

HPS Newsletter - September, 2024

1954 to 2024
70 YEARS

Website: <https://helderbergphoto.com>

Email: helderbergphoto@gmail.com

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: Night Lights

External Judge: Bruna Mentrup

Internal Judges - Prints: Members Present



First Placed Image: Millenium Bridge to St. Pauls Watertaxi

Author: Riaan van den Berg

Digital, Set Subject, 29 Points

 **Kodak Express**
Digital Solutions

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PHOTOGRAPHIC

 **SUPERFOTO**

Somerset Mall 021 852 6737



Second Placed Image: Shard in my eye
Author: Riaan van den Berg
Digital, Set Subject, 29 Points



Third Placed Image: Sunbird Spier
Author: Carima van den Berg
Digital, Open, 29 Points

FROM THE CHAIR

At our last meeting on the 10th September I was impressed by the amount of images there which were taken on overseas trips! Wow – we are a well-travelled bunch!

Having just returned from visiting family overseas, I ‘saw’ images in a new light – even subjects which one would normally pass by on home soil, now present opportunities for experimentation. However, here at home we have opportunities all the time too.

Members have been able to experience the wild flower season again, as well as snow-capped mountains, whales at sea, and the Overberg canola fields in all their glory – how lucky we are.

Our next Set Subject is ‘Windows’ – an opportunity for everyone in which to take part! Let’s make this a bumper month and get your images in (particularly if you haven’t been presenting lately).

My thanks to Peter, once again, for his excellent production of the Newsletter, and to Stephen Roodt for holding the fort during August.

Enjoy your photography!

Nettie
September 2024

FUTURE SET SUBJECTS

Month	Date	Meeting	Set Subjects	
October	Tue 08 Oct	Competition	Windows	
November	Tue 05 Nov	B&W	Windows	Minimalism
November	Tue 12 Nov	Competition	Minimalism	
December	Tue 10 Dec	GALA Evening	Special Project Show	

Set Subject for October - Minimalism

The HPS write-up states: “Minimalism is not too easy to define. In pictorial terms, it is an image that focuses on a small number of objects, and attempts to reduce the amount of visual distraction. Often, they are extreme abstracts with hard edges and hard colours. So, it's very much up to individual taste as what precisely a minimalistic image is. Let's see what your vision is!”

Once again, I asked Chat GPT to provide some suggestions! I then used those suggestions to find applicable examples on Google.

FUTURE SET SUBJECTS (CONTINUED)

Q. I need ideas for making interesting photographs of Minimalism.

Chat GPT A. Creating minimalist photographs is about focusing on simplicity, clean lines, and often, a sense of calm or emptiness. Here are some ideas to help you explore minimalism in your photography:

1. Negative Space

Use large areas of negative space to draw attention to a single subject. This could be a lone tree in a vast field, a person on an empty beach, or a single cloud in a clear sky.



2. Isolated Subjects

Find or create isolated subjects that stand out against a plain background. For example, a brightly coloured object against a white wall, or a single leaf on a flat surface.

3. Geometric Shapes

Look for or create scenes with strong geometric shapes. Architecture, windows, doorways, or shadows can create interesting compositions. The key is to simplify the elements to their basic shapes.



FUTURE SET SUBJECTS (CONTINUED)

4. Reflections

Use water or glass to capture reflections, creating a symmetrical and balanced image. A single object reflected in a calm body of water can be very minimalist.

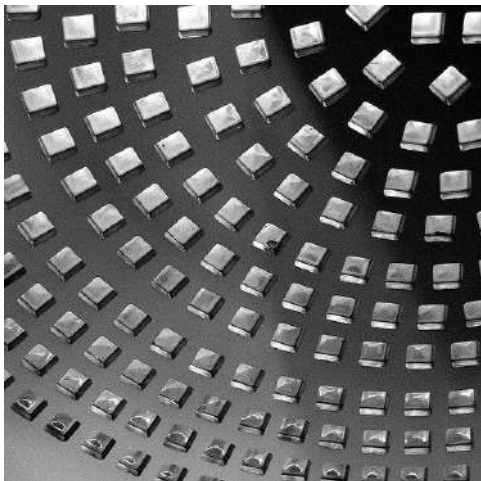


5. Texture

Focus on texture, like a close-up of sand dunes, peeling paint, or a fabric's weave. The lack of other elements makes the texture the star of the photograph.

6. Monochromatic Colour Schemes

Shoot in black and white or choose a single colour for your entire composition. This can emphasize form, contrast, and light without the distraction of multiple colours.



