

NEWSLETTER

Judging and Learning

Musings on camera club
judging systems (Part 1)

Dora Maar -
Picasso's muse

What my photography
tells others about me

GCC News

March 2025

GCC

GEORGE CAMERA CLUB



PSSA affiliated
camera club



Dam in die Vrystaat
Image: [Trix Jonker](#)

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

"Time and tide wait for no man" the saying goes. So very true for 2025. We have completed a quarter of the year, and it was New Year just the other day. Life is galloping along at a scary pace, for me anyway. I don't know if others have similar sensations. But I suspect it is very much the same for some of us. Maybe the many activities of GCC, both organized and spontaneously happening, are a driving cog in the relentless time machine of 2025.

When speaking to Schalk the other day, we started to list the GCC activities that have come and gone in the first three months of this year. Let me list some of them to jog your memory (in no particular order):

- Fabulous talk by Peter Delaney at the February Show and Tell. He is a world-renowned nature photographer, and the images he shared were inspirational.
- Obie Oberholzer's talk on his recently published book on the cities or "dorpies" with similar names in the Netherlands and South Africa like Ermelo, Amersvoort, etc. was mind blowing. Obie is not only a very special photography talent, but also a unique story teller.
- Sarel van Staden and Maryna Cotton's workshop on light painting at the March Show and Tell evening. With a minimum of equipment, i.e.

camera, tripod, standard lens, small LED torches and – importantly – imagination, you can create photographic master pieces of paraphernalia like old cameras, an old letter balance and small statues.

- At least three forays into star and Milky Way as well as blue hour photography led by our own Ben around our beautiful Garden Route.
- Three Judging and learning evenings with ± 120 images entered in each. Fabulous photography, careful judging, commenting, and PowerPoint presentations circulated to all members are a trademark of these.
- "Sax on the beach" outing to Sedgefield where we photographed Audrey Kritzinger the beautiful saxophone player and model Kim on a Saturday afternoon.
- "Ballet on the beach" photography outing with the ballet dancers of Elvina captivating the GCC photographers with their graceful movements at Suiderkruis beach.
- A late afternoon cum blue hour session at the Knysna Waterfront. The heavens smiled on us; the colours of the sunset were exemplary.
- Two AV meetings where some creative work merging sound and photographic artistry was

shown by GCC members, inspiring fellow members to even higher levels of AV making.

Therefore, anyone who complains that GCC is not doing enough for its members must look at themselves first. Have I participated in all the possibilities? If not, all I can say, you missed out.

We publish the programme in every newsletter to help you to plan your photography in such a way that you get the "mostest" out of every GCC month, and this is kept updated through our WhatsApp groups. And then there are members who organize their own thing, which is great, often dragging others along in their wake of enthusiasm. What a privilege to belong to such an active CROWD!!!

This newsletter is again packed with all sorts of special goodies. I will not list them here. Please do yourself a favour and read ALL of them. Don't just skimp over them, read them, please, please! It takes a lot of time and effort to put it all together, so humour the team behind it by reading it.

Like always, keep on enjoying your photography, create happiness around you, and look after yourself.

Martin, March 2025

GCC COMMITTEE FOR 2025

If you have any issues regarding the running or programme of GCC, please contact one of the Committee members to get the issue resolved.

 <p>Chairperson Ben Schoeman was elected Chairperson and continues to serve as the custodian of the sound system. Cell: 082 466 3983</p>	 <p>Vice Chair George Morrison was elected as Vice Chairperson for 2025. Cell: 082 777 4287</p>	 <p>Treasurer Riana Pienaar was newly elected to the Committee in 2025. Cell: 082 459 2827</p>	 <p>PRO Daleen Engelbrecht continues as the PRO and arranging our monthly outings. Cell: 083 440 6953</p>
 <p>Secretary Martin Kellermann, confirmed as Secretary and Editor of the monthly Newsletter. Cell: 083 632 4885</p>	 <p>Member Schalk Engelbrecht supports Scott Ormerod who looks after our Photovault presence. Cell: 083 250 2998</p>	 <p>Member Joggie van Staden. Cell: 079 500 5529</p>	 <p>Member Paul Rixom, who is also the PSSA Director for our region. Cell: 072 525 0016</p>
 <p>Member Gertie Joubert, welcoming committee and looking after the Show & Tell meetings. Cell: 083 501 0575</p>	 <p>Member Jaco Joubert, welcoming committee and looking after the Show & Tell meetings. Cell: 073 395 9199</p>	 <p>Member Lorraine Blackwell acts as Judges Co-ordinator. Cell: 083 417 9794</p>	 <p>Tech Support Scott Ormerod (non-member) runs the GCC Photovault system and projection at meetings. Cell: 072 934 0363</p>

JUDGING AND LEARNING

For the **Judging and Learning** event, GCC senior and junior photographer members may enter two images in the categories Open, Nature or Photographic Art and one additional image for the Theme. The number of entries each month range between 95 and 130.

To get the audience involved in the judging, the best Open, Nature and Photographic Art images for the junior members (1-star, 2-star and 3-star) as well as those of the seniors (4-star, 5-star and Master) are chosen by the audience during the actual meeting from the images with high scores.

All the entries and their comments are circulated to the membership after the competition as a PDF presentation. Here only the winners and some of the higher scoring images, typically those that scored 36 or higher, are published. Enjoy them.

