

Working towards FIAP Distinctions (Updated June 2017)

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Taking part in International Exhibitions (also called Salons) can be most rewarding. If the bug gets you, you can become drawn in for several years. Starting out is simple. You read the instructions, complete your entry and, with a little luck and skill, you get your first acceptances. You gain a few more and then learn of distinctions granted by FIAP, PSA, or GPU who are the principle organisations involved in “Patronising” or “Recognising” exhibitions worldwide. To find FIAP Patronised Salons go to the FIAP Patronage web site at <http://patronages.fiap.net/salons.html>

(NB:- Please take note of this link it is referred to a number of times in this document)

I do not propose to tell you how to take pictures; I would not presume to do that. This is about how you organise yourself and keep records so that, when applying for a distinction, you don't have the problems that many people suffer from. For the purpose of this article I will deal mainly with matters relating to FIAP, although some reference to PSA may be helpful.

In the case of FIAP they recognise the various sections, such as Open, General, Nature, Photo-Travel, Colour Print, Monochrome Print etc. But when it comes to working out whether you are qualified for a distinction, acceptances and awards from different sections are treated equally and are in effect lumped together. All that is required is that the particular exhibition is ‘patronised’ by FIAP and here can be the first trap.

It is not unusual for an exhibition to be patronised by FIAP one year and then not the next, something often missed by exhibitors. You should also be wary of not confusing the “Trierenberg Super Circuit”, with the “Special Themes Circuit”. Whilst organised in tandem they are totally different events with the “Trierenberg Super Circuit” enjoying FIAP Patronage, but not the “Special Themes Circuit”. So make sure of FIAP Patronisation. It will be on the exhibition paperwork, usually the year followed by a 3 digit number (Eg: - 2011/023). Separate parts of a circuit must have different FIAP Numbers. You can also check by visiting the FIAP Patronage web site.

With PSA, there are separate divisions that are responsible for particular sections, such as Open, Nature etc, and you have to apply to each separately for many awards. If you are interested in PSA, or think you may be in the future, you need to record which sections you receive acceptances in, and their recognition number.

Be aware of the difference between a Salon and a Circuit. A salon is a single event, which is likely have different sections (eg: Open, Nature, Photo-Travel etc) into which you can enter different images and these will be judged just the once. A Circuit will comprise of more than one Salon, each having identical sections, so that the photographs you submit will be passed from one salon to another and can then gain acceptances and awards in each salon. Sometimes the different salons are registered to different countries as well.

Circuits may therefore appear as an easy way to achieve the relevant FIAP Criteria. However whilst all acceptances gained in a circuit will count towards the total number of acceptances achieved, there are restrictions placed on results from Circuits. The main one is that in many circumstances FIAP will look on a Circuit as just a single Salon, when you are applying for one of their Distinctions.

With each application you need to submit a portfolio of images. With each succeeding application the images must be different, not resembling or similar to any of those in any previous portfolio.

Changing an image from Colour to Mono does not make a different image and it must retain the same title. This can present you with a problem because PSA have a totally different ruling on this issue. One way of getting round this conflict is to add the word “Mono” to the title of the mono version when entering a salon.

Also small manipulative changes to images do not make them different in FIAP's eyes. I cannot give precise instructions. The best advice is DO NOT try to push the boundaries and remember, FIAP expect you to gain your distinctions through the camera, not just on computer skills.

FIAP insist that, (except when entered in “Creative” or “Experimental” Sections), ALL parts of an image must have been obtained by photography and that the entrant owns the copyright for all parts of the image.

Different subjects or sections, such as Monochrome, Nature, Traditional etc are subject to definitions that control what you can and cannot do with an image. Some of these definitions are common to both FIAP and PSA, but some are different you will be required to comply with both versions.

FIAP and PSA will take action against flagrant breaches of their rules and definitions. This can result in being banned from entering salons for varying periods, even up to life bans in serious cases. You are advised to retain the original "Raw" files, which may protect you if a query is raised by a salon or by PSA or FIAP.

