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Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/helderbergphoto/

Member of PSSA: <http://www.pssa.co.za>

United Church: 28 Bright Street, Somerset West, 7130

Meeting: Second Tuesday of Each Month @ 19h15

MONTHLY COMPETITION

Set Subject for Month: Back Light / Rim Light

External Judge: Alida Heine

Internal Judges: Nettie and Stephen



First Placed Image: Early Morning

Author: Stephen Roodt

Digital, Set Subject, 27 Points



Second Placed Image: Early Morning Run
Author: Peter Dewar
Print, Set Subject, 26 Points



Third Placed Image: Winter in the Cape
Author: Steve Trimby
Digital, Open, 26 Points

FROM THE CHAIR

Unfortunately, Nettie is on holiday at the moment, and time pressures prevented her from providing her normal input.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next B&W Meeting will be held at Gavin & Denise's house at 19h15 on Tuesday 7 November, 2023. Digital entries for both October and November need to be placed in Photo Vault by Saturday 4 November. You will need a security code to get through the gate, so remember to request one.

FUTURE SET SUBJECTS

November	Rust	PROJECT	Broken but Beautiful
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The set subject of "Rust" was covered in the September 2023 Newsletter.

The Project ("Broken, but Beautiful") was covered in the July 2023 Newsletter. There I mentioned that there are six stanzas, each with a certain focus (in my opinion). Please have a look at that particular Newsletter.

My apologies to all members who followed my thoughts regarding the September set subject "Back Light / Rim Light", and submitted images of silhouettes. The external judge did not regard silhouettes as falling into this category, and marked those down as a result!

Your Committee is working on the list of set subjects for 2024. Hopefully, this could possibly be published in the next HPS Newsletter.

AUDIO VISUALS

First of all, I am sorry that I have been fairly quiet the last few months, due to an eye op, with complications afterwards. But it is getting better slowly. At least my Richtersveld photos don't look that blurry anymore...

To the subject of Audio Visuals: on Saturday Jeff from AV Makers SA had organised and prepared an AV morning where 8 PSSA accredited AV Judges showed some of their work. Again a diversity of subjects, and even more of techniques that were used, reflecting the creative possibilities we have to create Audio Visuals.

Before planning an Audio Visual it is important to ask yourself questions. One of them; who will be your target audience?

If you want to enter your AV for a PSSA recognition, there are rules one has to keep in mind. Those are clearly stated on their website.

In many cases it is a personal experience one wants to get across. Today, with all the technology available, and combinations of them, there are hardly any limits how to express your creative ideas.

AUDIO VISUALS (CONTINUED)

And then... during the discussions on Saturday new definitions came up:

‘The TikTok generation is the future’.

‘AI - Artificial Intelligence’.

As one member commented about the AI images we saw: nice and pleasing but soulless.

What about an artificial voice over? We watched a positive example.

Fact is, it is a complete new playing field. Are we going to use some of it???

Let’s see what the discussion during our next AV meeting is going to bring up.

Irmel

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Ansel Adams - The Score versus The Performance

I was recently watching a video on PhotoPXL. At the end, YouTube came up with its usual list of suggestions of videos that I might also like to view. Among those, I spotted a BBC interview with Ansel Adams. See:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdCq-1MJmHw>

In the past I have never really studied Ansel’s work, having only learned about him in passing. So, I thought that it was, perhaps, time for me to investigate further.

In 1983 the BBC ran a series of six episodes, each concentrating on the works of a famous Master Photographer. This, the fourth episode, was produced about a year before Ansel Adams passed away. (Ansel Adams 1902 – 1984).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ansel_Adams

Ansel Adams studied to be, and later worked as, a classical concert pianist. He began his photography as a hobby. He produced his first “rather good picture” at age 21, and had some minor commercial success with it. However, it was only in his late 20’s, after he met Paul Strand on location in Mexico, that he really started building the career that would make him famous. Like many artists who came to photography from another art form, Ansel would often compare the similarities between the two.



