



Knysna Photographic Society

<https://www.knysnaphotosoc.com/>

NEWSLETTER: October 2023

Pictures of the Month

Senior - A Five-way tie!



Together Forever-PO-Laubscher-Luana-MG



Tree Top Living-CA-Laubscher-Luana-MG



Hello and goodbye – Leoni Hattingh



Spheres – Carol Phillips



Shoot for the Moon – Sonia Elliott

All other high scoring images are available on the website at
<https://www.knysnaphotosoc.com/photo-albums>

To view click on the link above

There was also a tie for Junior
Picture of the Month



Hornbill Red Face – Alan King



Supply en route – Thorsten Siwiza

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Our image galleries

To see all the images that scored well and to follow the links to the resources, dates and so on click on the link below

<https://www.knysnaphotosoc.com>

The Knysna Photographic Society is proudly affiliated with the
PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA



Message from the Chair

October 2023

Welcome to our new members

We welcome new member Jenna Rossouw!

It's good to have you all with us Jenna, and we wish you a long, happy and stimulating time at KPS.

We also include a couple of new member bios in this issue – more to follow.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Carol Phillips and Cathy Birkett for winning medals at the German International Photo Cup. Carol won her medal for her image "Plates" (B&W) and Cathy for her image "Dwarf Chameleon". Congrats and well done to you both!

New member matters

We have a wonderful group of new members and there is a lot for them to absorb. Please make this task easier for them by engaging with them before, during and after club meetings, to help familiarise them with our club procedures, jargon and the like.

We have had constructive feedback from one of them with some good suggestions about how we could do things differently. Your committee is receptive to these ideas and will be implementing some of them soon.

Good luck

To all our juniors who are entering the "PSSA Up & Coming" Salon. We are holding thumbs for you!

Leisure Isle festival: 4th and 5th November

Six of our members will be exhibiting prints at this festival. Please come along and support them in Cearn Hall. There is a R10 entry fee which goes to Epilepsy, Southern Cape & Karoo.

Judging:

The situation regarding PSSA's view on club judge training has been clarified at the recent National Congress. As a club, we can continue training judges, as we have done in the past.

November Club Night and Bi-annual competition

This will be held at the Knysna Golf Club on Thursday 16th November. A catering change will be made to offset the high cost of KGC's snack menu. Details to follow.

This is our last club event for this calendar year, so we hope for a good turnout.

PSSA National Congress.

This congress was held recently, in the KZN Drakensburg. See separate and very interesting report from Anne Hrabar.

Doug Emanuel

Salon Acceptances – October

2nd MIDLENS DIGITAL SALON

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Leoni | 1 |
| Peter | 1 |
| Willie | 1 |
| Anne | 2 |
| Cathy | 3 |

Eileen **5 including 1 COM**



Well done, Eileen!

1st MARITZBURG DIGITAL SALON

| | |
|--------------|----------|
| Pam | 1 |
| Peter | 1 |
| Anne | 2 |
| Leoni | 2 |
| Carol | 3 |

Editor's choice

Having one's images critiqued is fundamental to the club scene and this article by Donna Brok, reproduced with the author's permission, gives very useful pointers to judges and entrants alike.

The article first appeared on the North American Nature Photographers Association website in 2020.

Donna is an architect by profession, but an avid photographer since the age of fourteen, and a pro since age 30. Her first camera was the Nikon F2. It was Joe McNally's first Nikon camera as well. Donna has been teaching photography classes, doing well-received presentations, and judging throughout camera clubs across the country. As a NFRCC member, she previously was the NFRCC Oversight Chair on the judge's committee. Donna completed the PSA Critique Analysis course in 2018. She has both an art and architectural degrees. Her photo specialties include macro, wildlife, product, landscape, and travel photography. She is very skilled in photo editing. Within the last year, she has been published numerous times in a few different wildlife publications.

Twenty-Five Questions to Think like a Photo Competition Judge



Impala Drinking. This image has a feeling of tranquility. The lighting and soft focus background of the impalas reinforce the feeling of a peaceful scene. The subject pops and helps create story. © Donna Brok

By Donna Brok

Camera clubs offer members some great opportunities to learn and practice their craft, one of which is regular photo competitions. In addition to whatever points members earn toward year-end recognition, seeing other members' images and getting critiques on your own is one good way to improve your photography. Thinking like a photo contest judge is an even more powerful way to rapidly improve the quality of your entries. In this article, I will explain my thinking as a photo contest judge and the 25 questions I ask about every photo I evaluate.



