



LUIS FERREIRA ALVES PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

Luis Ferreira Alves International Photography Competition

**A Contemporary Look at
Architecture**

Rules and Terms of Participation
2nd Edition | 2026–2027

About the Competition

The “Luis Ferreira Alves International Photography Competition | A Contemporary Look at Architecture” is a biennial programme created to honour the figure and work of Luis Ferreira Alves, a leading photographer who witnessed the transition from analogue to digital photography and whose work achieved wide recognition in Portugal and abroad.

The body of work left by Luis Ferreira Alves reveals a distinctive way of looking at architecture: rigorous and documentary, yet at the same time personal, sensitive and interpretative. His close relationship with architects such as Álvaro Siza Vieira and Eduardo Souto de Moura — both Pritzker Prize laureates — enabled him to develop a profound understanding of their works, their spaces, and the ways in which light, material, scale and time contribute to the architectural experience.

His photographs are therefore more than visual records of buildings and places. They emerge from a culture of perspectival representation, but go beyond it, turning photography into an instrument for reading and understanding architecture. It is this simultaneously documentary and authorial dimension that the Award seeks to preserve, discuss and project into the present.

The Award is implemented through the international competition created under the protocol signed between the heirs of Luis Ferreira Alves and the promoting bodies, Porto City Council (CMP) and Cityscopio — Associação Cultural (CCA). The Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (FAUP) and Casa da Arquitectura (CA) form part of the Organising Committee.

The competition is also supported by a broad network of institutional and strategic partners. These include the Northern Regional Coordination and Development Commission (CCDR-N), the Marques da Silva Foundation Institute (FIMS), the Portuguese Architects’ Association (OA) and the Serralves Foundation. They are joined by other organisations that contribute to the consolidation, communication and international projection of the LFA AWARD.

Among the sponsors and supporting organisations are Robbialac, “la Caixa” Foundation / BPI and J. Soares Correia. Metro do Porto supports the communication and promotion of the Award across the Porto Metropolitan Area.

Main objectives

- To promote, through photography, an in-depth understanding of architecture in Portugal and around the world, situating it within broader sociocultural, artistic, technical, political and historical systems.
- To give visibility to the distinctive relationship that can be established between photographer, architect, work and context, valuing a photographic practice capable of interpreting architecture beyond mere recording.
- To stimulate critical reflection on the growing mediation of architecture through images, promoting authorial, documentary and poetic approaches that broaden the understanding of the built environment.

Context

The competition stems from two central strands in Luis Ferreira Alves's career: his deep connection with architecture and his relationship with the city of Porto. Porto City Council, which awarded him the Municipal Medal of Merit — Gold Grade, and Cityscopio — Associação Cultural, publisher of the book "Luis Ferreira Alves — Fotografias em obras de Eduardo Souto de Moura" (2016), are the promoting bodies of the Award.

The Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto is a member of the Organising Committee because of the close relationship between Luis Ferreira Alves's work and the architectural culture of the Porto School. Casa da Arquitectura participates as the institution that holds a significant part of his archive. The Serralves Foundation is associated with the programme as a strategic partner, strengthening its cultural and institutional dimension.

Building on the legacy of Luis Ferreira Alves, a pioneer of architectural photography in Portugal and a decisive figure in the international projection of the work of several Portuguese architects, the LFA AWARD aims to establish itself as a benchmark programme with artistic, cultural, educational and editorial dimensions. It seeks to recognise established authors, identify new perspectives and give visibility to emerging practices, fostering contemporary reflection on the relationships between photography, architecture, city and territory.

This recognition is realised through the awarding of prizes and distinctions, the exhibition of the winning and finalist projects, and their publication in a catalogue. The programme also includes talks, interviews and other public events, developed in collaboration with partner institutions and addressed to professional, academic and cultural communities.

Programme Structure — LFA AWARD 2026–2028

The 2nd edition is organised into six sequential phases, bringing together the international open call, the assessment process, the public announcement and award moments, and a subsequent period of consolidation and dissemination.

