

# CAPE CAMERA

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December / January 2019



Official Newsletter

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**CAPE TOWN PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY**

# CAPE CAMERA

# WHAT'S INSIDE

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Contributions for Cape Camera are welcomed. Please let us know what you want to see in your newsletter. Please submit any contributions to editor Anna Engelhardt at email editor@ctps.co.za.

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## On the cover

The front cover image titled 'Cold Morning' was the winning images in the PDI set subject of our January 2019 competition. It was taken by David Barnes – one of our more recent new members, who joined our society only in August last year and already has made a strong impact with the striking images he regularly presents. "While out and about searching the coast for ideas and opportunities to photograph seascape motives, I drove past Fishhoek beach one winter's morning where I spotted bright white canoes against a dark wintery sea and sky, which looked rather interesting. I took a whole lot of photos of the canoes as they paddled past. Afterwards and when the canoes had already left, I sat there a bit longer, dreaming of all the faraway places across the ocean, when a lone swimmer emerged out of the water. I snapped her picture as she walked up the beach, for no other reason than that I had my camera in my hand.

"When I got home and processed the photos, the canoe images where on the whole OK but pretty boring. I then zoomed in on the picture of the swimmer, pushed up the contrast a bit and suddenly it had this lovely cold winter feel about it. I put the image into my 'Possible Submissions' photo-file and although I liked the feel and look of it, I didn't think it was up to club standards. Last month, I eventually plucked up the courage to submit it, and was very happy to see that other people could also have the same emotional response to it as I had," explained David.

# Themes for 2019

Month	Set Subject	Competition Date	Entry date
March	<b>Storytelling</b> Create an image that tells a story; an image that will convey the story without the need for a caption	13 March	6 March
April	<b>Nature up close</b> Get up close and personal with nature in this natural beauty shot. Flowers, bees, bugs and spiders might all make great shots, or shoot close ups of wild-life or other animals using a long lens. This can also include Macro shots of Nature.	3 April	27 March
May	<b>Backlit portrait</b> The sun makes a great back light, as well as a flash. Don't forget the fill light. A flash or reflector can be used to fill in the subject. The subject can be human or animal.	8 May	1 May
June	<b>Motion</b> Create an image that depicts motion, fast or slow. Leave the viewer in no doubt that your subject is moving.	5 June	29 May
July	<b>Autumn</b> Create an image which depicts autumn in all its radiant colours, or one which tells the story of the end of summer and the approaching winter.	3 July	26 June
August	<b>Creative composites</b> Create an image which is composed of several different elements from other images that you have captured. The composite image should convey a new story to the viewer and invite them to explore your vision.	7 August	31 July
September	<b>Long exposures</b> Create an image where the shutter speed is 15 seconds or longer. The use of a tripod will be essential in most cases although an image that is created handheld could be interesting	4 September	28 August
October	<b>Abandoned places</b> Shoot an image which tells the story of a place abandoned by humans or animals..	2 October	30 October
November	<b>Repetition</b> Find repetition in Nature or in the urban environment and produce an image which has a motif that repeats itself. It can be a pattern or a single element that repeats itself in one or more forms.	6 November	30 October

# News from the council

Council met on Monday 14th January after a welcome few weeks of rest from the day to day activities of our Society. But now we are in the thick of it once more with meetings and activities to organize. We started the New Year with a new laptop on which to run competition evenings, the old one being in excess of eight years old and was showing its limitations.

In a way, I am relieved that the proposed building purchase of new premises for our club has fallen through (it has been sold to a film prop hire company), as otherwise we would have been frantically involved for many months in designing and kitting out the entire internal areas of something that was nothing more than a single large space with only some raw-brick walls and a concrete floor to start from. However, we would like to ask all members to please keep their eyes and ears open for any opportunity of a suitable property coming available that may suit us and our needs.

To take the pressure off a single member to organize 12 months of outings, we have decided to run it differently this year by asking our members to volunteer and run/organise one single outing of their choice. So we are looking for people to come forward and assist us in getting the Outing's Schedule back on track. Pat Scott is showing the way with the planning of the first outing to the Simonstown penguins in February (watch out for the next Snapshot).

One of our topics of discussion at the last Council meeting has been whether to have a section in our competition evenings for images taken with cell phones. It was felt that this may encourage younger members to join CTPS. The rug was rather pulled out from under our feet when it was made known that quite a few images that had been entered into the competitions in the past, were actually taken with cell phones! A camera is a camera, so please don't hesitate to enter your cell phone images.

We would like to count the Montagu congress (28 April to 2 May) as part of our weekend away outings. So even if you can only join the congress for part of the time, please make a booking and seek out accommodation in Montagu. For more information, including the exciting range of speakers read the rest of Cape Camera.

We would like to hold our own CTPS in-house mini congress in the Hemel and Aarde valley behind Hermanus in September/October this year, in a similar way as we held the one at De Hoop some years ago, which was a great success and attended by a large number of CTPS members. We are in the early planning stages, so have no actual details at the moment.

Our Audio Visual section team is putting together a two-morning course on AV making, hopefully in March and April for those of us who are raw beginners. They are opening it up to other clubs as well, so look out for their notification of the course – it should be good – in fact I think I will be attending personally – if there is space!

We were delighted with the turnout for our combined cheese & wine/meet & greet/sell & swop/educational & development evening on the 23rd of January – well-done Kim and everyone else who helped to organize such a special evening in our CTPS calendar. We had in excess of 40 people there enjoying the plentiful wine and snacks and were particularly pleased to have some of our older members attending. Tables were laid out around the hall and some members displayed their photographic items, books and magazines they had brought along to get rid of. Because we recently had two work parties at our Ottery store and were able to clear out a small amount of excess and duplicate equipment and cameras, we could add some interesting photographic memorability to what was on offer. Quite a lot was swapped for a donation or simply given away. At the end of the evening, it was decided to offer the remaining items at the Paarden Island Craft Market to see if anyone there was interested in some of our historical photographic items.

All present were very complimentary about the second half of the evening (covering education & development), for which we had asked seven of our members (Danie Coetzee, Marleen & Christo la Grange, Anna Engelhardt, Jean Bradshaw, Rob Tarr and Steff Hughes) to explain how they had taken/created some of their amazing art photographs we had admired at the competition evenings during 2018. It serves as an encouragement to repeat this exercise.

**Richard Goldschmidt**  
President



*All photographs of Club members by Kim Stevens*

# NEWS ITEMS

## Investec Cape Town Art Fair

15th – 17th February 2019 (11 am – 7 pm)  
at the Cape Town International Convention Centre

Now in its 7th year, the fair is an important milestone and attraction for Cape Town as a cultural destination. It is the largest art fair on the African continent with more than 100 galleries and exhibitors from around Africa and the world, showing cutting edge contemporary art.

With each year, the fair has gained considerable momentum that has generated respect and prestige for the city of Cape Town as a major contemporary art destination. It provides a platform for galleries, collectors, curators and artists from around the globe to engage in cultural and economic exchange. About 18 000 visitors, collectors, galleries, curators, artists and journalists are expected to descend on the mother city to see work that represents the forefront of contemporary art.

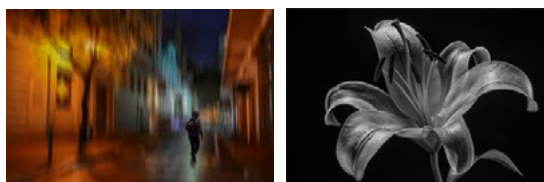
International galleries returning to the fair include Perrotin (Paris), Galleria Minini (Brescia), Galerie Cécile Fakhoury (Abidjan), Galleria Continua (San Gimignano), Circle Art Gallery (Nairobi), Officine dell'Immagine (Milan), Gregor Podnar (Berlin), First Floor Gallery (Harare), October Gallery (London), Galleria Giovanni Bonelli (Milan), Addis Fine Art (Addis Ababa), and Afriart Gallery (Kampala).

Local galleries and exhibitors represented are Goodman Gallery, Stevenson, Everard Read Circa, Gallery Momo, Smac Gallery, Whatiftheworld, Smith and Blank Projects. Photographic exhibitors at the art fair include the Billy Monk Collection, the THK Gallery, Sithor Senghor, Goodman.

## Latest Salon Results

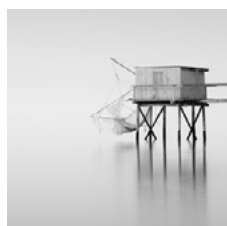
### 6th Swartland Fotografieklub Salon 2018 PDI & Prints

At this salon Jeanette du Toit got 15 Acceptances; Marleen la Grange got two Certificates of Merit for her *'Lonely wanderer'* and *'Lilly 1'*, plus another seven Acceptances; Chris Coetzee got three; Arthur Fitt, Lambe Parolis and Jacoba van Zyl two each; and Peter Turnbull, Steff Hughes and Klassen Crighton one each.



(from left) *Lonely wanderer* and *Lilly 1* by Marleen la Grange

### Tafelberg Photographic Club PDI Salon 2018\*



Jacoba van Zyl achieved a Certificate of Merit for her image *'Carrelet'* and a further nine Acceptances at this salon; Chris Coetzee got ten Acceptances; Marleen la Grange and Lesley Parolis got four each; Lambe got three; and Nicol du Toit one.

## "That's the way (I Like It)"



Ariane Jenssen, one of our oldest members (both in years and as a member of CTPS) celebrated her 85th birthday with a courageous parachute jump on 17th January 2019. To learn how to do this had been a dream of her already as a young woman, when she still lived

in Germany - a kind of bucket list item, together with climbing the mountains like a mountain goat, swimming and diving with dolphins and flying with the birds through the air. Sadly, she was told that her back was not strong enough to engage in such an activity. However, when years later she mentioned this disappointment to a friend, he suggested a tandem jump and she decided to give it to herself as an 85th birthday present.

The much anticipated day came but the jump had to be cancelled due to bad weather. "When we arrived the following day at a hall in the middle of nowhere, we watched in awe how carefully the parachutes were folded before we got our package together with the harness and walked to our tiny plane. Only six people climbed in but we still sat tightly packed in between each other's legs, and up and up we climbed.