Lilac-breasted roller. The action of the wings adds interest. A low perspective gives a unique view on this subject. DOF and lighting increase visual appeal. © Donna Brok

What judges look for

It is important to note that different judges will see an image through different eyes. One may score a photo differently than another. While judges follow guidelines and seek objective criteria to evaluate, there is also a certain level of personal opinion involved.

A photo competition judge considers all the factors that go into the presentation of the subject. It's more than just the subject of the photo. The judge looks at the form and feel of the image, the techniques that were used, the presentation, and the composition. A judge observes the work as a whole, without breaking it down into parts. Technical considerations, composition, lighting, and impact are key considerations. But even more importantly, a judge should examine how a photograph makes one feel.

Images can communicate meaning through composition, focus, focal length, tone, and light. A good image also conveys a mood that helps viewers find a meaning in what the photographer is trying to say. *Denotation* is the literal meaning in an image. *Connotation*, on the other hand, refers to the implied meaning within the photo. Connotation leads to art. Done well, it's why some photos evoke strong feelings in a viewer.

I'm not necessarily interested in the special *subjects* as much as I am in the *moments* you capture. Too much of the photography I see in camera club judging is merely documentary, lacking any feeling or emotion (denotation, not connotation). I suspect that is true in a lot of competitions. Including the subject, the moment, and the feeling will kick your image up a notch.

When I look at work of others, I look for a personal handprint, something that makes an image unique, powerful, or interesting. I look for emotion, intensity, passion, and purpose in the image. It is how you get impactful images.

How your choices create impact

Why do your choices as a photographer matter? Because when you snap the shutter, you create something no one else has captured in quite the way you have.

First and foremost, **you made that image for yourself**. It was a moment of connection, where the moment met the emotion within you. You felt something that excited you. No excitement, no great photo. If you look really hard for these moments, your images will improve and start grabbing the attention of judges. Okay, so it grabbed your emotions. Now, is it something that will move your viewer, especially if the viewer is a judge? You succeed when others see and then feel things as you intended. Even if they see it differently, you may have stirred their curiosity, or helped them imagine a new meaning. You are then on the way to forming a personal style and following.

When selecting photos to enter into a competition, ask yourself, "Did I create an image of which I am truly proud? Did I engage my viewers?"



Elephants Drinking. When do you choose to go black and white? Many times it is when the subject has texture and interesting form. This image shows how contrast moves the eye through the image. It creates balance, through a light and dark rhythm, which gives movement and impact. For instance, this is a dark subject on a lighter background. Many tonal values alternate, keep the eye moving through the space. ©

