



SNAPSHOT

Newsletter of the Hermanus Photographic Society
May 2018

View from the chair

The value of outsiders' comments

As a photographer, you mostly work on your own. And as a club, we are somewhat isolated from most of the other Western Cape clubs.

So we should take the opportunities to interact with others, and to listen when a knowledgeable "outsider" comments on our activities.

Criticism should always be welcome, but it is also good to hear from time to time that we are doing something right.

A case in point was the attendance of our April meeting by the Western Cape Regional Director of the Photographic Society of South Africa (PSSA), Nicol du Toit, and his subsequent newsletter, devoted to the visit.

He said after the meeting that he liked the relaxed atmosphere. In his letter he calls it a "jolly affair with many interesting topics covered".

One of the activities that he found interesting was the way we handled our monthly set subject, where "images entered are judged with a show of hands by everybody . . . separate from the serious evaluation and scoring of images after the break".

At the same occasion Mike Sander, our "club mentor", as Nicol calls him, commented positively on the set subject from a different angle. He was



happy to see that so many participants actually went out to take new photographs, instead of grabbing an image from their archives to submit.

The apparent success of the set subject must be ascribed, to some extent, to the regular club outings where members have the opportunity to take these photographs.

The set subject for April was Small Creatures, and it had been preceded by a visit to Abagold, where members had the opportunity to photograph abalone of various sizes, from various angles, and with various lenses and camera settings.

Going out in a group is not only more convenient and safer than to go to some of the venues on your own – it also offers opportunities for members to interact informally.

These outings were initiated about three years ago by a previous committee, led by Thea Erasmus. And it grew in popularity, from fewer than a handful of participants initially, to a dozen or more lately.

The reason for judging the Set Subject “with a show of hands”, was to encourage members to be more experimental and creative. This more informal way seems to have lessened the pressure that often goes with formal evaluation.

So, we seem to be doing something right.

Another opportunity to hear what others think of our photography, will be our FynArts Print Exhibition, entitled Perspectives, from 8 to 17 June. Visitors will once again be invited to vote for their favourite print, and interact with Club members on duty at the exhibition.

Charles Naudé

- Read Nicol du Toit’s newsletter on his visit to our Club meeting in April by clicking this link:
<https://westerncapepssa.wordpress.com/2018/04/22/hermanus-offers-members-a-lot/>
- The main purpose of Nicol’s visit to Hermanus was to hand a PSSA certificate for Club Top Achiever of 2017, for Salon successes, to our club member Treurnicht du Toit, as was reported in the previous Snapshot. Read Nicol’s report on that aspect here:
<https://westerncapepssa.wordpress.com/2018/04/22/thousand-acceptances-for-treurnicht/>

How many prizes can a man win?

Another Certificate of Merit, another ten images accepted for exhibition. These were Treurnicht du Toit's latest awards after receiving the top Honours award of EPSSA (Mille) for having a thousand of his images accepted for exhibition at international and local salons.

The certificate, for the image entitled Hom Laat Geld, was awarded by the Bloemfontein CC Salon, which accepted seven images, while the Krugersdorp Salon accepted three.



Hom Laat Geld, the image for which Treurnicht du Toit was awarded a Certificate of Merit

Encountering eagles, owls, etc

Fourteen enthusiastic photographers set off from Hermanus at 07:10 on Thursday 12 April to Eagle Encounters at the Spier Wine Estate in Stellenbosch. We had booked a private viewing, which started at 09:00.

The morning began with a very interesting flying demonstration. Various birds of prey, from owls and hawks to vultures, took part. We learnt a lot about the various habits and capabilities of the different birds, and the photo opportunities were abundant. The staff really did their best to accommodate our photographic needs.

The most impressive birds were the eagles, with their incredible wingspans. Seeing those huge strong claws and beaks up that close was amazing. The trust and relationship between the birds and handlers were remarkable.

It was a very interesting morning and well worth the private booking and drive from Hermanus. I don't think one person left without having captured a couple of good photographs.

A good time was certainly had by all. - **René Dewar**

The art of seeing . . .

All Club members are welcome to a presentation on The Art of Seeing . . . Beyond the Obvious by Max Leipold, in the Catholic Church Hall on Tuesday morning 22 May.

