

APJA NEWS

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President's Message

How can an audience experience an engaging competition night? Following up on last month's opening message with tips for entertaining and getting club members involved on a competition night here is some more food for thought:

- . Short anecdotes about a similar image you have made that is funny or poke fun at yourself, in a kind way, of how you went about making it.
- . Exaggeration, make it extreme so that it cannot be taken seriously, but puts a point across.
- . Quote someone else, famous photographer for example, about something funny or serious they said in the past but is funny in the current context.
- . Make "What If" comments about images (thinking outside the square) by surprising and delighting people with what they did not see coming.
- . A great way to capture an audience's attention is to get them curious about what's coming later. Hint at how you arrive at your findings or what you are going to present that is relative to the topic you are judging.
- . Don't offend anyone as what can be one persons humour can affront another.

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Annual General Meeting

Notification has been previously made of the AJPA Annual General Meeting on Sunday 17 July at St. Anthony's Church meeting room commencing 1:30pm. Following the meeting member Bill Millar is making a presentation around 2:30pm about variations in composite image construction. This overview will show the range of possibilities and what can be achieved to enhance image making and our understanding of it through photographic combinations.

APJA 2016 Syllabus

July	Sun 10	Level 3 training	8am - 4pm St. Peters
	Sun 17	Committee meeting AGM General meeting	12:15-1:30pm 1:30 - 2:30pm 2:30 - 4pm (Speaker: Bill
		Millar)	
Aug	Sun 7	Level 2 training	8am - 4pm St. Peters
	Mon 15	Committee meeting	7.30 pm St. Anthony's
September	Sun 11	Level 1 training	8am - 4pm St. Peters
	Sun 18	General Meeting	2pm St. Anthony's (Speaker: Vicki Moritz Topic: Subject to confirmation - 'What I look for as a judge')
October	Mon 10	Committee meeting	7.30 pm St. Anthony's
	Sun 30	General Review of Training	2pm St. Anthony's
November	Sun 13	General Meeting EoY	2pm St. Anthony's (Speaker: Paul Robinson Topic 1: Politics & Wilderness Photography in Tasmania Topic 2: Sol-struct: Lensless image making
December		No APJA events this month	

Photographic Artist Review

Recently, 25 June 2016, one of the great photographers passed away after suffering a stroke in New York, he was Bill Cunningham. Born on 13 March 1929 Bill was known for his candid, street and fashion photography. He commence his working life in 1949 as a milliner until 1962 when he turned to photography in the streets of New York and travelled around the city by pushbike - he never owned a car (Oh, 28 of his bicycles were stolen in the city by life's end). His work came to the attention of The New York Times with a 1978 capture of Greta Garbo in an unguarded moment. Cunningham had columns in the 'Times', (On the Street and Evening Hours) which ran in the paper from 1978 to 2016.

"He loved 'the kids,' he said, who wore their souls on sleeves he had never seen before, or in quite that way." He was uninterested in those

who showcased clothing they had not chosen themselves, which they modelled on the red carpet at celebrity events. His fashion philosophy was populist and democratic.



Cunningham in 2010

Fashion is as vital and as interesting today as ever. I know what people with a more formal attitude mean when they say they're horrified by what they see on the street. But fashion is doing its job. It's mirroring exactly our times. His personal philosophy was: "Money is the cheapest thing. Liberty is the most expensive." He declined all gifts from those he photographed, even offers of food and drink at gala parties. He said: "I just try to play a straight game, and in New York that's very... almost impossible. To be honest and straight in New York, that's like Don Quixote fighting windmills." Though he contributed to the *New York Times* he did not become an employee until 1994, when he decided he needed to have health insurance coverage after being hit by a truck while biking. Most of his pictures were never sold or published. He said: "I'm really doing this for myself. I'm stealing people's shadows, so I don't feel as guilty when I don't sell them."

In 1983 the Council of Fashion Designers of America named Cunningham the outstanding photographer of the year and in 2008 he was awarded the Officier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture. As he accepted the award at a Paris ceremony, he photographed the audience and then told them: "It's as true today as it ever was: he who seeks beauty will find it." In 2009, he was named a "living landmark" by the New York Landmarks Conservancy and in 2012 he received the Carnegie Hall Medal of Excellence. (Ref: Wikipedia)



Current Photography Exhibitions

Mars Gallery: 7 James St., Windsor

Current till 30 July: "TeVe VuDu" by Gary Willis

Strange Neighbour Gallery: 395 Gore St., Fitzroy

Current till 16 July: "Slippery Stories" mix of Australian and American photographers about dream fantasies set in city locations.

Glen Eira Gallery: Cnr. Glen Eira & Hawthorn Rds., Caulfield

Current: "Fashion Photography in Melbourne" (1950's features Athol Schmith)

Centre for Contemporary Photography: 404 George St., Fitzroy

Current: Closing Sunday 10 July 2016

GALLERIES ONE, TWO,

THREE

AND NIGHT PROJECTION
WINDOW

CCP Declares: On the Social Contract

Mohini Chandra, Miriam Charlie, Cherine Fahd, Katrin Koenning, Pilar Mata Dupont,
Tom Nicholson and Elvis Richardson.

