



SNAPSHOT

Newsletter of the Hermanus Photographic Society
December 2017

View from the chair

Ending the year on a record

The Club ended the year with a record number of images submitted for evaluation at our December monthly meeting – 61, compared to the average of 49 per meeting for the year.

A substantial percentage of images was awarded Gold or Merit – 51%, compared to the average of 42%.

The evaluation was done by a solid and credible panel, comprising our guru Mike Sander as lead judge, and most of the 9 members who are participating in Mike's Judging course.

The above numbers cannot be interpreted as measurements of firm trends in the club, but they do seem to indicate some progress on various levels. Which is not surprising, in view of the efforts to improve photographic abilities and skills in the Club, such as Mike's present courses on Judging and Composition, and the good work done in the Club's Audio-visual Interest Group.

Those who attended our December meeting, could witness the high quality of some recent submissions by members of AVIG, led by Deon Kühn. One of the AVs, with a theme of family violence, provided food for serious thought. It reminded us of a darker side of the world we live in and portray through our photography.



We normally seem to concentrate on the lighter side of life. For instance, the 61 images submitted for our last meeting focused on positive aspects of our world, such as beautiful scenery, wild animals and flowers.

But we live in a country where family violence is a huge social problem; where people are murdered at a rate of 49 per day; die in road accidents at 38 per day; where close to 28 million have no job; 20% of kids in Grade 4 do not understand what they read; billions of rands intended for the improvement of the people's circumstances are squandered or stolen; and corruption and self-enrichment are rife throughout all levels of government.

In this world with its extremes, I wish all our members a peaceful festive season filled with love; a new year with the promise of a better future; and continued growth in our skills, abilities and creativity as photographers.

Charles Naudé

Ten meetings, ten promotions

Elizma Fourie became the ninth Club member to be promoted to a higher Star level during 2017. Elizma received her certificate for rising from three- to four-star level at the December monthly meeting.

Her promotion was actually the tenth over the ten meetings since March, because one member got promoted twice. Apart from Elizma's, the full list of promotions is:

- Deon Kühn to four-star level
- Ingrid Grundlingh to three-star
- Christopher Waite to three-star
- Diane Steenkamp to two-star, then to three-star
- David Wilson to two-star
- Deon Steenkamp to two-star
- Earl Maree to two-star
- Thomas Hoffmeyer to two-star

For her promotion Elizma needed 100 points and 25 Golds from the monthly evaluation of images. At three-star level a Gold requires a score of 21.

To rise to five-star level, she will need 200 points and 60 Golds. But at four-star level a Gold is awarded for a score of 24.

An alternative route from four- to five-star would be via 120 points, 30 Golds and 20 Salon points.



Massive Thunderstorm in Kaokoland by Treurnicht du Toit, awarded a Gold Medal at the International Camera Obscura Circuit

Salon successes

Our two regular participants, Treurnicht du Toit and Robert Johnson, did particularly well in salons all over the world and nationally during November.



Pipe Smoker by Robert Johnson, category winner in Pietersburg

Treurnicht was awarded a Gold Medal and Salon Praise by the Balcan-based International Camera Obscura Circuit for his image Massive Thunderstorm in Kaokoland.

He was awarded another two Certificates of Merit by the Travelling & Living Exhibition in Arizona and the Grand Canyon Fall Circuit, while 62 of his images were accepted for exhibition at seven

international salons, and seven images at South African salons.

Robert's Pipe Smoker was the Open Colour Category winner at the Pietersburg Salon. Eight of his images were accepted by three salons.

Activities for next year

The first meeting of the new year will be in the Dutch Reformed Church Hall, as usual, on Wednesday 7 February 2018 at 19:00. The chairman will deliver the annual report, and members will have the opportunity to nominate and elect committee members.

There will be an open evaluation, for which members may submit up to three images each. The deadline is 12:00 on Saturday 3 February.

The Set Subject, to be voted on and discussed at the meeting, will be Abstract. An attempt to briefly explain abstract photography follows below. For more information, please search the internet.

How to approach abstract photography

What is abstract photography? The answer to that question can depend on who you ask – that is if you get an answer.

Photography experts on the subject seem to have consensus that there is no consensus on a definition of the term abstract photography.

In a Wikipedia article it is stated that many photographers, critics, art historians and others have written or spoken about abstract photography without attempting to formalize a specific meaning. But one does get some idea of the meaning of abstract photography from experts quoted.



Photographer and Professor of Psychology John Suler, in his essay *Photographic Psychology: Image and Psyche*, said that "An abstract photograph draws away from that which is realistic or literal. It draws away from natural appearances and recognizable subjects in the actual world."

Barbara Kasten, also a photographer and professor, wrote that "abstract photography challenges our popular view of photography as an objective image of reality by reasserting its constructed nature".



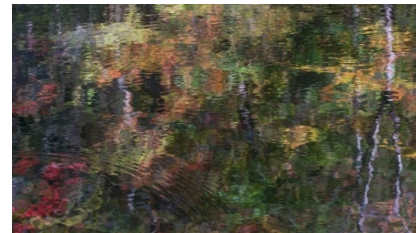
On the website Photokonnexion an unnamed author writes that abstract photography, like all abstract art, focuses on the simplest elements of artistic expression. The viewer is often unable to see the whole subject within the photo. In an abstract, the subject is often only a small part of the idea of the image.

Photographer Ron Bigelow writes on the website PictureConnect that abstract photography can create very impressive photos. However, people tend to perceive abstract images differently than other images. This is because abstract images rely more on form, colour, and curves than they do on image detail.



He agrees that abstract photography does not have a commonly accepted definition. "Of course, creating a concrete definition of an abstract concept is a bit challenging."

For practical purposes he suggests the definition that abstract photography does not represent the subject in a literal way, and communicates primarily through form, colour, and curves rather than image detail.



Diane Steenkamp has compiled some guidelines for those who have never tried abstract photography:

As abstract images are mainly not about the object but its graphic qualities, look for details such as lines, textures, patterns, colours, shadows, reflections, shape and forms and so on to convey an emotion of "I really like this, but what is it?"

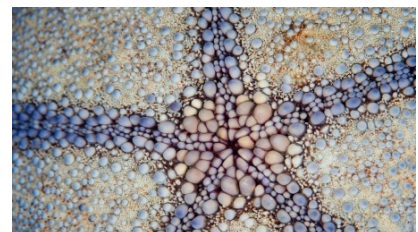
Abstraction by isolation or elimination can be done either while you are taking the photograph or in post processing the part that is of interest to you.



Abstraction by motion is another way of reducing information, moving the camera upwards while photographing a bunch of trees, leaving behind only lines and patterns.

Think about challenging perceptions, what your photograph can represent and convey this visually to the viewer.

You are looking to capture something in a way that is not usually seen. Approach your subject from all angles. Look for those key features and utilize them to construct an image that has all the visual appeal you perceived as the photographer.



Abstract photography is not abiding by the rules, it's a great opportunity to break the rules.

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All of them are available to assist you with your queries.

Fluit-fluit, my storie is uit.