Phase 1	25 September 2026 – 1 January 2027	Launch and development of the 2 nd Edition Open Call
Phase 2	1 January 2027	Closure of the Open Call and preparation of assessment
Phase 3	February – March 2027	Selection and announcement of finalists
Phase 4	25 April 2027	Ceremony announcing prize winners
Phase 5	July 2027	Exhibition and prize-giving ceremony
Phase 6	September 2027 – July 2028	Consolidation, dissemination and preparation of the next cycle

Photographic project to be submitted to the competition

The “Luis Ferreira Alves International Photography Competition | A Contemporary Look at Architecture” was conceived to encourage the creation of authorial photographic series capable of interpreting a work or group of architectural works in a coherent, rigorous and distinctive manner. The proposal may adopt a documentary, poetic, critical or experimental approach, provided that it maintains a clear relationship with the objectives set out in these Rules and demonstrates a conscious position in relation to architecture and contemporary visual culture.

Competition Rules

Chapter I — Objectives

a) General objective

The competition aims to encourage the creation of a photographic series comprising 9 to 11 images, accompanied by a project statement of no more than 2,000 characters, capable of interpreting and communicating a work or group of architectural works, thereby promoting a contemporary reading of architecture through photography.

(b) Specific objectives

Quality of the photographic series

- To encourage the production of series of 9 to 11 images with a coherent, articulated and, where appropriate, poetic visual narrative.
- To value the technical, artistic and visual quality of the photographs.
- To recognise the originality of the photographer's viewpoint and the ability to reveal relevant dimensions of the architectural work.

Visual and conceptual exploration

- To promote series in which the images relate to one another through sequence, montage or cumulative effect.
- To encourage the exploration of fundamental concepts of the work, the architect and the context in which it is situated.
- To value moments, framings and viewpoints capable of broadening the understanding and interpretation of architectural space.

Experience and phenomenological dimension

- To encourage approaches that reveal different ways of perceiving, inhabiting and experiencing architectural space.
- To communicate, through photography, the values, intentions and spatial relationships that structure the work.
- To construct a sequence capable of suggesting a rich, dynamic and sensory architectural journey.

Humanisation and transformation of space

- To reveal the multidimensional and changing richness of architectural space, understood as a lived reality subject to the action of time.
- Where relevant, to consider the presence of human scale, patterns of use and the humanist values that permeate the work.

Chapter II — Themes and participants

- a) All photographic projects must relate to the theme and objectives defined for the relevant edition of the competition.
- b) The competition comprises a single general category — Architecture — and accepts different photographic approaches and formats, in colour or black and white, of analogue or digital origin, provided that the submitted images are presented in digital format.
- c) The competition is open to all, without restriction as to nationality. Eligibility for the Portuguese Emerging Photography Award is restricted to Portuguese participants, in accordance with the specific conditions established for that Award.
- d) Entries may be submitted individually or collectively. In the case of a collective entry, the group must enter as a single competing unit and identify all of its authors.

- e) Each participant, whether individual or collective, may submit only one project.
- f) Participants must declare that the submitted images have not previously received an award in another competition.
- g) Participants declare that they are the authors of the submitted images, or that they hold the rights and permissions necessary for their submission, exhibition, publication and dissemination under these Rules, and accept responsibility for any third-party rights.

Chapter III — Submission of proposals

a) Photographic projects must be submitted exclusively through the Picter platform, on the LFA AWARD page indicated on the competition's official website, by the closing deadline of the Open Call in the 1st of January 2027, at 23:59 (mainland Portugal time). The direct link and exact closing date will be published on the platform and through the official LFA AWARD channels.

The entry must follow the platform instructions and include the information requested there, namely:

Profile

- First name and surname
- Date of birth
- Gender pronouns (required field on the Picter platform; information collected for organisational and statistical purposes and not made available to the Jury during the assessment process)
- Nationality
- Postal address
- Telephone number
- Biography, up to 1,500 characters
- Email address

Project

- Project title
- Year of creation
- Place of creation
- Project statement, with a maximum of 2,000 characters
- Series comprising 9 to 11 photographs

Images

- Title of each image;
- Year of creation;
- Place of creation;
- Images must not contain digital signatures, logos or watermarks.

b) The entrant must ensure that the original files are of sufficient quality for printing. Authors progressing to the final stages may subsequently be asked to provide high-resolution files, as well as colour proofs, for the purposes of in-person assessment, exhibition and publication.

c) Projects will be assessed as photographic series. The technical quality of the images is a prerequisite for their consideration during the selection stages.

d) Photographs produced through digital or analogue processes are accepted, including images captured on traditional photographic media and subsequently digitised. Digital processing and editing of photographs are also permitted, provided that these operations do not substantially alter the content of the image or introduce visual elements that do not derive from the photograph originally made by the author.