7. Patterns and Repetition

Capture repeating patterns like rows of chairs, tiles, or lines in the sand. The repetition creates a sense of rhythm and simplicity.

FUTURE SET SUBJECTS (CONTINUED)

8. Light and Shadows

Play with light and shadows to create stark contrasts. The interplay between light and shadow can turn ordinary objects into striking minimalist images.

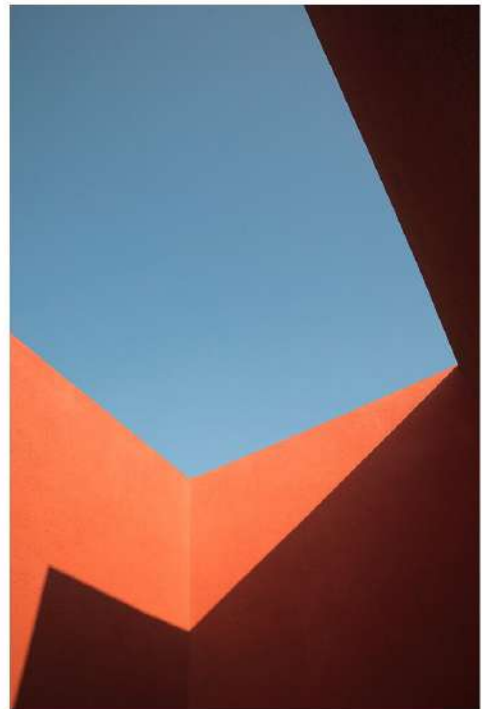


9. Minimalist Landscapes

Capture wide-open landscapes with minimal elements. Think of a solitary tree in a snow-covered field, or a desert scene with a single dune.

10. Abstract Minimalism

Focus on abstract elements, such as light reflections, close-ups of surfaces, or blurred motion. The lack of a clear subject can create an intriguing minimalist effect.



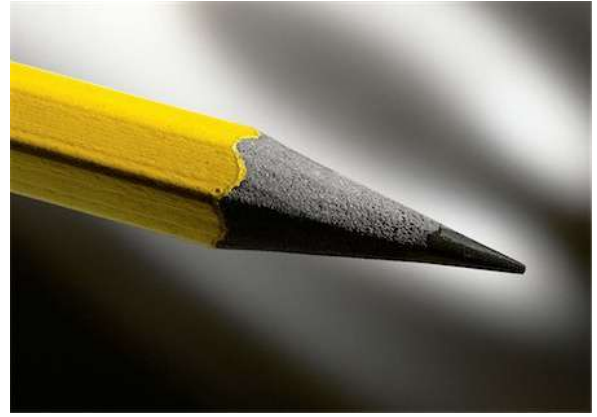
11. Long Exposure

Use long exposure to smooth out water, clouds, or crowds, reducing them to simple shapes and lines. This technique can strip away details, leaving only the essence of a scene.

FUTURE SET SUBJECTS (CONTINUED)

12. Single Objects

Choose a single object to photograph against a plain background. This could be a single flower, a lone bird, or an isolated piece of fruit.



13. Intentional Emptiness

Embrace emptiness by leaving large portions of your frame empty. This can evoke feelings of solitude, peace, or even mystery.

14. Silhouettes

Use backlighting to create silhouettes, reducing your subject to a simple outline. This works well with strong shapes like trees, people, or architecture.



15. Muted Colours

Incorporate soft, muted colours to create a serene, minimalist composition. Pastel skies, pale flowers, or washed-out landscapes can evoke a calm and simple aesthetic.

These concepts can be adapted to various environments, whether urban, rural, or even in a studio. Experiment with these ideas to discover which resonates most with your vision of minimalism.

AUDIO VISUALS



Our 'Celebrating HPS 70' in December is coming closer quickly and so does the deadline for our planned celebration AV.

Fortunately, we could collect some material from different sources, but we would like more versatile contributions to reflect on the long history of our club and what it means to us.

Do you have the following:

- Photos of members interacting
- Send us a voice note, what the club means to you, +- 30 sec
- Happenings that stay with you

Please send me your contributions as soon as possible. We are going to have a planning session Saturday 21 September.

Thank you!!

Irmel
irmel@avcreations.co.za 0823729824

Dear AV Creators

First, two dates to put into your calendar:

Sat 14 September 10:00: AV Makers Zoom meeting: The results of the Amber International Salon will be shown. Click on the [zoom meeting link here](#).

