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2024 Annual Micrograph Competition “HOOKEd on Microscopy” Official Rules and Regulations

About the Competition

This is the annual Micrograph Competition sponsored by the Clemson Light Imaging Facility. The contest, “HOOKEd on Microscopy,” may be referred to below as “Contest” or “Competition.” Micrographs may also be referred to as “photos” or “entries.”

Section I. Eligibility

1. **Light** microscopes are the only permissible equipment to be used in capturing photo(s).
2. All imaging techniques are eligible. Pseudocolored or other computer-enhanced images are eligible as long as the manipulation is done to highlight key aspects of the photo(s).
3. No video submissions will be accepted in this contest.
4. The contest is free and open to the public.
5. All participants must be at least 18 years of age or older.
6. All entries must be completely original and the sole work of the participant(s). Images must be captured by at least one or more of the authors listed on the Official Entry Form. If a third party was utilized in the capturing of the entry, the third party has full rights to that content. No rights of a utilized third party will be violated in the entering of the competition with the captured image. Plagiarized entries will be automatically disqualified.
7. International entries are welcome and encouraged. However, cash equivalent contest prizes can only be distributed within the United States. In the event that a contest winner resides outside the US, he or she will be sent a substitute prize if an appropriate mailing address is provided. Examples of cash equivalent prizes include prints of winning images or other merchandise, such as laptop case or coffee mug, printed with a winning image. PLEASE NOTE: If the shipping costs to mail a substitute prize exceed the value of the prize itself, we cannot offer a substitute prize. In certain cases, we have found that shipping costs are prohibitively expensive. In addition, we cannot predict how the COVID-19 pandemic might change our ability to ship prizes from the USA to other countries. International participants must be aware of these restrictions and limitations, and must accept these additional terms upon submitting an entry.
8. Group entries are welcome; however, any submission by an individual as part of a group counts toward the total number of entries that may be submitted by an individual entrant (maximum of three). Additionally, the Clemson Light Imaging Facility will not be responsible for distributing the prize among the group. If a group submission wins a prize, the prize will be distributed to

the first individual listed on the entry form. It is up to the individual to distribute the prize to the group.

9. All personnel *currently* and/or *previously* affiliated with Clemson Light Imaging Facility are not permitted to submit entries in this competition. This includes, but is not limited to, employees and each of his or her immediate family members (defined as spouse, child, sibling, parent/grandparent, and those living in the same household).
10. Appointed expert judges are not permitted to submit any entries into the competition.
11. All entries should be submitted by the guidelines outlined in **Section II**. All other means of submission will not be eligible for judging.
12. Clemson Light Imaging Facility is not responsible for late, lost, incomplete, damaged, misdirected, or incompatible images.
13. Entries previously submitted to the Clemson Light Imaging Facility's micrograph competition are eligible to take part in the current, ongoing competition unless the entry won any award or honorable mention in any previous CLIF micrograph competitions.
14. Entries must not have previously earned any award, honorable mention, recognition, or prize in any other commercially sponsored competition; however, micrographs that have earned academic recognition or have been previously published may remain eligible for the competition. Individuals must determine if micrographs are eligible based on publisher copyright guidelines.
15. No text or scalebars should be included on the micrograph when submitted. Supplemental information pertaining to the image should be written on the contest entry form only.

Section II. How to Submit Entries

1. Micrograph(s) must be able to be enlarged to an 18"X18" format. The Clemson Light Imaging Facility reserves the right to reject submissions that do not meet this requirement.
2. Each individual may submit up to *three* entries in total.
3. Entries should be submitted by uploading them as a part of the contest entry form via Qualtrics. This form may be accessed via the following web address: <https://tinyurl.com/2s37pvde> .
4. When uploading your entry, name the file using your full name and entry number. For example, if you enter 3 images, you would name the files as follows: "(Name)Entry-1," "(Name)Entry-2," and "(Name)Entry-3."
5. Upload the original .TIF(F) file when filling out the field labeled "Choose File" on the Qualtrics submission form. You are not required to add a description to this section; the description of your image will be included on the "Official Contest Entry Form."
6. The "Official Contest Entry Form" must include the participant's full name, contact information, a title for each micrograph, and a release of rights (see Section X.13). Your title may not exceed 50 characters including spaces. Each entrant is required to submit a brief description that includes a summary of what the image depicts, and/or the microscope/technique used for image collection. Descriptions may be vague if desired to protect data. Descriptions may not exceed 250 characters including spaces.
7. **Image titles must be unique to each entry and they must not include the names of the entrant.**
8. Inquiries regarding submissions should be directed to imaging@clemson.edu.

