

APJA NEWS

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President's Message

Planning for the main activities for the year are well underway with good progress being made. Soon details about speakers for the three main seminars this year will be advertised progressively contributing to further our knowledge about the general sphere of photography and judging.

This APJA News continues the theme of nature photography as noted in the last newsletter, the photographic practice of Joel Sartore, but this time from the viewpoint judging nature images. Also the continuation of the article from Ron Cork is covered.

APJA Syllabus

The 2016 Syllabus had been set. Please enter these dates into your diary.

May	Sun 15	Cmtee meeting General meeting	12-2pm Cmtee meet 2 - 4pm (Speaker: Jean-Phillipe Weibel Topic: Landscape)
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 1 training	8am - 4pm St. Peters
	Mon 15	Committee meeting	7.30 pm St. Anthony's

September	Sun 4	Level 2 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 for this issue and the next 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 ONE:

Tuck outlined the various approaches taken with nature photography being:

- * Documentary style where the subject is captured accurately in its natural environment. The natural history story is important and perfection of the subject may not be present. Design exists in nature and its randomness formed by natural forces can be recognized such as in landform etched by wave motion. Endemic vegetation in a landscape is material to a nature style landscape.
- * Interpretative style where there is concern for the beauty of nature. It can be impressionistic and accuracy may not always be present in the image. There is a reaction to emotive forces and generally deals with aesthetics. Interpretation is important to give visual stimulation to nature and the ecosystem.
- * Competition style generally is guided by international definitions but there are exceptions to this and in these cases the judge must follow the guidelines supplied by the competition organizers.

Historically the Australian naturalist photographer, Andrew Gibson, raised the first definition adopted by FIAP. It was from a naturalist viewpoint and forms the basis of the definition jointly adopted by PSA, FIAP and RPS as of 1st January 2015. Prior to this definitions varied between these photographic institutions for decades. The definition is strictly enforced; ethics are also strongly asserted against claims made about the authenticity of 'Wildlife' images. 'Nature' images can be in a restrained environment but cannot show the hand of man.

Nature Photography Definition

International photography organizations have agreed upon a common Nature Photography Definition. The participating organizations are The Photographic Society of America (PSA) which represents 6500 members and 470 camera clubs, the Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique (FIAP) which represents more than 85 national associations and The Royal Photographic Society (RPS) with over 11,000 members will all use the same definition for nature and wildlife categories for their respective competitions and exhibitions effective 1st January 2015. It reads:

"Nature photography is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archaeology, in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject material and certify its honest presentation. The story telling value of a photograph must be weighed more than the pictorial quality while maintaining high technical quality. Human elements shall not be present, except where those human elements are integral parts of the nature story such as nature subjects, like barn owls or storks, adapted to an environment modified by humans, or where those human elements are in situations depicting natural forces, like hurricanes or tidal waves. Scientific bands, scientific tags or radio collars on wild animals are permissible. Photographs of human created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domestic animals, or mounted specimens are ineligible, as is any form of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement. No techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are permitted. Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content, or without altering the content of the original scene, are permitted including HDR, focus stacking and dodging/burning. Techniques that remove elements added by the camera, such as dust spots, digital noise, and film scratches, are allowed. Stitched images are not permitted. All allowed adjustments must appear natural. Colour images can be converted to grey-scale monochrome. Infrared images, either direct-captures or derivations, are not allowed. Images used in Nature Photography competitions may be divided in two classes: Nature and Wildlife. Images entered in Nature sections meeting the Nature Photography Definition above can have landscapes, geologic formations, weather phenomena, and extant organisms as the primary subject matter. This includes images taken with the subjects in controlled conditions, such as zoos, game farms, botanical gardens, aquariums and any enclosure where the subjects are totally dependent on man for food. Images entered in Wildlife sections meeting the Nature Photography Definition above are further defined as one or more extant zoological or botanical organisms free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat. Landscapes, geologic formations, photographs of zoo or game farm animals, or of any extant zoological or botanical species taken under controlled conditions are not eligible in Wildlife sections. Wildlife is not limited to animals, birds and insects. Marine subjects and botanical subjects (including fungi and algae) taken in the wild are suitable wildlife subjects, as are carcasses of extant species. Wildlife images may be entered in Nature sections of Exhibitions"

Nature photography can be summed up as:

The phenomena of the physical world concerning fauna, flora, landform and products of the earth (as opposed to human products or human creations)

When evaluating Nature images the following is taken into account:

- . Technical excellence (This is a pre-requisite)
- . Documentary style (With quality composition)
- . Unblemished specimen
- . Natural history information is important
- . Accurate depiction with artistic skill

