

## **Conducting an international photo salon jury by using state of the art software ( Adobe Lightroom<sup>®</sup>, Adobe Acrobat<sup>®</sup> and Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup> ) and modern judging approaches / techniques, as used by german mega circuit ( gmc ) et al**

german mega circuit and other off springs of German Circuits brand family are known throughout the world for maximum efficiency in conducting its circuits.

Key to managing the circuits mega efficiently is proper and complete processing of slides, digital files and entrants data PRIOR to the judging.

A mega smooth execution of the judging itself is key too, modern judging systems do not use simple numbers input by judges but use yes / no systems and then have the judges decide later on award winners ( medals, HMs ) by discussion rather than by sheer numbers. We in gmc have not invented our presently used system by ourselves, but had – prior to starting up our salon - screened worldwide jury systems and, in a BEST PRACTISE approach have combined Puyallup, USA system ( if one judge gives 9 point max. score, the image is accepted, no matter what the two other judges score ) and Concorso Il Mosaico, Italy system with simple yes / no system, where each image with just one judge's YES vote automatically advances to the second round.

The combination of both systems is very simple, in gmc, if just one judge votes YES, the image is accepted and the jury continues. A special gmc touch is the selection of the medals and HMs, while for the medals ALL THREE judges must agree unanimously on the medal winners, each judge may select three HMs all by him/herself, with only the 10<sup>th</sup> HM to be agreed unanimously. This system speeds up the process of medal / HM selection tremendously and every judge after the jury knows for sure, that all "his" selected pictures are accepted and both the medal winners and HMs are his favourite pictures of the salon. Is clear, this judging system is not fit for inexperienced judges, for this reason in gmc we always keep in every jury two judges who know the system from previous years and add one rookie for training / evaluation purposes. This way we have accumulated over the years a pretty good pool of suitable judges. Judges need to be quick in sizing the quality of the image and they must be self confident, because the only potential problem of this system is, if the judges do not say yes often enough, in the end there are not enough acceptances to meet the required acceptance rate. In this case the judges need to look at all the images again.

Obviously this system is MUCH quicker than if for every image three judges need to input their numbers into their keypad.

This system was perfect for the slide area, in which gmc started.

We just needed four people to run the jury, three judges and one jury manager who operates the slide projector and takes the accepted slides out of the tray into the accepted slide tray. Later the accepted slide data was transferred into the acceptance list manually.

I still remember one year the big eyes of one highly experienced international judge, who, at 9 am sharply, when I said "Gentlemen, take your seats" could not believe, how we could manage the jury with just me being there apart from the three judges. He had run international salons before and said, "Gunther, I had more than 10 people working for me then, how can you do it alone?". After the jury he was still slightly shocked but loved the system. As did every judge so far.

When we started accepting digital images the judging system was still working perfectly, but we had in the beginning a quite complicated and elaborate system to process digital entries.

After two years ( 2005 – 2006 ) operating with this rather complicated system and two different digital entry chairmen, our then digital entry chairman Norbert Heil came up with the revolutionary idea of using Adobe Lightroom for the judging. The only problem was, there

was no easy way to transfer the accepted images data automatically into the acceptance list, which of course speeds up the processing of the jury results dramatically.

This is when gmc IT guru Ulrich Flogaus came into the scene, after looking at the issue he pretty quickly said “No problem”. This is, when I always get mega nervous, because Uli always makes that comment, no matter how complicated the issue is.

Well, to cut a long story short, Uli of course managed to find a way to automatically transfer the acceptances data into our Excel acceptance list and we are using this system now since more than two years without any problems.

A detailed explanation of the system follows, including a step by step description how to move accepted images data into the acceptance list automatically.

A jury of an individual salon or several independent juries within a circuit may be conducted as described below. A circuit consist of several salons.

The tools which we used are Adobe Lightroom, Adobe Acrobat and Microsoft Excel. Their basic functionality should be familiar to you. Deeper knowledge is not required as the process is explained step by step and in detail in this application note.

- I. After receiving all entries as .jpg files those need to be imported in Lightroom as a first step. Here you will also see if the files are all stored using the proper color space. This is typically sRGB. If you want to run different sections (e.g. ND, CPID, EID ) you will need to import the picture files into different folders. The importing of pictures is a standard Lightroom task.