The door was opened and one after the other disappeared into nothingness after having moved onto the very edge of the door frame. It's difficult to describe the feeling after we had left the safety of the plane, but it was fantastic and didn't feel like falling at all - rather like flying with arms wide like the wings of a bird. When the parachute had opened I was allowed to steer it - left, right, turn around. The Westcoast landscape under us was magnificent, with Robben Island so very close! All in all - it was far too short and I cannot wait to do it again," concluded Ariane

## Two CTPS members shine at International Salons

A few of our members regularly enter international salons and walk away with amazing results, of which they can be very proud - and so can our society by calling such accomplished photographers our very own!

Congratulations to both Kim Stevens and Marleen la Grange! Featured on the following page are only some of their award-winning images in the numerous overseas salons. Both photographers explain that they enjoy the extra challenge to compete against some of the best photographers throughout the world who enter salons that attract thousands of entries.

(continued on next page)

**Marleen la Grange**

Marleen entered altogether five salons: The 4th FKNS Winter Circuit where she was awarded eight acceptances and a silver medal for 'Feeling sad'; the DPW Circuit with 17 acceptances and three COMs; the New Bi-continental Circuit with 16 acceptances, an award similar to our COMs, a judge's choice and an EPS Diploma for her image 'Boarding the train'; the 1st Atlas salon in Singapore with seven acceptances; and the 1st DSNY in New York with 11 acceptances.



*Feeling sad*



*Boarding in the rain*



*Pizza in the making*



*Dusty wildebees procession*



*Afternoon quarrel*



*SALT and the Milky Way, Sutherland*



*Walking up the dune*



*Do not be afraid of the snow wolf*

**Kim Stevens**

Kim was very successful with her entries in two salons - the New York Digital Salon and the Cross Continental Circuit, achieving altogether 25 acceptances and the PSA medal from Germany for her image 'Skyline'.



*Tempi*



*Ovoid*



*Jugglers*



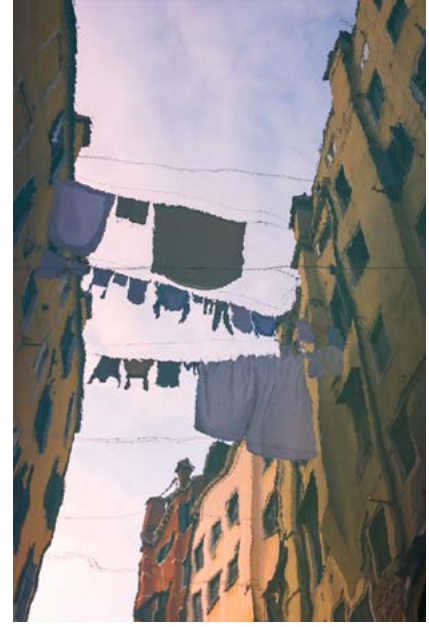
*Angel*



*Weathered*



*Honey I'm home*

*Blue room**Digitalized backdrops**Chevy**S-Curve**Joie de Vivre**Water Dwellers*

### Forthcoming Salons

- Ermelo Fotoklub 2nd Digital Salon - closing date 16 February
- 3rd Alberton National Digital Salon - closing date 2 March
- Port Elizabeth PDI Salon - closing date 9 March
- Cape Town International PDI Salon - closing date 16 March

## Why not become an AV making enthusiast in 2019?

### Next AV meeting on 13th February

ROBERT MAGINLEY, the convenor of our AV section, is confident that this will be a most enjoyable and successful year of AV making, particularly in the light of it being the year when our National AV Salon will take place. The closing date for salon entry is 31st May and there is only one category - OPEN. (For full details and to enter please go to the [PSSA website](#)).

To increase AV membership, JOY WELLBELOVED offered to start running a couple of AV Workshops for beginners and has already given her first introductory session at her home, which was well received by the five people who attended - Steff Hughes, Marion Jackson, Prem Moodley and Mark Faesen. According to her, all had left inspired to give AV-making a try. (Should you be interested to join this beginners' group which is planned for Saturday mornings in the next few months, please contact Joy at [joywellb@gmail.com](mailto:joywellb@gmail.com))

"My aim at the first get-together was to keep things simple and to explain why making AVs is a wonderful way to breathe new life into old images, and to offer another creative outlet for personal expression.

"By nature, we humans are all either story-tellers ourselves or

we are fascinated by seeing, reading or listening to stories. Our lives have been immersed in them - from ancient times, huddled around fires in the wild and listening to the clan's story teller, to sipping our chosen tippable while watching our favourite movies, TV series, or even just reading a bedtime story to the kids. Stories fascinate and enchant us and have always done so! What better way than to create our own story with our accumulated stack of beautiful images sleeping away on our computer, and enhancing it with some music we love?

"There is no rigid right or wrong way to start. Some people can get inspired by a song or a particular piece of music, and think 'I can make a good story around that', other folk go on holiday and come back with tons of images, and maybe even some indigenous music, and decide to put it all together to compile a travelogue or to impress their friends!

"What's important to know is that you do not need fancy expensive software to start out first, as some products are inexpensive such as Powerpoint and Faststone, are available free like Wings Basic, or offer a free one-month trial period," encourages Joy.

# Cape Photographers Congress in Montagu

28th April - 2nd May 2019



The following information was supplied by the patrons/organisers of the congress:

At the end of April, all photographic roads will hopefully lead to Montagu, where the Cape Photographers' Congress will be held from Sunday 28th April until Thursday, May 2nd, 2019. Join us by registering [here](#).

This beautiful town was voted the Western Cape Town of the Year in 2018 and is known for much more than its muscadel: this is where Boland fynbos meets Karoo succulents amidst spectacular mountains, vineyards with leaves that will be turning red and yellow at that time of the year, Old Dutch architecture, historical forts, nature reserves and too many other photo opportunities to mention.

There is so much to photograph and do in the area during that time of the year (autumn), that Mareletta Munday, head of the Montagu/Ashton Publicity Association, recommends that prospective congress-goers add at least another week to their stay in the town between the mountains with its many top-rated restaurants, museums and arts & crafts.

The congress – where all photographers from across the country are welcome – will be held in the NG Church Hall, which can accommodate 160 people. Therefore, don't hesitate to book your spot as soon as possible! Meals, teas and coffees and workshops are included in the congress fee.

## Martin Barber

Over the years his classes and lectures on the creative use of photo editing techniques inspired many other photographers to become more creative and showed them how a little fine-tuning can turn a good image into a stunning one. His acceptance records in national and international competitions has placed him top of the Impala Trophy log in Colour Open and Monochrome in 2017, and also has an APSSA in colour and monochrome and a FPSSA in colour.

## Peter Brandt

Peter has a Higher Diploma in Fine Art from Technikon Witwatersrand. Following an initial stint as an art lecturer, he has since plied his trade as a designer – although his passion increasingly lies with photography, where he tends to focus on street photography and portraiture. "The more unconventional the better!" he believes. But he "does make periodic forays into other genres in order to grow in unexpected ways," he says. He generally works in black and white, "partly out of a passion for tone, and partly in the belief that it allows me to strip the content of superfluities."

The congress programme has been planned so that there will be plenty of photo opportunities – several of them guided by experts – and workshops to cater for all needs. We'll publish a programme that will include the workshop choices and guided outings as soon as it is finalised so that you can book separately for these.

That is on offer in addition to a line-up of outstanding speakers on a wide variety of topics that all photographers are bound to find interesting – no matter what their specialised interests are.

## Chris Daly

Chris is always entertaining and engaging, presenting an interesting new angle on any topic he discusses, and he is, therefore, a popular speaker at congresses. In Montagu, he will be talking about "Time-lapse photography". He is a recognised PSSA judge for digital photography and AV salons and has also served as a judge on the PSSA Honours Panel.

## Susan Greeff

Susan is an accredited life coach and counsellor whose passion for photography and travel took her on a journey of discovering her own creative expression. Portrait, wildlife and travel photography are her favourite genres to work in, especially creating awareness of vulnerable cultures and species. Her photographs have been nominated, selected as finalist artworks and received honourable mentions in national and international photographic competitions. They also featured in several international photographic and art publications. At the congress, she will present a talk on travel portraiture, titled *In the Face of the Other*.

## Steff Hughes

In her capacity as communications and training manager for the UCT Information & Communication Technology Services department (2000 – 2016), Steff ran Respect Copyright campaigns to raise awareness so that staff and students didn't contravene the copyright laws. At the Montagu congress, she'll discuss how copyright affects photographers today; how South African law differs from international law; the Artist's Bill of Rights; and how photographers can amend their contracts to retain ownership of copyright.



**Kina Joubert**

As a keen photographer and Montagu resident for more than a quarter of a century, Kina is ideally placed to advise Congress delegates about the best photo opportunities in Montagu and surrounds. She is a BA graduate from the University of Stellenbosch with an honours degree in history. Today she is involved in the Montagu Tourism Bureau and became curator of the Montagu Museum.

**Jacques Marais**

Jacques is one of the most sought-after event and action photographers amongst editors of travel, adventure, and outdoor magazines. He has written 14 books and is an internationally acclaimed photojournalist, who has covered global extreme sporting events of disciplines as diverse as rock climbing, trail running, slack-lining, adventure racing, downhill mountain biking, surfing, snowboarding and off-road expeditions. He is also an accredited Getty and former Red Bull photographer.

**Martin Osner**

Martin is a multi-award-winning artist, an expressive, intuitive photographer who enjoys creating contemporary art using photography as a medium. He is also a mentor through his School of Photography where he offers one on one private photography lessons as well as masterclass programs in landscape and fine art photography. He is also the owner of two galleries where he exhibits his work.

**Don Pinnock**

Don is an investigative journalist and photographer who, some time back, realised he knew little about the natural world. So, he set out to discover it. This took him to five continents – including Antarctica – and resulted in five books on natural history and hundreds of articles. He is a member of the Conservation Action Trust. His day job is as an environmental investigative journalist.

**Bipin Prag**

Bipin is a landscape, architectural and travel photographer with a passion for chasing the light and finding unusual compositions of nature and the built environment. After studying ancient architecture, he found a renewed appreciation for design, geometry, light, colour, texture and form which is translated into his body of work.

**Stanwell & Michelle Slater**

Both of them are leading photographers, whose images have been published in various media, and they have both achieved success in national and international salons and competitions. They both hold PSSA honours in digital photography and are JAP accredited judges.

