

# Career Dossier

John Knopf

The work is large-format color landscape photography in the commercial-gallery register descended from Peter Lik and the tone-mapped travel-HDR lineage of Trey Ratcliff, with a distant and largely rhetorical gesture toward Ansel Adams. Capture is medium-format Hasselblad and Phase One with graduated ND filters, output as Fuji Flex prints at gallery scale; the stated process is in-camera and minimally retouched, though the finished frames carry the violet-gold and teal-orange chroma, edge halos, and panoramic-crop default of the preset-driven destination-landscape idiom. Subject categories are consistent across two decades: Antelope slot-canyon light shafts, Delicate Arch under stars, the Palouse, Maui and Columbia Gorge waterfalls, redwoods and rainbow eucalyptus, blue-hour cityscapes of Amsterdam, Lisbon, Dubai and Las Vegas, and storybook vernacular at Giethoorn and Sintra. Composition leans on centered axial subjects, foreground repoussoir at the wide-angle near edge, and rule-of-thirds horizons; light is restricted almost entirely to golden hour and civil twilight, with long-exposure water smoothing and sunstar diffraction recurring as signature devices.

The career markers cluster on the commercial and editorial side of the field. Two eponymous galleries operated in Las Vegas (Stratosphere, 2012–2017) and Minneapolis (Wayzata, 2015–2017); current representation is with Mondoir Gallery in Dubai, where the 2025 solo *Chasing the Light* was mounted. Group and fair appearances include Venice Biennale (2022) and Art Basel Miami Beach (2022). Editorial and platform credits include the TIME TIMEPieces Genesis NFT drop (2022), the National Geographic first-cohort NFT drop (2023), and work with Red Bull, USA Today, Billboard, and Google between 2018 and 2021. Two self-published monographs (2018, 2021) anchor the print record, alongside an Emmy nomination in 2018. Beyond the personal practice, Knopf founded FOTO, a working-photographer community whose curated exhibitions at NFT NYC and Art Basel have shown more than a thousand photographers, and he has organized exhibition programs for National Geographic and TIME and curated publications with HUG and with Michael Yamashita.

The stated aspirations — a museum acquisition, a state-level artist fellowship, and a monograph of the American West work — point to a register the existing record does not yet address. The collections list is corporate (TIME, National Geographic NFT cohorts); there is no museum holding, no kunsthalle or non-profit institutional exhibition, no curator-authored catalogue essay, and no critical writing in the photography press. Fellowship applications at the Nevada Arts Council or NEA level typically require a defined project with sustained inquiry, and the bodies of work as listed are open-ended geographic categories ("American West landscapes, 2010–present") rather than discrete projects with a thesis, a date of completion, and a return-visit structure. A monograph of the American West work would require either a trade or university press willing to take it, or a self-published volume distinct from the two existing ones; no such publisher conversation, no editor, and no writer for the accompanying text appear in the record.

## Ranked Opportunities (6)

The ordering here is driven almost entirely by aesthetic-fit alignment rather than by award prestige, because Knopf's StyleFingerprint — the Lik/Malan/Rive lineage of saturated, high-contrast, dramatic-vantage landscape work — sits cleanly inside some of these institutions' past cohorts and squarely opposite to others. Epson Pano leads at composite 0.47 because it is the only award on the list whose past winner pool explicitly includes Peter Lik, and the Tahoe Bonsai-Rock pastel pano (id=73) is essentially a textbook Pano frame: 2:1 crop, smoothed water, magenta-to-orange preset sky. The ceiling there is mechanical — only id=73 meets aspect — but the fit is unmatched, which is why it ranks well above the next tier even at a smaller submission count.

NANPA Showcase and ILPOTY occupy the second tier together at composite 0.25 for inverse reasons. NANPA earns its placement because its Scapes and Altered Reality categories openly admit Knopf's saturated-chroma register, and his Las Vegas base plus twenty-year practice fit the membership profile; the constraint is geographic, with the Lisbon, Sintra, and Dutch alley frames falling out of the continental remit. ILPOTY ranks alongside NANPA but for narrower reasons — Palacios's warm Atacama work shows saturated landscape can win, but Mielzynski's high-key minimalism sets the actual award-tier ceiling, and the HDR-violet-gold signature across id=29, id=57, and id=37 reads as the register that cohort sits opposite to. Both are plausibly Top-250 / Top-101 territory on the strongest single frames; neither is realistic at the named-award tier.