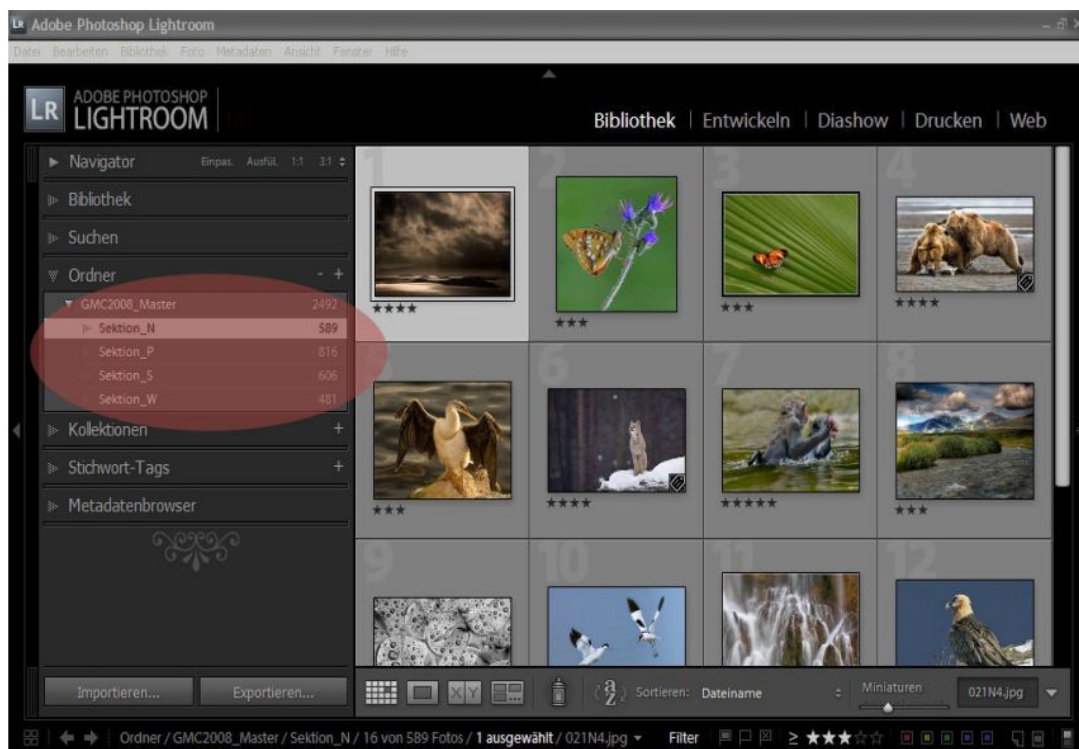


figure 1

As a second step all data for each picture needs to be collected in an Excel workbook. Typically you need at least the name of the photographer, the country of the entrant, the section abbreviation, the title of the picture and the unique filename of the picture in the Excel worksheet which we call here *master worksheet*. Best practice is to use column A for the filename and the following rows for further data.

- II. Jury: The jury is conducted as follows and is very simple: Just one person is required to run it, in Lightroom the proper folder ( CPID open, CPID theme, etc. etc ) is selected, then the slide show is started manually. As soon as one judge says YES, the image is given a star (by pressing “1”) and the next picture is shown. We in gmc leave the picture on the screen for about 3 seconds, if no judge votes for the image within this time, the next picture is shown. The system is of course very flexible, you can always go back, if one judge wants to see the picture longer. Continue until all images of this section have been judged. For processing of the data, follow with step III. We at gmc then continue to judge as follows: select the 1 star images and run the jury again, this time the judges should only vote YES if they think the image is worth a potential HM or medal. This may be denoted using 2, 3, 4 or 5 stars. After this round you normally end up with about 20 to 30 images, which you then can look up all together in Lightroom using the grid display for discussion of HM/medal selection. Here then we record the award winners and manually transfer them to the acceptance list later.
- III. After completing of the first round of the jury you want to export the accepted pictures in a new folder, named as “output” or with a descriptive name for the salon. To do so you need to select all pictures rated with one or more stars and then select export from the files menu. Best practise is to use lowest JPG quality to minimize disk space usage. Keep in mind that the pictures themselves are not of any interest, only their filenames are important to allocate the acceptances.