Section III. Final Judging for Experts' Choice Category

1. A panel of light microscopy experts will be assembled by CLIF staff. This panel will choose the top three micrographs from all entries as discussed below.
2. The name of the entrant(s) and their affiliated organization will not be provided to the judging panel.
3. The judging panel will assign each micrograph a score between 1 and 50 points based on aesthetic value. Criteria for consideration will include broad appeal of subject, preciseness, beauty, and elegance of the image.
4. Only one photo per entrant may be selected to be a prize winner. If more than one micrograph per entrant is chosen, the higher scored micrograph will be chosen and the other(s) will be named honorable mention.
5. Judging for finalists will be completed by the end of October 2024.
6. The micrographs with the three highest scores will be the overall winners of the contest, and will be awarded the first, second, and third place prizes.
7. All judges' decisions are final and binding.

Section IV. Prizes for Experts' Choice Category

1. The following prizes will be awarded in this category:
 - 1st place: \$300 VISA gift card
 - 2nd place: \$200 VISA gift card
 - 3rd place: \$100 VISA gift card
2. All prizes are awarded without any expressed or implied warranties.
3. Prizes are taxable per fiscal rules and regulations outlined by Clemson University.
4. Contest winners may pick up their prize in person or may elect to have their prize distributed by mail. Instructions for prize pick up will be sent to the contest winners via an email from imaging@clemson.edu.

Section V. Final Judging for the Pawsitive Image Prize

1. If we receive entries from at least **ten** individuals affiliated with Clemson University at time of submission, we will implement the "Pawsitive Image Prize."
2. A panel of light microscopy experts will be assembled by CLIF staff. This panel will choose the top micrograph from Clemson University.
3. The judging panel will assign each micrograph a score between 1 and 50 points based on aesthetic value. Criteria for consideration will include broad appeal of subject, preciseness, beauty, and elegance of the image.
4. Judging for finalists will be completed by the end of October 2024.
5. All judges' decisions are final and binding.

Section VI. Prizes for the Pawsitive Image Prize

1. The micrograph with the top score from Clemson University will receive a \$100 VISA gift card.
2. This prize category does **not** exclude winning People's or Expert's Choice awards.
3. This prize is awarded without any expressed or implied warranties.
4. This prize is taxable per fiscal rules and regulations outlined by Clemson University.

5. The contest winner may pick up their prize in person or may elect to have their prize distributed by mail. Instructions for prize pick up will be sent to the contest winner via an email from imaging@clemson.edu.

Section VII. People's Choice Category Semifinalists

1. At least ten entries will be chosen as semifinalists for the People's Choice category: at least five entrants will be selected via Qualtrics voting and at least five entrants will be chosen by CLIF personnel.
2. Only one photo per entrant may be selected to be a semifinalist to prevent competition between one individual's entries. If more than one micrograph per entrant is chosen, the top micrograph will be chosen as a semifinalist and the other(s) will be named honorable mention.
3. Qualtrics semifinalists will be chosen via multiple choice survey after all submissions have been received. Any individual will be allowed to vote for, the photo(s) of their choice. Voting for one's own entry is allowed and encouraged.
4. Sharing the Contest voting survey, Clemson Light Imaging Facility Facebook, and other social media pages is encouraged in order to generate votes.
5. All Qualtrics votes are binding on the set date for voting to end. The top five most voted for images will be eligible as semifinalists in the People's Choice category.
6. Bonus points are available for early submissions, and will be awarded as additional "votes" during Round 1 of the People's Choice portion of the contest:
 - Individuals that submit entries between **17 July and 14 August 11:59PM, 2024** will receive **20 extra bonus points on their submission(s)**.
 - Individuals that submit entries between **15 August 12:00AM, 2024 – 31 August 11:59PM, 2024** will receive **10 extra bonus points on their submission(s)**.
 - Individuals that submit entries between **1 September 12:00AM, 2024 – 16 September 9:00AM, 2024** will receive **0 extra bonus points on their submission(s)**.
7. The semifinalists' entries will be displayed at various events at Clemson University during October 2024. Specific details regarding these events will be published on the Clemson Light Imaging Facility Facebook page.

