



## 8th Annual CHOCOLATE FEST

# Eighth South Beach Photomathon: Tips from the Insider

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Photography is a discipline that can produce stunning products when executed by experts and atrocious results when in the hands of deluded souls who somehow deem it acceptable to publicize pictures taken in their bathroom mirrors. Log onto any social networking site and we promise you will find an abundance of avatars and profile pictures with too much glare, boring perspectives, inordinate amounts of Photoshop filters and that weird duck face some girls still insist on making every time a camera flashes in their direction. You know who you are.

As with any field, though, there are just as many natural talents as there are hacks. A beautiful photograph could just as easily come from a total beginner as a seasoned professional. This egalitarianism is part of the appeal of the [South Beach Photomathon](#).



This year's competition, hosted by Fotomission and Tropicolor, takes place March 25 at [Miami Beach Botanical Garden](#). Already in its eighth year, the Photomathon boasts as many as 200 contestants, some of whom even fly in especially for the event. The rules are simple: everyone has five hours to explore South Beach and photograph anything pertaining to any of six assigned topics. The topics are not revealed until the event day, and they are purposefully unclear so participants can interpret the topics and express themselves as they wish. Last year's topics were vague concepts like right, wrong, hard, soft, reality and fantasy. With so much freedom and all of South Beach at their fingertips, how can entrants hope to woo judges and other voters?

Fotomission's Chendo Perez was gracious enough to give us a peak into the workings of the competition and, most importantly, to pass on useful tips for taking winning shots.

***New Times:* The Fotomission site says the first, second and third place winners will be chosen from the "best photos" of each topic. What characteristics would a photo need to have to be one of the best?**

*Chendo Perez:* They should demonstrate a creative interpretation of the topic, good composition, good subject matter and technique.

**What did some of the photographs from last year focus on?**

Last year's first place photo was an almost abstract close up of a flower. Since the topics are always ambiguous to allow plenty of room for self-expression, we get a very diverse range of subject matter. It's very interesting.

**Of the entries you have seen, which are your favorites?**

It's very hard to say. Every year we think we have already seen the best, but we are always surprised with the submissions of new contestants. It's always great.

**This may not be especially useful, but out of curiosity, which are the weirdest photographs you've seen?**

We've had a few very erotic shots!

**Are winners typically professional or amateur photographers?**

We get the whole range, from kids as young as nine to the working professional photographer. We've had winners from every class.

**Are contestants with SLR cameras at an advantage, or do people with point-and-shoots have as much a chance at winning?**

We've seen some incredible images from disposable cameras. It's mostly about creativity and a good eye.

**Can you give hopefuls any other tips to achieve photographic greatness?**

We always tell contestants to think outside the box and simply have fun with it.

Whether you are borrowing your little sister's shoddy point-and-shoot or breaking out your new EOS-IDs Mark III, you have a chance to participate in a cool project and win more cash than some of us make in a week. You can find more info on the eighth South Beach Photomathon, rules and registration forms at [fotomission.com](http://fotomission.com).

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