**JJ van Heerden**

Johann is one of several South Africans who developed a passion for photography after attending a Freeman Patterson workshop, later joining him as a lecturer. He photographs with the philosophy that images are not taken, but created, using principles of design and an understanding of human psychology and visual perception.

**Audio Visuals****Adri van Oudheusen**

Adri has been known to photographers countrywide as PSSA Board member and Chairperson of the audio-visual division for the past six years. Her artistic and photographic skills have won her many AV honours. She is also the FIAP Audio Visual Observer in South Africa, responsible for contributions to FIAP's Audio Visual Library.

**Luana Laubscher**

Luana was the 2015 and 2018 Impala Trophy winner for AV. In Montagu, she will be talking about the influence and importance of music in AVs.

**Jeff Morris**

Jeff Morris is the founder of the only dedicated audio-visual club affiliated to the PSSA, namely AV Makers South Africa. He has made about 25 successful AV sequences, 12 of which have been accepted in salons with FIAP patronage. By forming relationships with AV enthusiasts and organisations across the world, he is able to follow international trends and keep abreast of the latest developments. In Montagu he will be talking about the use of voice-overs in AV, covering the theory of writing scripts and the required hardware essentials.



## Forthcoming E & D evening – 20th February 2019

During the first part of the evening (until tea break) our guest speaker will be Craig Strachan - photographer, musician, marathon runner and IT architect, reports KIM STEVENS, who has agreed to continue organizing our educational evenings for another year, and for which we are very grateful.

Craig will be talking about his approach to travel and street photography, what works and what doesn't, shooting strangers, what gear he uses when travelling, workflow & backups, and how he has sold some of his images.

He is a long-standing member of SAFREA and has done work for magazines, online new sites, city guides, websites, large retail companies and has even had one of his images used on a bootleg U2 album cover. He has done studio work for performers, professional speakers and people just wanting great profile pictures. He also commissioned work for retail, including product shots for online retail. He loves to shoot street and travel, jumping to the challenge of capturing the essence of an experience in a photograph.

"I use photography to document the world around me. For me almost every photo I take reminds me of a story; sometimes it is a personal reminder about where I was when I took the photo, but often it is just a thought, a wondering of what could have been happening in the scene. I don't believe in rules, I tread them more as guidelines (the rule of 3rd was made to be broken). I believe that a photo is like a glass of wine. If you enjoy a glass of wine drink some more, if you don't find another wine to drink", explains Craig.

His photoblog [www.notesfromthecape.com](http://www.notesfromthecape.com) has been running since 2005, and has about 800 posts.

### Question & Answer session

Following on from last month's successful interaction session, the second half of the evening will be in the form of an educational discussion on common questions that we as photographers think we know the answers to, but do we really? This discussion will be led by Richard who will invite answers and opinions from knowledgeable members on the floor.



All photographs by Craig Strachan

Next month: In March we welcome Jon Kerrin and his business partner Kyle Goetsch. Jon will speak on composition in landscapes and Kyle on astrophotography.

## A member's Profile



## Pat Scott

Although I have not been involved in Photography until recently I have always been interested in "pretty pictures", and have made up many albums of pictures which friends and family have taken on special occasions.

Once I became involved in Ergonomics I realized I needed a camera to take photos of workers *in situ*. This was because in assessing the physical demands on manual labourers we clearly were not able to stop production lines on factory floors. It was therefore necessary to digitally capture the working positions and actions as accurately as possible before downloading them onto a biomechanical computer programme to analyze the forces being placed on the various joints of the body. Hence all photos were taken perpendicular to the plane of work, with the 'object', being the human operator, centrally positioned. Precision was the name of the game...no "creative flair" accepted!

For the duration of my working life, beside work-related photos, I also took "record shots" of places I was fortunate to travel to for work. These were also put into Albums, and at the time I realized that, with the camera on auto, I was just 'snapping' iconic tourist sites. I took the picture without capturing the mood, and began to realize that I would like to know more about the art, and technical aspects, of photography. However, being a workaholic and very involved in work and sport, my life was pretty full. Nevertheless, I always promised myself that once I retired photography would be my hobby; and secretly dreamt of being a "Wildlife Photographer"!

My husband Jack and I retired to Cape Town in December 2005, and in February 2006 I registered for my first Photographic

Course at the Cape Town School of Photography. I was most fortunate to have Vanessa Cowling as my first instructor, and although I drove her round the bend with all my pictures being around a middle point, she eventually got me to see beyond just a central object, and with persistence she got my creative juices flowing slowly but surely! I was now beginning to become part of the photographic world and one thing that has really struck me about most photographers is that they are so willing to share their knowledge and ideas. I have been fortunate to have had some really good tutors and photographic friends, and no article on my photography would be complete if I do not mention some by name.

Establishing a basic knowledge of this new hobby I went to Orms to buy a "proper" camera. There I met Stephen who soon realized that I was just starting out, but that I was serious about embarking on a new venture. To cut a long story short, several years, and Rands, later, although I have progressed with upgrading my camera I still have my three original lenses thanks to Steve's good advice and guidance over the years. Obviously it would be great to buy the biggest and best, lenses particularly, but I am constantly reminded of Peter Haarhaaf's comment "Skill in photography is acquired by practice not purchase"; and I feel very fortunate to have the equipment I have.

Although I could go on with the many people from whom I have learnt so much, I must pay special tribute to Nicole Palmer. From her Desert Light workshop in Namibia to the present I am truly grateful for her guidance in bringing more creativity into my photography, and for being so supportive as I have progressed.

It was Malcolm Jones who suggested that I join CTPS where I first put my images up for peer review. I do enjoy the challenge of being self-critical in selecting my images to submit for Competition night, and in seeing and hearing the judges' comments not only on my work, but also on the other images submitted. I find it interesting and inspiring to see the work put forward by like-minded photographers. Despite the fact that we don't always get the marks that we think we deserve, we should acknowledge that not every photo can be an absolute winner, and I remind myself of Ansel Adams' comment "Twelve significant photographs in one year is a good crop".

Another major breakthrough in the development of my photography was when I was invited to join a group of four ladies who met once a month to present and discuss each other's photographs. There are now eight of us and we formed the Full Spectrum Photographic Club (you will have read Anna's article





about us recently, after we had our 100th meeting). The support, encouragement and inspiration of this group has played a most significant role in improving my knowledge of photography, as well as the quality of my images. I am truly grateful to Anna, Kathy, Les, Joan, Kim, Sue, and Jean for the thought-provoking sessions, both theoretical and practical, which we organize on a regular basis.

There is no doubt that my preferred genre is Wildlife and the only negative aspect of moving to the Western Cape is the lack of Game Parks. But as you all know the Kgalagadi is my second home! I have always loved visiting Game Parks, from my Zimbabwe days to the present. I love observing the behavioral traits of the various species and can watch a single Dung Beetle or a huge family of Elephants for hours, with or without a camera. I feel at peace within their environment. I enjoy getting up close and personal and have always said I want to see the eye lashes of all creatures large or small. I am not keen on getting too inventive with animal shots, they are all such magnificent creatures just as they are. Nevertheless I do like to capture images from different angles, varying the distance from the animals, taking portraits or a paw or a tail, catching action shots, and sometimes bring in panning when they are on the move. I love to capture the interaction within species and between the different species.

I would say the technical aspect which I adjust the most is the aperture when I want more or less detail in the image (the eye or the setting!); and more recently I have played with the exposure, to establish a calm mood or a dramatic scene. While I used to use 'continuous' shooting mode, I now, more often than not, use a single shot where one has to anticipate what is about to happen, to concentrate and catch that special moment. Clearly I still shoot in continuous mode when trying to capture birds in flight. Some years ago Vanessa Cowling guided the Full Spectrum group through the development and presentation of an exhibition in which we all worked on our own theme. Mine was "Trees"; another aspect of nature which I really enjoy. Besides the huge diversity of trees I find it quite strange that dead trees are also



such good subjects to shoot. With trees one can select so many differing ways to capture the very essence of a single tree or a forest of them. As I walk a great deal through the Cape forests, I select "my" tree to come back to in a different season and/or when the light is right to capture its special characteristics.

My love for nature leads naturally into land-, sea- and sky-scapes. I so enjoy being caught up in the natural world, sometimes serene and elegant, and others so rugged and dramatic. Each has its own appeal and each requires a great deal of thought before pressing the shutter. My biggest challenge has always been to not clutter my image by trying to include all I see before me. Who can disagree with Pablo Picasso that "Art is the elimination of the unnecessary"? I confess that "Less is more" has for me been difficult to achieve. But it is amazing how if I do focus my mind on the key elements, my image jumps out at me, evoking an emotion within, and motivating me to think more before I take the next one! Maybe having been a landlocked Zimbabwean I now relish every moment I have at the sea. I love the power of the sea and the crashing waves; hence I don't do many "milky waters", but rather enjoy adjusting the shutter speed to capture the contrasting moods of the flow of water.

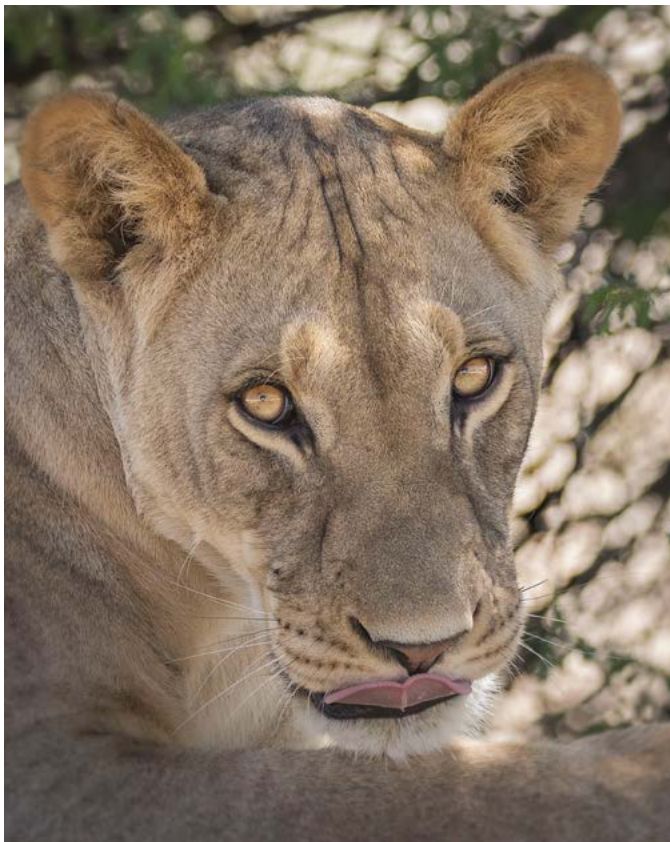
It may be obvious that, other than my Ergonomics pictures I have made no reference to humans in my images. Strange for a "people-person", but for many years I just didn't want people in my photos. However, they have begun to creep in, and now, although I don't think I will ever get caught up with studio por-



traits, I do so enjoy trying to “catch that decisive moment” which Henri Cartier-Bresson demonstrates so strikingly in his street photography. I am intrigued with the different emotions of people in different situations. It can be so rewarding when people respond naturally to having ones camera in their faces! Sure I have been rejected occasionally, but no doubt in the era of cell phones, having ones picture taken is now very natural. I always show people what I have taken and if I know it is possible to see them again I print jumbos and take it to them, or even get an email address to send them.