The bottom three — FAPA, ND Awards, and IPA at composites 0.23, 0.22, and 0.13 — are structurally interchangeable: IPA-family mass-entry awards with broad category trees, generous HM tiers, and unreachable top-tier "Photographer of the Year" prizes that require project armature Knopf's portfolio does not have. The same six frames (id=1, id=6, id=11, id=37, id=66, id=73) map onto live sub-categories in all three, and the same two frames (id=29 iceplant, id=57 haloed vineyard) register as weak signals against more disciplined entries in all three. The ordering among them is essentially a fit-margin tiebreaker, and the realistic outcome at each is multi-HM with no category win.

Application priority should follow the fit ranking, not the prestige ranking. Epson Pano 2026 is the first submission to prepare — it is the highest-confidence placement on the entire dossier, and Knopf almost certainly has un-submitted panoramic captures from the same Tahoe and canyon shoots that would expand id=73 into a three-to-five-frame entry. NANPA Showcase 2027 is the second priority because the category fit is real and the geographic constraint is a filtering exercise rather than a ceiling problem. ILPOTY, FAPA, ND, and IPA should be treated as a single batched submission cycle using the same six-frame core set across all four — the marginal cost of adding another IPA-family entry is low, the HM-tier outcomes are plausible across the board, and there is no reason to prioritize among them beyond deadline order.

# 1. 17th Epson International Pano Awards 2026

major · deadline 2026-07-13 · prize \$14000 · fit 0.65 · composite 0.47

## Why this match

This is the strongest aesthetic fit on the entire list — Epson Pano is the one major institution whose past cohort explicitly includes Peter Lik alongside Hougaard Malan and Max Rive, the lineage Knopf's StyleFingerprint reads directly out of. The Tahoe Bonsai-Rock pastel pano (id=73) is exactly the frame the award rewards: 2:1+ crop, dramatic vantage, magenta-to-orange preset sky, smoothed water. The category-eligibility ceiling is the limit, though — only id=73 in this twelve-image set meets the 2:1 aspect requirement; everything else (id=1 vertical canyon, id=6 vertical waterfall, id=16 vertical bamboo, id=21 ground macro, id=66 vertical alley, id=57 HDR vineyard) would need to be re-cropped or excluded. Knopf almost certainly has additional un-submitted panoramic captures from the same shoots; based on portfolio register, a Top 50 placement or Bronze in Open Nature is unsurprising.

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## Artist Statement

The wide frame is a discipline, not a crop. I shoot for it in-camera, balancing the sky and the foreground in a single exposure with graduated filters, and I stop there. No composites, no stacks, no rescue work in post.

I am drawn to the hour when a landscape gives up its loudest light and the sky settles into one long gradient. Lake Tahoe at dusk with a single boulder anchoring the foreground. A Caribbean shoreline as the surf flattens under a long exposure. A stand of trees stretched across an aspect that would crop badly at any other ratio. The panoramic format is what those scenes ask for. A 3:1 frame is honest to the way the eye actually moves across a horizon, slowly and laterally, the way you would walk a shoreline rather than face one.

I came up reading Adams and learned exposure from the Zone System, but the work I make is not contemplative black and white. It is color photography of the warm hour, made for print at scale, and I have spent twenty years learning how to keep the sky from blowing out and the water from going dead in the same frame. That is the craft I am submitting to this prize. The panoramic ratio in my work is not a stylistic shortcut. It is the reason I went to those places at that hour with those filters in my bag.

One exposure. One frame. One horizon. The panel will see twelve of them.

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## Project Proposal

The twelve images submitted are drawn from a long-running panoramic landscape practice that has moved across the American West, the Pacific, and the Caribbean since 2010.

The subjects are Tahoe at first light, a Grenadian shoreline, alpine treelines, and pastel horizons over open water, photographed from vantages chosen for the way the wide format holds them.

I work in the Zone System tradition on medium-format film, balancing scene dynamic range at exposure so the file leaves the field close to the final print.

What unifies the twelve frames as a sequence is the panoramic ratio itself: every image was either made native at 2:1 or wider, or composed at exposure with the panoramic crop already decided, which is why the set reads as built for the format rather than retrofitted to it.

The argument I want the panel to see across these twelve frames is for the panoramic ratio as a primary landscape format rather than a marketing crop, sustained across regions, seasons, and light conditions over fifteen years of work.

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## Cover Letter

Dear Selection Committee,

I am submitting twelve panoramic landscape photographs to the Epson International Pano Awards 2026 across the Open and Amateur categories. I am a Las Vegas-based landscape photographer working in saturated color at panoramic aspect, and the Epson International Pano Awards is the venue I have built toward across two decades of frames composed natively for the wide format.

The work in this submission is the long-exposure, golden-hour and blue-hour landscape register I have spent my career refining: a Tahoe scene at last light, a Caribbean shoreline at 3:1, a 2.85:1 vista built for the wide frame rather than cropped to it, and a pastel-horizon sky at extreme aspect. Several frames are native captures at 3:1 and wider, composed for the format from the moment of exposure. I am entering the 17th edition specifically because the body of recent panoramic work has reached the scale where it deserves to be measured against the strongest international field in the format, and this cycle is the right moment to put it forward.

