

APJA NEWS

Issue 10. June 2016

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President's Message

How can an audience experience an engaging competition night? Member Bob Sloane has mentioned on a number of occasions that in the past a survey was conducted amongst Victorian clubs and a significant response was that members wished to be entertained. Judges that are less extroverted than others may find this difficult but there are ways around this. Some ideas that could help:

. Instead of fully explaining an aspect of photography ask questions, e.g. "Who has studied colour theory?" or "Who has researched the set subject?" or "Who has researched Gestalt Theory in composition?" ask the right question and someone in the audience will indicate they know something about the answer. All good to this point but now DO NOT get the person to explain anything on the spot but get them to say their name and then ask those present to see that person after the meeting.

. If there is a consistent visual irritant across a number of images in a competition there is no need to labour the point. After the first couple of times you have mentioned the perceived difficulty ask the audience, when it recurs, about what might be improved; most of the time they will identify what you have noticed and often with some humour involved.

. Where possible get the audience involved, obtain comments about an aspect that has arisen during your commentary, then continue on.

. Encourage audience members to look at the work of great and talented photographers - the Web has more reference material than any library.

Two things come out of this approach:

1. Saves time - remember we may only have 45 to 60 seconds for each competition entry (The judge does not have to repeat anything and the person who volunteers knowledge about a subject is going to do this if they only actually know - but after the judging).

2. It gets people involved; they have ownership and responsibility for what is happening. When they get involved often humour is introduced especially between audience members who know each other well.

More about this next issue.

APJA 2016 Syllabus

Please enter these dates into your diary. An error was made in the last newsletter regarding the Levels 3, 2 and 1 meeting dates. It was corrected in the Mini-news by Bob Sloane and has been amended here.

June	Sun 26	Cmtee meeting General	12-2pm Cmtee meet 2 - 4pm (Speaker: Dr. Bert Hoveling Topic: Judging Nationals & Internationals)
July	Sun 10	Level 3 training	8am - 4pm St. Peters
	Sun 17	AGM & Cmtee meeting General	12-2pm Cmtee meet 2 - 4 (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

Instead of featuring the work of an influential photographer in the last news issue and this, it will be devoted to a presentation made by one of our members, Tuck Leong, to a general meeting on 28th February 2016 about Nature photography which outlined current circumstances. It was followed by a wide ranging discussion which was enlightening to those attending the meeting.

PART 2

Alternative nature images

In the previous APJA News the more formal aspects of assessing nature photography was introduced. However, the role of the judge of nature images does not end here.

Examples of other styles of nature photography include:

- . Rural or City Shows where there are several categories dealing with pets and here the evaluation process need not follow formal definitions and also, in some cases, definitions are not provided by the organizers. The judge is now looking for aesthetic and technical qualities.
- . Illustrative scientific specimens will not usually show the environment of the subject but rather in a studio lit setting with a white background. As well, these include microscopic subjects.
- . The urban edge; where species share the environment with man. Here the hand of man is integral to the story telling component of the image.
- . Zoo photography is common and may feature enclosure architecture. This may not always be obvious but may be the shadow of cage wire falling across a bird as in an aviary. Zoo animals feature prominently in photography club competitions.

ANZANG is a major player in Nature Photography in our region which carries some subtle differences compared to the international bodies noted previously. The Nature Photography Definition used for The Australian Geographic ANZANG Nature Photographer of the Year states:

"All photographs must be of natural fauna, flora or natural land formations and must have been taken in the ANZANG bioregion.

ANZANG bioregion means Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica and the New Guinea region. The region of New Guinea is limited to the west by the Wallace Line (the biogeographical line extending between Bali and Lombok northward through the Makassar Strait between Borneo and Sulawesi). To the east the New Guinea region includes the Bismarck and Solomon Archipelagos and islands of the South West Pacific, with its eastern boundary formed by the International Date Line. Antarctica includes the Sub-Antarctic Islands, which for the purposes of this competition are those south of the Antarctic Convergence or Antarctic Polar Front.