I also appreciate multiple images, composite images and abstract work, and like to work on these both in camera and in Photoshop. I can spend a whole day, and more, trying out different things on my computer; but the frustrating thing there is that I can't always remember what I did to get my take on a “master piece” of modern art!

I always feel so alive when I have a camera in my hands. The bottom line is I love photography. It has given me purpose, a sense of satisfaction and achievement in my retirement; and I have enjoyed sharing my experiences with you.



*All photographs by Pat Scott*

## *A member's Travelogue*



*Jokulsarlon lagoon*

# Discovering a captivating land of glaciers & waterfalls

*by Lesley Parolis*

2018 was a big year for Lambe and me. We celebrated our 60th and 80th birthdays in September and December, respectively. Our birthday present to ourselves was a trip to Iceland, which had been a dream of ours ever since we saw the magnificent photographs that were being shown to us by our fellow photographers. After some research as to when would be the best time to go we decided that autumn would be good as it would be less crowded with tourists, the weather not too cold, the autumn colours would be lovely and we stood a reasonably good chance of seeing the aurora borealis. Thus, we booked our trip from the 2nd to the 12th of October and hoped for good weather and auroras! We confined our travels to the south east and

the south west of the island and on average spent two or three days in an area.

We flew to Keflavik airport from Amsterdam and immediately collected our rental car, a 4x4 Hyundai, and drove the three hours to our first destination, the coastal town of Vik. It was a long drive after the long flight and we arrived there after dark but we were glad to have made a good start. There is much to see around Vik notably the black volcanic sand beaches, the Reynisdrangar, which are the dark, strangely shaped, basalt stacks just off shore, Reynisfjara beach, the Dyrholaey peninsula with its spectacular views, and of course the famous waterfalls (foss) of the area such as the much photographed Skogafoss and the Seljalandsfoss.



*Reynisdrangar at Vik*



*Mountain pass Snaefellsnesvegur to Olafsvik*

The temperature hovered between 4 and 8 degrees Celsius during the day and went down to zero or 1 degree at night. It was also a bit windy at times so dressing appropriately was vital for feeling comfortable. We dressed in our alpine gear and we were fine. Good boots are essential. We had some cloudy days but overall the weather was fine for photography with some sunshine but also lots of moody skies.

Driving in Iceland on the ring road is easy and there are plenty of places to stop and take photos. We had many opportunities to photograph the friendly Icelandic horses that come up to the fence to nuzzle visitors. The autumn colours were lovely and we stopped often to take photos of the beautiful yellow grasses

against the snow and the dark earth. The mosses that cover the lava fields are amazing and combined with the grandeur of the snowy mountains give the landscape an otherworldly look. No wonder so many films have been shot here. Waterfalls (called foss) are everywhere and it is so scenic that good photos are just begging to be captured.

The next part of our journey on the ring road took us to the area around the famous glacial lagoons of Jokulsarlon and Fjallsarlon and the black ice beaches. We arrived there in the late afternoon



*Jokulsarlon lagoon in the sunshine*



*Ice sculpture at dawn - black beach at Jokulsarlon*

and the light was really beautiful and we took some photos, mainly on the cell phone, as we knew we would return there in the early morning. Sadly the next day was very overcast and so we drove further up the coast to the small town of Höfn. We had some rain too but on the way back the light lifted and we stopped to take wide angle shots and panoramas in the soft light. We were fascinated by the hundreds of trumpeter swans on the waterways.

The next day was slated to be good weather again and so the ice beach was on. We just missed the sunrise as we had to travel 30km from our hotel in Höfn to get there but had a lovely morning photographing the huge ice floes on the beach as well as



*Aurora borealis*

the floating ones in the ice lagoon. If one arrives early one can miss most of the tourist crowds that arrive in the busses from 10 AM onwards.

On our last evening at the Höfn Hotel we were lucky enough to see the aurora borealis appear in the skies. It was cold and windy but we dressed quickly, grabbed the cameras and tripods and headed outside. Unfortunately we weren't in the best position to get good foreground composition but nevertheless the experience was wonderful. This beautiful green glowing light appeared and moved slowly around the sky. We then hopped into the car and drove for a little distance to a darker area but again not a great foreground.

Our next port of call was the little town of Fludir in the so-called Golden Triangle. We chose this as it is well suited to visit the geysirs and the famous Gullfoss waterfall. The whole area is



*Kirkjufell waterfall and mountain*

alive with steam and hot springs coming out of the ground. There is a faint sulphurous odour but it doesn't worry one. The geysirs are great fun to watch and to try to catch the plume on camera as it shoots out of the ground every 10 minutes or so.

Thingvellir National Park is home to the site of the most visible part of the mid Atlantic ridge above ground. The Eurasian and North Atlantic plates are moving apart from each other at 2.5 cm per year. It is a very scenic area with a beautiful lake and mountains in the background. Snorkeling into the divide and between the plates is popular with tourists but we declined!

Our final three days were spent on the Snaefellsnes peninsular. We stayed at the Langeholt guesthouse not far from the black church at Budir. This church is one of the most photographed



*Black church at Budir*

buildings in Iceland and so we did our part and photographed it too. The peninsular again offers many scenic points and we did quite a lot of driving over the three days. One of the highlights was driving over the mountains to the northern side to visit the Kirkjufellsfoss waterfall and mountain, which are

again much photographed. The drive over the snowy mountain pass was spectacular and we had to stop and photograph the scene complete with rainbow. Unfortunately the weather wasn't perfect for photography when we got to the waterfall but we braved the wind and a few showers to photograph. Because of the showery weather we were often blessed with spectacular rainbows on our trip.

We were very impressed with the ease of making the travel arrangements, the car hire, the hotels and guesthouses and the very friendly people in the tourism industry. It is well organized and getting around was easy. We cannot wait to go back; perhaps next year?



*Eruption of the Strokkur geysir*



*Partly frozen Gullfoss*



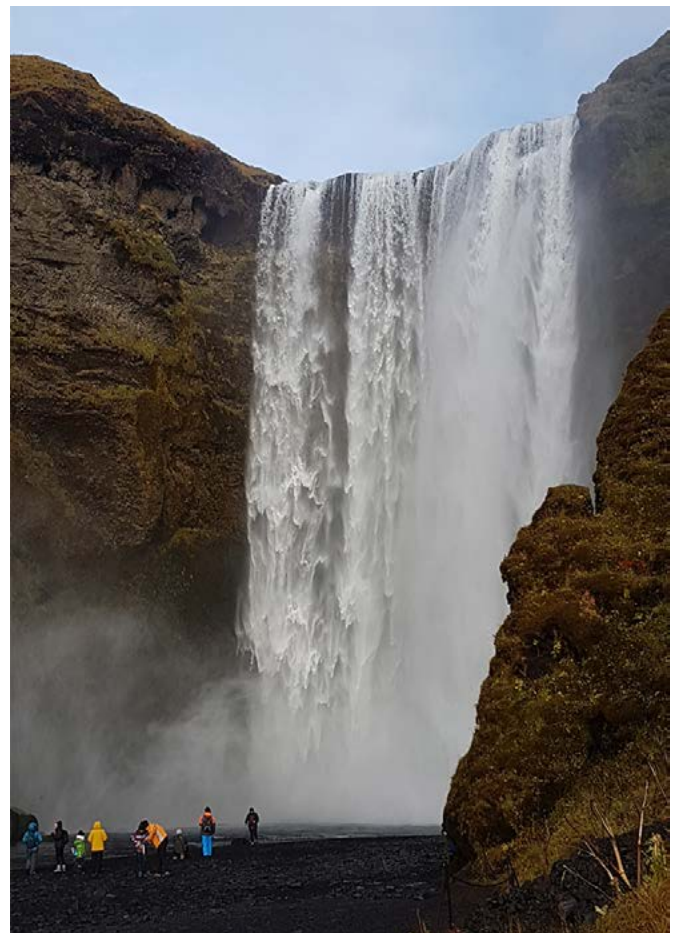
*Black beaches*



*Fjallsarlón lagoon reflection*



*View of the Reynisfjara black beach Dyrhólaey*



*Skogafoss*

◀ *Jokulsarlón lagoon on a cloudy day*

*All photographs by Lesley Parolis*



# Winning images from December

## *Set subject: Altered reality*

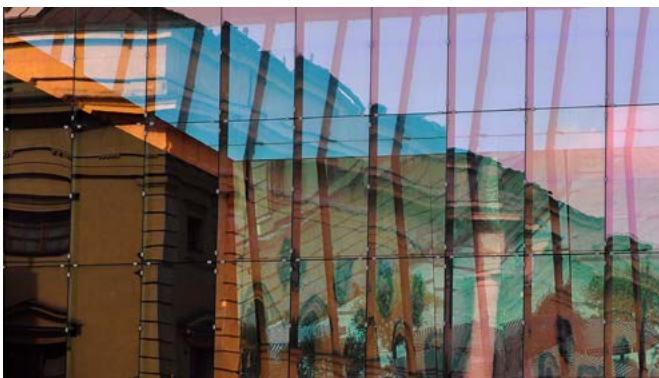
*The final competition of the calendar year with its challenging theme of 'Altered reality' was a fitting end to an exciting year of our society. It was most interesting and encouraging to see such a variety of very creative works that were produced by an exceptionally large number of our members, giving proof that we are not stuck in a groove but are able to regularly test the boundaries of the norm. The judge for the evening was Peter Hardcastle, the chairman of Swartland photographic Club. Fortunately there were no power cuts that evening and all could run smoothly without any interruptions, reports LESLEY PAROLIS.*