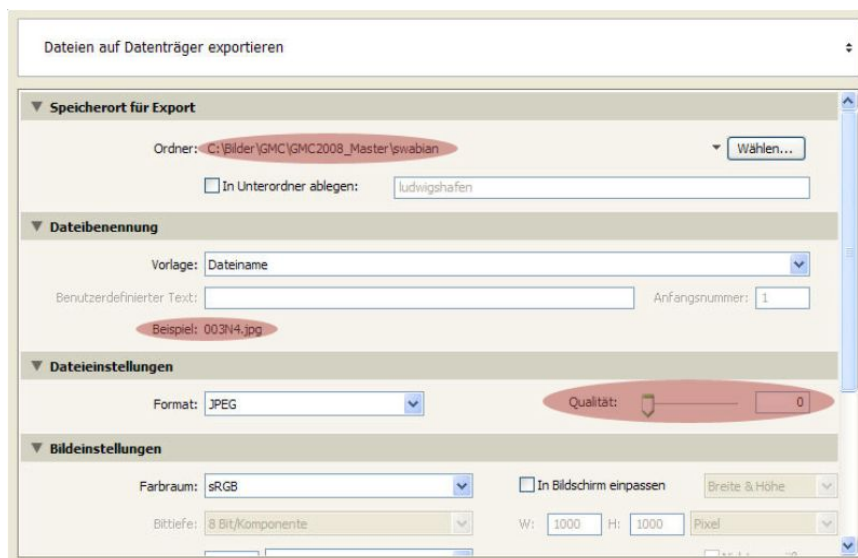


figure 2

- IV. Now all accepted pictures are present in the folder “output”. To collect their filenames use a windows command window in which you “cd” to the output folder. There you launch the following command “dir > acceptances\_from\_output.txt”. This DOS command lists all files in that particular folder and redirects the output to a text file named acceptances\_from\_output.txt. Remember, output stands for the salon name within a circuit.
- V. After pre-processing all juries/salons you may open those text files one by one using the open command of Excel. In the import-wizard confirm, fixed width, then click next, then click finish. You will end with an Excel worksheet carrying the filenames of the accepted pictures in column E. You should delete column A to D and also the first unwanted lines 1-7 and also the unwanted lines at the end of the table. Now you have the list of acceptances in Column A. Column B you should be filled with “A” for acceptance. If you awarded medals or honourable mentions you may put M or HM or whatever you like to see in the final result sheet. Alternatively you may fill in the M and

HM into the *master worksheet* later (this is actually easier as you have the titles there for reference). If you have made it up to here, you are almost there. You copy the content of this worksheet in a new *salon worksheet* within your *master workbook*. It is good practice to name the new worksheet according to the salon name.

- VI. In your *master worksheet* you want to have the acceptances for your jury or the first salon in a column (e.g. column G). So you want Excel to look the acceptances up in the respective *salon worksheet* and transfer them into the *master worksheet*. To achieve this use the VLOOKUP() function of Excel. This worksheet function will copy the acceptances to your master worksheet. If you have more juries/salons use the next column (e.g. I) for the next acceptance list and so on for bigger circuits.

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet titled "psa article acceptance sheet". The formula bar displays the formula: `=IF(ISERROR(VLOOKUP(A4;lookup_laup3;2;FALSE));";";VLOOKUP(A4;lookup_laup3;2;FALSE))`. The spreadsheet contains a table with the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	I	L	O	R
1	5th german mega circuit 2008										
2	Entry										
3	Number	Name	Country	Spa	nr	Title	Laupheim	Veitshoechheim	Filderstadt	Main Spessart	Leve
4	114N1	Dequick, Luc	Belgium	N	1235	Rode Libel	A	A	A	A	
5	114N2	Dequick, Luc	Belgium	N	1236	Early snow Ibex		A	A	A	A
6	114N3	Dequick, Luc	Belgium	N	1237	Blue Pool		A			A
7	114N4	Dequick, Luc	Belgium	N	1238	Ibex in Alpslandscape	A	A			A
8	114P1	Dequick, Luc	Belgium	P	1239	Hurdles Duel		A		A	A
9	114P2	Dequick, Luc	Belgium	P	1240	Tom & Fabian		A	A		A
10	114P3	Dequick, Luc	Belgium	P	1241	Leading 1109		A		A	A
11	114P4	Dequick, Luc	Belgium	P	1242	BK-622	A	A	HM	A	A
12	124N1	Preuss, Alfred	Germany	N	1327	Map-Butterfly					
13	124N2	Preuss, Alfred	Germany	N	1328	Stag-Beetle		A	A		
14	124N3	Preuss, Alfred	Germany	N	1329	Red-Eyed Treefrog		A	A		A
15	124N4	Preuss, Alfred	Germany	N	1330	Dryas julia Eclosion	A	A	A		
16	124W1	Preuss, Alfred	Germany	W	1331	Butterfly-Mating					
17	124W2	Preuss, Alfred	Germany	W	1332	Comma		A	A		
18	124W3	Preuss, Alfred	Germany	W	1333	Red Dragonfly		A	A		
19	124W4	Preuss, Alfred	Germany	W	1334	Four spotted Chaser		A	A		A
20	154N1	Stiller, Ralph	Germany	N	1608	Im Gebet		A			A
21	154N2	Stiller, Ralph	Germany	N	1609	Am Strand?		A			A

figure3

- VII. For generating a nice looking result table as a PDF File, you may want to remove the titles from the master worksheet which have not received an acceptance. To achieve this you may use an Excel macro or VBA function. If these are not familiar to you, you may also delete those lines manually. If you run an international jury/salon you might also want to sort the whole master worksheet according to the country of the entrants. This can be done with the Excel data menu. Use the sort item and select alphabetical sorting according to the column which contains the country as first selection and according to the column which contains the name as a second selection. To generate a decent PDF file from within Excel we recommend to use Adobe Acrobat, which plugs into Excel, Word and other office programs as a convenient printer driver. It generates better quality PDFs compared to freeware tools.

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