OPEN SECTION

The best Junior OPEN image – Audience choice



“Kokerboom in golden sky” – Laetitia Chandler

The best Senior OPEN image - Audience choice



“Eerste Rivier sunset” – Rob Glenister

High scoring OPEN images



“Explosion” – Joggie van Staden



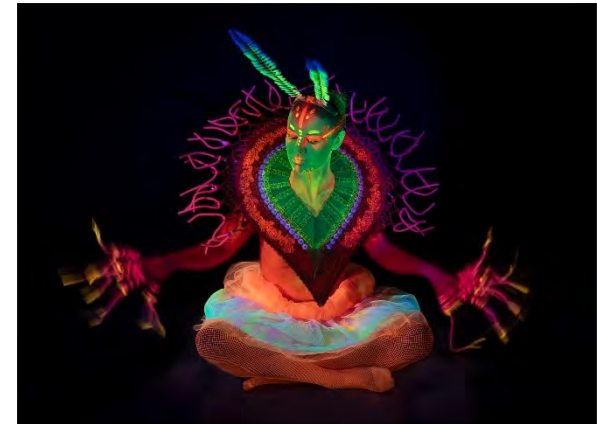
“Dam in die Vrystaat” – Trix Jonker



“Boat builder” – Bill Zurich



“Oopsie nie my kuikens nie” – Louis van Zyl



“UV Moth girl” – Lorraine Blackwell

High scoring OPEN images



“My red fan” – Alan King



“Sonvanger” – Joggie van Staden



“Please release me” – Daleen Engelbrecht



“Sunset AL Sarab” – Amanda Whiteman



“Santos Valentine” – Peter Betts

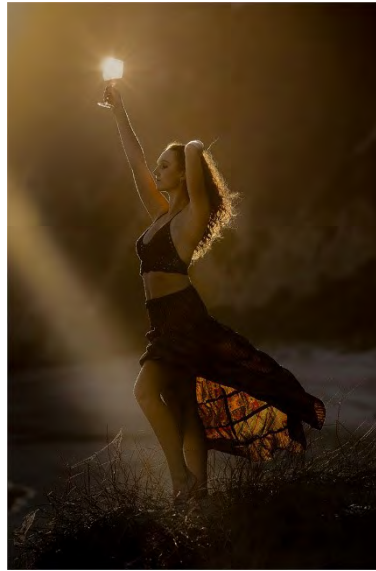


“Taj Mahal adj” – Schalk Engelbrecht

High scoring OPEN images



“Sea treasure” – Roza Barnes



“A toast to life” – Alan King



“Relaxing on the beach” – Henri le Roux



“Turbo boost” – Louis van Zyl



“Meal time” – Deon Barnard

The best Junior NATURE image – Audience choice



“Woodland Kingfisher” – Laetitia Chandler

The best Senior NATURE image – Audience choice



“Cautious Leopard” – Trix Jonker



“Stromness Bay” – Schalk Engelbrecht



“Golden wings in the green sanctuary” – Scott Ormerod



“Rain Spider” – Martin Kellermann



“Opstyg” – Amanda Whiteman

PHOTOGRAPHIC ART SECTION

The best Junior PHOTOGRAPHIC ART image – Audience choice



“Moving landing pad” – Adelle Beukes

The best Senior PHOTOGRAPHIC ART image – Audience choice



“The Phantom Express” – Scott Ormerod

High scoring
PHOTOGRAPHIC
ART images



“Beach blocks” – Olga Schoeman



“Don’t worry everything will be OK” – Evelyn Gibson

THEME: MOTION AND EMOTION

Best THEME image - Audience choice



"Greedy pigeons" – Lorraine Blackwell

High scoring THEME images



"Determination" – Rob Glenister



"Enjoying the ride" – Trix Jonker

High scoring THEME images



“Determined to win” – Bill Zurich



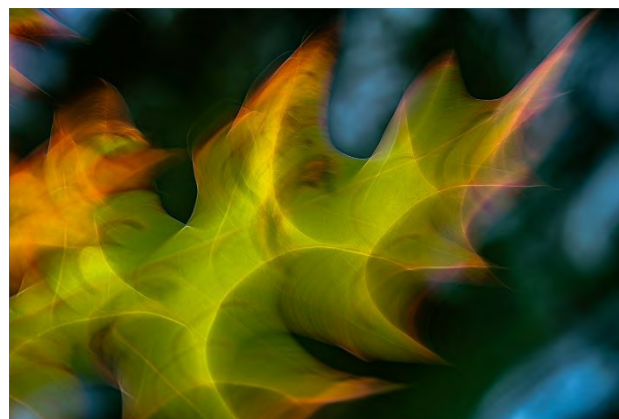
“Rythm of the burning heart” – Scott Ormerod



“Determined to win” – Lynette Neethling



“Summer splashhhh” – Olga Schoeman



“Autumn leaves in the wind” – Joggie van Staden



“Commitment” – Zenobia Geldenhuis

IMPORTANT NOTE: I have included some of my entries of the past year with the award and judge's comments. Some of them are good comments, others less so. I have added my take on the comments.

I respect judges tremendously, as I think judging is not for the faint-hearted. In addition, in my own journey as a judge, my photography progressed immensely, more so than through anything else. I believe therefore, that being involved in judging can enhance your own photography no end.

Therefore, if my take on the comments sounds a bit harsh, it is not me getting at any specific judge. Please see it as pointers to encourage judges to learn the finer points of judging. This comes through practice, and more practice, and a continuous journey of increasing your knowledge regarding great imagery.

The system used for the GCC Judging & Learning competition has a long history. But little has changed during the decade that I have been a member. Every so often we hear mutterings that it needs to change to which the response has mostly been why change something that works.