Standard photographic post-production procedures are permitted, including adjustments to exposure, brightness, contrast, colour, white balance, sharpness and framing, as well as localised corrections of minor elements or imperfections. However, images generated wholly or partly using generative artificial intelligence are not permitted, nor is the direct use of AI tools to create, add, replace or substantially transform elements or areas of the photograph.

e) Whenever deemed necessary to verify the authenticity of an entry and its compliance with these Rules, the Organisation and/or Jury may request the original photographic files or other evidence of the image-production process, including RAW or equivalent files, negatives, transparencies, original scans or other technically appropriate records. Failure to demonstrate correspondence between the submitted image and the original photograph, or evidence of prohibited use of artificial intelligence or substantial image manipulation, may result in disqualification of the entry.

Chapter IV — Jury and assessment process

a) The Jury for the 2nd edition will comprise three individuals of recognised competence, standing, credibility and national and international experience:

João Pedro Serôdio, architect — a Portuguese figure in the field of architecture, with recognised merit and professional and academic experience.

Valeria Carullo, curator and researcher — an international figure in the fields of photography and architecture, with recognised curatorial and research experience.

Paolo Rosselli, photographer and architect — an international figure in the field of architectural photography, with recognised merit and international standing.

b) The Advisory Board and Organising Committee are responsible for ensuring the appointment of a Jury of recognised competence and independence, approving the proposed composition and defining, where applicable, the thematic framework for each edition.

c) The assessment process is conducted in three stages and is based on the following criteria:

- Quality and poetic content of the visual narrative;
- Technical quality of the photographs;
- Artistic and visual quality of the photographs;
- Originality;
- The ability of the series to present the architectural work in a distinctive way, through a visual discourse that explores relevant concepts of the work, the architect and the context, and in which the images relate to one another through order, sequence or cumulative effect.

d) Anonymisation of entries

During the assessment stages for which the Jury is responsible, the platform will be configured for **blind judging**, so that the authors' names, gender pronouns and any other profile or personal identification details not required for assessment are hidden from Jury members.

- Anonymisation applies to the information made available through the platform and does not prevent a Jury member, due to the nature, content or visual language of a project, or prior knowledge of it, from recognising or inferring its authorship. This possibility does not, in itself, invalidate the assessment process, which must remain grounded in the criteria established in these Rules.
- Where necessary for the application of the specific provisions concerning Portuguese representation among the finalists or the Portuguese Emerging Photography Award, candidates' nationality may be taken into account without their identity being disclosed to the Jury.

First stage — compliance check and pre-selection

The Organisation will verify the compliance of entries with the Rules and carry out a pre-selection to ensure that the submitted projects meet minimum standards of technical, photographic and documentary quality for consideration by the Jury.

Second stage — selection of finalists and additional distinctions

The Jury will assess and rank the entries with a view to drawing up a shortlist of up to 10 finalist projects.

Taking into account the international scope of the LFA AWARD and, at the same time, its commitment to valuing and promoting Portuguese photography, the shortlist should include at least two Portuguese authors, provided that there are entries which, in the Jury's assessment, meet the artistic, conceptual and technical quality standards required by the competition.

The Jury nevertheless reserves the right to select fewer than 10 projects if, on reasoned grounds, it considers that there are not enough entries of sufficient quality to constitute a complete shortlist.

At this stage, the Jury will also select the entry to receive the Portuguese Emerging Photography Award. This distinction is independent of the shortlist, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Prizes and any Special Mentions, although it may be awarded to an author who also falls within one of those categories.