Adams: The Tetons and the Snake River

EDITOR'S COMMENT (CONTINUED)

One of Ansel's most mentioned statements was; "The negative is the score; the print is the performance." The negative is made to suit the visualization of the picture. The negative is the score. You must then interpret the score at various different emotional levels. To be a Master Photographer, one has to be both the composer and the performer.

He pointed out some interesting points. In many cases, the music composer of yesteryear produced the score, but could not even imagine what the performance might eventually be, because the Grand Piano, or e.g., the Saxophone, had not even been invented at the time. One might say that, new technology and craft practices had made previously unforeseeable "performances" possible.

Ansel notes (in 1983 mind you!) that, "in not too many years time, there will be the possibility of electronic images." He'd seen pictures made by laser scanners, and the possibilities of these future technologies "will be wonderful". The old negatives could be interpreted through a new medium, and "this is marvelous".

Ansel clearly separated the two phases. The negative was prepared (photographed) with a vision in mind. Later, this vision, or perhaps a modified vision, was turned into the final image in the darkroom. As Ansel pointed out; "None of my images are realistic in terms of values. There is an intentional manipulation of values."

Ansel showed the BBC three different images prepared from a single negative, but turned into prints at times that were decades apart (Monolith, the Face of Half Dome, Yosemite National Park).

Each of the three prints has a different emotional effect, caused by having been done with different visions, and having been affected by changes in technology (materials) and experience (level of craft). The score remained fixed, but the performances vary widely.

In Ansel's early years as a photographer, his work did not coincide with the general view of contemporary photographers. At that time the tendency was for photography to follow a pictorialism approach; and soft dreamy images were the order of the day. In 1932 Ansel joined a number of like-minded photographers to form the Group F/64, a loose and relatively short-lived

association of like-minded "straight" or "pure" photographers on the West Coast whose members included Edward Weston and Imogen Cunningham. The group favoured sharp focus (F/64 being a very small aperture setting that gives great depth of field on large-format view cameras) and contact printing. Precisely exposed images of natural forms and found objects; and the use of the entire tonal range in a photograph.



EDITOR'S COMMENT (CONTINUED)

Ansel wrote the group's manifesto for their exhibition at the De Young Museum:

“Group f/64 limits its members and invitational names to those workers who are striving to define photography as an art-form by a simple and direct presentation through purely photographic methods. The Group will show no work at any time that does not conform to its standards of pure photography. Pure photography is defined as possessing no qualities of technique, composition or ideas, derivative of any other art-form. The production of the 'Pictorialist,' on the other hand, indicates a devotion to principles of art, which are directly related to painting and the graphic arts. The members of Group f/64 believe that Photography, as an art-form, must develop along lines defined by the actualities and limitations of the photographic medium, and must always remain independent of ideological conventions of art and aesthetics that are reminiscent of a period of culture antedating the growth of the medium itself.”

Based on this, it would seem that, in the view of Ansel Adams, the manipulations he carried out in the darkroom were part and parcel of “pure photography”. Either that, or perhaps he had moved on from the philosophies of the F/64 Group by then.

It took a couple of decades for Ansel’s images to start becoming accepted. However, his vision that all landscape photographs should be sharp from foreground to background still remains with most formal landscape photographers to this day.

On the other hand, musician turned photographer, Canadian-born [Michael Matthews](#), has noted: “In music, you go to the score and you see how the composers have done it, how they have notated it. Music is a unique art form because you have this ‘in-between thing’, the score. The composer writes the score, but this isn’t really the music. Rather, the score is a set of instructions for other people to interpret, and make music out of. And that’s what makes it so interesting. If you give a Beethoven score to different string quartets, the listening experiences will be very different because the musicians all contribute their own vision and way of following the set of instructions.”