I have been involved in club and salon judging for a very long time, even judging salons since the 1980s. I experienced many judging system variants in the camera clubs in Gauteng over the years, to a lesser extent here in the Garden Route. Originally manual systems dominated, which later inevitably changed

to computer support. But with that came changes, not all of them for the good some would say.

But let us have a look at the various systems. And once we do that, we soon find ourselves in a quagmire of competing opinions, more so than the mechanics of differences in approach. So, let's keep our thinking as objective as possible before we go off on a tangent based on our own prejudices.

ALTERNATIVES

Here are some of the alternatives which are practiced by clubs in the PSSA fold:

1. Provide the images beforehand to the judges for their perusal and careful consideration. The feedback to members takes place thereafter during a live meeting.
2. Do live judging on the evening, i.e. the judges see the images for the first time when they are projected at the meeting.
3. Dispense with three judges, and do with one judge for the evening.
4. Conduct only remote judging, i.e. there is no live event where the judges talk to the members. Results are provided to members electronically.
5. Include judges from other clubs, i.e. do not rely only on your internal judging panel.
6. Judge images in star rating categories instead of a common approach for all.



JUDGE: The facial expression of the gentleman is engaging and it makes me want to be there and be part of the conversation. (Award: Low Silver)

MY TAKE ON THE COMMENT: Nice comment at the emotional level. But what is the problem with this image? What must be changed or made better to gain a Gold? Is the composition OK? Should it gain more contrast? Hints to enhance the image are absent.

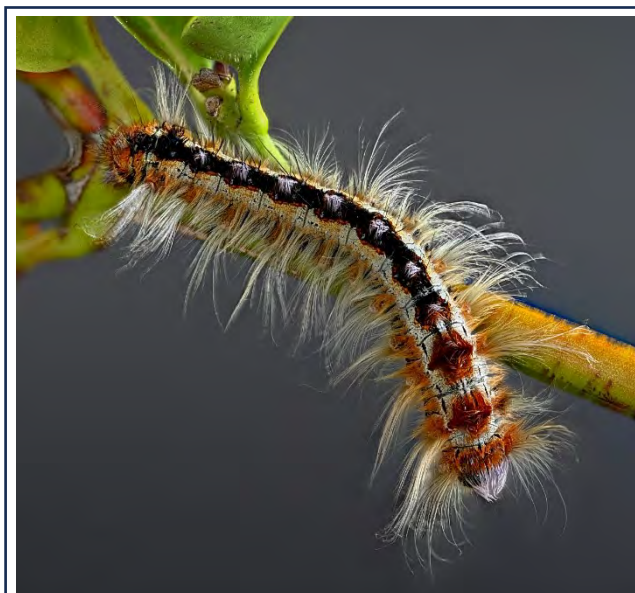
PRE-VIEW JUDGING

This is the system that GCC uses. The images are sent to the judges before the live meeting for them to consider and formulate their scores and commentary. The advantages are:

- The judges have time to carefully consider the images and decide on a score and commentary, leading to improved commentary.
- The propensity to purely go for “I like” or “I dislike” is countered.
- Less well-experienced judges can be more readily accommodated if you have a panel of judges, the well-versed judges supporting the learner judge.
- If a judge cannot be present due to unforeseen circumstances, their scores and commentary can still be read by a non-judge.

Some of the disadvantages include the following:

- The screens of home computers are of differing qualities, and some are not properly colour calibrated, leading to erroneous judgement calls. This can be countered to some extent by giving judges the freedom to change their scores during the actual projection on the big screen.
- Spontaneity of the commentary suffers. Judges tend to read what they have written, and this becomes monotonous, thereby losing the audience.
- Some judges like to pixel peep, and even manipulate entered images further. Although in itself



JUDGE: Very sharp. Good soft background. Strong diagonal composition. Stem provides colour contrast.

(Award: Gold)

MY TAKE ON THE COMMENT: Although brief and to the point, the comment says everything there is to say.

Talking about the effect of the direction of the diagonal going from top left to bottom right that we see psychological as moving fast, tending to take our eyes out of the image, unless stopped by the vertical orientation of the larvae head in this image, takes the comment to a next level.

not a problem, it often leads to nitpicking of technical inconsistencies and a lack of a holistic evaluation of the image as presented.

LIVE JUDGING

Live judging has its advocates and has been suggested for GCC recently. It used to be the system in GCC years ago. Some of the advantages are:

- Judges do not get a chance to look at 100% screen shots on their computers at home, hence the nitpicking on technicalities is suppressed.
- Impact and mood of the image inevitably become more important in allocating a score.
- The differences in colour calibration of the various home computers are negated.
- The commentary becomes more spontaneous, as there is no reading of notes.

Some of the disadvantages include:

- Not every judge can provide sensible commentary on the fly. Some need to reflect on what they want to say for which there is no time during the actual meeting. Hence the propensity to waffle increases.
- The scoring system quickly degenerates into “I like” or “I don’t like” territory as there is little time to reflect on a more thoughtfully compiled score or commentary.
- You must use judges physically available on the night, using remote judges or judges from other camera clubs is more difficult.
- Experience shows you need well-versed judges to utilise live judging successfully, and the training of less experienced judges becomes more challenging.

- Providing presentations to the membership with the scores and commentary after the event, would be extremely challenging, and would entail a lot of extra work for somebody.