Judges will consider the photographic technique plus the aesthetic, artistic and unique quality of all images when making their selections.

Black and white and monochrome images may only be entered into some sections as identified.

There are ten sections in the Competition. Up to four images may be entered in each section.

1. Animal Behaviour - the subject(s) must be engaged in natural activity.
2. Animal Portrait - the subject(s) must be photographed close up, occupying around 30% of the frame.
3. Botanical - this may be a portrait or habitat shot.

4. Landscape - the landscape or seascape should show a natural environment. Evidence of humans can be present however it must not be the focus of the photograph. (Stitched panoramas are allowed provided that all original images can be provided on request and stitching is disclosed in the statement.)

5. Threatened Species - the subject(s) may be photographed in any of the following ways: in portrait, engaged in natural activity, or in its natural habitat. All entries selected in this category (flora or fauna) must be verified by an official reference, valid for any of the previous five years prior to the date of close of entries. This can be obtained from the country's state or federal government agency concerned & with verifying the subject's threatened, rare, vulnerable or endangered status.

6. Monochrome - the subject(s) must be chosen that would qualify for any of the first five categories. This category includes all monochrome photography including black and white, sepia-toned and infrared photographs. (Stitched landscape panoramas are allowed provided that all original images can be provided on request and stitching is disclosed in the statement.)

7. Our Impact - the image must depict human impact on nature, be it terrestrial, marine or atmospheric. This impact may be negative or positive. The choice of subjects is broad, including any subject that would qualify for categories 1 to 5, or may extend beyond these to subjects relating to pollution and climate change.

8. Animal Habitat – the image must show an animal (or animals) in the environment it lives in. This can be a natural or built environment that the animal, either native or feral, has independently claimed as its habitat (captive species not allowed).

9. Interpretive - the subject(s) must be chosen that would qualify for any of the other categories. Entries in this section must have their origins in nature photography, but can be manipulated in any way. Photographers are encouraged to experiment graphically with their images. There is no limit to the number of exposures used, or to the graphic treatments applied in this section."

10. *Author: References to Junior photography have been omitted.*

BBC "Wildlife Photographer of the Year" is another influential international nature competition conducted by the Natural History Museum, London. Categories for nature include:

- (i) Mammals
- (ii) Birds
- (iii) Reptiles, Amphibians and Fishes
- (iv) Invertebrates
- (v) Plants and Fungi
- (vi) Underwater
- (vii) On Land
- (viii) In the Skies
- (ix) Urban
- (x) Detail
- (xi) Impressions
- (xii) Black and White
- (xiii) Wildlife Photojournalist: Single Image
- (xiv) Wildlife Photojournalist: Photo Story Award

(xv) Rising Star Portfolio Award (ages 18 to 25)

(xvi) Wildlife Photographer Portfolio Award (ages 26 and over)

* Entrants to the Wildlife Photojournalist: Photo Story Award may submit between six (6) and ten (10) images from which a maximum of six (6) images will be selected by the Jury. Entrants to this category may submit up to two (2) photo-stories each.

* Entrants to the Rising Star Portfolio Award and Wildlife Photographer Portfolio Award may submit between six (6) and ten (10) images from which a maximum of six (6) images will be selected by the Jury. Entrants to these categories may submit one (1) portfolio only.

Interestingly, there are rules for this competition, mostly technical and ethical (following) etc. but definitions for each of the categories could not be found. If this is the case then interpretation, conceptual and imaginative concerns may apply. Ethics (The Owner is the NHM):

(1) Any breach of the Competition's Ethics below will constitute a breach of the Rules.

(2) Entrants are required to report on the natural world in a way that is both creative and honest:

(i) entries must not deceive the viewer or attempt to disguise and/or misrepresent the reality of nature;

(ii) caption information supplied must be complete, true and accurate.