Sat 21 September 9:00 – 12:00 HPS AV Group meeting: Lutheran Church Hall, 26 Hofmeyr Str. Stellenbosch

Secondly, it has been quiet on my side, sorry about that.

Due to various reasons, AVs were not my priority. Most of all, I'm struggling with my very slow working PC, plus LrC and PS shutting down the machine regularly.

I hope the technician will come up with a solution soon!

EDITOR'S COMMENT (CONTINUED)

Black & White Conversion – The Case for Nik Silver Efex Pro 2

Let me start by copying some of what I wrote in the June 2023 HPS Newsletter (on the subject of B&W prints).

“During my teens, my parents bought me a second-hand miniature 35mm camera. In those days, the only film I could hope to afford was an Ilford B&W of some sort. This was developed and printed at the local chemist shop. In my university years, I became slightly more affluent, and moved on to using colour slide film. I then swore that I would never use B&W film again.

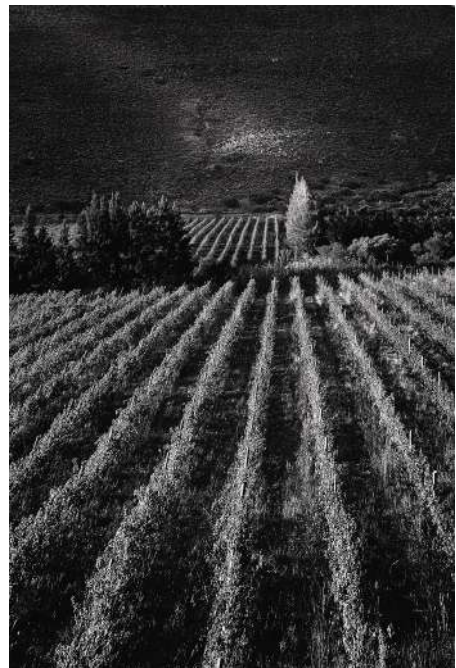
When I could afford my first SLR and joined a camera club, I continued using colour slide film, first Ektachrome E100, and later, Agfachrome CT21. So, like many folks from those days, I have a cupboard full of slides, but hardly any prints. And no slide projector anymore!

Along came the digital era. I wholeheartedly embraced the new technologies, and eventually found a camera club of the same mind. Initially, we had slides, prints and projected images. The slides were soon dropped. Thereafter, points obtained from both prints and projected images counted towards the annual club POY (Photographer of the Year) competition. So, most of us entered both sections.

Through all of this time, I had continued to avoid B&W. The few B&W images that I did submit were my edits with a pencil sketch look. However, in September 2010 the club set-subject was “Monochrome”, and I was forced to face the genre. For the first time I had to think seriously about digital B&W; and I began to appreciate the advantages of starting out with a colour image. After all, in Photoshop, a clear blue sky can be changed into any tone between pure white and pure black. And then, for some reason, this wasn't called “manipulation” (which was a bad word at that time)! Wow! So, I started investigating Photoshop B&W conversion techniques.”

Although I determined early on that Nik Silver Efex (a Photoshop plugin) was the best B&W conversion software, I could never afford the ridiculous asking price (~USD 600 in 2010!). So, I built my own Photoshop Action, which was largely based on Photoshop's Channel Mixer. Although it was capable of doing a good job, it was extremely difficult/frustrating to operate.

Finally, Google bought out the Nik Collection; and later, in 2016, they offered it for free! Since then, I have used this free version of Nik Silver Efex Pro 2 for virtually all of my B&W conversions.



EDITOR'S COMMENT (CONTINUED)

Earlier this month, I entered my B&W image "Those Crazy People" at the HPS B&W Meeting. When I later published this, I was surprised when a very experienced photographer on one of my regular sites asked what software I had used to do the B&W conversion. Then, Antenie posted a [video by Alex Kilbee](#) on the HPS WhatsApp concerning B&W lessons learned.



So, I figured that many of you may be in need of some assistance in choosing B&W conversion software. Of course, I cannot help you much, other than to tell you about my own usage of Nik Silver Efex Pro 2.

When Google started giving away the Nik collection for free, they also stopped providing any support. However, a few years later, DXO bought Nik from Google, updated the software, and started charging for it again. They also provide support for the updated version of course.

Was the old version of Nik in need of support? Well, Yes. The programme always had the occasional crash, bringing Photoshop down with it. Unfortunately, with the "improvements" in the MS Windows operating system, this tendency to crash has got worse and worse over time. To counter this, I now make sure that I have saved my working psd file prior to each Nik usage. That way, I can restart PS, reload the psd file, and try again. This is an annoyance, but it's worth the effort when one sees the results that can be achieved with Silver Efex.

