



Programming overview – 2025 Festival – Sustain [tautīnei]



In the context of photographic arts, the theme of **'Sustain' [tautīnei]** examines the intense, often conflicting interplay between human survival, environmental limits, and ethical awareness. It's a theme that encourages us to question our role within a larger ecological framework and to consider what it means to care for our planet and all forms of life.

To sustain is no longer just about securing resources for ourselves, but encompasses a more holistic vision that balances human needs with the well-being of every entity in our ecosystem. This includes understanding the finite nature of resources in the face of rapid population growth, recognising our impact on fragile environments, and reassessing our relationship with animals in a way that goes beyond traditional human-centric views.

'Sustain' [tautīnei] themed submissions can capture the following challenges and tensions, among many others: Indigenous practices or community-based initiatives for environmental justice. Exploration of food security, endangered species, habitat destruction, or vast deforestation that tell the story of loss. Protesters, government officials, legal documents, courtrooms, and natural landscapes under legal protection.

Conversely, projects of renewable energy, permaculture, and conservation areas can reflect hope and ingenuity in addressing resource scarcity. Farmers, community volunteers, fresh produce, reforestation projects, recycling initiatives, and food distribution centres are interwoven. Photographic projects might juxtapose urban and rural life or highlight the isolation and resilience of indigenous communities. Supporting celebrations, rituals, traditional dress, ceremonies, indigenous art, and community gatherings.

Ultimately, **'Sustain' [tautinei]** in photographic arts asks us to reflect on our collective responsibility. What is the story, a question, and an invitation to envision a world where humans, animals, and ecosystems can coexist and flourish? It is a vision of sustenance not only for our physical needs but for the moral and ethical structures that bond us to everything around us. "To hope is to want something to happen and to believe that it can. It can be a sustaining force" – Lines of Sight, Being and Making with Place doctoral thesis, Wendy Brandon, NZ.