Pictorial considerations include:

- . Flash (Not obvious)
- . Photo-stacking and HDR both permitted

Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2013 Creative Visions Section Winner

Jasper Doest - The Netherlands



Current Photography Exhibitions

Monash Gallery of Art, 860 Ferntree Gully Rd, Wheelers Hill VIC 3150
Phone:(03) 8544 0500 (Closed on Mondays) featuring "Australian Exotica" until 29 May 2016. Some of Australia's most highly regarded photographers are represented in large, glazed and framed prints. Of particular interest are those by Indigenous photographic artists as well as in a separate space works by year 12 students - check out their folios which work in conjunction with their exhibited images.

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 then please contact Ron:

RCmurbella7@gmail.com.

So it comes back to "Why Do We Do It"?

Why do we offer up our hard efforts to be assessed, judged, criticised and commented on by people who apparently don't seem to understand what it is they are looking at? Here is something to consider.

Why is it that pretty much everyone who visits an art gallery and comes across a generally acknowledged masterpiece will stop and gaze in awe at the exquisiteness of the work? It's usually the photo-realism that first grabs our attention. but that's not the only reason we are attracted to it. It is everything in the painting that makes the whole so much more than the sum of the individual components.

It's the subject matter, composition, the use of light and shade, colours, tones, use of contrast, sharpness, horizons, verticals, leading lines, sweeping curves, focal points, the use of the golden mean and points of thirds, of negative spaces. The Dutch masters like Rembrandt & Vermeer in particular were exemplary in the use of these. Even the simplest looking image is in fact a carefully considered construction, every brush stroke of detail thought about before it was placed.

Like all highly competent workers, artisans and architects, master painters and master mechanics, this level of consideration becomes almost automatic after a while, but the thought is still there.

We get similar reactions to top line photography. In photography, the realism part is a given, cameras don't create images on their own. But in the best images, whether they be advertising, portraits, landscapes, nature, reportage or just plain indulgence, those same elements, when they are in balance, are still what makes an image stand out from its peers. What if you arranged a showing of some good and not so good works by a mix of well known, unknown and even a few untalented photographers. You then invited a specifically selected variety of people to view them.

These people would be from all walks of life with varying experiences in their exposure to art in general and photography in particular. Some are respected judges or critics, some are above-the-average-income-level well-to-do who own private collections of well known and expensive works. Some of the select few are just your local suburban types, bricklayers, postmen, clerks, who have no real knowledge of the arts and have rarely, if ever seen the inside of an art gallery. These last lot would have no idea about what they are looking at. Their idea of a pretty picture would be a shot of their cat taken with their phone camera, with flash.

You stand back and watch the reactions of the visitors to see which piece they pause briefly at, which they simply glance at as they move past and which ones causes them to stop, study and ponder about. You note these differences and later by way of a questionnaire, ask them why they stopped or why they simply glanced and moved on.

Which opinion would you value above others, the well-known, learned and respected judge, the famous photographer, the novice photographer, or the chap who lives next door to you, works on his racing stock car engines all hours of the day and night, driving you and the neighbours nuts with the noise, someone you know can see nothing in anything remotely 'arty' other than the beauty of a polished cylinder head inlet port.

The more knowledgeable judges and photographers will have scrutinised each image to death, noting the subject matter, composition, colours, tones, horizons, vertical, leading lines, points of thirds, sweeping curves, contrast, sharpness, negative spaces and everything we hear club judges tell us about. The uneducated (in art) layman mechanic will look at the questionnaire and write simply that he liked the look of it.

So what was it about that image that got his attention. He doesn't know, but I bet the academia could tell him. The image that grabbed him was made up of all those elements mentioned earlier and what we talk about when we try to explain to a camera club audience what makes a good image.

The layman won't have a clue what we are talking about but that doesn't matter. It is your efforts in creating an image that has the right things in the right places that makes it work. Good image construction will win over anyone, with or without them having an appreciation of what it is that makes fine art. They will instinctively know and feel that it is good, even if they don't know why. The last sad fact about all this is, for those who have had an artist's training or has the photographers passion for looking at the world through a 4:3 frame, they can see the beauty when and because they are looking for it, constantly. The casual observer sees nothing unless it is pointed out.

Photographers are a bit more weird than that, they look at everything, analysing every scene before them, the front yard, flowers, trees and leaves, the clouds, cracks in a wall, the old shed, the rubbish, dog droppings, all in terms of composition, colour and tone, hoping to find a winning image.



Misty Gage - USA Nature Category 2014 National Geographic Photo Contest