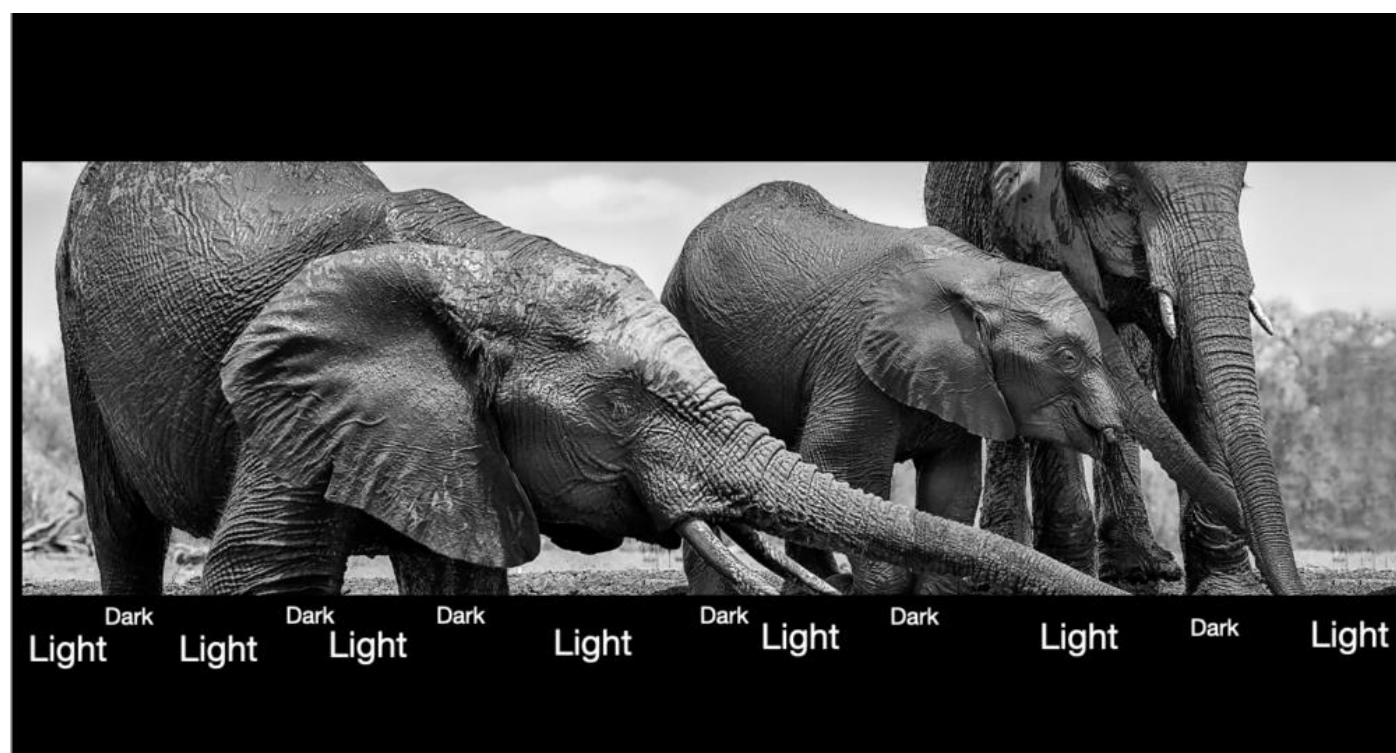
Donna Brok

The technical craft of photography matters

Technical excellence does and will always matter. A badly composed, out-of-focus image won't stir emotions or win any prizes. But technical prowess is not the end. It's really the beginning. A necessary but not sufficient condition for a winning photo. A contest winner needs good lighting, posing, contrast, emotion, story, and expression.

Ask yourself, "Is the shot well focused, sharp and well exposed?" Those should be a given if you view yourself as photographer. **That's as basic as it gets.**

In nature photography competitions, judges will also want to know that photos were taken ethically and without harming or stressing animals or environments.



Elephants Drinking. Here, I've simplified how this works. If you change an image to B&W you can readily see the changing tonal values. Go to the top of this image and see the same thing happening. © Donna Brok

A judge's feedback

The job of a photo competition judge is, of course, to provide expert feedback. The first and most basic level of feedback is scoring, based on the judge's analysis of the work. Ideally, the judge will also give a second level of feedback with helpful advice for improvement or explanations of why an image was or was not successful. If your club's competitions do not have this level of analysis, it's a missed opportunity that leaves the photographer with little to no guidance for getting better. And it won't take full advantage of a judge's knowledge and skills.

A judge should be a communicator whose remarks have both substance and guidance. The score or award is secondary. If a judge does their job well, photographers will learn, improve, and enjoy the process. When I judge, I give feedback on what works (or doesn't), similar to the captions on the photos that illustrate this article. I also try to ensure that people will start asking themselves questions so they can

learn. Questions only they can answer. Questions that will lead to images with direction, purpose and feeling.

In a way, judging is answering questions the maker should have asked before taking the shot!



Baboons *Papio*. This image exhibits emotion. When you look at the photo, you might note the eyes, the face and, if you are very observant, the hand. They are darker, more vibrant, and sharper than the surroundings. What you might not notice is the alternating light and dark areas which create tonal contrast

and visual interest. The strength of figure/ground to make the subject stand out. The direction of gaze into the negative space works with implied converging lines. © Donna Brok

Twenty-five questions to ask yourself

These are some of the questions I ask, as a judge, when evaluating a photograph. These are questions you could be asking yourself, either in the field before you press the shutter button or at your computer as you consider entering a photo in a competition.