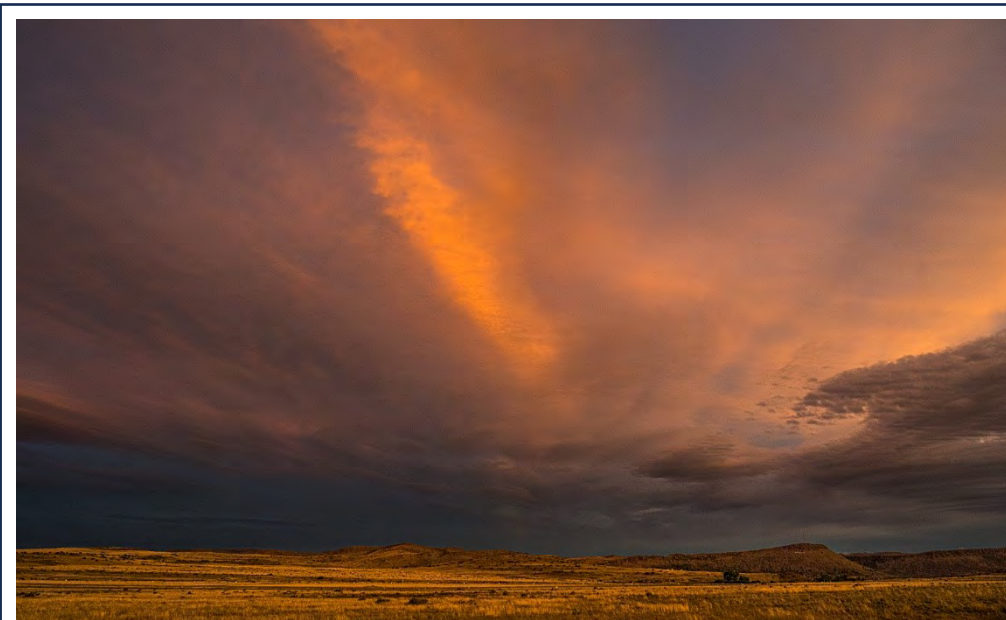
A while ago, GCC judges were asked whether they would continue as judges if GCC changed to live judging. About half indicated they would step down. The remaining judges would have had to shoulder a much heavier judging burden, and whether they would stay on was uncertain. In addition, the presentations appreciated by many currently circulated to all members would cease. Hence, the committee decided to maintain the current system.

USING A SINGLE JUDGE

Using a single judge is practiced by some clubs, usually combined with live judging.

- The main advantage is that you get a common approach to the scoring and commentary across the range of images entered. There are no differences in interpretation due to having different judges.

The disadvantages of having only one judge:



JUDGE: Majestic yellow sky over wide Free State landscape. Somewhat thin base but it is all about the sky.

(Award: Silver, one point shy of a Gold)

MY TAKE ON THE COMMENT: Yes, it is all about the sky, so the thin base should not be an issue. In fact it is an asset, it is a known compositional approach to anchor the sky and to give it prominence and scale. But what must be done to elevate the image to a Gold for all judges? Is the composition OK, and if not, what needs to be tightened? Is the mood OK, and if not, how can it be given more impact? Questions remain unanswered, and it is probably only something small that needs to be adjusted.

- If the judge has strong likes and dislikes, the result can lead to much unhappiness amongst members if your images fall into the judges' dislike territory. Using three judges is intended to even out this possibility.
- If there are many entries, it is very taxing on the judge physically and mentally, and as the

evening progresses, judging can become less fluent and less effective.

I experienced this many a time in my early days in Gauteng camera clubs. It worked well in the Leica Camera Club in Johannesburg because there were not that many entries. We mostly had the same person as a judge month-on-month, and there was continuity in the judging. He was well-respected as a judge and taught us many photography lessons.

In another club where I judged quite often, we had over 300 entries for the night, about 100 prints and 200 slides. I was always totally exhausted when I got home after the meeting. Doing this demanded extreme concentration over more than three hours of live judging. It honed my live judging skills no end, but it was very challenging and hard work.

USING ONLY REMOTE JUDGING

During the Covid epidemic when we could not meet physically, many camera clubs resorted to remote judging. The advantages and disadvantages are very similar to those of the pre-view judging system.

The effort for the judges varies. If only scores are required, the effort is not that serious. Written

commentary adds work, but can still be handled reasonably easy. If, however, the judges need to provide spoken commentary, the effort to record and often rerecord can become quite onerous.

But it does become very impersonal. You lose the experience of the social interaction amongst members, which is important for the well-being of the camaraderie of a club. You might as well belong to a disparate social media community of photographers.

INCLUDING JUDGES FROM OTHER CLUBS

The idea to include judges from other clubs has advantages, but also comes with challenges. And, if you are a small photographic club without a reasonable pool of senior photographers that can act as judges, you may have little choice but to use outside judges.

The advantages include the following:

- It counters the propensity of “incestuous” development of the approach to judging that may develop if you only use internal judges.



JUDGE: The authors choice to make 90% of the image grey and the other 10% bright yellow is clever and adds to the story. We can interpret it many ways, i.e. there is always sunshine after rain, etc. There are a couple of border-patrol issues that would assist in the overall presentation, namely, the little “loop” in the cloud on the RHS and the very bright white spot under the trees also on RHS.

(Award: Gold)

MY TAKE ON THE COMMENT: Solid comment. The comment tells the audience WHAT is good about the image, it highlights a principle. Small improvements are briefly addressed as border patrol issues, not laboured on. A comment as to the importance of the small houses that act as a compositional focal point, keeping the image together, could have been added.