Section VIII. Final Judging for People's Choice Category

1. Final judging for the People's Choice winner will take place during October 2024 using various platforms and will conclude no later than October 31, 2024.
2. The general public will be the judges for the People's Choice category.
3. "Flash" voting on Qualtrics will also be announced in October 2024. Semifinalists are encouraged to follow our Facebook page and watch for emails from us for announcement of these voting events.
4. All members of the public, including contest entrants, are eligible to vote only once per voting event.
5. The entry with the highest overall number of votes at the end of October 2024 wins the People's choice category.
6. If an image has won first, second, or third prize in the Expert's Choice category, then they are not eligible to win the People's Choice category; if this were to occur, the image with the second highest amount of votes will be chosen as the People's Choice winner.

7. All judges' decisions and votes cast are final and binding.

Section IX. Prizes for People's Choice Category

1. The prize for the People's Choice category winner will be \$100 VISA gift card.
2. See **Sections IV** and **VI** for additional prize details.

Section X. Notifications and Announcement of Winners

1. Contest semifinalists will be notified of their achievements via e-mail from imaging@clemson.edu after votes have been tallied.
2. All announcements will be made public via the Clemson Light Imaging Facility Facebook page.
3. If a selected winner cannot be contacted for any reason, or becomes ineligible due to a violation of the Official Rules and Regulations, then he or she forfeits the prize and an alternative winner may be selected in their place.

Section XI. Time Requirements

1. All entries should be submitted by 9:00AM EST on 16 September 2024.
2. Qualtrics voting will be open between 12:00PM EST on 19 September 2024 to 1:00PM EST on 23 September 2024.
3. The deadline for Qualtrics voting is 1:00PM EST on 23 September 2024 to determine five of the People's Choice semifinalists. All votes must be cast by this time. Clemson Light Imaging Facility personnel will select an additional five entries for People's Choice semi-finalists by 23 September 2024. Notification of selection as a semifinalist will be sent the following week.
4. Final voting for the People's Choice category will occur during the month of October 2024.
5. Experts' choice finalists will be chosen and judged by the end of October 2024.
6. Winners from both categories will be announced no later than 15 November 2024.

Section XII. Miscellaneous

1. Clemson Light Imaging Facility reserves the right to cancel, terminate, modify, or suspend this Competition for any reason.
2. Clemson Light Imaging Facility reserves the right to disqualify any entries if it is believed that the entry or competition has been tampered with.
3. Clemson Light Imaging Facility will be collecting personal data about participants. By participating in this Competition, you release this information to Clemson Light Imaging Facility.
4. Clemson Light Imaging Facility is not responsible for any technical difficulties, problems, or malfunctions that the participant may experience in the submission or judging of their entries.
5. Clemson Light Imaging Facility reserves the right to modify the Official Rules and Regulations of this Competition at any time.
6. Clemson Light Imaging Facility employees reserve the right to bestow any Honorable Mentions as they deem fit, no matter the placement of the entry throughout the judging process.
7. By entering this Competition, participants release their right to hold the Clemson Light Imaging Facility accountable for any damages at any time. Participants must also agree to release, discharge, and hold harmless Clemson Light Imaging Facility.

8. By participating in this Competition, participants agree to the Official Rules and Regulations of this Competition and to the decisions of the judges, which are final and binding in all respects.
9. All federal, state, and local laws and regulations apply.
10. By digitally signing the "Contest Entry Form" via a checkbox, participants grant the Clemson Light Imaging Facility non-exclusive rights to the photo(s) submitted. Clemson Light Imaging Facility may use your name and submitted photo(s) to promote and publicize the contest and the Clemson Light Imaging Facility. Whenever possible, appropriate photo credit will be given. Clicking the checkbox also indicates that you hold the necessary rights to grant such permission.