RECORDS

When applying for a FIAP distinction you will be required to complete a record of your acceptances on what they call a "Dossier File". This file, along with detailed guidelines for completing your application, will be supplied to you by the FIAP Liaison Officer once he has opened the annual process (only one batch of applications is allowed from a country in any one calendar year). You can download it from the FIAP web site but be warned that FIAP have in the past changed their rules and the design of their forms at short notice. You will also not have the benefit of the guidelines to help you through the application process. FIAP will not accept handwritten entries, nor will they accept ad hoc print outs. The "Dossier File" is an Excel file. You may therefore wish to keep your exhibition records on Excel; it will save you a lot of hassle later on.

The data needed on the part of the dossier recording your acceptances is:-

1. The title of each accepted photograph.
2. The Name of the Exhibition /Salon, and if a circuit, the part of the circuit you got the acceptance in.
3. The name of the country where the Exhibition is held.
4. The FIAP Number allocated to the Exhibition or part of the circuit.
5. If any Award has been achieved with an acceptance.
6. In the case of applications for AFIAP and EFIAP (not EFIAP Levels) whether the acceptance was gained with a Print or a PDI.

Your file should have columns for all this data, along with any others you decide to keep. The next few paragraphs, give you some idea of what sort of entry you will need in each of the columns

Title Column

The title must be that which appears in the catalogue. The title should be the same for ALL acceptances for that photograph. If for any reason you have used a different title then, except in the circumstances set out here **you should not include that acceptance in your listing**. FIAP's current rules are quite clear and I quote:- "*The same work submitted to several salons under FIAP Patronage or to FIAP Biennials must bear the same title*" – their words and emphasis, not mine. The only acceptable exceptions are:-

- a) If the salon has entered your title up wrongly in the catalogue whether printed or otherwise, then it is **your** responsibility to check the catalogue and request a correction is made.. You should retain copies of the correspondence and attach copies of them to your application.
- b) If you have had to curtail a long title (already accepted elsewhere) due to entry form restrictions put the curtailed title in brackets in the next line below the correct title.

We now come to another issue that comes up rather too often. Sadly, there are those among us who are prepared to cheat to achieve distinctions. The use of more than one title for a single photograph is one method used. There are others. Therefore there is a need to protect the integrity of exhibitions.

- i) Firstly, every photograph must be given a title. The use of "untitled" (or variations of that) is prohibited in FIAP Patronised Exhibitions.
- ii) Secondly, as mentioned earlier, the title given to a photograph should be unique in your records. Once a particular photograph is given a title it must stay with that photograph. Do not change the title or give it to another photograph, no matter what sections you enter it in. Take this into account in giving it a title. (See above re 'mono' versions of the same image)

Many exhibitions place arbitrary limits on the length of titles. This can vary from 25 to 35 characters including spaces. With 'on-line' entry systems that refuse a title if it does not comply, you need to bear this in mind as well. Nature section entrants can save themselves much effort and frustration by not adding Latin sub-titles. They are rarely if ever read out to the selectors and even more rarely are they included in catalogues.

You are also strongly advised NOT to use the “definite article” and “indefinite article” as the first word of a title. It will cause problems with record keeping and is an unnecessary use of available letters when title lengths are restricted. Also these words can be omitted by salons causing problems with verification.

Similarly, the practice of using the same title for different images, differentiated by a number is to be strongly discouraged. This is because a) mistakes occur with the numbers and b) again some exhibitions do not include such numbers in their catalogues; consequently such acceptances may not be verifiable.

Salon Column

There is now much more space on the dossier file but it is still unnecessary to include full details of longwinded salon names. In the case of a stand-alone Exhibition, such as say “*The 32nd Northern Counties International Salon of Photography 2011*” we don’t need all that. All we need you to put in the Salon column is **Northern Counties**. We don’t need, in fact we don’t want all the other superfluous wordage.

In the case of a Circuit we do need more information, in that we also need to know which leg of the Circuit is involved, but again it should be very basic. So for example the “*Linz*” Exhibition in the “*Trierenberg Super Circuit*” should be shown as **Trierenberg – Linz**. The hyphen identifies we are dealing with a Circuit. A second example may be the “*Carlisle*” Exhibition of the “*Great British Small Prints Circuit*”. This can be shown simply as **GB S/Prints – Carlisle** or even as **GBSPC – Carlisle**.

Country Column

In dealing with this please remember that England, Scotland and Wales are separate countries and should be shown as such. Do not use UK, United Kingdom or Great Britain in the Country column.