- Over time, internal judges get to recognize authors due to their specific styles. This may or may not compromise the objectivity of their judging.

- It offers a chance to increase the quality of judging if you can get senior judges from more advanced clubs or the salon circuit.

Using outside judges works well if you only do remote judging. Once you decide on a live meeting, it is more complicated. All the advantages and disadvantages of the above-mentioned types of judging apply here as well.

The major issue is the availability of such judges from other clubs. There is the question of travel and accommodation expenses that needs to be sorted, including remuneration on occasion. Few judges from other clubs have such a drive to judge that they will be willing to do all the work on a *pro bono* basis. And traveling a longish distance after the meeting during the night brings about its own challenges.

In my early days as club judge in Gauteng, I often travelled to clubs in Johannesburg and Germiston from Pretoria. They reciprocated; hence the system was beneficial all round. Travelling at night was fairly safe then, which sadly, it no longer is. In addition, we were much younger and traveling at night was not an issue.

Now we are quite a bit older, and traveling at night is no longer a comfortable endeavour.

JUDGING IN STAR CLASSES

In the mostly manual systems of slides and print judging, it was common to judge all the 1-star images first, then the 2-star and so forth. The advantage of this approach is that the criteria of judging and the commentary can be adjusted to the star rating of the entries. A 1-star entry will be judged mostly on technical qualities, whereas a 5-star entry will be judged solely on story, mood, impact and composition, technical quality taken as a given.

Then came the big move from PSSA's side to align club judging more with salon judging, and together with the wide-spread use of computer programmes that could apply sliding scales to deal with the differences in star gradings, the propensity to judge all entries with the same criteria started to dominate and it replaced the earlier star-based systems.

It is especially in the pre-judging and remote systems that the commentary suffers. The judge does not know the star grading of the entry, hence keeps the commentary to generalities. If the star grading would have been known, the commentary can be adjusted to the level of competence of the member. Adjusting your commentary during the live meeting is a possibility, but seldom practiced.

CONTENT OF COMMENTARY

Irrespective of the system of judging, its quality will be determined by the value of the commentary. In general, we are looking for a considered approach that tells members what is good about their image, and where it can be enhanced.

Information theory and perception psychology research provide credible reasons that you need to address three elements, namely the technical side, the composition and finally the impact. The challenge for the judge is to do that concisely and in a clear way in the limited time available for the comment. Time that is often regrettably condensed by the members attending, who want to get the "mostest" in the shortest time possible.

Hence many of the comments stop at the technicalities, and deal superficially with what should be corrected in this regard. Words like "I really like this image" are often heard, but what there is to like remains vague. The composition is seldom discussed in any detail, and similar with impact.

The biggest void in most commentary is a discussion on WHY the image is considered a high-quality image, i.e. WHAT is good about it. This is where everybody can learn the most, and this is where the judge's knowledge on composition and impact, augmented by a wide-ranging knowledge on art and photography genres must come to the fore.

All-embracing training of judges is therefore a very important first step to increase the quality of commenting. But it does not stop there. Judges must continuously increase their knowledge through books, attending art and photographic exhibitions, etc. whether in real life or through the social media. You can only offer thoughtful commentary from a given knowledge base; it is very difficult to invent commentary without background information.

WHICH SYSTEM IS BEST?

The above musings show that there is no perfect system for club judging. If there was one, all clubs would follow it by now. All the systems have their advantages and disadvantages. Some systems entail more work for the judges and club members running the system, others less so. And because members who run this are not paid employees but volunteers, the system must be set up to run as effortlessly as possible.

In the end it boils down to what the club wants to achieve with the judging system. Do you wish to give members only a score related to the quality of their images or do you also want to educate the broader spectrum of members, especially beginners as to what good imagery is all about. And this is what we wish to see in GCC, hence the choices we have made regarding our judging system.

See Part 2 next month for a detailed description of what we do in GCC and the reasons for our choices.



Portrait of Dora Maar by French photographer Rogi

Dora Maar, generally known as Picasso’s muse and lover, was also an accomplished photographer and painter in the surrealist tradition.

EARLY LIFE

Henriette Theodora Markovitch, borne in 1907, was the only daughter of Josip Marković, a Croation architect working in Paris, and a French mother, Louise

Julie Voisin. In 1910 the family left for Buenos Aires where the father gained several commissions, amongst others for the embassy of the Austrian-Hungarian empire.

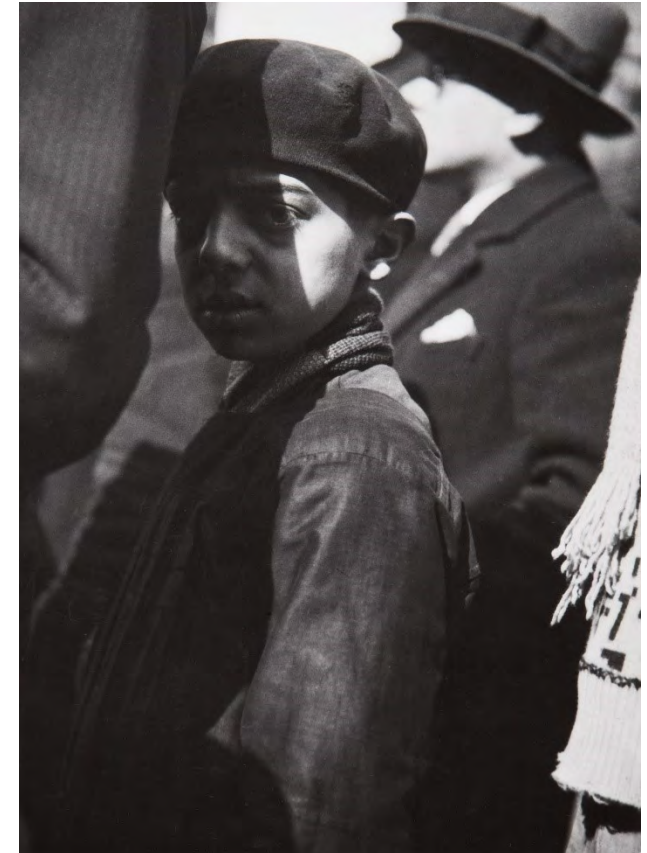
The family returned to Paris in 1926 where she adopted a shortened version of her name, Dora Maar.