*Below are the winners in the various categories together with the judge's comments.*

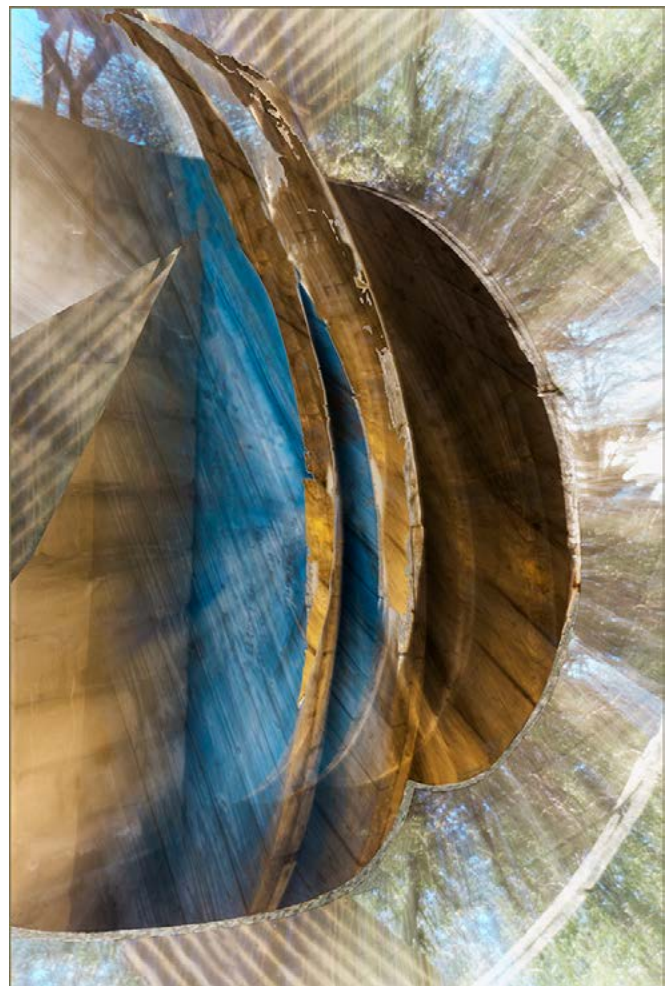
### Set Subject



Winner PDI – Set (Salon) *Breakfast moon* by Steff Hughes (26). The planning of the image was carefully done and the author must be complimented. Replacing the eggs with moons was well thought through and changing the orientation of the individual moons was an excellent idea that breaks the rhythmic effect that normally occurs with 'copy & paste' actions. The two empty tray pockets and the broken egg shell add to the impact of the photo and bring an interesting aspect to it. Exposure is well handled, and colour and texture complement each other.



Winner PDI – Set (Salon) *Architectural Mystery* by Keith Bull (26). The image is divided into three distinct sections by its horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines that intercept on the third. Each part features scenery that has its own story. Very strong vertical and horizontal lines often have a negative impact on an image, but in this one it was used in such a way that adds dimension to it.



Winner Print – Set (Advanced) *The Journey of Wooden Wheels* by Anna Morris (25). The author uses shapes (triangles, rectangular, half-moon and oval) and diagonal lines to create a very strong and appealing image. The colours also complement each other and add to the overall effect.



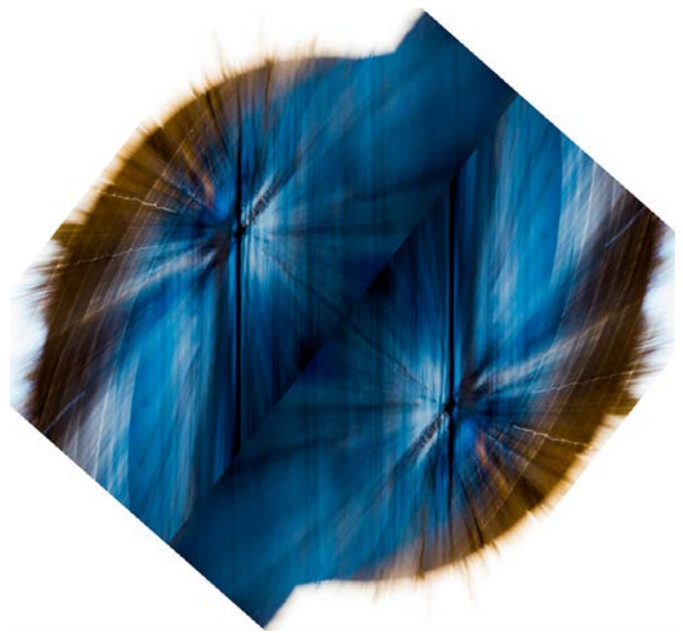
Winner PDI – Set (Intermediate) *Floating Dancers* by Antonio Chavry (25). The composition of multiple dance figures and the interaction that represents the dancing scene are well done. The strong almost over-saturated colours of the stage are not overwhelming because of the chequered effect of the floor and the integration of building outlines in the blue backdrop draws everything together.



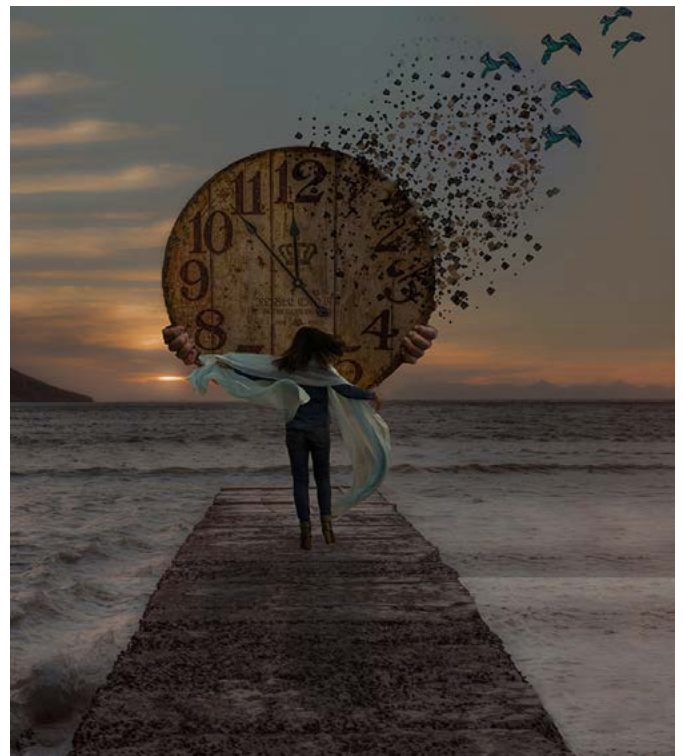
Winner PDI – Set (Master) *Viaggio lungo il Grand Canale* by Kim Stevens (26). The transition and composition of the various images in this intricate composite has been done very well. The exposure of the images is very good and the pastel colours are soft and gentle, adding to the mysterious mood of the image.



Winner PDI – Set (Salon) *I can see clearly now* by David Barnes (26). This composite image was well-planned and the transition between the individual images is well-handled. The textures in the eye and in the bark complement each other very well. The detail in the eye is very sharp and the veins in the white of the eye make it very realistic. The window washer adds balance to the composition and emphasises the title of the image.



Winner PDI – Set (Advanced) *Blue Energy Fragment* by Anna Morris (24). The blue and brown colours complemented each other. The sharp edged rectangular shape positioned diagonally, counteracts the strong vertical lines of the two star effects. The soft circular background balances the sharp edges of the triangular shape. The manner in which the two colours, shapes and line are used, makes this a very strong and appealing composite.



Winner Print – Set (Salon) *Time flies* by Marleen la Grange (25). Each element used in this image contributes to the impact of the title. The edges of the quay disappearing into the ocean, leads the eye to the time element and the effect between the clock and the flock of birds flying out of the picture, again emphasises the title and the message it portrays. The technical quality of each image used for this composite is well handled. Overall a well-planned and well-executed image.

## Open Subject



Winner Print – Open (Advanced) *Enchanted Forest* by Peter Turnbull (26). The exposure of this image was handled very well as it captured the light perfectly. Placing the animals on the third adds emphasis and perspective to the image. The early morning light concentrating on the animals is soft and draws the attention to the important part of the image; and the details in the dark forest background are just enough to add to the mystical feel of the image.



Winner PDI – Open (Advanced) *Chobe Crossing* by Peter Turnbull (24). The image was taken from a very interesting angle. Although the faces of the elephants are not visible, the simplicity and by photographing them from behind, makes it a special photo. Although the details in the shadow areas are on the dark side, it definitely does not have a negative impact on the image. The exposure in general is well handled.



Winner PDI – Open (Intermediate) *Fynbos Snack* by Michael Smyth (21). The depth of field is just enough to create a special mood. The shadow on the bird is well handled. The yellow of the flower in the foreground is slightly overwhelming. Care must be taken not to crop the image too tight at the top. The head of the bird should preferably be on the top third line of the image.



Winner PDI – Open (Master) *Not an Easy Start* by Jeanette du Toit (26). The rim light around the heads and front legs of the cubs makes the animals stand out against the background - yet, there is a lot of detail in the fur and the faces of the cubs. The depth of field is just enough to also tell a story about the environment. The early morning / late afternoon light gives the image a very gentle mood.



Winner PDI – Open (Intermediate) *Menacing* by Carmen Anderson (21). A face with a lot of emotion (especially around the eyes). The grey colours are well handled and the depth of field of the background is just enough. However, the image was cropped too tight at the top. The eyes are normally the strongest feature in the face and should preferably be on the top third line of the image. This would have moved the hands, which are out of focus, towards the bottom edge of the photo, making them less obvious.



Winner Print – Open (Master) *Glacier Beach Jokulsarlon* by Lambe Parolis (26). The exposure is very well handled. The image is sharp from the foreground to the horizon. Ice is generally a difficult subject to expose correctly and therefore always a challenge to photograph. Here the whites in the ice are perfectly handled with a lot of detail visible in the ice rock, and also enough details in the shadows.