A few career markers relevant to this submission: I am represented by Mondoir Gallery, where my solo exhibition *\*Chasing the Light\** opened in 2025. I have also published two self-titled photography monographs (Volume I in 2018, Volume II in 2021) drawn from the landscape and cityscape work that the panoramic frames in this entry extend.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be honored to have this work read by the Pano Awards jury.

Sincerely,

John Knopf

## 2. NANPA Showcase 2027 (North American Nature Photography Association)

mid · deadline 2026-09-19 · prize \$500 · fit 0.55 · composite 0.25

### Why this match

NANPA Showcase is one of the better-fitting awards on the list for Knopf because the Scapes category openly admits golden-hour and saturated-chroma landscape work, and the Altered Reality category absorbs the more aggressively-processed frames. The Antelope Canyon shaft (id=1) and Tahoe Bonsai-Rock pano (id=73) are squarely Scapes-eligible and competitive at the Top-250 tier; the Hawaiian waterfall (id=6), bamboo path (id=16), and glass-pebble macro (id=21) all map to live categories. Knopf's Las Vegas base and twenty-year practice fit the NANPA membership profile cleanly. Hurting signals are the non-North-American urban frames (id=11 Lisbon, id=37 Sintra, id=66 Dutch alley) which are out-of-scope for the continental remit, and the haloed HDR vineyard (id=57) which would still read weak even within NANPA's more permissive register.

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### Artist Statement

I plan my year around the long light. Sunrise, sunset, and the half hour on either side of civil twilight are the only conditions I shoot in, and the only conditions in which the country I photograph looks the way I want it to look.

The work here is North American. A bonsai pine on a granite shoal at Lake Tahoe. A tree line stretched across a three-to-one frame. A reflection held still long enough to double the sky. I came up exposing for the scene, balancing the dynamic range with graduated filters in front of the lens at the moment of exposure, and I have kept that discipline through the move from film to medium-format digital. I do not stack, composite, or stitch. What the camera saw is what the print shows.

The panoramic crop is the format I trust most. A two-to-one or wider frame matches how my eye actually moves across a ridge, a shoreline, a row of trees before settling on a subject. It is a working honesty about how I scan a landscape, not a stylistic flourish.

Light first, then format, then subject. That is the order I work in, and it is the order this submission is built around. NANPA is a competition where the panel reads work samples as nature first and photography second, and that suits me. The frames I am sending are not symbolic, not allegorical, not constructed. They are a record of being in a place when the light arrived, and pressing the shutter once.

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### Project Proposal

These ten frames are drawn from *\*American West Landscapes\**, a body I have been building since 2010 across Nevada, California, and the Pacific Northwest. Nine images are submitted to Scapes; one blue-dominant square is submitted to Altered Reality, where its register belongs.

The subject is the alpine and high-desert West at its most open: Tahoe shoreline anchored by a bonsai rock, ridge tree lines at panoramic crop, reflective water at calm hours, and the wide horizons the region offers a photographer who waits for them.

I work in medium format in the Zone System tradition, balancing scene dynamic range at exposure rather than at the desk afterward, and the saturated chroma in these frames is the chroma the light delivered, not an additive layer.

What unifies the ten images is return practice. I photograph the same lakes, ridges, and coastlines across many seasons in different conditions, and the frames I am entering here are the ones where the wait, the weather, and the hour arrived together.

The stake is regional. I live in Las Vegas and work primarily across the western United States; the landscapes in this submission are ones whose snowpack, water levels, and tree cover are shifting visibly season to season. Showcase puts the work in front of NANPA's nature-photography readership, an audience that knows the country in these frames well enough to register what is changing in it.

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## Cover Letter

Dear Selection Committee,

I am a Las Vegas–based landscape photographer submitting to the NANPA Showcase 2027. I work in medium format, balancing scene dynamic range in-camera and printing at gallery scale on Fuji Flex.

I am writing to NANPA in particular because the Showcase's Scapes category is the right home for the panoramic landscape work I have been making across the American West, and because the panel's openness to saturated color in natural-light scenes fits how I see and print. Several of the frames in this submission were made specifically for the wide format the category recognizes, including a 2:1 panorama of the bonsai rock at Lake Tahoe and two additional 3:1 frames that sit beyond the format minimum. The remaining entries are standard-ratio Western landscapes from the same ongoing body of work, and one more processed blue-dominant frame I am offering toward Altered Reality.