Curated by Pippa Milne.

GALLERY FOUR *Gordon Bennett: Moving Images, Part One*

Gordon Bennett and John Citizen.

Curated by Helen Hughes and Chiara Scafidi.

Monash Gallery of Art, 860 Ferntree Gully Rd, Wheelers Hill VIC 3150

Phone:(03) 8544 0500 (Closed on Mondays)

Current to 28 August 2016. "China:grain to pixel" on loan from the Shanghai Centre for Photography this is a major exhibition.

APJA Facts

Over the next few issues there will be a catch-up of the presentations made at our general meetings by Jean-Phillipe Weibel and Dr. Bert Hoveling, their generous support to the ongoing operations of the APJA are most welcome.

At the association meeting on 20th September 2015 Ron Cork presented about why we judge photography. The following is the final part in his series. If you have any questions about content of the articles please contact Ron (RCmurbella7@gmail.com)

So why is it a sin to edit, manipulate, enhance an image with every bit of skill you have.

Why must the editing process be limited to just a few simple tasks?

Major artists of old like Adams, Karsh and Capa and even more recent masters like Annie Leibovitz, Trent Park would be horrified by these attitudes. These opinions upset a lot of modern photographers too.

If the style of work we see now as a result of digital processing, was produced by those early exhaustive 'primitive' means back in the pre-digital age, the age of film, it would be lauded, get standing ovations and overt cries of "Bravo". In those olden days, to achieve results in print similar to what we do now digitally, required highly skilled artists to do such things as hand paint over parts of original negatives to minimise or mask light transmission onto the printer paper, partially scratch away material on the negative to allow more light through, in order to minimise or eliminate unwanted elements in the frame.

The lab technicians would add various combinations of neutral or coloured filters of different densities between the negative and the paper to change the contrast or even the colour range of the image and the consequent developed print. Using brushes as fine as a human hair they even hand painted detail or colour directly on the print itself. These were exhaustive and laborious tasks that took hours, if not days or weeks in order for them to realise the wanted final image. So why is it a sin for a modern photographer to do the same with digital tools.

Also, why is it a sin for a judge who has the knowledge and skill, to use the member's submitted image to show what could have/should have been done in the editing process to bring out the best in it and display the process to the audience? It is an historical and still current truism that a picture is worth a thousand words. A technical explanation by word of mouth alone is rarely fully comprehended, much less retained, especially in the rush of a judge's presentation.

Few people take notes during a club image assessment presentation. But accompany those words with a visible demonstration and everybody gets the picture, without ambiguity. Being able to use the actual image under assessment to demonstrate to the worker and the wider audience what can or might be done to fix the problems or maybe simply enhance/embellish it to show other possibilities for the image, is an invaluable educational tool. The technique has been used by a small number of judges, mostly with critical and enthusiastic acceptance, but sometimes with outright rejection and even rage.

The argument against using this highly instructional method when presenting assessments is typically one about copyright or ownership of the image. This is a trivial argument. The judge already has possession of the image with their permission. Apart from any written rules and regulations, the ethics of a judge would prohibit them from keeping the image, selling it or using it for any other purpose.

If the image quality was such that it apparently needed some adjustments then it probably was not worth trying to use or peddle anyway. Not only that, but typically the image would be no larger than 1920x1080 pixels and 72dpi. This is way too small for printing at any useable size and good only for projection at best. After the judge's presentation, it is normal for the image and its modifications to be deleted. It has no other value to the judge so in effect, both the copy sent to the judge and any modified versions will no longer exist after the presentation. So why the distrust & fear?

Does the worker (or maybe a misguided committee) worry because the deficiencies of the worker will be on display? Those deficiencies are displayed anyway and remarked on during the presentation, so why the negative attitude toward the help offered? The monthly club judging, or image assessment should be more about education, not competition. It is an opportunity for club members to get a first hand, honest and educated appraisal and feedback for their efforts, as well as knowledge, help and guidance from an experienced resource. This opportunity is so often constrained or even squandered by a well meaning, but blinkered few.

Judges willingly give up their time to pass on their knowledge and experience with the sole goal of helping others add to theirs. Yet some clubs still treat judges as a necessary evil only, as having small value. For them the monthly assessments are something that has prevailed only because of history.

They dislike the very idea that someone from outside their club membership should be allowed in to assess the works of their members. That is a closeted, shameful attitude, thankfully limited to just one or two clubs in this state. When delivering a presentation, a judge may say things like, the horizon is not level, the verticals are not perpendicular or the image is not sharp.

For the most part, the audience will see and appreciate the issues and the solutions suggested. But when the presenter says that the image needs a

bit more or less contrast, more or less saturation, that the distracting elements in the picture could be minimised or eliminated, that the image is a 'bit flat' and could do with a lift to bring out the features better and may work even better as a mono-chrome, that parts of the image need to be sharper or that a different crop and maybe a vignette would help with the composition, for a lot of people, these things are harder to visualise.