Of course, this very approach has also been practiced in film photography for many years. Most people shoot an image, but then get a film lab to process and print the result. Here, the “photographer” was involved in the "score", but not in the “performance”. This often leads to disappointing prints that do not coincide with the photographer’s vision. This could sometimes be alleviated by the photographer developing a close relationship with a Master Printer. The performance then becomes a cooperative effort, although the photographer normally claims the performance as his own.

Most of Ansel’s’ discussions seem to have always viewed photography as involving a B&W negative photograph, and a subsequently derived positive print. However, there is a surviving record of letters between himself and Paul Strand where the use of negative colour film (Kodak color) and positive slide film (Kodachrome and Ectachrome) were also discussed. Ansel was not too keen on these alternatives because of the lack of control possible during the development and printing processes. For further information, see:

<https://repository.arizona.edu/handle/10150/641049>

EDITOR'S COMMENT (CONTINUED)

One of Ansel's most famous works is "Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico". Although Ansel himself didn't seem too keen on the picture, the public were; and it was often brought up in discussions with him. In the BBC interview he mentions taking the photo without the help of his light meter. However, it has been pointed out that, in 1943, just two years after taking the shot, he wrote an article for US Camera magazine, citing the actual readings from his Weston Master light meter, taken from his notes.

In the adjacent image Ansel is shown with two versions of Moonrise; the first, a straight print from the negative, and the second, one of his manipulated versions.



Over nearly four decades, Ansel reproduced this image using his latest darkroom equipment. He made over 1300 prints in all, and the sale of these finally gave him financial independence from commercial assignments. The highest price paid for a single print of Moonrise reached \$609,600 at a 2006 Sotheby's auction in New York.

Perhaps the thing that Ansel is best remembered for is the [Zone System](#). [Wikipedia states:](#)

"The Zone System is a photographic technique for determining optimal film exposure and development, formulated by Ansel Adams and Fred Archer. Adams described the Zone System as '[...] not an invention of mine; it is a codification of the principles of sensitometry, worked out by Fred Archer and myself at the Art Center School in Los Angeles, around 1939–40.'

The technique is based on the late 19th-century sensitometry studies of Hurter and Driffield. The Zone System provides photographers with a systematic method of precisely defining the relationship between the way they visualize the photographic subject and the final results. Although it originated with black-and-white sheet film, the Zone System is also applicable to roll film, both black-and-white and color, negative and reversal, and to digital photography."

In the BBC interview, Ansel was asked if he ever bracketed images. He answers that he never does this. Occasionally he takes two identical exposures; but this is for reasons of security. It is always possible for one of the negatives to be physically damaged in some way. But the two negatives would be identical to each other. Bracketing of exposures is a sign of insecurity - you don't really know what you are doing.

Ansel says that he never verbalizes what is in an image. He only provides a title, which tends to identify the source of the image. The emotion should be contained in the picture, and it is impossible to put this into words.

EDITOR'S COMMENT (CONTINUED)

Micheal Matthews again: "On a broader scale, post-production software reminds me in some ways of synthesisers in the 1980s. Everyone who had a synthesiser could use preset patches to construct a piece of music, but these relatively facile technical means did not necessarily produce art of value. Even more so today, anyone can buy a camera, take a photo of high technical quality, or buy a synthesiser with very sophisticated preset patches, but not everyone can make, for example, a Beatles album. I mention the Beatles because of a documentary I saw recently, showing how they created and developed their music in the studio, and this for me presented an excellent example of what differentiates brilliance from simply or easily making something. The difference is why we're still listening to the Beatles today."

On what level do you embrace your photography?

ODDS & ENDS

PSSA Congress 2023 - Drakensville



The annual PSSA Congress took place on 17-22 September, 2023 at the Drakensville Resort in Natal. As far as I am aware, no members of HPS attended this year. For those members who may be interested, a small collection of different photographs has been published on the [PSSA Website](#).

Jill Sneesby has stepped down; and Simon Fletcher has replaced her as President of PSSA. Nicol du Toit remains the Regional Director - Western Cape, but has also had the position of 2nd Vice President added to his responsibilities.

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