1. Does the image have a message, purpose or feeling?
2. Is the subject presented in an effective way?
3. Is the photo unique?
4. Is there a fresh or creative approach or is this image merely documentary or a snapshot?
5. Does the image tell a story? Can you say it is compelling?
6. Does the image focus on the subject or interaction of subjects?
7. Are the colors used pleasant and harmonious?
8. Was it taken in good lighting?
9. Was the best angle or point of view chosen?
10. Is the depth of field appropriate or adequate?
11. Is the image noisy?
12. Are there distracting elements or mergers?
13. Would a different aspect ratio improve the image presentation?
14. Is the image lacking visual interest?
15. How are the tones in the image? Is there depth to the image?
16. Is there implied movement?
17. Does the subject have room to move in the direction of travel?
18. Is the subject doing something interesting?
19. Is the background pleasing, working with the subject, and appropriate?
20. Is the horizon line level? Was it intentionally skewed?
21. Is the image sharp?
22. Was selective focus used?
23. Is the subject in focus?
24. Is the subject properly exposed?
25. Is there contrast? Or is the image flat?

Yes, it's great to win or score highly, but competitions are supposed to be an incentive for photographers to excel in, or advance their craft. The end result isn't really the winning, but rather gaining a better understanding of your own photographic strengths and weaknesses, your vision and passion and your path to improve.

My best advice, as a judge, is to enter camera club competitions and look for other opportunities to have your work juried or critiqued. Some friendly expert feedback is the best way to improve your craft.

And, when you're asking and answering those 25 questions, you are on a path to thinking like a judge. Your photos will thank you.

November Meeting

Our November meeting will be the last for the year and will be held at the Knysna Golf Club on Thursday 16th .

The specific format has yet to be finalized but will be communicated after the November committee meeting.

There will be the usual club judging and the competition images will also be shown

November Competition

The competition theme is "Wheels" and the deadline for submissions is **11:59 on Wednesday November 1**

WHEELS

(This category accepts photos in HD - Images must be sized with either the height exactly 1080px or the width exactly 1920px (2mb) format)

You may interpret the theme topic as you wish. Colour or monochrome. Manipulation is allowed

Judges

The competition will be judged remotely by an independent judge.

Club night judges will be Cathy Birkett, Paul Rixom and Peter Oosthuizen

PSSA CONGRESS 2023 @ ATKV Drakensville 17th -21st September

Report back to KPS Committee

Anne Hrabar

The venue, despite lacking aesthetic beauty had all the facilities and more to make the Congress a success. The food was excellent and very plentiful! The whole vibe was friendly and with most of the delegates staying at the resort the comradery was great.

The lectures were very good and varied.

Day 1

'Look without fear' by Matthew Willman. Matthew is a journalistic photographer whose work, mostly in Mono, includes portraits of numerous presidents including Obama and Clinton, as well as being the official photographer of Mandela for his last 11 years.

matthewwillman.co.za

His message that stuck with me most... 'purpose is a must in your photography that will drive you forward. Without purpose one is like a boat without a rudder or sail drifting nowhere.'

'Landscape Photography Future' by Emil von Maltitz. Emil, a landscape and an everything else photographer made a point that in future true landscape images could gain in value as AI makes inroads into other genres especially commercial photography.

Afternoon session.... Astro Photography by Emil.

This detailed workshop, including all aspects of Astro, was most informative to the extent that it was easy to get lost in all the info. There will be a video available soon with all the details.

Day 2

'Developments in AI and how will it affect us' by Rory Baker

Rory explained how AI has been with us in everyday life for ages. What is emerging lately is Generative AI. In his opinion we will have to integrate it into clubs somehow and the biggest task will be how to distinguish between 'real' and AI images.

'Photographing the Ocean' by Linda Ness. Linda shared with us her beautiful images of life below the waves. She is a free diver, training for which is a prerequisite for this type of work. Sharks, bait balls, dolphins and whales were shown in their own environment. We really got to appreciate what all goes into being successful in this genre.

Afternoon session.....Macro by Rory Baker

This session focused mainly on focus stacking in macro. He started with the procedure for SLR which is different to that for mirrorless. Unfortunately, by the time he got to mirrorless, I heard the drums of the Zulu dancers outside and did a duck!

Day 3

The morning started with the PSSA AGM and was followed by the Members forum where anyone could ask questions of the Directorate.

The 2 issues that needed clarification by KPS were....