Winner Print – Open (Master) *Rock arch* by Jacoba van Zyl (26). The misty effect obtained by the slow shutter speed creates a soft and tranquil mood to the image. The exposure is well handled with just enough details visible inside the arch. The curved shoreline in the foreground together with the water pools/puddles helps to lead the eye to the arch in the background. The saturation and the colours are pleasing and well balanced.



Winner PDI – Open (Advanced) *Stormy Day in Innsbruck* by Alison Bull (24). The overall exposure is well handled with excellent details in the clouds. Normally people tend to over saturate the colours of buildings such as in this scene, but here the saturation is well handled and gives a natural look and feel to the image.

## Other high-scoring images from our **December competition**

(24 & above)



*Boarding in the rain*  
by Marleen La Grange (24)



*A different view of Museum Square Amsterdam*  
by Lesley Parolis (24)



*Double bill* by Jonathan Burchell (24)



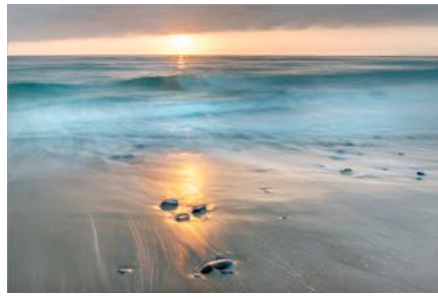
*I miss you* by David Barnes (25)



*Stellenbosch Pano* by Neels Beyers (25)



*Windmill in the Flowers*  
by Jean Bradshaw (24)



*Morning Harmony*  
by Catherine Bruce Wright (24)



*Moon Dance* by Anna Engelhardt (25)



*Inspired by the Impressionists*  
by Anna Engelhardt (24)



*Flowers in the forest* by Joan Ward (24)



*I want to go there*  
by Marleen La Grange (25)



*Yachts at Rest* by Richard Goldschmidt (24)



*Downstairs* by Steff Hughes (24)



*Rain-painted dunes* by Anna Engelhardt (24)



*Windmill Warrior* by Mireille Landman (24)



*Last Light* by Jeanette du Toit (24)



*Abstract Tree* by Marion Jackson (24)



*Lighthouse at the Pier*  
by Christo la Grange (24)



*Quizzical look* by Pat Scott (25)



*Jokulsarlon glacier lagoon*  
by Lesley Parolis (24)



*High tide* by Jacoba Van Zyl (25)



*De Hoop Awakening*  
by Jeanette du Toit (25)



*Ghostly gannet* by Joan Ward (24)



*Tea Party* by David Barnes (25)



*Arches* by Jean Bradshaw (25)



*Kolmanskop doorway* by Nicol du Toit (25)



*Sands of time at Kolmanskop*  
by Neels Beyers (25)



*RGB* by Christo la Grange (25)

# Winning images from January

## Set subject: On the Coast

*LESLEY PAROLIS, who has agreed to continue as our competition convener for another year – for which we are very grateful – reports that the first competition of 2019 was enthusiastically embraced by a record number of entrants (47). Seventy-five of the 120 images entered were in the set subject. The judge for the evening was Eugene van der Merwe who teaches at the Cape Town School of Photography. He provided a very detailed analysis of every image and although this made for a long evening there was much to be learned from his critique.*

*Below are the winners in the various categories together with the judge's comments.*

### Set Subject

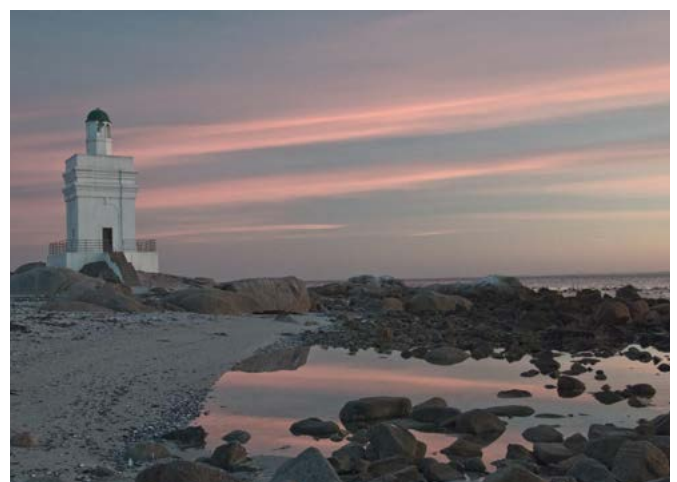


Winner PDI Set – (Salon) *Cold morning* by David Barnes (26). The symmetry and simplicity of the image is very pleasing, with the horizontal lines and even divisions lending a sense of calm and stability to the frame. The monochromatic colour palette in the space and complimentary skin tone, along with the contrast of the black bathing suit and reflection create strong emphasis on the subject.

Winner PDI Set – (Advanced) *Coastal Sentry at Dawn* by Mireille Landman (23). The soft light and unusually clear reflection give the image a very peaceful mood, and the bright streak of cloud aligned with the lamp in the lighthouse creates an interesting representation of the beam of light it would cast when shining. The foreground is a little busy with so many stones, and consequently breaks up the reflection somewhat, it may be compositionally more effective to have moved closer to limit the area given to the stones in favour of making the reflection more prominent. The lighthouse could also use more space to separate it from the edge of the frame.



Winner Print Set - (Master) *Under the Boardwalk* by Kim Stevens (26). The tonal range is expertly managed to create a striking contrast between the hard, contrasty dark tones of the pier and the softness of the low contrast light tones. This neatly compliments the contrast between the rigidity of the geometric patterns in the pier and the smooth gradations of the water and sky. Symmetry and receding perspective in the composition along with gentle reflections create a strong sense of depth. Overall a very moody image.





Winner PDI Set – (Salon) *Heavy skies* by Keith Bull (26). The dramatic, uneven lighting along with the aerial perspective accentuated by lens compression creates a very moody image with a strong sense of depth. The dark island stands out very strongly against the bright patches of sunlight on the water, and makes for a clear point of interest, especially due to the tonal contrast with the headlands further back. It is also interesting how the layering in the clouds echoes the layering of the mountains and the light patterns on the water.



Winner PDI Set – (Advanced) *On the beach* at Normandy by Jennifer Morkel (23). The monochromatic palette and simply designed composition is visually pleasing, and the lone figure in the large space gives the image a playfully mysterious mood. The overall look is quite contemporary. The person's body position is somewhat awkward, and the composition would balance better with less space on the left and bottom.



Winner PDI Set – (Intermediate) *Boy or Girl* by Paramasivam Saravanakumar (23). A playful image, with a strong sense of engagement with the models and effective use of mixed lighting. Colour palette is soft and beautiful, with the coldness of the natural light well balanced with flash. A more side-on lighting direction would work much better to accentuate the baby bump, and would also add depth to the features of the models.



Winner Print Set - (Intermediate) *Natural Equilibrium* by Nicholas Moschides (21). Contrast and lighting is well managed and the three distinct subject zones create a sense of depth. Brightness discrepancy between the rocks and the clouds and high overall saturation create a somewhat unnatural aesthetic. The pattern in the rocks echo the pattern in the clouds, but the foreground may hold more interest with a composition emphasising only one interestingly textured or coloured boulder.



Winner Print Set – (Advanced) *Fading beauty* by Jonathan Mark Burchell (22). An interesting, gentle interpretation of a sadly beautiful subject. The tight composition emphasising the foot and sand covered feathers sympathetically illustrates beauty in death. Both the colours in the foot and sand in the feathers would be better rendered with a much colder white balance, and the image could also benefit from more effective output sharpening.

## Open Subject



Winner PDI Open - (Master) *Spectral Highlights in Harmony* by Jeanette du Toit (25). Lovely crisp rendition of the dandelion seeds, and well complimented by the strong contrast and pattern of highlights in the background. While the small aperture choice works very well on the dandelion itself, opening up by a stop or more would subdue the crispness of the background and create better separation between subject and background.





Winner PDI Open - (Salon) *Get out of my way* by Dave Gordon (25). A lovely sense of intensity in the moment, well complimented by dramatic lighting and a tight, coherent composition. The expression and body position of the front elephant is very dynamic and is nicely juxtaposed with the second elephant. The light through the dust adds drama, and selective brightening of some more areas of the dust, especially on the right hand edge could balance the frame even better.



Winner PDI Open - (Advanced) *A Rose Essay* by Marianna Meyer (23). The high key, moderate contrast tonality works well with the minimal composition and restrained colour palette. Using fewer roses (removing the second from left, and possibly also the far left one) and tidying some leaves away may create an even more cohesive image.

Winner Print Open - (Advanced) *Eagle Watch* by Peter Turnbull (24). The tension in both cubs' body positions and the front cub's gaze add to a general tension and sense of expectation. The reflections add depth and interest without being distracting, and the simple colour palette and subtle contrast are very pleasing.



Winner PDI Open - (Intermediate) *Thirsty* by Nicholas Moschides (24). Framing and scale provided by the legs compliment the baby elephant in an interesting way and accentuates the awkwardness of its position. Overall tonality is well handled and the shallow DOF and soft reflection work well to maintain emphasis.

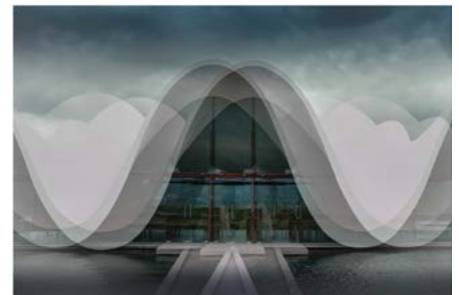


There were no promotions in December & January. Members are reminded that progress upwards in the rankings from Intermediate and Advanced requires Salon Acceptances. Therefore members are encouraged to enter the national salons which can be found on Photovault and also on the PSSA web page. Our own CTPS International Digital Salon will be held in March and there will be a special medal for the best CTPS entry.

