

# APJA NEWS

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**Photographic Artist Feature  
Donna Crous**

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## **The Covid-19 Lockdown**

The lockdown continues in Victoria with borders closed around the country and continues its impact into how clubs, national and international salons conduct their operations. It is a time when we as judges need to support each other as best we can and I urge all members to do this as we are kindred spirits in carrying out our judging roles. You will know some better than others and if you think a fellow member can help you shape or sharpen your understanding of your role or discuss judging issues you are facing then please make the call and on the other side give the best response you can.

**APJA Committee Activities**

Around the time of the July AGM the committee undertook to review operations of the APJA in the light of the Covid-19 impact and look at the association's next stage of evolution. The outcome is that we are about to raise a five-year strategic plan.

Why have a strategic plan?

The APJA is nearing the completion of its second cycle of development. The first cycle was to gain support and construct the APJA; the second cycle was to implement the original purposes for its existence and carry out six levels of training. The sixth level is in development for implementation.

Operations, especially input from the training program, identified areas of challenges that go beyond steady ongoing improvements. Major undertakings needed to occur. As a result of seeking comments within the committee about conducting a strategic plan a number of issues were identified which needed to be contained within a structure about how they could be resolved. Further, the Covid-19 virus presented challenges and opportunities previously not considered. Hence the need to plan our way through the foreseeable future.

The question then to ask was, where to from here? A positive response was made within the committee to produce a strategic plan and numerous ideas have been taken into account; **however, general membership is yet to be consulted.** Once this process has been completed then an issues based strategic plan can be formalized and used as a guideline for the five-year period, 2020 – 2024.

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To round out the proposed strategic plan **MEMBER FEEDBACK is sought under the following broad topics:**

1. Any ideas about where you feel the association can improve
2. Where you think operations fall short
3. Identification of specific issues that concern you

*Email your thoughts to [apjasecretary@gmail.com](mailto:apjasecretary@gmail.com)*

## **Photographic Artist Review**

Still Life Photographers

Marian Drew (Australia) – Issue 13 November 2016

Robert Beulteman (USA) – Issue 14 December 2016

Martin Klimas (Germany) – Issue 15 February 2017

Anatoly Che (Russia) – Issue 44 July 2020

**Donna Crous**, is an award-winning blogger and food photographer living in Surrey, UK. She has been a finalist (2017, 2018, 2019) then in 2020 overall winner of the Pink Lady Food Photographer of the Year competition (Shortlisted in the Stylist Award category for 2019 & 2020).

Rotolight Interview 9 April 2020

She moved to the UK from South Africa in 2015 when she started a blog: Eighty 20 Nutrition. *“I started the blog to keep myself busy and focused,”* Donna explains. *“I wanted a centralised platform to share my recipes with friends and family back home in South Africa.”*

*“I very quickly realised that I did not enjoy writing, but preferred photography,”* she admits. *“It was in 2017 in a moment of random craziness that I decided to enter Pink Lady Food Photographer of the Year. I was placed third in my category, Blogging, and from there many doors opened for me in the UK photography industry.”*

Since then, food photography has become Donna’s full-time job based out of her home in Surrey where she lives with her husband and two daughters.

*“I not only need a full photography studio but also access to a fully functioning kitchen in close proximity to each other,”* Donna says.

*“Luckily being in the country I have more space in my home so I’ve been able to convert the TV room into my studio.”*

*“The downside to having my studio at home is that it is still a home for the rest of my family,”* Donna continues. *“As well as all the usual*

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*photographic gear and lights, there’s also a large selection of props and backgrounds. Space becomes a big challenge, and I’ve learned to become selective when acquiring new gear and props to minimise how much my work takes over our home.”*

Donna indicated that while having full control over the subject, the composition and the styling, food can prove to be a challenging subject if not shot correctly. Donna says that she battles with brownies, biscuits and cookies in the studio. *“I think they can end up looking very generic because of their shapes and colours,”* she explains. *“Brownies are particularly difficult to create separation so they don’t end up looking like a big brown lump, whilst still being able to show the texture.”*

Describing her shooting style, Donna says: *“Highlighting the hero in the picture. It is what is the most important to me, along with telling a*

*story. I want a viewer to get lost, even for a nanosecond, to just stop, look and take it all in whilst feeling part of the picture.”*



Home studio set-up and resulting image

