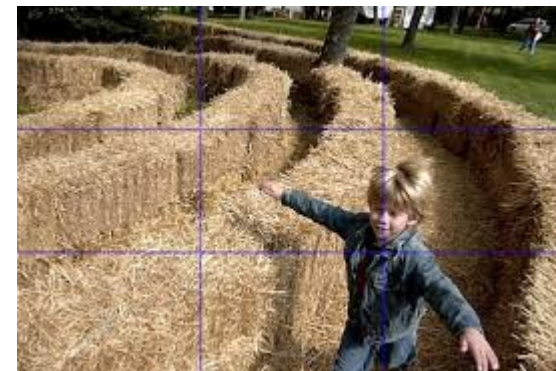
- Each panel must be prepared as a single digital image. All the usual rules about the number of, size of, etcetera apply.
- Hence you may submit up to 4 panels in the normal manner.
- Rules for each panel:
 - Prepared as single image (max 1400w x 1050h).
 - Presented as 3 separate pictures arranged horizontally on a black background.
- These rules are to provide a level playing field for all members.
- Panels not meeting these requirements will not be included

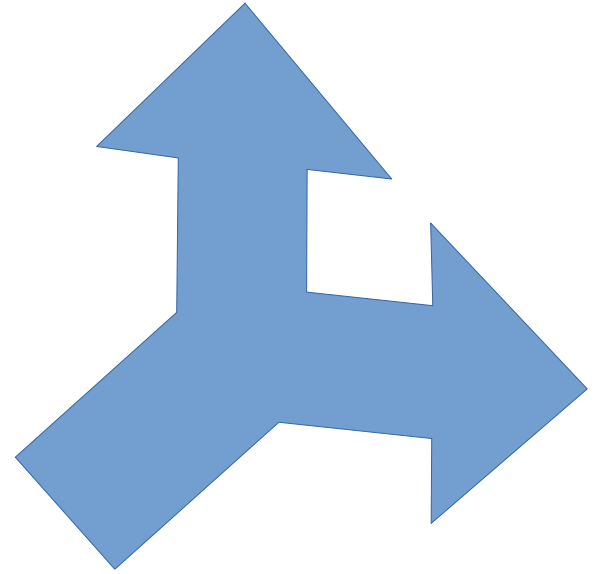
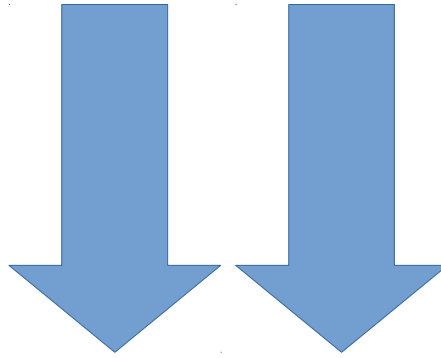
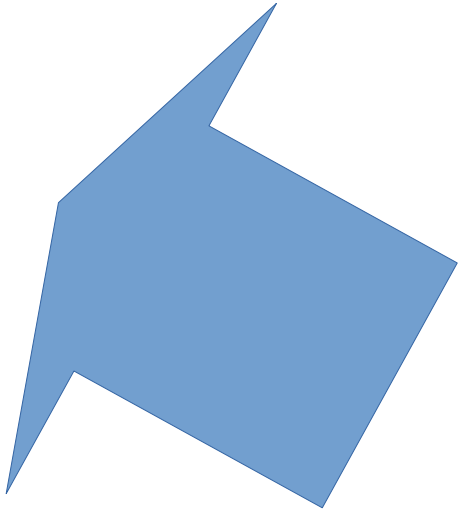
Choosing Images