Maar, determined to become an artist, studied everything from decorative art to painting to photography. She attending prominent Paris institutes like Académie Julian, École des Beaux-Arts and the École Technique de Photographie et de Cinématographie.

Maar started to get involved in surrealist circles. At the École des Beaux-Arts she met Jacqueline Lamba, who would later marry André Breton, one of the co-founders of Surrealism. In addition, Maar frequented the workshop of André Lhote, well-known cubist painter, where she met Henri Cartier-Bresson, one of the greats of French photography.

LIFE AFTER UNIVERSITY

When Lohte’s workshop ceased activities, Maar travelled on her own to Barcelona and then London in 1933. Here she photographed the effects of the economic depression following the Wall Street crash of 1929. As a woman from a well-off family, she was taken aback by the miserable living conditions of ordinary people and the growing influence of fascism.



Child with a beret – circa 1932

Back in Paris, she became an assistant of Man Ray for a while, a well-known surrealist photographer of the 1930s. He photographed many portraits of her, and they remained in contact throughout their lives. Soon afterwards her father helped her establish a photographic studio which she ran together with Pierre Kéfer.



Hand shell – 1934

This became very successful, undertaking advertising projects for magazines like *Le Figaro Illustré* and *Beauté Magazine* amongst others. For a while she shared the darkroom of the studio with Brassai, another well-known French photographer who said she had “*bright eyes, and an attentive gaze, a*



Le simulateur – 1935

disturbing stare at times”. In 1932 she had an affair with the screenwriter Louis Chavance.

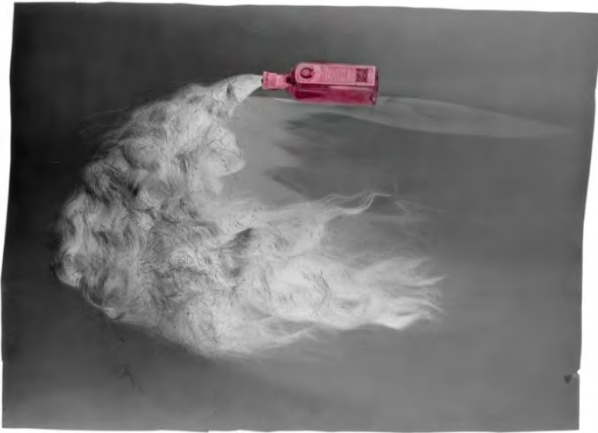
Her experiences in Barcelona and London influenced her political views, triggering her left-wing leanings. Surrealist concepts and interests often aligned with the ideas of the political left of the time. Because she was involved in many Surrealist groups, Maar became politically very active at this point in her life.



Portrait of Ubu – 1936

She often participated in demonstrations, convocations, and cafe conversations.

In 1934 she signed the “*Appel à la lutte*”, a leaflet instigated by André Breton following an anti-fascist demonstration during which 14 demonstrators were shot by the police. It encouraged countering fascism and Maar subsequently joined a group of



Advertising study for Pétrole Hahn, 1934

intellectuals against fascism. Another one titled "When Surrealists were right" she signed in August 1935 which concerned the Congress of Paris, which had been held in March of that year

Maar also frequented the "Groupe Octobre", a left-wing theatre group formed around Jacques Prévert and Max Morise after their break from surrealism.

MAAR'S PHOTOGRAPHY

Maar's earliest surviving photographs were taken in the early 1920s while on a cargo ship going to the Cape Verde Islands. During her time in advertising, the influence of surrealism started to manifest. It can be seen through her heavy use of mirrors and contrasting shadows.



Man looking inside a sidewalk inspection door, London, circa 1935

She had her first publication in the magazine *Art et Métiers Graphiques* in 1932. Her first solo exhibition was held at the Galerie Vanderberg in Paris. Soon, Dora Maar became one of the leading surrealist photographers, her work shown in Paris galleries alongside that of Man Ray and Salvador Dali.

Her photographs of this time that stand out include *Portrait of Ubu, 29 rue d'Astorg*, various collages, photomontages, and superimpositions. *Portrait of*



Model in Swimsuit, 1936

Ubu represents the central character of a play by Alfred Jarry. It was first shown at the *Exposition Surréaliste d'objets* at the Galerie Charles Ratton in Paris and at the *International Surrealist Exhibition* in London in 1936. She also participated in *Participates in Fantastic Art, Dad, Surrealism* at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York in the same year.

After she met Picasso her photography output declined markedly.



Pablo Picasso as a screaming minotaur, 1937



Photograph of Dora Maar and Pablo Picasso on the beach by Eileen Aga, 1937



Pablo Picasso working on *Guernica*, 1937

PABLO PICASSO

In 1935, Maar was introduced to Pablo Picasso and their subsequent relationship had a profound impact on both.