The presentation deals with the compositional element of photography, on the basis that before you can begin to compose, you need to see the image. "Many people fail to see . . . beyond the obvious," he says.

Max, an honorary member of our Club, will do the presentation for the U3A (University of the Third Age). It will begin at 10:00.

The month ahead

The next meeting will be in the Dutch Reformed Church Hall, as usual, on Wednesday 6 June at 19:00. Members may enter up to three images of their choice for evaluation, and one image on the Set Subject, Wheels, for discussion. The best set-subject image will be decided by voting.

There will be an outing for members to a Motocross regional race meeting near Cape Town on Saturday 26 May, with opportunities to focus on "wheels" for the Set Subject.

Photographing wheels

By Liz Masoner

Motocross is a loud, dirty, and exciting sport. Sometimes held inside arenas, most often held outdoors on dirt tracks, motocross is never dull. Motocross photography is not difficult once you know the tricks, but there are specific challenges to photographing motocross.

Dirt

Dirt is the number one issue with motocross photography. Even at indoor arena events dirt is everywhere. Motorcycles kick up dust, mud, and dirt as they tear across the track. Many tracks "prepare" the course by dampening it via sprinkler systems. This only changes the dust to mud until the motorcycles dry out the track as they ride.

Dirt, dust and mud are mortal enemies of cameras. Dirt and dust can enter moving parts of camera lenses and damage optics. It can also lodge on

digital sensors. Mud is less often to enter the camera but more likely to be difficult to clean off the camera and lens.

When choosing a location for photography, be aware of where the wind is blowing dust and where riders are throwing mud. You should stay out of the way of the vast majority of the debris. A telephoto lens will help with keeping your camera clean.



Rider kicking up dust, from Garth Milan Portfolio

Dirt, dust, and mud are also vital for your images. By selecting a composition where dust, dirt, and/or mud is shown flying from behind the motorcycle the photographer increases the idea of motion in the image.

If you choose a location where dust, dirt, and/or mud from a previous rider obscures your view of your subject your image will suffer.

Speed

Very few motocross riders will move slowly. While speeds will vary greatly based on rider skill level, track, and competition level, you can be sure that shutter speeds of at least 1/500 of a second will be required. In many cases 1/1000 of a second or greater is preferred.

The direction of the motion will greatly change the shutter speed needed. To photograph a rider heading directly at you will require a slower shutter speed than a rider moving perpendicular to you.

Background

Backgrounds are a huge obstacle at many motocross tracks. Safety barriers, spectators, and even trees can quickly ruin an otherwise great shot. Scout the track ahead of time if possible. Pick out spots where you can fill the background with the track or sky if at all



Turning a corner, by Steve Vit, imaging-resource.com

possible. A jumping rider framed by clouds is greatly preferred to a jumping rider framed by a blue spectator tent.

Lighting

While many photographers use powerful flashes to illuminate rider faces, I am strongly opposed to this practice for safety reasons. A flash strong enough to illuminate the riders' faces during a race is strong enough to cause light spots in their eyes and temporarily decrease their vision.

The vast majority of motocross tracks have multiple spots that are excellent for photography. Scout the track ahead of time and select a location where the sun (or track lighting) is going to be shining on the front of the rider.

Poses

Like most sports, there are several "iconic" scenes to a motocross race. These scenes are photographed over and over again because they are the most visually strong scenes. Capturing these poses will help add familiarity to your images as well as the visual impact.



Head-on jump, from Pinterest

Crowded start - the initial crowded start offers a great opportunity to fill your frame with the brightly colored bikes and uniforms of the riders along with plenty of dirt being slung up behind the bikes.

Sliding turn - capturing riders as they slide into a deep turn is an excellent way to show off the rider and bike while still showing motion. This is

also an excellent image to capture where mud/dirt will be flying away from you.

Head-on jump - plan to capture riders as they jump towards you. Make sure you are at a slight angle so that some of the side of the bike will be captured rather than just the rider's head and the handlebars. Crouch down and shoot upwards to increase the dramatic effect of the shot.

Side jump - many tracks have at least one spot where riders sail across a fairly severe dip in the track. This is an excellent place to capture the rider in profile during a jump. Be sure to use the fastest shutter speed possible and pan with the motion if you can. - www.thesprucecrafts.com

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Fluit-fluit, my storie is uit.