Because these are just words, they are not as obvious, especially to the novice and the owner of the image. The impression of the image is someone else's vision, not theirs, so is a little harder to put into the context of their vision. This is where the old saying that 'a picture is worth a thousand words' really comes into its own.

Seeing on the screen, the differences that are being talked about, how the composition would be improved if it was cropped like 'this'. Or how the image would look if the eyes were sharp, if there was a little more contrast in this area over here. The recognition, understanding and appreciation is visible, obvious and instantaneous. Why do so many disapprove of this valuable instructional tool? The judge is expected to verbalise these things, yet not allowed to visualise and display them.

Most club's have image assessment or judging events every month. How often do they have instructional events where this type of information and help is displayed and explained? For most clubs it's once a year, if that. There are too many other things a club does for its members that would limit how many practical image editing events like this could be organised.

A judging night is a golden opportunity for the club to provide time for them to see the fixes, both simple and if the judge has the knowledge and skills, complex fixes too and maybe an offer of other creative possibilities for their images interwoven with the judge's normal presentation. Not only do the members get valuable feedback about their image as it was presented, but also see how that image actually would look if the suggested fixes were applied and what the other possibilities for it might be if a little more thought and effort was applied.

Not every judge would be willing to do this and not every judge would have the necessary skills to go beyond the more straight-forward tasks, but that too is fine, they don't have to do this. The clubs have the choice of who they want to judge and it gives clubs an added level of variation in presentations.

On a final note, I wish to comment on the common monthly image contest and practice of awarding prizes at these club level image judgements. This is a personal view but is shared by others. Image assessment at club level should be all about education, not selecting winners. There are plenty of opportunities and other ways for image makers to win prizes.

At the monthly club-level image assessment, which is what it is, each and every image that deserves recognition should be entitled to get that recognition. Often a judge has trouble separating the better performers but because of the constraints of the contest, must downgrade some of these to a lesser value in order to comply with the limits of the 1st,2nd,3rd award structure.

By limiting the merit list to 1st, 2nd and 3rd and a couple of HC's, usually with constraints on equal placings, those other images worthy of recognition are downgraded and usually forgotten. The only images remembered are the winners. Why not allow for more recognition? Giving merits or credit to each and every image that deserves it, without limits, provides a much broader base for recognition of good work. What does it matter if 30 out of 100 gain a merit. If they are deserving then why should they not receive? A few more pieces of paper will not break the bank nor destroy a forest. But they will bolster confidence and promote better efforts from both recipients and peers.

And so ends my sermon, almost....

Remember that judging at club level is not and should not be considered the same as a judging at national or international level. At the national/international level, a judge has just seconds to make an assessment and deliver a score. At club level a judge is 'usually' given the time to properly assess the merits of an image. This could anything from days to weeks. He or she can give each and every submitted image and print as much depth in assessment as needed. There is time to compose a well worded critique with appropriate notes and pointers to highlight those qualities and issues that need to be emphasised.

This is why 'cold judging' at a club competition has little merit and value. For those who don't know, cold judging is what we call it when a club does not send the prints and images to a judge prior to the presentation event, but presents the photography to the judge on the night of the

presentation in front of a live audience. The judge is then expected to scan, appraise and comment on each image immediately, with little time for any serious consideration of the quality and value of the image.

How can a judge make an honest and accurate assessment and then present that assessment, along with helpful advice, in the space of 30 seconds or so? It is a fact that very few judges are comfortable doing it and fewer still who are prepared to do so. There is no way that a fair assessment can be made in such a short amount of time. At least not one that requires an appraisal of any depth. It is demanding and demeaning for the judge and both unfair and near worthless to the worker.

The 1 or 2 clubs that still insist on this method of judging should consider their position. If the decision to maintain this judging method is based on the notion that the membership wants it, the committee should educate and convince their membership as to the folly and low value of this method of image assessment. For the benefit and both club members and invited judges, committees should implement the more typical method of sending the images to the judge in advance.

Regarding the actual presentation, whilst very few judges do, there is no shame in a judge reading their comments of assessments from a printed page, if that ensures they get it right. As experience grows so will confidence and reduce the need to rely on a printed script. In this regard a judge should always carry a small torch or book light so they can see in the dark.

Lastly, about the limitations of time. On some nights and for some judges (me especially), a shortage of adequate delivery time might be an issue. Judges have been performing under this limitation since the very first judging event, so while it would be nice for a club to allow more time (and they should), we must accommodate the limitation and measure our deliveries accordingly.

It may be an inconvenience for some clubs and create a need for another scheduled night for the committee, but I believe it unnecessary for a club to conduct committee meetings and present reports, other than an update of planned events, to the membership on a judging night. This can rob valuable presentation time from a judge who has information that would be of more value than a treasurers report.