I have not attempted to use the trial version of the DXO Nik collection. Since I use the old CS6 version of Photoshop, I suspect that the new Nik may not be compatible with my outdated software. But it seems to have a similar operating user interface to the original version. This has a bunch of standard presets on the left side of the screen. The right side of the screen has various adjustment sliders etc. In truth, I hardly ever attempt to use these adjustments, preferring to use the standard presets, and combine/modify them as layers in Photoshop. For instance, I often end up combining one preset for the foreground with another for the sky. Obviously, all manual dodging and burning is done in Photoshop, rather than in Silver Efex.

Some of the Silver Efex presets tend to put a light halo around dark objects. The software is obviously using some sort of mask internally. I've never tried to correct this in Nik, but prefer to do so by using selections/masks in Photoshop.



EDITOR'S COMMENT (CONTINUED)

In conclusion, if you need some assistance with B&W image generation, my recommendations would be:

Do not buy a specialist B&W digital camera. Use your normal (colour version) digital camera, which will allow you more options during post processing.

Photograph in raw format. This allows for more control in post processing.

Most digital cameras will allow you to view your subject in B&W. (You may have to record raw + jpg. The raw file will always contain the coloured version.) However, I have tried this out and do not think that it helps, so I, personally, do not do this.

If you use the latest version of Photoshop, try out the [trial version of DXO's Nik Collection](#). The software price is currently listed as USD 149, but there are some discounts available out there.

If you are not using the latest version of Photoshop or Lightroom, it is possible that the free Google version might run as a plugin on your editor. Try it out. You can [download a copy here](#), or alternatively, you can get a copy from me.

B&W images are best viewed as prints!

Attend the HPS B&W Meetings!

ODDS & ENDS

Mooiste Kaap Competition - Thanks to Carima

Attention farmers and photography enthusiasts in the Cape area!

AFGRI is hosting a photo contest, and we want to see your best photos! Whether it's the golden wheat fields, beautiful wine fields, vibrant canola or John Deere equipment in action during harvest, we're looking for compelling images that showcase the beauty of agriculture in your region.

Enter by emailing your photos to:

antonie.broodryk@afgri.co.za between 1 September and 31 October 2024. Great prizes are up for grabs, so don't miss out!

*By submitting your photo to AFGRI's competition, you grant AFGRI the right to use your photos in marketing materials, including social media, print and online campaigns.



ODDS & ENDS (CONTINUED)

The Chelsea Flowers Come to Stanford (from News24)

SA's floral exhibit which won three of the most prestigious awards at the Chelsea Flower Show will be in Stanford from 21 September to 6 October.

The thrill of South Africa winning a World Cup in any sport buoys the nation up and builds pride. It was the same when South Africa won a gold medal at the Chelsea Flower Show this year, lifting the spirits of South Africans as much as our Rugby World Cup win did. "The beautifully



designed display of our nation's stunning proteas achieved not only a gold medal, but also the coveted Best in the Pavilion and the Best New Design awards," Penelope Goemans, Communications Officer of Grootbos Foundation, said. "Leon Kluge designed the stand and, with the help of a hard-working team and private donations, showcased the spectacular Cape fynbos in a unique layout, breathtaking for its creativity, array of flowers and heady fynbos scent, which filled the pavilion. Now, Leon Kluge is building the fynbos display again . . . this time, for South Africans."

Tickets for the show are available from [WebTickets](#) at R200 pp. If none are available, it may still be possible to pay at the door.

2024 Interclub Celebration of Photography

It gives Paarl Photography Club great pleasure to invite the Western Cape Photography Clubs/Societies to take part in the 2024 Western Cape Photography Forum Celebration Event at the PJ Olivier Art Centre, Blom Street, Stellenbosch.

The formal Event Opening will take place on Saturday 9 November 2024

Doors Open: 12:00

Opening Address: 13:00

Gallery Closes: 17:30

Free parking will be available on 9 November (Entrance to Parking in Mark Street, just behind the Art centre).

The Exhibition itself will be open from Monday 11 November, 09:00 to 17:00 on weekdays, until 20 November 2024.

Returned prints may be collected on Thursday 21 and Friday 22 November 2024 between 09:00 and 12:00 from gallery. (Alternative arrangements for collections may be made with the coordinator).

ODDS & ENDS (CONTINUED)

Ctein's View

Ctein is a multifaceted individual. He is a photographer, writer, physicist, astronomer, etc. etc. If you haven't heard of him, have a look at his [own interpretation of who he is](#).

