

The Wall And The Falls International Print Competition 2004 - Overview

NAC International Group Inc., a Toronto based firm and Latis Research Consultants, a firm based in the Niagara Region, have been working together since 1999 in the area of cultural exchanges, economic development potentials and introduction of leaders in the areas of industry, tourism, government and the arts among Canada, the United States and China.

In 2003, we (NAC and Latis) had the opportunity to bring together award-winning photographers from the China Artistic Photography Society (CAPS) and their work, with venues in Canada. The China Artistic Photography Society is a national organization that represents a diverse cross-section of photographers from all over China, with a membership of around 10,000. The project was limited in its scope of presentation by the worldwide outbreak of SARS. In spite of the limitations, we were able to bring to Canada a selection of photographic art from the CAPS and five of the photographers. The photographers had the opportunity to display their work at the Fort Erie Friendship Festival, before it went on permanent display at the Seaway Mall in Welland. A future display of the photographic art is also planned for a location within the Niagara Parks Commission in Niagara Region in Ontario.

As a result of the 2003 display, NAC International Group Inc. and Latis Research Consultants have been asked to continue their efforts to promote open and friendly communication between the countries through a photographic competition. All parties involved have made it clear that this should not be viewed as a competition between the countries involved but a sharing of talent among peoples who have similar interests. We feel that while in some cases there maybe a language barrier, the old saying that "A picture is worth a thousand words" can be realized and utilized in the efforts to promote an exchange of images and ideas.

In order to make this undertaking one that will be viewed as both culturally significant and demonstrating the highest level of professionalism possible, we have asked The Professional Photographers Of Canada (PPOC) and The Professional Photographers of America (PPA) for assistance and now have their permission to use, for the Western part of the Competition, some of the submission and judging criteria that the PPOC and the PPA have established for use in approved competitions. All members of the Western judging panel and the competition chairperson are PPOC accredited judges. Respectively, all members of the Chinese judging panel are CAPS accredited judges applying submission and judging criteria set out by CAPS. Our goal is to make this international print competition an annual event.

Working in association with CAPS, PPOC and PPA, the print competition will take place simultaneously in North America and in China with the entry deadline on March 8, 2004. This competition is open to members of PPOC, PPA, CAPS and all image-makers with an interest in photography. Entries will be judged, either in North America or in China, depending on where the prints were submitted, by the end of March 2004. An awards evening for North American winners will take place on April 3, 2004 in the Niagara Region, Ontario.

The approximate retail value of all prizes awarded to the winners of the North American judging is \$10,000.00. There will be five awards and five honorable mentions in each of the six categories of the competition, a total of 30 awards and 30 honorable mentions for those involved in the North American judging. The grand-prize is one round-trip air ticket to China and 4-night accommodations in Beijing for the awards ceremony on April 25, 2004. There will be similar awards and prizes for the Chinese competition. The judging for the North American component will take place mid-March in the Niagara Region and all winners (including the grand prize winner) will be notified in time for the Awards Evening on April 3, 2004.

The winners' work from the North American component will be transported to Beijing in April to be exhibited along with the work of the winners from the Chinese component, in a friendly competition to be judged jointly by PPOC and CAPS accredited judges who will bestow honorary awards and prizes for overall outstanding work in each category at the Awards Ceremony for this competition on April 25, 2004 in Beijing, China. Recipients of these additional awards and prizes will be notified in writing. A list of these honorary awards and their recipients will be available on the organizer's website.

A joint exhibition of winning prints from both the North America and Chinese components will be presented at various international traveling exhibitions selected by the competition organizers, in spring and early summer 2004 in China and in summer and fall 2004 in North America, such as the Great Wall at Badaling in Beijing, locations in Shanghai, the Buffalo/Fort Erie Friendship Festival, selected sites at the Niagara Parks Commission and throughout the Niagara Region. The collection is scheduled to be housed permanently at the Seaway Mall in Welland, until the winners of the 2005 competition are announced. The order of the event will be reversed in 2005 with the final judging taking place in the Niagara Region.

With the assistance of PPOC, PPA and CAPS, it is our goal to make this truly international event one that will provide a starting point from which many other opportunities for cultural and professional exchanges may grow.