- a) What happens to raw images sent into Salons for verification for various reasons?
I was informed that they are all checked by the Salon concerned. If deemed to be ok (e.g. no manipulation found in a nature image) they are deleted straight away by the Salon.
If, however, a transgression is recorded, the image is then sent to the Director in charge of Salons to be filed in the "Naughty list"! This is to keep a record of transgressors and to be able to check if that image is presented in future Salons. There is much debate as to the punishment/ sentence of transgressors.
- b) The issue of whether we are allowed to train our judges in club was met with "Of course"! It is only the PSSA JAP course that is being held Nationally, not at Regional or Club level.

Afternoon Session.....Table Top by Robbie Aspeling.

Robbie set up 3 different tabletop stations and gave a very informative demo of how he goes about refining composition, lighting etc. His camera was tethered to his computer which was connected to the projector so we could all follow.

Day 4

'Wildlife ' by Matt Yardley. Matt also impressed upon us the fact that one must 'Know your Why" Why are you taking a certain shot, what are you trying to convey? His main objective is to evoke emotions with his wildlife shots. There was a welcome move away from the usual tech importance towards the meaningful and emotional.

PSSA Presentation by Jill Sneesby Jill explained all Things PSSA and gave the results of the annual competitions. Claudette won the Junior pic of the month(see all results on the PSSA website) Launa's 'Sky Whales' was shown as an example of how never to assume! Salon judges were convinced it was AI !

General

Apart from all the talks there were plenty of other activities. There were model shoots every afternoon, and Zulu dancers twice. All the above happened at the venue.

Going further afield there were many landscape opportunities, farm visits cheese making and game drives twice a day at the neighbouring Kilburn Private Game Farm. The proximity to Royal Natal was great despite the total lack of water in the Umgeni river.

Next year the PSSA Congress will be held in Parys. It is also in a resort on the banks of the river.

The Salon director explained that they want to gear the talks and workshops more to Junior photographers. The Congress dates coincide with the SA Equestrian Champs that are also being held there.

2025 is at Bredasdorp and 2026 in PE.

Start planning!

Cape Photographers Congress – 2024

The congress will be held in Calitzdorp from 28th April to 1st May . For details click the following link

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bku_DUtbzNg

Meet our members

Our club membership is growing very nicely and there are new faces at every meeting. Each month we will publish a short introduction to our members so that we can get to know each other virtually as well as in person.

This month we introduce –

Alan King

My name is Alan King. I joined KPS in February 2023 as a junior member. I recently retired to Sedgefield with my wife and was introduced to KPS after a chance meeting with one of the senior members Cathy Birkett.

I have been an enthusiastic photographer for the last 15 years with the arrival of digital photography and am mainly interested in nature, wildlife and travel photography. I am quite keen to improve my photography with the help of the members of KPS who have a broad range of expertise, experience and skills not only in taking but also processing images.

There is a wealth of experience in the club and I am trying to use this to improve not only the technical aspects of taking pictures, but also the post-processing side and the story-telling component.

Birgitt Heyer

My name is Birgitt Heyer, I am from Germany and live in Knysna permanently since 10 years. It's one of my favourite hobbies to take pictures during my outings with my dog. It's mainly nature, my dog (number one) and Knysna surroundings. My friends are quite pleased to have me around as the photographer... I only have my iPhone, but I am quite happy with my pics. I do my editing on the phone as well - it's more limited than with a proper camera and a computer. My knowledge of the features on a camera is unfortunately very poor. I am not sure if I can improve my skills very much, because the iPhone is a totally different tool, and I don't understand everything (lack of knowledge and not my mother language) on KPS WhatsApp group and newsletters. I am very grateful, that Doug took his time, to give me a first introduction and showed me, how to enter my iPhone pics in the right format.

Karen and Fred Abrams

Fred and I retired to Knysna in October 2020, a very unsociable time, we heard about KPS but decided to wait to join until we could meet in person and not under covid conditions.

I am a very junior, unskilled photographer, but love the idea of taking great photographs and turning them into art and hence am looking forward to learning lots from all the very experienced members.

Fred knows his way around the camera a little more, but also wants to learn more.

Our hobbies are travelling, hiking and foodies. Fred loves taking portraits of subjects in their environments showing culture and personalities and musicians.

We look forward to this journey of learning.