He is probably most famous for his abilities as a dye transfer printmaker in the good old days.

On Monday 9 September, 2024 Ctein sent out his latest occasional newsletter. In it he mentioned a couple of interesting things, part of which is reproduced below:

Some Noise is a Good Thing (and Unavoidable!)

So many photographers think that noise in their digital photographs (and prints) is a bad thing. They imagine that in an ideal world their images would be 100% noise-free. Aside from the minor detail that this is fundamentally physically impossible (I'll get back to this), it's not even desirable!

It's true that too much noise is a bad thing... but then that's true of most things in the real world. Just the right amount of noise, though? That's a very, very good thing!

There's a common false claim online that the deepest shadows in a digital photograph have only a few levels of grey. That is, if 0 represents black and 65535 white (in a 16-bit/channel image), then the very darkest tones are quantized as 1, 2, 3, 4, etc — big differences, relatively speaking! — whereas the near-whites run 65535, 65534, 65533, etc.

That'd be true in a noise-free universe. In the real one where noise is unavoidable, a little bit of it wipes out those distinct tonal steps and we see continuous tone. I've illustrated that in this column:

"Noise Is Your Friend"

Furthermore, a little noise extends the range of the shadows. In the noise-free universe, there's no such thing as a grey level of 0.5—anything less than 1 is 0. In the real one, any particular pixel might have a value of 0, but some will have a value of 1... or even more. In visual terms, there's fine grain.

Our printers make use of noise in their dithering algorithms, to produce tones that are intermediate to the small handful of discrete droplet sizes they can print. It's a very fine, often invisible grain pattern that results in continuously varying tone instead of discrete, banded steps.

Noise has another consequence...

ODDS & ENDS (CONTINUED)

Dynamic Range isn't Exposure Range

OK, this isn't EXACTLY basic, but it follows from the previous section. Light is intrinsically noisy. It's not a continuous flow but a stream of discrete photons! At high light levels it's close enough to a continuum that we can ignore this; but at low light levels, this discreteness becomes very important.

Imagine we have an exposure that will deposit an average of 1 photon per pixel. In the unreal, noise-free universe, each pixel would get exactly one photon. In the real world, it's like a sprinkling of raindrops on the pavement. A square cm of concrete might get splattered with a drop... or it might not. Some will get several drops. The likelihood a square cm will get X number of raindrops can be calculated. It's called a Poisson distribution (you don't really need to know that).

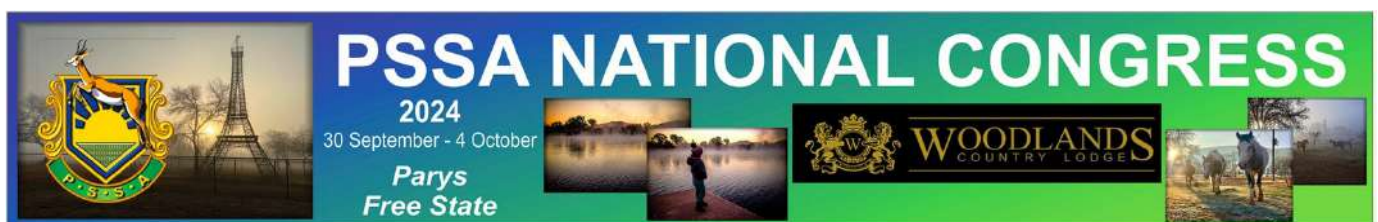
Okay, back to our thought experiment. Imagine a light flux that averages 0.5 photons per pixel on our camera's sensor. That can't be a thing-- either there's a photon or there's not. More than half the pixels will get no photons. A little less than half will get one. A smaller number will receive two. A few will receive three or more. It will average out to that impossible 1/2 photon per pixel.

This is a great thing! Why? Because it lets your camera record a few stops more shadow detail than it would if we lived in that "perfect" noise-free world. Yes, it's detail that is low in contrast and noisy... but it's there!

See these articles for more details and illustrations of what this looks like:

"Dynamic Range Is Not Exposure Range! Part I"

"Dynamic Range Is Not Exposure Range! Part II"



If you haven't booked yet, there is still time to join the 2024 PSSA National Congress.

Unfortunately, we are not attending this year. However, I can say that, we have attended at least half a dozen Congresses over the years, and I don't believe that there was one where I did not learn something of photographic importance.

Please remember to support our sponsor - Kodak Express in Somerset Mall!



Somerset Mall 021 852 6737