A few markers relevant to this submission: I had a solo exhibition, *\*Chasing the Light\**, at Mondoir Gallery in Dubai in 2025, and my landscape work was selected for both the National Geographic and TIME Magazine fine-art photography programs in 2022 and 2023. Beyond my own practice, I founded FOTO, a community of working photographers, and have organized and curated gallery exhibitions presenting work by more than a thousand photographers at events in New York, including programs alongside National Geographic and TIME. The community side of NANPA's mission is one I recognize and have spent years building toward in my own way.

Thank you for your consideration of this work.

Sincerely,

John Knopf

### 3. International Landscape Photographer of the Year (ILPOTY) 2026 — 13th Edition

major · deadline 2026-10-07 · prize \$12500 · fit 0.45 · composite 0.25

#### Why this match

ILPOTY does admit dramatic-landscape register, so the artist's slot-canyon shaft (id=1) and Tahoe Bonsai-Rock pastel pano (id=73) are in the room — Palacios's warm Atacama frames show that saturated desert work can win here. But Mielzynski's high-key minimalist Cono de Arita and lone-snow-tree set the actual ceiling of the cohort, and Knopf's HDR-violet-gold preset signature across id=29 (purple iceplant), id=57 (HDR vineyard tree with halos), and id=37 (Sintra teal-and-magenta) reads as Lik/Ratcliff-adjacent — the register Mielzynski's cohort sits \*opposite\* to. Cityscape and storybook-village frames (id=11, id=66) are out-of-category entirely. Plausible Top 101 placement on the strongest single frames; nowhere near the Mielzynski/Palacios award tier.

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#### Artist Statement

I am pursuing a single subject across the American West: the half hour when desert light goes ceremonial. For sixteen years I have returned to the slot canyons of northern Arizona, the high-desert arches, and the granite shoreline of Lake Tahoe to photograph that interval, the one where a beam drops through a sandstone aperture or a low sun grazes a glass-still cove and the whole frame turns warm.

The work I am submitting belongs to that body. The canyon frames are made on repeat visits to Antelope, timed to the weeks each year when the overhead beam reaches the floor. The Tahoe panorama and the Pebble Beach coast are part of a parallel seascape thread, photographed at the same hour but in cooler register, where I am after the wide horizontal that holds water, stone, and sky in one continuous read.

I shoot medium format with graduated neutral density at exposure, balancing the scene in camera so the print carries the dynamic range I actually saw rather than one I built afterward. The 2:1 and wider crops are not a house format. They are the shape this country takes when I stop trying to make it fit a rectangle.

I keep returning until the light arrives. Galen Rowell said his first thought was always of light, and the American West work is my long argument with that sentence: that the photograph is not the place, it is the hour the place agrees to be looked at. The frames I am submitting here are the ones I trust to carry that argument into a single sequence.

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#### Project Proposal

The twelve images I submit are drawn from a fifteen-year body of work I title Chasing the Light: photographs made in the American West, on the Pacific coast, and in cities where the hour and the angle of light let a place show its form.

The selection is deliberately mixed. Two slot-canyon interiors from northern Arizona, a Tahoe shoreline at first light, and a Pacific pebble beach anchor the recognizable-subject category submissions. Two wide-format panoramas clear the 2:1 threshold for the panoramic class. The remaining frames hold to 1.5:1 or square ratios and read as single-image

scenics suited to the open and special-subject categories. I am offering the panel both the portfolio range that the Photographer-of-the-Year prize asks for and the subject specialization the single-image awards recognize.

I shoot Hasselblad and Phase One medium-format with graduated neutral-density filters set at exposure to balance the scene's dynamic range in-camera. There are no HDR composites, no AI generation, and no stacked exposures in any frame I submit. The discipline is Zone System exposure carried into a digital workflow, and the prints are made on Fujicolor Crystal Archive Maxima at gallery scale.

What unifies the twelve images is timing. Each frame waits for the moment when directional light, low sun in a canyon, last dusk on Tahoe granite, sunrise on Pacific stone, makes the place legible. ILPOTY's portfolio prize specifically rewards that consistency across varied terrain, which is what these twelve images are assembled to demonstrate.

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## Cover Letter

Dear Selection Committee,

I am submitting twelve frames to the International Landscape Photographer of the Year 2026, including dedicated entries for the Panoramic category and individual scenic submissions across the open classes. I am a Las Vegas-based landscape photographer twenty years into a practice grounded in Zone System exposure and minimal post-processing, working in medium format and DSLR.

The submission centers on subjects the prize has historically rewarded: an Antelope slot-canyon light shaft, a Lake Tahoe panorama at 2:1, a 2.85:1 wide-format horizontal, and a 3:1 extra-wide frame for the panoramic class. Two additional canyon interiors and a Pebble Beach seascape round out the entry. I am directing this work to the 13th edition of International Landscape Photographer of the Year specifically because the panoramic category as the prize defines it matches the format I have been printing at gallery scale for the past several years, and because the jury's published shortlists track closely with the saturated dramatic-landscape register I work in.

