

# APJA Australian Photographic Judges Association Inc.

## APJA NEWS

**Issue No.49 February 2021**

**Established 2014**

PO Box: 2554 Ringwood North 3134

Website: [www.apja.org.au](http://www.apja.org.au)

APJA EMAIL: [apjasecretary@gmail.com](mailto:apjasecretary@gmail.com)

Marketing: Rob Sloane: email: [msec@optusnet.com.au](mailto:msec@optusnet.com.au)

President: Paul Robinson: email: [perfectpics.pr@gmail.com](mailto:perfectpics.pr@gmail.com)



Photographic Artist Feature

**Kevin Best**

World Renowned Still Life Photographer

## *President's Message*

The year opened with a high-quality presentation by Len Metcalf, N.S.W., on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February, titled 'Astonishing Abstracts'. With 26 members attending Len opened with an explanation about 'abstract' deriving from Latin meaning 'to take away', 'to hide' or 'to remove'. So, it is more about the unreal and less about the natural. It is explained on the following spectrum:



Abstract promotes conceptual communication/discussion where we can talk more about these than classical realist/descriptive images.

Len showed internationally renowned abstract artists and photographers work as well as his own B&W images. He offered several references to these photographers who will be covered in future newsletters. The follow-up discussion identified three prime ways to judge abstract images: interpretation, conceptual and emotional. These are in addition art elements and design principles.

See Len's Website where he conducts courses/workshops & features images from various exhibitions.



### **Level 2 Seminar via Zoom – March Fridays 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>**

Training Director, Gary Smith, has put in a great effort to update this seminar so if you have not attended in the past then you are encouraged to register directly with Gary at: [wordpicts@gmail.com](mailto:wordpicts@gmail.com)

*Paul Robinson*

# Syllabus

All meetings by ZOOM (Subject to review)

**2021**

- Jan Committee prep month for the year.
- Feb Sunday 14th Committee and General meeting  
Presentation: Len Metcalfe – Astonishing Abstracts
- Mar Level 2 Seminar via Zoom  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup>  
Friday 12<sup>th</sup>  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup>
- April Easter 2nd, 3rd, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>
- May **Sunday** 7th Committee and General meeting **should be Friday**
- June Possibly VAPS convention 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>
- July Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> APJA AGM
- Aug Level 4 Seminar via Zoom  
Friday 6<sup>th</sup>  
Friday 13<sup>th</sup>  
Friday 20<sup>th</sup>
- Sept Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> Committee and General
- Nov Level 6 Seminar via Zoom  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup>  
Friday 12<sup>th</sup>  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup>  
**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> EoY**

## Photographic Artist Review

Still Life Photographers reviewed to date:

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

Donne Crous (UK) – Issue 45 August 2020

Suzanne Saroff (USA) – Issue 46 September 2020

Tatiana Skorokhod (Ukraine) - Issue 47 October 2020

Cristina Wanjura (Bavaria, Germany) – Issue 48 December 2020

Kevin Best (NZ/Australian) – This issue 49 February 2021

The final in this series about Still Life is about Kevin Best who was born in New Zealand (1960) and learnt his craft at the Australian Centre for Photography (2007 – 2009). He is reinterpreting the still life paintings of the Dutch Golden Age and manages to freeze time and take us back to that golden era. Kevin has amassed an extensive collection of items which featured in the original paintings, from a giant glass Roemer's and delicate "Kraak" porcelain to German Westerwald jugs, agate and silver knives, silver cups and 300-year-old bronze candlesticks that have miraculously survived; each image can take weeks or months to fully prepare. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the significance of every item used in each work and how they interact with each other to form a narrative that had a deep significance in a time of great wealth and fear. A narrative really that resonates to this day. (Ref: DesignFather)

In no era was the still life more important than the seventeenth century. Numerous types of still lifes emerged, which were to appeal to and stimulate viewers' sensory perception. The genre's earliest form was the banquetjes, or banquet still lifes. An arranged table, covered with culinary specialties, fine vessels, and luxurious textiles, took the foreground in these paintings. Still life masters hoped to achieve the most realistic depiction possible (photographic quality); it was their goal to create the perfect illusion. Kevin Best now turns the process on its head where he captures the atmosphere that must have reigned in his forerunners' ateliers. With meticulousness and a love of detail, he quotes Dutch still life painters from Holland and Flanders, in particular Pieter Claesz, David Bailly and Willem Kalf, whose pictures he sets up true to the originals. He interprets the Old Masters in a modern manner. At first glance his compositions have the same effect as those of the Old Masters, but a closer look reveals the image as photographic, modifying the traditional mode of observation with an ironic twist. (Ref: LUMAS)