(3) Entrants must not do anything to injure or distress any animals or destroy their habitat in an attempt to secure an image.

(4) Entrants are responsible for ensuring full compliance with any applicable national or international legislation and for securing any relevant permits that may be required (which, in the case of human portraits and recordings, will include the subject's permission) and which must be made available on request by the Owners.

(5) If the Owners suspect that an entry has been achieved through cruel or unethical practices, including the use of live bait, the entry will be disqualified and the Owners reserve the right to report the entrant to the applicable authorities.

In conclusion, where does this leave the photographic judge! It is a case of applying knowledge of nature photography as fits the image being assessed. There may be amazingly well photographed nature subjects, which clearly show the hand of man, but need not be overlooked in open competitions because they do not meet formal nature definitions; but may comply with other definitions noted above. In club photography judge the images based upon your discretion and supplied definitions (if any) but in the teaching practice of judging ensure photographers are aware of how their images comply in deference to international definitions.

Current Photography Exhibitions

Mars Gallery: 7 James St., Windsor

Current till 25 June: "Immortal Flower by Laura Carthew

Strange Neighbour Gallery: 395 Gore St., Fitzroy

Current till 18 June: "Elemental" by Rohan Hutchinson

(Effects of extreme weather on architecture)

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: "On the Social Contract" Collaborative exhibition

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.

Workshops

Gold Street Studios
700 James Lane
Trentham East
T: 03 - 5424 1835

June 18, 2016	<u>Oil Printing - Ellie Young - 1 Day</u>
June 19, 2016	<u>Holograms - Ellie Young 1 Day</u>
June 21, 2016	<u>Tin Types @ Blanco Negro - Ellie Young - 1 Day</u>
June 22, 2016	<u>Ambrotypes @ Blanco Negro Wet Plate Collodion - Ellie Young - 1 Day</u>
June 24, 2016	<u>Casein (milk) Printing - Ellie Young - 2 Days</u>
July 1, 2016	<u>New Chrysotype - Ellie Young - 2 Days</u>
July 3, 2016	<u>View Cameras An Introduction - David Tatnall - 1 Day</u>
July 8, 2016	<u>Collodion Chloride POP (Aristotype)- Ellie Young - 1 Day</u>
July 9, 2016	<u>Tin Types - Ellie Young - 1 Day</u>
July 10, 2016	<u>Ambrotypes - Wet Plate Collodion - Ellie Young - 1 Day</u>
July 15, 2016	<u>Salt Printing - Ellie Young - 1 Day</u>

APJA Facts

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

Getting back to the question of "Why Do We Do It"? Why do we offer our work to be assessed, judged, criticised and commented on by people who apparently don't seem to understand what it is they are looking at? Why should we trust their appraisal? Why even consider it has value?"

Well the first answer to that is, we do it because we are looking for feedback, guidance and encouragement. We have to start somewhere, even if that appraisal is a little flawed.

Initially we may not be aware that the information is flawed, but in time we will learn the difference. That alone is good for your knowledge base. It will help educate you about what is good and not so good advice. It will open you to other ideas and different sources of information.

Along with the camaraderie and interaction with others, getting feedback for personal effort is the primary reason people join photography clubs. They want to learn how to make better images, pictures they will be proud of, to not only hang on their own walls to admire, but be happy when visitors also honestly admire them and appreciate the effort that was spent in an endeavour to make a better, more pleasing, maybe even a more professional looking picture.

Many go further and endeavour to make images that a wider audience will appreciate, are prepared to display their images in club exhibitions. Some go all the way and enter them into national and international competitions. There are some folk who don't seek that level of recognition but simply want an honest appraisal and some help in advancing their skills. They are wanting to be educated, taught the skills they don't have, get help in improving the skills they do have, simply for their own satisfaction.