The recent career markers most relevant to this opportunity are three. Mondoir Gallery in Dubai mounted my solo exhibition Chasing the Light in 2025 and now represents the work. I have self-published two monographs of the landscape practice (Volumes I and II, 2018 and 2021). Selections from this body were included in National Geographic's first NFT cohort in 2023 and in TIME magazine's TIMEPieces Genesis drop in 2022, both of which curated landscape work specifically.

I would be honored to have the entry considered alongside the 13th-edition field. Thank you for your consideration.

John Knopf

## 4. Fine Art Photography Awards 2026/2027 (13th FAPA)

mid · deadline 2026-10-11 · prize \$3000 · fit 0.50 · composite 0.23

### Why this match

No FAPA recipient images or names were provided in this prompt, so I'm scoring against the published structure of the award (broad categories, generous HM tier, IPA-family mass-entry economics). Knopf's strongest single frames — the Antelope Canyon shaft (id=1), the Hawaiian waterfall (id=6), and the Tahoe Bonsai-Rock pano (id=73) — are exactly the register that takes Landscape category Honorable Mentions in FAPA every cycle, and the Lisbon light-trail nightscape (id=11) plus Sintra coastal frame (id=37) plot well in the Architecture and Travel sub-categories despite the Lik-leaning palette. The conceptual top-tier "Fine Art Photographer of the Year" award is unreachable for a portfolio with no project armature, but a category placement is unsurprising; HDR-uniformity in id=29 and the haloed vineyard tree id=57 are still hurting signals against Fine Art jurors.

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### Artist Statement

I chase one hour: the minutes when light goes from ordinary to specific. A slot canyon fills with a shaft of dust and gold. Blue hour rolls a Lisbon avenue into ribbons of light. A Sintra cliff at sunset turns magenta and amber for fifteen minutes before the show is over.

For twenty years I have built a practice around that hour. I work in saturated color, in wide and panoramic frames. The discipline is to be standing in the right place when the light arrives, and to know what the frame wants when it does. I shoot for the print, at gallery scale, on Fuji Flex, where the color has somewhere to go.

The twelve frames in this submission are a catalogue of that hour across the categories the light treats differently. A beam in Antelope Canyon for Landscape. A Hawaiian waterfall for Nature. Lisbon traffic at civil twilight for Cityscape. A Sintra coast at 1.50, a Tahoe boulder cut to 2.00, a wider pano at 3.00 for the Panoramic slot. An interior, an alley, a Pacific dusk for Travel. Different rooms, one house.

Galen Rowell wrote that his first thought was always of light. Mine is the same. I am not interested in the landscape as scenery. I am interested in the quarter hour when the landscape stops being scenery and starts being a frame the light has chosen.

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### Project Proposal

The twelve images submitted here are drawn from three ongoing bodies of landscape work made over the past fifteen years: American West sites, Pacific waterfalls and tropics, and global cityscapes.

Subject across the twelve is the picturesque vantage held at the edge of legibility: a slot-canyon shaft of light, a high-altitude boulder at last light, a city avenue under blue-hour traffic trails, and a tropical cascade in shaded green.

Method is golden-hour and blue-hour shooting in saturated color, with exposures balanced in the field and aspect ratios chosen for the scale at which the prints are made, including one architectural interior carried for tonal contrast.

What unifies the twelve as a single submission is consistency of palette and light across radically different geographies. A warm-cool register holds a sandstone interior, a European avenue, and a tropical grotto inside one frame of attention. The selection is built around print and gallery wall presentation rather than around a documentary or essayistic argument.

The stakes for me, in entering FAPA's fine art category, are the case that the destination-led picturesque remains a serious register when the seeing is sustained, the palette is held disciplined across continents, and the print carries the work at scale.

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## Cover Letter

Dear Selection Committee,

I am submitting twelve photographs to the Fine Art Photography Awards 2026/2027 across the Landscape, Travel, Architecture, and Panoramic categories. I am a Las Vegas-based landscape photographer working in saturated color across slot canyons, tropical waterfalls, blue-hour cityscapes, and coastal frames, and FAPA's category structure is one of the few international awards where a single dossier can sit cleanly across all four registers I work in.

I am writing in advance of the 13th edition's deadline because the dedicated Panoramic sub-category is the right home for two frames I have wanted to place in front of an international jury: a 2:1 Tahoe seascape and a 3:1 horizontal landscape, both meeting the category's aspect threshold without re-cropping. An Antelope Canyon light shaft and a Hawaiian waterfall anchor the Landscape submissions, and a Lisbon nightscape extends the dossier into Architecture and Cityscape.