# Other high-scoring images from our **January competition** (23 & above)



*Pellestrina fishing hut* by Kim Stevens (24)



*Pushing the boundaries*  
by Anna Engelhardt (24)



*Grand old lady at rest*  
by Anna Engelhardt (24)



*Misty Ocean* by Steff Hughes (25)



*Wooden pier and lighthouse*  
by Jacoba van Zyl (24)



*Green season* by Jacoba van Zyl (25)



*Dawn over the rocky shoreline*  
by Jean Bradshaw (24)



*The Monster Within* by David Barnes (23)

“  
*You don't make a photograph with just a camera. You bring to the act of photography all the pictures you have seen, the books you have read, the music heard, the people you have loved - Ansel Adams*”



*Fishermen and the wave*  
by Rob Tarr (25)



*Saldanha Bay* by David Barnes (23)



*Bubbles in the sand* by Pat Scott (23)



*Cinderella at the ball* by Joan Ward (23)



*Red bells* by Jennifer Morkel (24)



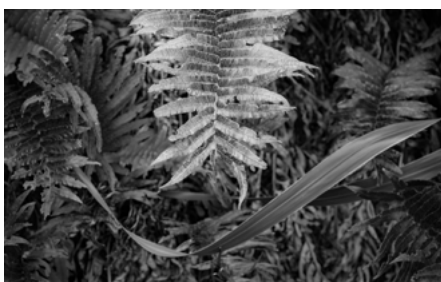
*Crested Barbet* by Marion Jackson (23)



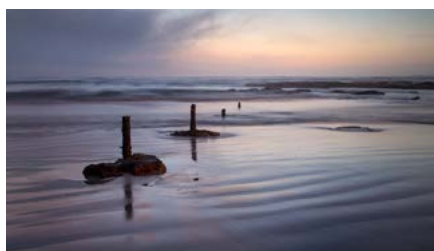
*Glacial adventure* by Rob Tarr (23)



*Black Church of Budir Iceland*  
by Haralambos Parolis (23)



*Fynbos Still Life 3* by Stephen Gibson (23)



*Angular light* by Detlef Basel (23)



*Young Seagull* by Neels Beyers (24)

*Waiting for the fog to clear*  
by Dave Gordon (23)



# An Analysis of Judging

by Dr. E.R. Sethna\*

*The importance of judging cannot be denied. Where would club photography be without competitions, exhibitions and the granting of distinctions? And yet, judges are almost invariably the object of criticism and denigration and rarely of praise. The subject never fails to arouse great passion and controversy.*

The subject of judging fascinated me, as it bore great resemblance to some aspects of my professional work as a psychiatrist in which I dealt with abstract subjects which are difficult to measure or quantify. I wondered whether I could combine my knowledge of photography with my training in psychiatry to the study of judging in photography.

I knew from the outset that as so little established literature existed on the subject, anything other than systematic observations on judging would be inappropriate. I, therefore, set about making my own observations on judging at all levels from club competitions to international exhibitions and salons. I did this intensively over a period of two to three years and have continued making these observations less rigorously ever since. Whenever I got the opportunity I attended judging sessions and also talked to the judges without giving them any indication of my study.

## Negative Aspects of Judging

During my study, I have observed many negative approaches adopted within the judging process but will restrict my comments to four of the most significant ones, which are: "Overvalued Idea"; Failure to see the picture as a whole; Critical rather than constructive approach; Consideration given to effort put into getting or making the picture.

### 1. "Overvalued Idea"

This term, borrowed from psychiatry, describes a common failing which arises as a consequence of a judge having an idea which he currently wishes to promote as being very important in picture-making. Invariably the idea is valid, but when held with great fervor, the judge becomes so preoccupied with it that he neglects all other aspects of the picture. The best way to illustrate this failing is to state actual examples observed during my study. From the examples below it can be seen that however valid an idea is, if it is "overvalued" by a judge, he restricts his judging to a single issue and neglects the rest. Overvalued ideas can also lead to judges making their own rules which are exclusive to them and applied indiscriminately:

• For instance: One judge was of the opinion that obliques (slanted lines) in composition are preferable to verticals and horizontals. He spent most of his time looking for obliques to make his point instead of getting on with the task of judging.

- Importance of background was stressed by another judge who then set about spending most of the time judging the background rather than the subject matter.
- Importance of a full range of tones from pure black to white in monochrome prints was stressed by a judge. Some prints, which conveyed a great deal of mood or which reflected a misty atmosphere, were rejected for not displaying a full tonal range, even though their feeling would have been destroyed if they had fulfilled these criteria.
- It was the belief of another judge that most pictures should be light at the top and dark at the bottom, as that is what normally occurs in natural lighting. Any picture bright at the base was marked down.
- More than one judge expressed the view that monochrome is more creative than color as the world is in color

and it would require some creativity to translate it into black and white. This implied that color pictures only depict reality and lack creativity.

- Several judges held the view that unless a picture was "creative" it was not worth entering.
- A couple of judges felt that pictures portraying movement by use of slow shutter-speed, should have something sharp within the picture.
- Some judges were sticklers for "print quality" by their own individual criteria. In such cases it meant that they gave little attention to the content of the picture or what it communicated.
- Some judges emphasized the importance of presentation, particularly the mounts used for prints. At times it appeared that assessment of presentation superseded that of the picture.
- In a natural history competition a judge expressed his view that unless a picture is taken in the wild, it is not a natural history picture, although no such rule was stipulated by the club.
- In another natural history competition the judge stated the view that mammals are neglected by natural history photographers. It was obvious from the outset that photographs of mammals would be treated favorably even though some of the pictures of birds, insects and flowers were better.
- Early in a session of judging, a judge said that he did not like studio portraits, and he proceeded to pass over several pictures of this type without judging them at all.
- Many other judges expressed dislike of a particular subject and openly admitted that it was no use putting such pictures in front of them.

### 2. Failure to see the picture as a whole

A fundamental principle established by Gestalt theory is that "The whole is not the sum of its parts." This is best explained by a couple of examples. When one appreciates the beauty of a building the architectural qualities it possesses are not there in the individual bricks. It is only when they are put together as a structure that the building acquires aesthetic qualities of its own, which do not exist in its components. Similarly, a tune is not just a sequence of notes. When played together they produce a tune, the quality of which is not present in the individual notes. It is invariably the case that the qualities of the whole transcend the attributes of its components.

The same principle should apply to a photograph. When seen as a whole, as an entity in itself, it has qualities which far transcend the parts of which it is made. Regrettably, in photographic judging realization of this fact is sadly lacking. It appears that judges look upon pictures as if they are just a collection of areas of different tones or colors. From their comments they seem to dissect the picture, closely scrutinizing the different areas rather than responding to the picture as a whole.

So common and widespread is this practice that we have all learned to accept it as an established way of judging. How often one hears judges comment at great length on "a bright area at the edge of the picture," "the position of a tree," or "the place-

ment of the hands in a portrait." These comments would be quite acceptable, valid, and useful to the audience in improving their work, but they must not be the sole criteria of judging. A judge should see the picture as a whole, as an entity in itself, and not as a collection of areas of different tones and colors.

### 3. Critical rather than constructive approach

The modern view of testing in education is to find out what a candidate knows rather than what he does not. If a similar approach is taken in photographic judging, the test should be to find out what is good in the picture and not what is wrong. Many judges work on the premise that judging means finding out what is wrong and the best picture is the one with the least faults. Comments from such judges can hardly be constructive.

Even on rare occasions when criticism is warranted it could be done very politely and in a constructive manner. I am sure that many potentially good photographers have been lost to club photography because of ill-advised comments of judges. Judging should be looked upon as an agreeable exercise in which the judge's sole function is appreciation of the work he/she is asked to evaluate.

### 4. Effort put into getting and making of the picture

Many judges feel that in their marking they should include the effort on the part of the photographer in either getting the picture or the making of it. It is hard to justify this approach. If effort put in by the photographer is included in judging, then why not a host of other considerations which would affect the picture-making such as: the equipment a photographer can afford, the amount of travel he can manage or even his height which might be an advantage to him in taking pictures. It would be best if judging was restricted to what is put in front of the judge and had nothing to do with how it was made, what effort went into it or the advantages or disadvantages of the photographer.

### The Positive Aspects of Judging

Having dealt with the four main ways in which negative attitudes manifest themselves in judging, I will now turn my attention to the positive aspects. In good judging, I found that three attributes of the pictures should be taken into consideration: What the picture communicates (the "message" with a weighting of 50-60 %); The content of the picture and how it is dealt with (with a weighting of 30-35%); The technical aspects of the picture (with a weighting of 10-15 %).

#### 1. What the picture communicates— The "Message"

Appreciation of all art, including a photograph, is not primarily an intellectual exercise but an emotional one, which may be pleasurable, depressing, moving or frightening. The mood that a picture conveys is the core of the "message" and should form the basis of evaluation of a picture. Good judging is done more by the heart than the head, and the ability to feel a picture and not just visualize it. It is the buzz and tingle which one experiences on seeing a good picture which is at the heart of judging.

More often than not it is difficult to verbalize feelings and emotions that a picture conveys, a fact which assumes greater proportions in the case of judges not blessed with a verbal facility. A judge who finds it difficult to express feelings and emotions of a picture should not feel he is alone but rather should realize that almost all people find difficulty in this area. Like all abilities this one increases with practice, and once acquired, adds so much value to a judge's comments that all should strive to achieve it.

It is neither essential nor important for a judge to find out what the author of the picture was trying to communicate. What matters is what feelings and thoughts it engenders in the viewer—the judge. More often than not a good picture conveys different things to different people and credit should be given to a picture that manages to do that. Ambiguity of a picture could be its greatest charm by providing an image on which viewers can project their own thoughts, feelings and imaginations.

Besides the feelings, emotions and mood, there are three other things that a picture may convey and they are: a statement or a story as in photojournalism or documentary photography;

an idea or inventiveness; an interpretation of the beauty or any other quality of the subject.