They also expect to have discussions with like-minded people, to share anecdotes, to be informed about what works better, what doesn't work well, how to make better choices when buying equipment, be offered opportunities to practice their skills in workshops and practical sessions, be shown quality work by the more advanced members and by the seminars of invited 'outsiders'.

This is the reason why image judging at club level is so important. The judge has the ability, at least partially, to shape the destiny of the worker. This sounds a bit grandiose, but it's true. By giving consistently bad appraisals and judgements, (negative and positive), coupled with poor presentations, a judge can not only dissuade a member from continuing in the club, but discourage him or her to the point that they give up photography altogether.

That would be a sad day and a very bad outcome for what could have, should have been an enjoyable and ongoing experience. By appealing to egos, a presentation by a judge may keep a member in the club. But appealing to egos alone could also have long-term detrimental effects.

Bad assessments eventually get found out and poorly presented criticism (even of good assessments) can minimise the educational value of the presentation, both of which could discourage a worker. By presenting honest appraisals, a skilled judge can encourage a worker to not only continue with their efforts and stay in the club, but also to try new things. The judge can show different directions to try and encourage more creative thinking in both shooting and presentation styles.

This honest appraisal must not only contain comments about what is good, what has worked effectively and what appealed to the judge personally, but also what is bad, what didn't work, where the image could be improved and equally importantly, when a mistake or error is discovered, it should be pointed out and advice offered as to what

can be done to fix the error, along with the more general information of how to improve the image, provided the judge has this knowledge. To do this effectively, a judge will need to know what needs to be done, what can be done and how it can be done. Even more complicated is the level of digital technical knowledge required in order for a judge to properly diagnose and assess a digital image, whether it be on a screen or in print.

As the judge, you need to know what a jpeg is, know about and recognise the effects of jpeg compression and the subsequent artefacts it produces, digital noise, what produces it, how to minimise it and how to use it to effect. You need to know about and appreciate haloes, jaggies, masking errors, recognise cut-n-paste montage and spot cloning errors, chromatic aberration or colour fringing as it is more commonly known. All this knowledge is only acquired through time and exposure to all the stuff that is digital imagery. Some folk only ever manage a tiny portion of the information needed to be an effective judge. And none of this has value unless you can articulate it, get the message across. A judge therefore requires a wider range of knowledge and skills than those he or she is trying to educate, a daunting but not impossible task. Time and experience counts for a lot.

Something else a judge must remember and remind him or herself of continually and should also be mentioned at the start of a presentation, that regardless of how expert he, she or others may consider their personal judgements, they are still only the opinions of one person. As a judge, you hope that it is also the opinion of others, but you have no control of that.

The member who's work you have either praised or condemned must also consider their position, objectively, a very hard thing to do sometimes. Rather than simply swell with pride in the euphoria of the merit, or take umbrage at the judge's lack of judgement and sensitivity in the heat of the moment, they should take the information home with them, reassess the work with this new opinion about it, then decide if that opinion has value to be acted on, or that it has no relevance to them and be discarded. One of the big stumbling blocks for judges in attempting to provide this level of education and knowledge is time. Most clubs leave little time for a judge to expand the presentation to accommodate this extra and often critically necessary information.

Speaking of the monthly image assessment process, one thing that puzzles me always is why some clubs still actively discourage the acquisition, use and display of modern creative and artistic skills and processing methods. They prohibit their members from using the wonderful tools available to them in this digital age. Some clubs have rules that disallow the 'overuse' or 'obvious' use of image editing software when producing an image. My question here is, "How else do you produce the final image?" They apparently forget that in the digital age, every image must be digitally edited, even if that editing is done by the camera - heaven forbid. Apart from what can be obvious, if the editing has been done well, how can you tell what has been done? Every single digital frame that is captured by the sensor and then extracted from a camera's memory card must be edited in software. If it is not done by the camera itself then the worker must import the unprocessed RAW or camera-processed jpeg file into an image editing program and process it until the desired result emerges and then saved. There is no other way.