By way of relevant background: I had a solo exhibition, *Chasing the Light*, at Mondoir Gallery in 2025, and my work was shown in group context at the 2022 Venice Biennale. I have self-published two monographs of the work to date, with a third planned around the American West landscapes that anchor several of the photographs in this submission to FAPA.

The dossier was assembled to read as a coherent entry rather than a portfolio sampler, with each frame chosen to meet the technical specs of its category cleanly and to stand on its own as a single image in front of the jury.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
John Knopf

## 5. ND Awards (Neutral Density Photography Awards) 2026

mid · deadline 2026-09-20 · prize \$3500 · fit 0.48 · composite 0.22

### Why this match

No recipient images attached, so I'm scoring against the ND Awards cohort structure, which mirrors FAPA and IPA closely. Top "Photographer of the Year" tier is unreachable without a project body, but the Nature, Architecture, and Special sub-categories are exactly where Knopf's strongest single frames seat at the HM tier — Antelope shaft (id=1), Hawaiian waterfall (id=6), Lisbon light-trails (id=11), Sintra coast (id=37), Dutch alley (id=66), and Tahoe pano (id=73) all map onto live ND categories. The HDR-violet-gold preset across id=29 (iceplant) and the haloed vineyard tree (id=57) remain weak signals even within the more permissive ND register. Plausible multi-HM, no top-tier; structurally similar outcome to FAPA and IPA.

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### Artist Statement

I work to one principle: balance the scene in the glass, not in the file. A graduated neutral-density filter on the front of the lens lets me hold a bright sky and a dark foreground inside a single exposure, the way the eye held them when I was standing there. That choice rules out HDR, composites, and rescue work in software. What you see is what the camera saw.

Twenty years in, that discipline carries a Zone System inheritance from Ansel Adams: pre-visualize the print, place the values, accept the frame the conditions give you. I shoot medium format and print on Fuji Flex at gallery scale.

The selection I am submitting moves across three registers I keep returning to. Slot canyons and Pacific waterfalls, where the problem is a narrow shaft of light against deep shadow and the filter does most of the thinking for me. Coastal and alpine frames at Sintra and Tahoe, where the panoramic crop earns its width because the subject is the horizon and what sits below it. And blue-hour cityscapes in Lisbon and Dubai, where a long exposure resolves traffic and water into something the unaided eye cannot quite see but recognizes.

I am drawn to the picturesque and I do not apologize for it. The frames are warm, saturated, and built around a light shaft, a leading line, or a pier. I want a viewer to stop in front of a print, not pull it apart. For a prize named after the filter itself, that feels like the right thing to say plainly: the photograph is made at the moment of the shutter, and the rest is craft.

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### Project Proposal

I am submitting twelve photographs to the ND Awards 2026 across the Nature, Cityscape, Architecture, Panoramic, and Fine Art categories, drawn from twenty years of landscape and architectural work.

The submission is not a single series and I am not framing it as one. It is a cross-section of three working bodies. The first is American West and Pacific tropical landscape, represented here by an Antelope Canyon shaft, a Hawaiian waterfall, and a Tahoe panorama. The second is blue-hour cityscape, represented by a Lisbon long exposure and a Dubai skyline. The third is architectural and panoramic crops, including a Dutch alley at 3:1 and a square fine-art frame.

The images are sorted into the categories the contest is built around, which is the structure ND Awards itself asks entrants to use.

What unifies the twelve is method. Each frame is exposed in-camera using ND graduated filters to balance scene dynamic range at the moment of exposure, in the Zone System tradition, with minimal post-processing and no compositing. The long-exposure smoothing in the waterfall and seascape frames, the vehicle light-trails in Lisbon, and the shafted directional beam in Antelope are all products of in-camera time and filtration rather than post-capture reconstruction.

Stakes are practical. The ND Awards categories map cleanly onto how the work is made and how it has been shown over two decades of gallery and editorial placement, and the contest's name names the tool the work depends on.

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## Cover Letter

Dear Selection Committee,

I am submitting twelve images to the ND Awards 2026 across the Nature, Cityscape, Architecture, Panoramic, Long Exposure, and Fine Art categories. I am a Las Vegas-based landscape photographer working primarily in medium format with graduated ND filters, balancing scene contrast at exposure rather than in post.

The slate draws from three regions I have worked in for over a decade: the American West, the Pacific tropics, and Europe. Single frames anchor each category: an Antelope Canyon light shaft for Nature, a Lisbon night street with vehicle trails for Long Exposure, a Dutch alley panorama for Architecture or Panoramic, and a square-format frame for Fine Art. Each image is offered as a standalone entry rather than as part of a project sequence.

