



SNAPSHOT

Newsletter of the Hermanus Photographic Society
February 2018

Chairman's report

'It was a very good year'

This song, written by Ervin M Drake and made famous by Frank Sinatra more than half a century ago, is about seeing and celebrating the positive in any year at any stage of your life.

In the spirit of this positive mindset, we as a club can be happy with our last year.

Our approach was that we belong to the club and take part in its activities for our enjoyment, and for the challenge to keep growing as photographers by gaining a better understanding of photography and improving our skills.

Monthly activities

Looking at the past two years we seem to have stabilised at about 50 members, of whom many are really active. About 25 members on average attended the 11 monthly meetings of last year, which is a good 50% .

There were 10 opportunities to enter images for open evaluation. A total of 33 members (66%) took part, at an average of about 16 per meeting, and 12 members (about 25%) were promoted to a higher star rating through these evaluations.

Other regular activities that evoked lively participation were the outings, many of them with a theme similar to that of the set subject of the subsequent monthly meeting.



Training opportunities

Formal training took the form of courses and workshops. The two major courses, Composition and Judging, comprised several modules approximately three weeks apart, with practical homework inbetween. These courses, with 9 participants each, are continuing into the new year.

There was also a short refresher course in Layers, attended by 7 members, while a Landscape Photography workshop took place in Greyton over a weekend in September, and was attended by 6 members.

These four events together offered 31 training opportunities.

AV Interest Group

Another training success story is the Audio-visual Interest Group. It was founded by 8 enthusiasts in February last year.

The group has a good working relationship with a few clubs in our region. Their meetings, every second month, usually has a theme.

Their best AVs are often shown at the Club's monthly meetings, where members witnessed the huge improvement in the quality of AVs produced over the year, especially by newcomers.

Visibility

The Club's visibility was boosted last year by its second FynArts Print Exhibition; its third participation in the Western Cape Interclub Competition with both prints and digital images, after a number of years with digitals only; and by individual members' successes in national and international salons.

The 48 prints in the FynArts exhibition were submitted by 16 members, and the 12 prints and 12 digital images for Interclub by 15 members. At Interclub we were placed fifth out of 12 competing clubs. We did particularly well with our Interclub prints, of which three were among the top eight, and two among the top five, all with a score of 27 out of 30.

Sustainability

Our Club is a non-profit organisation, but we have to be sustainable. For that reason our income should cover running expenses, leaving enough to build a reserve for capital expenses.

During the year we increased income through asking participating members to contribute to the costs of events such as Interclub, through training courses, and through a voluntary tea contribution. We decreased expenses through taking over the operation of our website.

These actions resulted in increasing our bank balance from a lowish base by 37% to a more comfortable level. Our acting treasurer pointed out that we need another financial year like that to be covered against normal capital expenses.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following:

The Committee members, and some members working behind the scenes, for the smooth running of the Club, its monthly meetings, outings, formal and informal training, website, communication, evaluation points system, finances, and for looking after the members;

Past presidents/chairmen and retired senior members who keep on sharing their knowledge and experience, working behind the scenes, taking part as judges in the monthly evaluations, and giving moral support;

Active members for their enthusiasm, participation in activities and events, taking responsibility for tea and snacks, or just giving a hand at meetings;

And non-members, including spouses, for helping, understanding and supporting the Club.

In all respects it was a very good year. We will aim for another one.

Charles Naudé

One new face on Committee

Five of the seven Committee members were re-elected at the annual general meeting. The AGM, featuring the chairman's report, was part of the February monthly meeting.

Deon Steenkamp was unanimously elected to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of André van Zijl. He will take over André's responsibility for managing the evaluation points sheet.

The five re-elected members are René Dewar, Elizma Fourie, Charles Naudé, Daniel Reddie and Diane Steenkamp. The seventh member, Deon Kühn, is there ex officio as chairman of the Audio-visual Interest Group.

Two stars shine brighter

Two Club members were promoted to a higher Star level. André van Zijl had collected enough points (100) and Golds (25) by December last year to become a four-star photographer, and Eward Grobler (20 points and 5 Golds) to become a two-star photographer.

A friendly reminder: the road becomes steeper with every promotion. André will need 200 points and 60 Golds, while Eward will need 40 points and 10 Golds to reach the next level.

Salon successes



Virulence by Treurnicht du Toit, Gold medal winner

World-wide recognition of the high quality of photography by Club members continued to the end of last year, and even spilled over into the new year.

Treurnicht du Toit ended the year with another two dozen acceptances – 20 of his entries were accepted for exhibition by three international salons and another 4 by a South African salon.

He started the new year on a high note with a Global Photographic Union Gold medal awarded by the international Miroc Circuit, where another 19 of his entries were accepted for exhibition.

Our other regular salon participant, Robert Johnson, collected 2 South African acceptances from Kosmos Kamera Klub.

The month ahead

The March meeting will be in the Dutch Reformed Church Hall, as usual, on Wednesday the 7th at 19:00. Members may enter up to three images of their choice for evaluation, and one image on the Set Subject, Slow Speed, for discussion. The best set-subject image will be decided by voting. There was an early morning outing to Mossel River on 8 February for some slow-speed photography. See the notes on slow speed, and on the outing, below.

Slow shutter speed photography

By Richard Bernabe, Popular Photography

The magic of photography has always been its ability to freeze an instant in time. But a single, frozen instant doesn't express motion very well, and that's where long exposures can add another dimension to still photography – the dimension of time.

The Water Ballet

For a nature photographer, no other subject presents better opportunities for capturing long exposures than moving water. Waterfalls, cascading streams, and ocean waves are but a few examples.

You're going to need a tripod, a remote shutter release or the camera's 2-second self-timer to avoid camera shake, and preferably overcast lighting conditions.