Meeting Pablo Picasso

Maar served as an on-set movie photographer, and at the end of 1935, they met during the filming of Jean Renoir's "*Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*". It was Paul Éluard, a French Surrealist poet, who introduced her to Pablo Picasso at *Cafe des Deux Magots*.

The story of their first encounter was told by the writer Jean-Paul Crespelle, "*the young woman's serious face, lit up by pale blue eyes which looked all the paler because of her thick eyebrows; a sensitive uneasy face, with light and shade passing alternately over it. She kept driving a small pointed pen-knife between her fingers into the wood of the table. Sometimes she missed and a drop of blood appeared between the roses embroidered on her black gloves... Picasso would ask Dora to give him the gloves and*

would lock them up in the showcase he kept for his mementos."

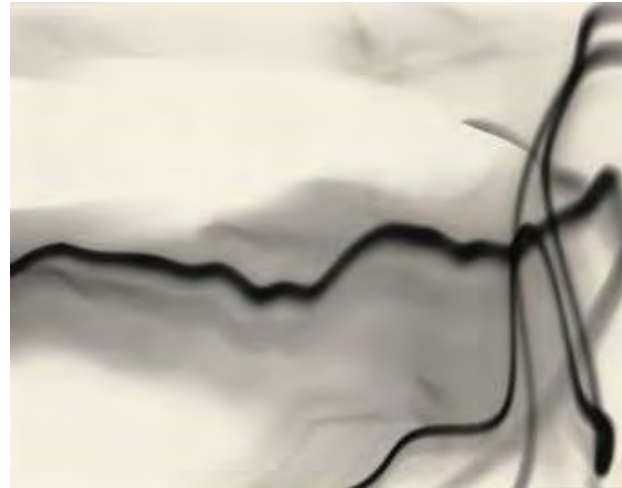
Their relationship

Soon afterwards she became his muse and lover, a relationship that lasted nearly nine years. It was tempestuous, as Picasso kept on seeing Marie-Thérèse Walter, mother of his daughter Maya, getting the women compete for his attention. Tensions got worse when Picasso had an affair with the 21-year-old Françoise Gilot in 1943 (Picasso was 62 at that time), which basically ended their relationship.



Cavalier, 1936

Picasso did buy her a house in Ménerbes, Vaucluse, after the break-up, where she withdrew from public life. Jacques Lacan, a controversial psychoanalyst and psychiatrist, took care of her nervous breakdown through years of analysis. She slowly recovered. She turned to metaphysical elements of the Catholic faith, met the painter Nicolas de Staël (who lived in the same village), and stopped photography, focussing on abstract painting and experimental darkroom work.



Untitled, darkroom experiment, circa 1980

Their influence on each other

When they met, Maar was at the height of her career. Picasso in his own words “*was emerging from the worst time of [his] life*”. He had not painted or sculpted for months. Maar taught Picasso photographic techniques, and encouraged his political awareness. He encouraged her to take up painting and leave photography – some art historians say because he was jealous of her success as a photographer.

Picasso was intrigued by Maar's seductive and masochistic behaviour, which served as inspiration for many of his works throughout their relationship. He painted many portraits of her, the most well-known being *The Weeping Woman*. Maar did not appreciate the way in which Picasso painted her, and in a



Untitled, 1934

later interview she said: “*All portraits of me are lies. They are Picassos. Not one is Dora Maar.*” Many critics believe today that they are a metaphor of the feelings both had for the sufferings of the people in

in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and less a portrait of Maar.

The Basque town Guernica was obliterated in a bombing attack during April 1937. Picasso had earlier in 1937 been commissioned by the Spanish Republican Government to paint a canvas for an exhibition. As the war progressed, Maar with her leftist political leanings, influenced Picasso to create a painting with a distinct political content, something he had never done before. Her photographic background also persuaded him to paint it in black and white with shades of grey, so different from his usual use of vibrant colour.

Maar photographed Picasso during the time he painted *Guernica*, a unique glimpse of Picasso at work. *Guernica* is considered by many his absolute masterpiece. It is very large: 3,49m tall and 7,76m across. It portrays the suffering wrought by violence and chaos. Prominently featured in the composition are a gored horse, a bull, screaming women, a dead baby, a dismembered soldier, and flames.

DEATH

Maar spent her last years in her apartment in Rue de Savoie, in the Left Bank of Paris. She died in July 1997, aged 89. She was buried in the Bois-Tardieu cemetery in Clamart. Her experiments with photographs and darkroom photography were only found posthumously.



Portrait of Dora Maar by Man Ray, 1936



Portrait of Dora Maar by Picasso, 1937

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All of us have some or other desire driving our photography. These drivers include the urge to create something beautiful, enjoying the act of taking photographs, we want to gain the acknowledgements of our peers, we want to win competitions, we want to create memories, we send images to our friends and family with “wish you were here” messages, we wish to establish monuments for ourselves, and more.

All the above are valid reasons, and I suspect all of us follow one or more of them depending on the situation or the season in which we find ourselves. There will even be one or two that dominate us doing photography, drive us absolutely without us realizing it. Or, maybe you do know it, and that spurs you on to even greater heights! I always thought my main driver was to create a beautiful image.

But our images show something much more than we often appreciate. They show the world something of ourselves, our inner thoughts, our world-view. We may not realize it, but it is nevertheless true. And this happens even though we may not wish the world to see this, because we are afraid of becoming vulnerable. On the other hand, becoming vulnerable is a good way to progress, it is how we learn.