I am directing this slate to the ND Awards 2026 specifically because the competition's category-by-category judging rewards single-image craft across distinct registers, which is the form my practice actually takes. A project-bound prize would not be the right home for this work; ND Awards is.

The most relevant credentials for this submission: my 2025 solo exhibition "Chasing the Light" at Mondoir Gallery in Dubai, from which several of the included frames were drawn; inclusion in the first National Geographic and TIME Magazine TIMEPieces photography cohorts in 2023 and 2022; and two self-published monographs collecting the American West and global cityscape work that the submitted images are taken from.

Thank you for your consideration.

John Knopf

## 6. International Photography Awards (IPA) 2026 — 23rd Edition

major · deadline 2026-06-30 · prize \$10000 · fit 0.50 · composite 0.13

### Why this match

No recipient images were attached, so I'm scoring against the IPA cohort structure: Stephen Wilkes-tier "International Photographer of the Year" is unreachable for a portfolio without project armature, but the Nature, Travel, and Architecture sub-categories are exactly where Lik-register single frames seat at the HM/Category Winner tier each cycle. Knopf's Antelope shaft (id=1), Hawaiian waterfall (id=6), Lisbon light-trails (id=11), Sintra coast (id=37), Dutch alley (id=66), and Tahoe pastel pano (id=73) all map onto live IPA sub-categories. Plausible multi-HM outcome; HDR halos in id=57 and the over-pushed iceplant chroma in id=29 still register as weak signals against more disciplined competing entries even at the HM level.

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### Artist Statement

I work in a single discipline. Arrive early, wait for the light, stand where the composition has already been decided, and expose for the scene's full dynamic range in one frame. No HDR, no composites. What survives is one negative.

The work submitted here moves between three registers I have returned to for years. Slot canyon interiors, where a single shaft through Antelope's upper chamber holds for about a minute before it goes. Long-exposure water on Pacific coasts and tropical falls under canopy. Blue-hour cityscapes, Lisbon and Dubai, where light trails give up thirty seconds of motion to a still frame. The panoramic crop, when I use it at 2:1 or 3:1, is not a stylistic shortcut but the frame the coastline or the alley actually offers.

I shoot in the saturated, golden-hour register because that is where the subjects I keep returning to live their best light. A Sintra headland at dusk, a violet alley facade at twilight, a falls running long enough to read as silk. I am not chasing the unfamiliar. I am chasing the picture a casual viewer walks past because no one stopped to wait for the right minute.

For IPA, the frames here are selected to read across the categories I shoot across: nature, travel, architecture. The discipline does not change between them. The light, the wait, the single negative, the foreground that lets the eye enter, the saturated close at the end of the day. One working method, several rooms.

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### Project Proposal

\*Selections from Three Concurrent Bodies, 2010–2025\*

The twelve images submitted are drawn from a fifteen-year landscape practice working across three concurrent bodies: American West landscapes, Pacific waterfalls and tropics, and global cityscapes.

The subject across the set is light in transitional hours, from a shafted directional beam in an Antelope Canyon slot to civil twilight over Lisbon, with long-exposure flow and traffic trails carrying the frames where moving water and moving light are present.

Method is consistent across subjects. I work in the Ansel Adams Zone System tradition on medium-format bodies, using ND graduated filters at exposure to balance scene dynamic range in-camera rather than in post. No HDR, no composites, no AI. Final prints are Fuji Flex at gallery scale.

What unifies the twelve frames as one submission is not a single subject but a single approach: golden hour and civil twilight as the working window, long exposure where moving water or light trails carry the frame, and format chosen per subject (vertical for slot canyon and waterfall, 2:1 and 3:1 panoramic for landscape and architecture, square and 4:3 where the subject asks for it).

The stakes are the breadth of one calibration of color, light, and scale, tested across three subject registers and presented to IPA's Nature, Travel, and Architecture juries as a cross-section of a continuous practice.

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## Cover Letter

Dear Selection Committee,

I am submitting twelve photographs to the International Photography Awards 2026 across the Nature, Travel, and Architecture categories. I am a Las Vegas-based landscape photographer with a twenty-year practice working in medium format and the Zone System tradition, and the IPA category structure is the right home for a submission that crosses sandstone interior, tropical waterfall, European night street, and lit-tower skyline in a single coherent group.

I am writing to the 23rd IPA cycle in particular because my first international solo, *\*Chasing the Light\** at Mondo Gallery in Dubai, opened in 2025, and an IPA placement this year would directly extend the international visibility that exhibition began. The submitted images are drawn from the same body of work shown there, anchored by the Antelope Canyon shaft and the Lisbon night frame.