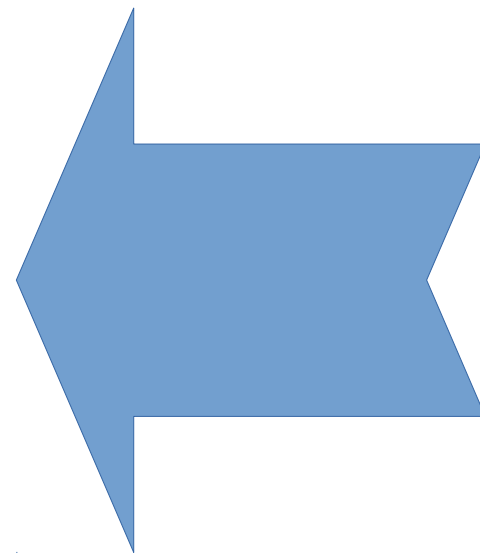
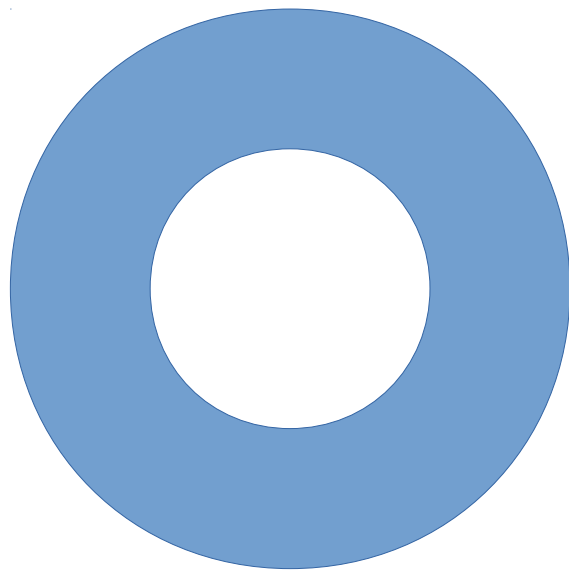
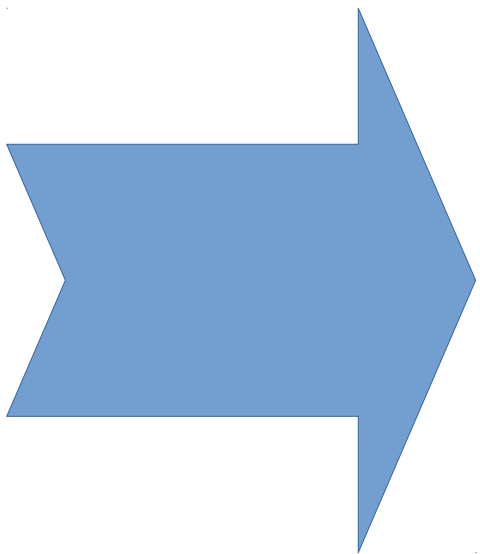
- For this competition there must be some kind of theme, harmony or coherence across each set of images.
- This might be:
 - an essay on one subject;
 - relation through
 - Theme or Mood
 - Shape
 - Colour
 - Texture
- The panel must express something as a whole.

Visual Flow and Composition

- A well composed picture guides the viewer through the picture and directs and returns attention to the main subject.
- A badly composed picture fails to direct attention to the main subject, has competing subjects, has distractions or allows attention to fall out of the image.
- Likewise: a well constructed panel will encourage the attention to travel amongst and be maintained within the panel.





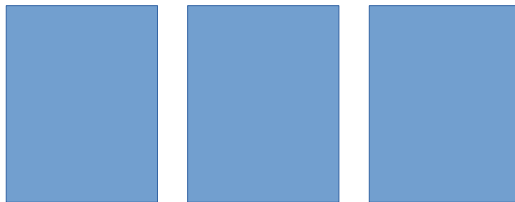


Layout and Sizing (1)

Three equal widths of 450 pixels ($450 \times 3 = 1350$ gives two gaps of 25 pixels)



three squares @ 450x450



three tall @ 450 wide (? equal height ~600)



three wide @ 450 wide (? equal height ~300)

Layout and Sizing (2)

Two narrow (388) and one wide (582) [$2 \times 388 + 582 = 1358$ leaves two gaps of 21]



square (388x388), wide (582x388), square (388x388)



tall (388x~600), wide (582x388), tall (388x~600)



tall (388x~600), square (582x582), tall (388x~600)

Layout and Sizing (3)

Two wide (510) and one narrow (340) [$2 \times 510 + 340 = 1360$ leaves two gaps of 20]



wide (510x340), square (340x340), wide (510x340)



wide (510x340), tall (340x~510), wide (510x340)



square (510x510), tall (340x510), square (510x510)

Layout and Sizing (4)

- Consider tall, wide and square crops.
- Choose a layout that matches the balance and visual flow of your 3 pictures.
- Consider the impact of the relative sizes of each of the pictures.
- Plan the aspect, crop and actual sizes so that total width of the three pictures comes to about 1350 or 1360 pixels to allow two 20-25 pixel gaps
- Perhaps use one of the following width plans:
 - 450, 450, 450
 - 388, 582, 388
 - 510, 340, 510

Borders

- Think about the borders, if any, it would be best to apply to each of the three pictures
 - An overall light image may not need any border on the black background
 - A picture with a dark area on the edge will get 'lost' on a black background and so would benefit from a 2 pixel wide white or light grey border
 - If there are also light areas on the edge these will 'bleed' into the border so a single pixel black 'key line' will help hold the picture together.
- It would probably be best to apply the same style of border to all of the pictures on the same panel

Key Methods

These are not the most 'power-user' or efficient methods. They are designed so that they can be done in simple stages saving files as you go. A set of notes (Creating a Panel) have been prepared. They been created and tested in Elements 10 and should work similarly in later versions and full PhotoShop.

- Prepare each of the individual pictures
 - Crop and/or re-size using the Crop Tool
 - Apply any required border
 - Save with a helpful name
- Make up the Panel
 - create a correctly sized black backdrop
 - add guides to ensure correct placement of the three pictures
 - place the 3 pre-prepared pictures
 - save as an appropriately named JPG