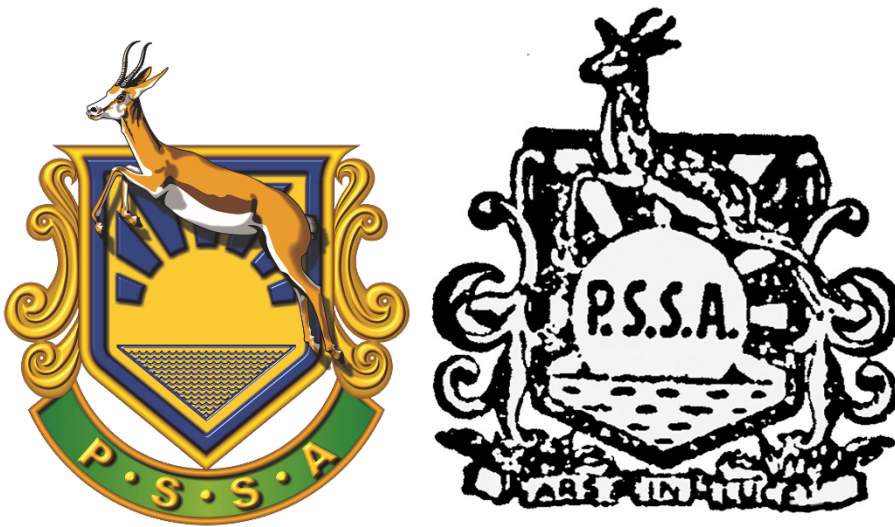


Does PSSA deserve a new logo?

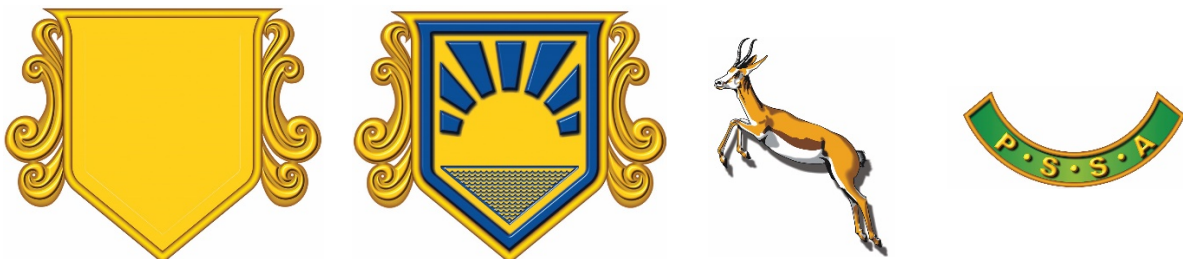
For the past 70 years the PSSA logo stayed basically the same. Is it perhaps time for a new emblem with a more modern, updated design?

Emblems have been used by groups to demonstrate a common identity for as long as we have been fighting or competing against each other. Nowadays, we wear Springbok colours to international rugby matches and proudly display the logos and colours of our local teams to matches closer to home to show which team we support. These colours or flags or badges or logos still serve to distinguish friend from foe at a distance and the heraldic elements signify the values that a family/tribe/country wishes to portray. It also portrays a common allegiance to a society.



PSSA is identified by a logo, which is 70 years old and clearly dates from another era when elaborate letterheads were used in all correspondence and documents (above left). It has changed very little from the first logo published in the PSSA newsletter, *Camera News*, featuring the shield, jumping Springbok, rising sun and waves (above right). A major difference is the motto in a scroll at the bottom “Ars in Luce” (*Art in Light*). Due to the print quality and paper of the first newsletters the design is unfortunately not 100% clear.

All the elements of our logo have heraldic meanings, which can be broken down into the following: traditional, protection, energy, positivity, an affinity for water, peace and harmony and will not fight unless provoked.



The traditional knight's shield design (straight at the top with a point at the bottom) forms the basis. The scrolls at the sides provided more protection.

In heraldry sun rays typify energy and positivity. The repeated waves indicate an affinity for water.

A deer or stag signifies peace and harmony and one who will not fight unless provoked.

A scroll with the family motto was often added at the bottom.

It is hardly likely that anybody will look at the current PSSA logo and say, *"I want to join this society because these people are traditional, cautious, energetic, positive, have an affinity for water, seek peace and harmony, and will not pick a fight."* And then successfully decipher the family motto P.S.S.A.

That is if anybody can decipher the meanings. In reality, people will not know what the symbols mean. Even if they do, non-members are hardly likely to recognise it as the emblem of the Photographic Society of South Africa. There is no symbol to indicate art, technology or anything remotely connected to photography, and with no name on the logo, you must know about PSSA to recognise the emblem.

And then there is the Springbok ... PSSA says it wants to be inclusive and attract young people. For many of the people we would want to attract, the Springbok is still a divisive symbol – apart from on the national rugby jersey. Surely, it does not make sense to alienate people with our logo – even if it is only a small group. Besides, our only link to a deer is the Impala trophy.

In addition, the "motto" P.S.S.A. was discontinued within the first decade of PSSA's existence and replaced by PSSA. And yet, it still lives on the logo.

Compared to modern logos

Nowadays, everything has to happen fast, faster and even faster. Communication is short and to the point via WhatsApp, X, Instagram etc. Branding on email messages is reduced to signatures that do not add much bandwidth. Emblems that are not immediately recognisable, are ignored.



Often, a name forms part of the identifying emblem, as can be seen by the logos of the major photographic societies from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, America, as well as FIAP. The only association whose logo is not immediately identifiable is PSSA.



Other member-based societies in South Africa have logos that clearly identify what they do, for example, Birdlife South Africa, Chess SA, the Mountain Club of South Africa. Some brand logos are so well-known that one glance tells you who you are dealing with – think Nike, adidas, Google, Facebook, Instagram etc.



To summarise: The modern brand message is short, to the point and immediately recognisable.

Is it not time for PSSA to update our logo?

Obtaining a brand new logo and modern look for PSSA will entail starting from scratch with new colours, emblem(s) and a fresh design that will find favour with most PSSA members.

The PSSA Board decided to launch a countrywide competition via extensive media coverage (social media, radio, community media and the few remaining “bigger” newspapers) to invite designs for a new logo. A prize purse of R15 000 will be on offer to attract good designers from among our members, as well as the public.

The media campaigns promoting a competition for a “makeover” of PSSA would be a great opportunity to tell the wider public what PSSA stands for, the benefits it offers photographers and how they can benefit by joining. The campaign can also be linked to the 70th Celebration exhibition.

Media readers and listeners would be invited to visit our website to better understand the heritage and all the activities and achievements of PSSA. Our Facebook page would also be used to promote the competition.

We would like to encourage our PSSA members to take up their design tools and participate in this competition – and stand a chance to earn some money. It would be wonderful if all our club chairs and Regional Directors could promote the competition amongst all members. Wouldn't it be a bonus if the new PSSA logo could be designed by a PSSA club member or individual member?

But, we also see this as the ideal opportunity to promote all the achievements and benefits of PSSA to the general public by inviting them to learn more about us and offer their designs.

After the first selection had been made, PSSA members will be invited to vote for their choices of the remaining designs to ensure that members' preferences are considered.