Still Life Photography (sisterMAG Issue 06) BY:: [ELODIE LOVE](#)  
(Edited)

Still Life Photography, more so than other types of photography such as landscape or portraiture, gives the photographer more leeway in the arrangement of design elements within a composition. It is a demanding art, one in which the photographers are expected to be able to form their work with a refined sense of lighting, coupled with compositional skills. The still life photographer makes pictures rather than takes them. Knowing where to look for propping and surfaces also is a required skill.

When you hear the word “still life” or in French “*nature morte*” (dead nature) it is still a growing trend in photography and is a beloved topic for Instagram and blog photography. Kevin Best, one of the most talented living still life photographers today, offers some tips to achieve great still life photography at home.

#### THE INTERVIEW

Preparation: Before starting your photo shoot, you should sketch the photo you want to achieve in your head, think about the story you want to tell and maybe take a little tour of your home and look at the little things you like and could inspire you for a photograph. It could be

- A globe
- A spoon collection
- A vase or a glass full of wine
- An object you brought back from a trip abroad
- A book or a pile of books
- Some feathers
- A pretty looking fruit: in classical still life paintings, you find a lot of lemons (often already half-peeled), pears or quinces.
- A musical instrument

Styling Tips: I like to play with fabric also when composing a picture. If you photograph food or flowers, it can enhance your picture dramatically to put your plate, your soup, or a bunch of violets on a coordinated or on a contrasting fabric. Fabric can also be used as a pretty background.

Another important aspect with collection props for a photo can be the size. You can tell a story with big and small objects, and create a surprise for the eye of the beholder.

The colour can also be very important, you can group some very different items by colour in order to create some harmony.

Floral still life: If you are especially interested in flower photography, the choice of vase is very important. If you want to recreate the flower paintings from the Dutch masters, an iron Medici vase would be the most appropriate. The 17th-century still life bouquet usually contains many different blooms and foliage.

The Flaming Parrot tulip is a typical flower used in those kinds of arrangements, but you can use any kind of tulips. Peonies, ranunculus, roses, anemones, delphinium and lilac can also be appropriate.

- You should put some moss (to be found in most flower shops) at the bottom of your vase
- You should then start building the outline of the arrangements with the longest branches of foliage. A good rule of thumb is that the tallest branches should be at least one and a half times the height of the vase, so that the overall composition looks balanced.

- Add some of the longer-stemmed flowers to the outline of the foliage.
- Continue to build up the density of the display with some larger flowers.
- Put the short-stemmed flowers towards the edge of the vase.

The modern floral still life: There are no set rules for this kind of arrangement. My tip would be not to mix too much. A bunch of peonies, artistically displayed in a beautiful vase can look good by itself, so if you like it simple, just keep it simple. You can also use just one type of flower, but in different colours.

If you want to compose a bouquet using different flowers, consider:

- 1- the colour: complementary or harmonious contrast
- 2- the size of the stems
- 3- the texture
- 4- the scent: if you use hyacinth, for instance, you don't want to mix this with another very scented flower.

The choice of the vase is also crucial. Do you want to play with transparency, for instance, by binding your flowers together with a pretty ribbon and making it visible, or do you want an opaque vase?

What I like to do, when I work on an arrangement, is always to use two or three vases and play with the sizes.

I like very much to create a miniature version of a big bouquet, and take a picture of the smaller bouquet with the bigger one in the background.

Conclusions: See Kevin Best's website for his images & p.9 here. Still life photography is often overlooked in competition photography and this series gives an insight into the subject and what to look for when judging.

## **Committee Activities**

1. The website has been undergoing re-design for several months and it will not be long before the new website becomes operational. Site testing will take place prior to implementation.
2. Privacy statement revision underway.
3. Over view of training ongoing.
4. Mail Chimp will be used for mail outs.
5. The committee draft of the five-year plan has been completed.
6. One of the key projects underway is the review of accreditation and mentoring. These two aspects are now managed by the Honours Director, Sam Mariani, heading a sub-committee comprising Ron Cork and Mario Mirabile. **Further support for this sub-committee is needed from within general membership, contact Paul Robinson.**

7. While the review of accreditation and mentoring is being undertaken, as of the issue of this newsletter, all new applications for accreditation and mentoring hereafter will be temporarily placed on hold until the new guidelines are issued. Previous applications will be processed using current guidelines.

