

GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE PHOTOGRAPHY IN PUBLIC SPACES

Core Principle: Balance freedom of expression with respect for privacy

1. Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA)

- 1.1 Comply with the PDPA whenever the photographic work serves a professional or institutional purpose.
- 1.2 While hobbyist and personal photography are excluded under the “personal or domestic” exemption, photographs where individuals are identifiable may constitute as personal data, and as such trigger PDPA obligations.

2. Ethical Approaches

- 2.1 Always respect human dignity and consent. Avoid coercion, embarrassment, or exploitation of subjects. Photographers should offer the subject the opportunity to decline participation when approached.
- 2.2 Given Singapore’s diversity, always be sensitive to cultural and religious customs by showing respect for the varying customs, spaces and attire.
- 2.3 Handle objections respectfully and explain artist intent clearly when approached. Artistic or literary use may be exempt, but the exemption does not cover misuse or offensive depiction. Ethical safeguards remain essential to maintain good faith and artistic practice.
- 2.4 Avoid misrepresentation, stereotyping, or harm to the subject.
- 2.5 Exercise special care when photographing minors and the vulnerable. It is ethically safer to seek the permission of the parent or the guardian.
- 2.6 Respect private and commercial property rules.

3. Proactive Measures

- 3.1 Encourage voluntary compliance of ethical standards within the photography community through positive peer mentoring.
- 3.2 Preserve data security for all digital files containing personal data.
- 3.3 Balance freedom of expression with respect for privacy.