### 2. Content of the picture and how it is dealt with

This is where the ability of the photographer to see what subject would lend itself to a good photograph is judged. What appears good to the eye does not necessarily make a good photograph. Different subjects have different degrees of being photogenic. How often one sees a really good photograph of a subject many of us would not have dreamt of taking. Even when the subject matter is quite commonly selected for photography, like a portrait or a landscape, it is the choice of the person or the scene that the photographer makes which will determine success or failure of a picture. Often it is the uniqueness or rarity of the subject which will make it interesting and worthy of high marking. Equally important to the choice of the subject is how it is dealt with and that includes:

- The choice and control of lighting; one of the most important aspects in picture making
- What is included and what is not in the picture
- The choice of background, setting or environment for the chosen subject
- Sharpness or lack of it in the picture as a whole or in different parts of the picture
- The interpretation of movement
- The juxtaposition of tones and colors
- Exploitation of perspective
- The critical timing of taking the picture
- The arrangement of the different components of the picture - the composition
- Exploitation of pattern and texture
- The choice of format - horizontal or vertical and the shape and dimension of the picture

### 3. The Technical Aspect of the Picture - the "Medium"

The following should be considered in assessing the technical merits of the picture:

- Handling of tonal range and color rendition
- Correct exposure
- Sharpness of the picture - depending upon its appropriateness to the subject
- Quality of processing
- Retouching
- Appropriateness of choice of black and white or color
- Presentation of the picture if mounted

It can be argued that technical merit of the picture should be a prerequisite to assessment of artistic qualities which have been so strongly emphasized up till now. In a sense this is true, but in reality it does not present difficulties. Technical ability is acquired far more easily than aesthetic. In consequence, experience shows that those capable of great artistic expression are rarely lacking in technical ability. What is more often seen is that those lacking in technical ability are also unable to excel in artistic interpretation. It is only on exceptional occasions when a picture outstandingly good artistically has to be rejected because of very poor technique.

### Conclusion

Though the three aspects of pictures to be taken into consideration in good judging have been stressed, it is by no means suggested that there should be rules for what judges should like or dislike. Judging is, and will remain, a subjective exercise. This is why we have three or more judges in major exhibitions and salons so that different tastes and interests are fully represented. However, what is suggested is the need for agreement on what judges should take into consideration in judging and the above three parameters could form the basis for it.

This is what is happening in photographic judging where marking is done according to rules made by the individual

judge and which are entirely personal and exclusive to them, or where the marking is based on the judges' current fads, prejudices and overvalued ideas.

If there was a consensus on what should be taken into consideration in marking and the weighting given to each attribute chosen, it would help entrants to competitions and exhibitions to know what was expected of them and the results of judging would be more consistent and fair. This does not imply rules on what the judges should select but agreement on what aspects of the picture they should be taking into consideration in judg-

ing. It would in fact mean less rules than at present since individual judges are currently making rules based entirely on their own way of thinking.

\*) *This analysis by Dr. E.R. Sethna was first published in the Royal Photographic Society Journal in 1992. The above is an extract from this two-part treatise on photography judging, from a psychological perspective. Dr. Sethna is a psychiatrist and vice president of the Royal Photographic Society of the United Kingdom.*

## Learning from Master Photographers

# 10 Common Mistakes in Long Exposure Photography

by Francesco Gola\*

*At every workshop I held in Italy in 2015, I introduced an exercise, where at the end of the workshop the attendees were asked to write down the three mistakes they used to make before attending the course. From these comments/lessons learned I made the following list of the most common errors in long exposure photography.*

### 1. Vibration reduction system is set to ON

There are some lovely technologies that can help get much sharper images minimizing the blur caused by camera shake, which are extremely useful in low-light conditions where slow shutter speeds are required. Every brand calls this technology something different, but the aim is the same. They can be lens-based (like for Nikon and Canon cameras) or camera-based (like for Sony, Olympus and Pentax cameras), but at the end the result is that this vibration reduction can give you the same image quality up to four shutter speed stops slower than usual.

They use some movement sensors to detect motion and try to compensate for it by moving an element group in the lens, or on the sensor itself.

The point is that if the camera is on a sturdy tripod (and if you are shooting a long exposure, your camera is definitely on a tripod!), you shouldn't expect any vibration. You may know this, but your camera doesn't, so even if there is no movement, it can happen that this anti-vibration system tries to compensate anyway moving a lens group (or the sensor), and this will actually result in an introduction of a vibration (and blur) instead of a removal.

So, if your camera is on a sturdy tripod, turn the anti-vibration system to OFF!

### 2. Forgetting to use Mirror Lock-up

In a DSLR camera, light travels through the lens and is sent to the viewfinder by a mirror. When you press the shutter button, the mirror flips up so that the light goes directly onto the image sensor. This movement introduces a small vibration that will cause slight blurring in the photo.

To avoid this vibration, you can activate the Mirror Lock-up function in your camera. After its activation, the first time you press the shutter button, your camera will lift the mirror; the second time it will open the shutter. If you wait a couple of seconds between the first and the second press, you will avoid the vibration! Yes, if you have a mirrorless camera, you can skip this advice!

### 3. Not using a GND filter because they are expensive

In some situation (in places where there is not a big difference in the exposure between different areas of the scene), just a Neutral Density filter can allow you to get the desired result. However, in many situation the light condition require the use of a

Graduated Neutral Density filter to balance the exposure.

If you are using a screw-on ND filter, you may believe that the only chance you have is to try to apply a GND filter in post-production – but you'd be wrong!

You can just hold the filter with your hand in front of the lens. For a shot with a shutter speed up to few seconds, your only problem will be the correct alignment of the filter. For shots which are minutes long, even if your hand is not perfectly still, the final result will be more than great – try it if you don't believe me. The holder is required if you want to use multiple filters together (or when you start having cramps in your hand).

### 4. Setting the aperture to f/22 to increase the exposure time

The rule was simple: if you decrease the aperture, you increase the exposure time.

With this rule in mind, you may think that you can transform your 30 second exposure to a two minute exposure just moving from f/11 to f/22. Theoretically, you're right. Unfortunately there is a physical phenomenon called optical diffraction that above f/16 is enough intense to ruin the sharpness of your image.

If you are already at f/11 and you need a slower shutter speed, decrease ISO if possible or use a stronger filter.

### 5. Forgetting to adjust the ISO

ISO can be a powerful ally in a long exposure. Sometimes you forget the possibility of changing the ISO setting, and you only play with filters and aperture. Remember that every camera has a range of ISO where the output quality is almost the same. In high-end cameras this range is usually between ISO 50 and 200.

This means that you have two stops to play with, and in a long exposure shoot, two stops mean minutes of exposure.

### 6. Shooting like you're in a studio

When you shoot pictures at home or comfortably seated in a studio, no external agent can affect the quality of your image. But if you are perched on a rock in front of the sea, on a beautiful stormy day, quite soon your filters will be completely wet.

Remember to fill your bag with cleaning cloths. A thin layer of water on your outer filter will result in a high diffraction, and

this will irremediably ruin your image. Never underestimate nature, even on a sunny day, the weather conditions can change very quickly.

### 7. Choosing a low quality filter

Every time you add a filter in front of your lens, you inevitably decrease the overall quality of the optical system. Yes, some well-known filter brands are quite expensive, but do you believe it is worth putting a \$5 filter in front of a camera of thousand dollars? No, it isn't – so focus on quality: fewer filters but better! You don't need the whole set of density ranges for ND and GND filters. Try to understand which filters you will probably use more often, and then remember that you have ISO and Aperture to play with to cover the gap between. Finally, remember that a lot of good quality filters are available at incredibly affordable prices. Check in advance for filter reviews on internet.

### 8. Underestimating the wind

When you take a long exposure shoot, your camera is exposed to possible external vibration agents for minutes. Even a wind gust of a few seconds can ruin your image. Invest on a sturdy tripod, and then set it firmly on the ground. If needed, hook an additional weight to the tripod to make it even sturdier and solid.

Avoid using the tripod's central column too – if you raise it up, you raise the centre of gravity of the system and it will be less stable.

### 9. Not covering the viewfinder

You took a three minute exposure, and the preview is full of strange purple lines and halos. Why? It is because light, like water, loves to find a way – always.

Your camera is intended to allow light through only from the hole in your lens, but unfortunately there are some other accesses that can potentially harm your images.

The most common of them is the viewfinder. To avoid infiltration of light from it, cover it after composing the image. If your camera is not provided with a cap, you can even use some black tape. If you forgot the black tape, use a chewing gum. The typical result of viewfinder infiltration is a strange purple halo. Yes, if you have a mirrorless camera, you are also free of this issue!

If you use slot-it filter system, another possible source is the gap between one filter to another (this is one of the reason why many photographers love screw-on filters). In this case, the best solution is to cover that gap with black tape. The typical result of filter infiltration is a vertical purple line on the opposite side of the sun.

Finally, if you use a tilt-shift lens, or a lens adaptor, you may have an infiltration from the lens body. The best way to avoid this is to cover the lens with a black neck warmer.

### 10. Believing the filter vendor

When you buy a six stop ND filter, you expect that it has exactly the optical density to get a six stop reduction. Unfortunately, you are wrong. In my life I never found a filter with the exact intensity stated by the manufacturer. Of course, the difference usually is minimal, but remember that even ½ stop of difference, in a long exposure means minutes of error.

To avoid errors when you are on field, test it in advance by following these steps:

- Choose a room in your home, turn on the lights and close the windows (you need a place where the lighting is perfectly constant).
- Mount your camera on a tripod and take a photo of the room until you get a shot with a good histogram. Note down all the parameters (ISO/Aperture/Shutter speed) of the shot.
- Mount the ND filter and compensate the shutter speed obtained before, according to the f-stop reduction introduced by the filter.
- Take a picture with the ND filter

Look at the histogram of the photo taken with the filter, and compare it to one taken without. If they are approximately superimposable (exactly the same), the filter intensity stated by the manufacturer is accurate. If the new histogram has shifted to the left, your filter has an intensity greater than that the one declared; if it is moved to the right, it has a lower intensity.

If the two histograms are not superimposable, take another shoot changing the shutter speed to obtain a histogram approximately similar to the one of the picture without the filter.

When you have found the exact optical density, build your own shutter speed conversion table. Another possibility is the PhotoPills app for your iPhone, the only one that allows you to convert the shutter speed for non-standard f-stop reductions.

\*) Francesco Gola is an Italian photographer who fell in love with long exposures of seascapes soon after he took up photography. For him a long exposure represents a parallel universe in which to escape from the frenzy of modern life. His passion for the sea and for travels has led him to visit some of the most iconic locations on this planet looking at them with different eyes.

See more of his work on 500px or his website <http://www.francescogola.net/> or join one of his workshops around the world!



All photographs by Francesco Gola