## **Judging Support**

### **COVID-Safe Practices**

#### **Print Handling Guidelines For Photographic Competitions**

##### *Introduction*

There are two considerations for the handling of photographic prints during a competition in the current climate of COVID-19 and beyond. The first of these is the concept of “Universal Precautions”, which was described during the AIDS epidemic in the 1980’s (1). Universal Precautions assert that every object/sample/patient potentially has/contains an infectious agent; in this case the SARS CoV-2 virus the causative agent of COVID-19. This holds true regardless of the background incidence of infection. One of the central pillars of Universal Precautions is hand hygiene using alcohol-based hand wash (2,3). The second consideration is that the SARS CoV-2 virus has been shown to remain viable on inanimate paper and polymer banknotes for up to 28 days at room temperature (4). Inanimate objects, called fomites have been implicated in the transmission of Coronaviruses. The virus cannot penetrate intact skin, and can be transmitted to the face/noses/eyes by the individual’s hand after touching a contaminated surface. This is why frequent hand sanitising and not touching the face is of paramount importance.

##### *Collection of Prints*

It is assumed for the purposes of this document that appropriate social distancing measures have been employed and masks worn were necessary during print collection according to current health guidelines. No food or drink should be consumed in the immediate area during the collection of prints.

The hands of the person collecting the prints should be sanitised with at least 70 % alcohol (ethanol) based hand sanitiser at least at the completion of each handling session. It is also recommended that the exterior of the transport container/s is wiped down with household cleaner/bleach and disposable towels on completion. It is recommended that the individual’s hands are then sanitised again.

The wearing of gloves for handling prints is not considered necessary unless the individual has sensitivity to hand sanitiser. In that case vinyl disposable gloves are recommended (because of potential latex allergies), but they must be removed and discarded at the completion of each handling session, or when leaving the collection area and replaced with new gloves upon return.

#### Receipt of Prints by Judge

Upon receipt of the prints by the judge, it is recommended that the exterior of transport container/s is wiped down with household cleaner/bleach and disposable towels. It is recommended that the judge's hands are sanitised on completion.

#### Judging Prints

The transport container/s should be opened in a separate area for judging with surfaces that can be wiped down with household cleaner/bleach and disposable towels. It is recommended that the judge's hands are sanitised again on completion.

The prints can then be unpacked and arranged for judging as appropriate. It is recommended that hands are sanitised again at this point. A non-touch approach is recommended so that writing materials etc. for notes are not potentially contaminated during the judging process.

No food or drink should be consumed during the judging of prints. It is recommended that the judge's hands should be sanitised before leaving the judging area for breaks, and again upon return.

The wearing of gloves is not considered necessary unless the individual has sensitivity to hand sanitiser. In that case vinyl disposable gloves are recommended (because of potential latex allergies), but they must be removed and discarded at the completion of each handling session, or when leaving the judging area and replaced with new ones upon return.

At the conclusion of judging, the prints can be packed away in their transport container/s. Surfaces are wiped down with household cleaner/bleach and disposable towels, as well as the exterior of the transport container/s. Any equipment that has been handled should also be cleaned. On completion the judge's hands are sanitised again.

#### Conclusion

These guidelines have been drafted to provide a safer working environment for photographic judges handling prints. The SARS Cov-2 virus will continue to present challenges over the next year or so even after the vaccine is distributed.

*References*

1. Perspectives in Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Update: Universal Precautions for Prevention of Transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Hepatitis B Virus, and Other Bloodborne Pathogens in Health-Care Settings MMWR 37(24);377-388  
Publication date: 06/24/1988
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/global-covid-19/handwashing.html>
3. <https://www.hha.org.au/hand-hygiene/what-is-hand-hygiene>
4. <https://www.csiro.au/en/News/News-releases/2020/CSIRO-scientists-publish-new-research-on-SARS-COV-2-virus-survivability>

Robert Clark  
BAppSc MAppSc

Kevin Best Still Life Photography