The Portuguese Emerging Photography Award is intended to recognise and give visibility to an emerging photographic career of particular artistic relevance. It may recognise the beginning of a career in the case of a young photographer, or reveal an author who is still little known or publicly recognised.

The Jury may decide not to award this distinction if, on reasoned grounds, it considers that none of the eligible entries meets the required standard of quality.

Depending on the quality and diversity of the entries, the Jury may also award up to two Special Mentions, intended to recognise particularly distinctive contributions, the diversity of perspectives and approaches represented in the competition and, where relevant, perspectives that have historically been under-represented in the field of architectural photography.

Third stage — in-depth assessment and awarding of prizes

An in-depth assessment will be undertaken of the finalist projects, as well as of entries under consideration for Special Mentions and the Portuguese Emerging Photography Award. The respective authors will be contacted and asked to provide photographic files in TIFF format, at a quality suitable for printing.

This stage will combine assessment via the digital platform with in-person review of printed copies of the selected entries, enabling the Jury to examine in greater detail the photographic quality, sequencing, conceptual coherence and material qualities of the projects.

From among the finalist projects, the Jury will select the three best photographic series, which will be awarded, in order of ranking, the 1st Prize, 2nd Prize and 3rd Prize.

Where the profile and career of an author ranked 1st, 2nd or 3rd justify it, the Jury may state in the reasons for its decision that the distinction also constitutes recognition of an early-career trajectory or a breakthrough*, irrespective of the author's nationality. This reference is complementary in nature, does not constitute a separate prize category and does not entail any additional prize money.

* For the purposes of these Rules, "early career" means an initial stage in the development and public establishment of an authorial or professional career; "breakthrough" means the recognition of an author or work whose quality and distinctiveness stand out in a particularly significant way within the context of the competition, irrespective of the duration of the author's previous career; and "emerging" refers to an author whose career is already under way and recognisable, but is still in the process of becoming established and consolidated within the relevant field. These concepts do not depend on the candidate's age or on a predetermined number of years of activity, and are to be assessed by the Jury in the light of the author's career, the work submitted, and the professional and artistic context of each author.

This possibility is independent of the Portuguese Emerging Photography Award, which is a separate distinction specifically intended for Portuguese authors. In the event of any overlap, the Jury will decide how the different distinctions should be awarded, taking into account the quality of the entries, the diversity of the authors recognised and the specific objectives of each prize.

Inclusion of an entry on the shortlist presupposes, in principle, that the Jury considers it to be of sufficient quality to be considered for any of the prizes provided for, including the 1st Prize.

Exceptionally, the Jury may decide not to award the 1st Prize if, on reasoned grounds, it considers that none of the finalist works has reached the level of excellence required for that distinction. In such circumstances, the decision must be expressly justified in the minutes and adopted unanimously or by a qualified majority of the Jury members.

Jury decisions and conditions of participation

The decisions of the Jury are final and not subject to appeal. The Jury is also responsible for deciding on matters not expressly covered by these Rules or on questions of interpretation, in consultation with the competition Organisation.

Members of the Jury and persons directly involved in organising the LFA AWARD may not submit entries to the competition.

Chapter V — Prizes

a) The following prizes will be awarded to the three highest-ranked projects:

1st Prize — €10,000, sponsored by Robbialac;

2nd Prize — €4,000, sponsored by “la Caixa” Foundation / BPI;

3rd Prize — a voucher worth €1,500 for the purchase of photographic equipment, provided by an organisation or brand of recognised relevance in the field of photography, whose association with the Prize will be announced in due course.

b) A Portuguese Emerging Photography Award will also be presented, consisting of a voucher worth €1,500 for the purchase of photographic equipment, provided by an organisation or brand of recognised relevance in the field of photography, whose association with the Award will be announced in due course.

This distinction is independent of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Prizes and any Special Mentions, under the terms set out in these Rules.

c) The authors ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd, the remaining finalists, the recipient of the Portuguese Emerging Photography Award and the recipients of any Special Mentions will be included in the official exhibition and publication for the relevant edition, under the terms defined by the Organisation. The distinguished authors will also receive a certificate.

d) The authors of the projects ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd will each be entitled to three copies of the official catalogue for the relevant edition.

e) All entrants will be notified of the competition results via the email address provided in their entry.

f) Authors of projects selected for the final stages, the exhibition and/or publication must, whenever requested by the Organisation, provide the photographic files in TIFF format, at a quality suitable for printing — Adobe RGB (1998), 8 or 16 bit, 300 dpi — together with the relevant colour proofs or any other technical materials that may be deemed necessary.