A few markers I think are relevant to this jury. My photographs were included in the first National Geographic and TIME Magazine NFT cohorts, in 2023 and 2022 respectively, both juried selections of contemporary photography. I am also the founder of FOTO, a community of working photographers, where I have curated and organized FOTO-branded gallery exhibitions in New York during NFT NYC and Art Basel weeks, programming work by more than a thousand photographers across multiple events. I co-curated a photography publication with National Geographic photographer Michael Yamashita, and have organized gallery programs for both National Geographic and TIME.

The submission represents the strongest single-frame work from a body produced over the past decade. I would be honored to have it considered by the IPA jury this cycle.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Knopf

# Curriculum Vitae

JOHN KNOPF

b. 1983 | Lives and works in Las Vegas, Nevada, United States

Landscape photographer working in the Ansel Adams Zone System tradition, with a twenty-year practice spanning the American West, Pacific waterfalls and tropics, and global cityscapes.

## EDUCATION

Self-taught

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2025 — Chasing the Light, Mondoir Gallery, Dubai, UAE

2015–2017 — John Knopf Gallery (Wayzata), solo program, Minneapolis, MN

2012–2017 — John Knopf Gallery (Stratosphere), solo program, Las Vegas, NV

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS (selected)

2022 — Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy

2022 — Art Basel Miami Beach, Miami Beach, FL

## PUBLICATIONS (selected)

2023 — National Geographic, first-cohort NFT drop

2022 — TIME Magazine, TIMEPieces NFT — Genesis drop

2021 — John Knopf — Photography Monograph (Volume II), self-published

2021 — Billboard

2020 — Google

2019 — Red Bull

2018 — John Knopf — Photography Monograph (Volume I), self-published

2018 — USA Today

## AWARDS AND HONORS

2018 — Emmy nomination

## COLLECTIONS

National Geographic, first NFT cohort (corporate)

TIME Magazine, TIMEPieces NFT collection (corporate)

## REPRESENTATION

Mondoir Gallery, Dubai, UAE (since 2025)

John Knopf Gallery (Wayzata), Minneapolis, MN, 2015–2017 (closed)

John Knopf Gallery (Stratosphere), Las Vegas, NV, 2012–2017 (closed)

## CURATORIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL

Founder — FOTO, photography community and curated gallery program. Founded FOTO, a community of working photographers; organized and curated multiple FOTO-branded gallery exhibitions in NYC at NFT NYC and Art Basel, presenting work by 1,000+ photographers across multiple events.

Curator and Organizer — National Geographic, gallery exhibition program.

Curator and Organizer — TIME Magazine, gallery exhibition program.

Curator — HUG, photography publication.

Co-curator — Photography book co-curated with Mike Yamashita (National Geographic photographer), independent / collaborative.

## Filtered Out

Why not World Nature Photography Awards 2027 (WNPA): with no wildlife work eliminating ten of thirteen categories and only a Lik-register Antelope Canyon shaft and Hawaiian waterfall reaching the Landscapes category — where heavily HDR-saturated frames fare poorly against the jury's preference for restrained ecological reportage — Knopf's gallery/NFT positioning is fundamentally misaligned with WNPA's WPY-adjacent register.

Why not Nevada Arts Council Artist Fellowship FY27 (Visual Arts): although the Las Vegas residency meets the threshold requirement, the HDR-saturated international travel imagery and commercial-gallery/NFT career markers sit entirely outside the conceptual contemporary-art register NAC fellowship panels have been funding.

Why not Travel Photographer of the Year 2026 (TPOTY): the contest rewards humanistic travel reportage of people, rituals, and cultures, while Knopf's portfolio offers only saturated HDR landscapes and empty postcard cityscapes with no human or cultural content in any frame.

Why not Natural Landscape Photography Awards 2026: the portfolio's saturated HDR processing and iconic tourist-vantage subjects sit in direct opposition to NLPA's restraint-focused rules and the intimate, naturalistic register its jury demonstrably rewards.

Why not Critical Mass 2026 (Photolucida): the portfolio is a uniform-preset collection of bucket-list single images aimed at decorative print and NFT sales, not the cohesive, statement-driven project body that Critical Mass reviewers forward into the museum and Aperture/ICP pipeline.

Why not International Aerial Photographer of the Year 2026 (IAPOTY, 2nd edition): the competition only accepts aerial photography, and Knopf's portfolio is entirely ground-based with no drone or aerial work to submit.

Why not MACK Books Photography Open Submission (June 2026 window): MACK publishes book-shaped sustained inquiry in the lineage of Soth, van der Molen, and Graham, whereas Knopf's portfolio is a catalogue of single-image, HDR-saturated destination spectacles with no sequence, edit, or thesis — the aesthetic opposite of MACK's house register.