NB:- There are a number of Circuits that have one or more of the component Salons marked up as being in a different country; eg: Spanish Andorran Circuit. In many cases these used to be judged in the same location as the other component salons; ie not in the country that it is accredited to. In these cases those apparent ‘different’ countries will NOT count as such. In other words the location of the judging will decide on the country. You can confirm which country a salon is recognised with by checking out the FIAP patronage site. You may have to search round a bit, the information is generally there, but in recent years the method of displaying the information has changed more than once.

FIAP No. Column

This must be accurate. **I CANNOT EMPHASISE THIS TOO MUCH**. FIAP check acceptance against their Database of Salon Results. This contains only the FIAP Number and not the Salon’s Name. If you get it wrong you will lose the acceptance or award from your application. The number can be gained from the promotional material for any FIAP patronised Salon or from its catalogue, but this can sometimes be wrong. By far the best way of ensuring you get this information correct is to go once again to the relevant pages of the FIAP web site. The records go right back to 1979.

Awards Column

Space is limited here and only the barest of details is required here, ‘Gold medal’, or ‘HM’ or ‘Ribbon’ is the sort of thing that is sufficient.

Media used

Whilst applying for AFIAP or EFIAP you will need two small columns to denote whether the acceptance was obtained as a “PDI” salon or as a “Print”. If your acceptance is from a film slide mark it as PDI.

General Information on Record Keeping etc

You should aim to collect and record your data as you go along, remembering that it does need to be set out in a specific order in the dossier.

- a) All acceptances for any one given photograph must be grouped together.
- b) The acceptances for each photograph need to be ordered as per the FIAP Number.
- c) FIAP instruct that groups of titles must be set out in ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Providing you maintain your records tidily you may be able to 'copy & paste' results into the FIAP dossier file but you must be careful not to disturb the formatting of the Dossier, it is likely to be rejected if you do, because FIAP have to be able to paste your data into their own database.

The columns contained in the Dossier file for recording your results are as follows, from left to right:

Acceptance number) *You will not be copying & pasting date into these two columns, because*
Title Number) *the data is either already there or cannot be put in until the data is there.*
Title
Salon
Country
FIAP Salon Number
Award
Media used - PDI) *You only need to place an 'x' in the appropriate column.*
Media Used - Prints)

When pasting into FIAP forms you can try this. Use 'paste special' (rather than 'paste') and then select the 'values' option. This will paste the values only, without altering the format of the destination spreadsheet.

If you are not comfortable with this, then another way is for you to ensure the file you are copying from (your records) is IDENTICAL in formatting to the one you wish to paste into. The list below gives the properties and formatting for the dossier file..

Background:- set no properties for backgrounds
Font Properties:- Arial size 10, type set normal
Columns & Borders:- Single thickness line

ACHIEVING THE CRITERIA AND MAKING AN APPLICATION

As previously stated we are only allowed one batch of applications in any one year. The Liaison Officer for PAGB regularly has a batch of in excess of 100 applicants each year and therefore it is necessary to follow a strict procedure. In August of the year preceding the submission, he will publish on the PAGB web Site and on PAGB 'e-news' a timetable and guideline document for prospective applicants. This will involve an initial 'registration' starting later that autumn and completion by the end of the following March. Please do not contact the Liaison Officer to register except in line with these instructions.

You have to achieve the relevant criteria BEFORE you register for a FIAP Distinction. However it is also worth noting that NO title, acceptance or award will count towards any application for a distinction until the salon involved has submitted their Salon Report, which contains all the results, to FIAP. Salons are required to submit these files within a specified length of time, but many are tardy (even up to and over 3 months is common and in longer in a few cases). Report Cards, Email or Website notifications are not acceptable. You can check whether FIAP has received the salon report by visiting the FIAP Patronage web site.

KEEPING UP TO DATE

If you have not already done so, you are strongly advised to subscribe to **PAGB 'e-news'** as we are now using that and also the PAGB website at www.thepagb.org.uk to circulate information. You can subscribe to PAGB 'e-news' very simply via the web site, and it is free of charge.

FINALLY

The above may seem complicated, but it is really quite simple and largely commonsense. I can speak from experience and say that once you get your organisation correct you should find it relatively straight forward and the lack of consequent hassle will hopefully enable you to enjoy Exhibition Photography all the more.