The files must be provided within the deadline indicated by the Organisation in the relevant notification, so as to enable assessment, editorial preparation, publication and exhibition production. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in exclusion of the project from the exhibition and/or publication and, where the files are essential to the assessment stage, loss of eligibility, except in duly justified circumstances expressly accepted by the Organisation.

Chapter VI — General provisions

a) Only entries that comply with the conditions set out in these Rules will be admitted to the competition.

b) Submission of an entry implies that participants have read and accepted these Rules in full.

c) Failure to comply with the conditions of participation may result in disqualification of the entry, by reasoned decision of the Organisation and/or Jury, depending on the stage of the competition.

d) Matters not provided for in these Rules will be considered by the Jury, in consultation with the competition Organisation.

e) Participants retain full copyright in the images and projects submitted. By submitting an entry, they grant the LFA AWARD Organisation and Cityscopio - Associação Cultural / scopio® a royalty-free, non-exclusive licence, limited to the purposes of the Award, to reproduce, publish, exhibit, communicate and disseminate the submitted images and materials, in physical or digital media, for the promotion, documentation, exhibition, publication, archiving and dissemination of the competition and directly associated initiatives.

f) The licence referred to in the preceding paragraph does not entail the transfer of the author's economic rights and does not prejudice the author's moral rights in the work.

g) Physical copies produced by the Organisation for the purposes of in-person assessment and/or exhibition may, after the exhibition and any subsequent touring, be incorporated into the LFA AWARD documentary archive. This incorporation concerns only the physical copies produced and does not entail any transfer of copyright in the images.

h) Personal data collected in connection with entries will be processed for the purposes of managing, assessing, communicating and archiving the competition, in accordance with applicable legislation and the privacy policy made available by the platform and/or Organisation. In particular, information concerning gender pronouns is collected solely for organisational and statistical purposes and remains hidden from the Jury during the assessment stages. The data will not be used for purposes incompatible with participation in the LFA AWARD without the data subject's consent, where such consent is legally required.

Chapter VII — Promoting bodies, organisation, partners and management

a) Promoting bodies: Porto City Council (CMP) and Cityscopio — Associação Cultural (CCA).

b) Advisory Board: one representative of each promoting body; architect Eduardo Souto de Moura; one representative of the Luis Ferreira Alves family; and one representative of the Architecture, Art and Image research group of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto — Centre for Studies in Architecture and Urbanism (FAUP — CEAU/AAI).

c) Organising Committee: one representative of each promoting body, one representative of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (FAUP), appointed by its Board, and one representative of Casa da Arquitectura (CA).

d) Operational implementation and management of the Award: Cityscopio — Associação Cultural (CCA).

e) Jury: three individuals of recognised competence, standing, credibility and international experience, as set out in Chapter IV.

f) Sponsors and supporting organisations:

- Prizes: “la Caixa” Foundation / BPI and J. Soares Correia, together with the organisations associated with the 1st Prize and the Portuguese Emerging Photography Award, to be announced in due course;
- Communication and promotion: Metro do Porto.

g) Strategic partners:

- Northern Regional Coordination and Development Commission (CCDR-N);
- Serralves Foundation;
- panoramah!.

h) Institutional partners:

- Portuguese Architects' Association (OA);
- Marques da Silva Foundation Institute (FIMS).

Chapter VIII — Contacts and registration

a) Registration and submission of entries will take place through the Picter platform. The direct link for the 2nd edition will be made available on the official LFA AWARD website and through its communication channels.

b) Further information may be obtained through the following channels:

- email: info@luisferreiraalvesphotoaward.com
- Website: luisferreiraalvesphotoaward.com
- Instagram: [@lfaphotoaward](https://www.instagram.com/lfaphotoaward)
- Postal address: P.O. Box 001601, 4108-007 Porto, Portugal