I approach a waterfall or stream scene just as I would any other landscape. I work in aperture-priority auto mode (Av or A), choose an f-stop that gives the desired depth of field, then adjust the ISO until I get the shutter speed I want. A smaller aperture can help to slow things down.



An example of photographing ocean waves using slow shutter speed - by Joshua Zhang, published in Digital Photography School.

If you just can't leave the shutter open long enough without overexposing the image, opt for a neutral-density (ND) filter. These reduce the amount of light entering the lens, allowing for longer exposure times.

ND filters are available in different strengths designated by either the number of stops they soak up or the optical density. A 3-stop or 0.9 density ND is ideal for waterfalls in bright sunlight, slowing the exposure to a second or so. A strong 10-stop or 3.0 ND can blur clouds over several minutes, even on a bright, sunny day.

How much you should slow things down is a matter of personal taste. Longer exposures work best with lighter streams and help express grace or

fragility. Relatively faster shutter speeds are more effective for heavier cascades, as they help convey the feeling of power or strength. My own preference is to keep some texture and detail, and that means shutter speeds of 0.5 to 4 seconds for most situations, but there are plenty of exceptions.

For ocean waves, a very long shutter speed – 20 seconds to several minutes – can smooth out the water and reduce distraction in the image. Waves, surface undulations, and refracted light all blend together into a creamy, smooth surface, leaving only the essential elements that make a powerful composition.

Tracking Motion

Panning is a technique in which you move the camera parallel to the subject. The subject remains relatively sharp, while the background blurs due to the motion of the camera. This is a great technique for moving wildlife or birds in flight.

I will use shutter-priority auto (Tv or S) since I am looking for a very specific shutter speed and the depth of field is nearly irrelevant – everything but the moving object will be blurry anyway. I usually start with a shutter speed of 1/15 sec and modify if needed. If there is too much blur in the moving subject, I will speed up to 1/20, 1/25, or 1/30 sec.



Tracking motion, using the panning technique - by Jake Catlett, published in NaldzGraphics.

A tripod isn't necessary when panning. Set both autofocus and drive modes to continuous, and turn on image stabilization if you have it. Use a smooth turn of the torso and begin focus-tracking the subject well before you shoot.

Gently press the shutter release and hold it down to take many exposures. Continue to track the subject until after the exposures are taken, which will help avoid the tendency to stop panning once the shutter is pressed.

The more blur you capture in your image, the more abstract the moving subject becomes. I like to see literal elements in the image, with just a hint of blur to give it a dynamic feel.

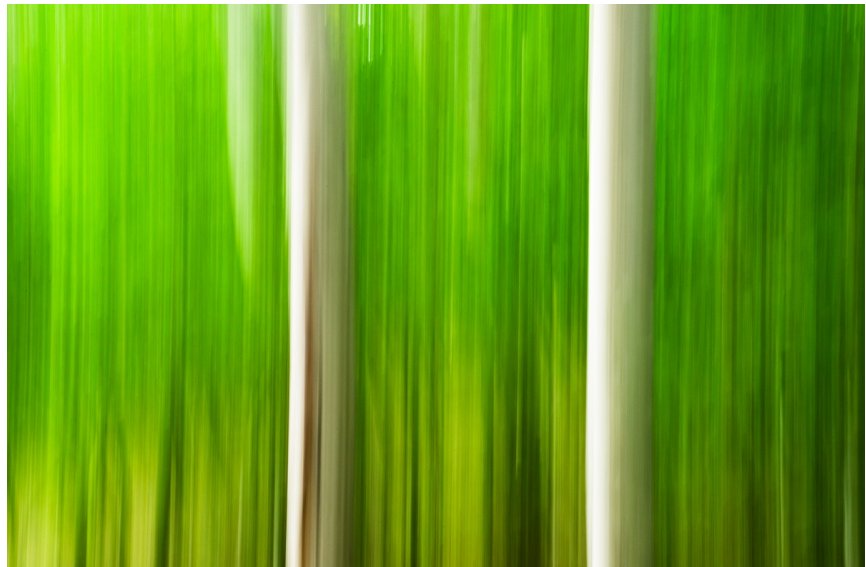
Panning for Abstracts

Panning stationary subjects or scenes vertically or horizontally is a great long-exposure technique that creates a dreamy, painterly look. One ideal situation is a stand of trees with many strong vertical elements within it.

Here, you can pan the camera vertically along the prominent tree trunks during a long exposure.

Horizontal panning of a clean, even horizon along a coast can also produce some beautiful results.

Shutter speeds of 1 to 6 seconds are best for these images, but you should try others on your own. Pan slowly with a longer exposure, or quickly with a shorter one.



Vertical panning, used to create an abstract image - by Joshua Cripps Photography.

Try keeping the camera still for half of the exposure and moving it through the other half; this imprints more literal elements of the scene while introducing just a touch of blur.

Slow speed on the beach

The Club outing to practise long-exposure ocean photography, organised by René Dewar, was well attended by about 10 photographers. We were up well before dawn on Thursday 8 February to meet at the Mossel River.

We clambered down to the beach at 5:30 am, armed with head lights, cameras and tripods. The enthusiasm and expectations for that perfect ever so slow shutter speed images were palpable.

We found ourselves at a good location. A rocky beach with marvellous rock formations, patterned sands, glistening pebbles and mussel shells. It was cloudy and gloriously wind free – great conditions for slow shutter speeds.

The photographers found their “spots”, and the rest was pure bliss. At sunrise, the slow changing colours of the sky, and the light reflections on the sea and sands, made it beautifully tranquil. - **Diane Steenkamp**

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

Fluit-fluit, my storie is uit.