A year or two ago I was invited into a small group of photographers to discuss the deeper meaning of photography. Other than reading books on the subject and discussing whether they are still relevant, like Susan Sonntag’s *“On photography”*, we also shared thoughts on our own photography journey.

The knobbly S-curve

I photographed this in the Union Building gardens in Pretoria. The ephemeral out-of-focus seed stalks are in stark contrast to the solid, permanent tree trunk. For me the image just looked beautiful, I had no other thoughts. A large A3 size print hung in my flat for many years.

Others found this image evoked many more emotions than just the “simple” pleasure of beauty, finding it intriguing. They had similar comments on my other B&W images, finding them to contain multiple levels of interpretation, even being mysterious.

Questions to myself: Do I have a propensity to add mystery to my photos without thinking about it? Are all of them more than just a “beautiful” image? Are they all complex in a way that allows for more than one level of interpretation? Where does this complexity originate? Probably in my subconscious? Is this good?



Fellow student

A “stolen” image of a fellow student photographed on Church Square, Pretoria during a midnight get-together – a way of life long gone.

This was cutting edge technology of that time, with the Agfa 1000 ASA film push processed two stops. The resulting grain enhances the image in my view, club judges mostly differ.

The others saw in this that it poses questions it does not answer: Who is she? Why did I photograph her? Was she my girlfriend? For them the image invokes a sense of mystery, heightened by the indistinct features.

Question to myself: When I take portraits, I struggle to tell the model what to do. Sometimes I get lucky, most of the time not. Or, should I rather concentrate on the natural look in my portraiture? Let the model be himself/herself, but very importantly without artificial posing? And how do I create the atmosphere for that?



One of the challenges that surfaced in our discussions was to write a monograph about our own photography journey.

This monograph was intended to provide the reader with insight into my deeper thoughts regarding my photography through a set of images. Not too many, just enough to establish my inner thought patterns. It was not to be a treatise about good photography – there is enough of that around. It really challenged me. How will I tell somebody what my photography is all about in not more than twenty images, without explanations of many pages? It was a journey of intense introspection, even scary at times.

Writing this monograph and selecting the images took longer than I thought. I even went back to my very early photographs, in fact back to 1965 when I was given my first camera. I considered many images, until I homed in on those I wanted to include. I shared my monograph with the group, and was given the monograph of some of the members – not all wrote a monograph – to consider deeply, to experience, to comment on.

It was an enriching experience. They saw something in my images that I never knew. It was a revelation realizing how much the images told the world about my inner being. Likewise, I learnt a lot about my fellow participants, even though I have not met most of them in real life. The experience changed my view of my own photography, gave it a more focused meaning, clarified aspects of it for me.

Heaven's sail

For me this image is a metaphor of the minuteness of man, with the magnificent cloud lit by the setting sun in the form of a sail going before the boat. It speaks to me of what the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 19 over 3000 years ago: *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands"*.

Those thoughts have not changed; they still evoke an awe in me that I find difficult to put across in words. I love to photograph clouds for this reason, for the intrinsic beauty of them, never the same, an ever-changing canvass of colour and shapes. Artists also feel this, Rabindranath Tagore writing: *"Dark clouds become heaven's flowers when kissed by light."*

Interestingly, sadly, none of the readers of my monograph commented on this image. Is my feeling about heaven and clouds too far removed from the reality of this our existence? Are my images of the majestic clouds and their beauty just for me? I really hope not.



In this article I share just three of my images and my thoughts about them, as well as what the others saw in them where relevant. Including all 17 images of my monograph will render the article far too long.

Maybe you can try such a monograph, it will take you much longer than you think. Do not rush it, you must think deeply about every image you include, even more so about the images you do not include. You

must limit the number of images to no more than twenty – twenty images taken over your lifetime of photography. Share your monograph with photography friends you trust, and be ready to be overwhelmed by what they see.

My original view on what my driver is, namely to depict the beauty around me, was expanded. I learnt about the multiple levels of interpretation that many

of my images contain, I was made aware of a sense of mystery in many of them. None of this is relevant in club photography, but it edified me, gave me insight as to what my photography means to me, told me a lot about myself. An absolutely worthwhile experience.

THEMES FOR 2025

GENERAL: All the Themes can be entered as colour or monochrome except for the Monochrome Portrait in September. There are no restrictions on manipulation in any of the themes.

Please take more than a moment to read the guidance notes carefully and apply them consistently. In 2024 we had quite a few Theme images that were disallowed because they transgressed the guidance notes big time. This stressed the judges and led to unhappiness in the member whose image was marked down. I am sure we can get it right in 2025 if all of us take a little care.

JANUARY: At the market

The market can be a very rewarding place to take images of the interaction between people, sellers and buyers. Even the interaction between people and the merchandise on display is fine, or an action by a person in the market place. The important point to remember is that the image must be taken in a market, images inside a shop or similar are not acceptable. Street photography style probably has the best chance of earning high marks.

FEBRUARY: Wish you were here

The image must clearly show an event or a place you are experiencing that caused you to send the photo to your mates, family, or friends, inviting them to be there with you to share your “wow” experience or

moment. Typical of cell-phone images that are sent all over the place by the billions every day. But this one must be special, have mood and/or impact to gain high marks.

MARCH: Motion & emotion

Emotions are reactions that we experience in response to events or situations. Typical emotions are joy, sadness, anger, fear, trust, disgust, surprise, even anticipation. Motion is the change of position of an object with respect to time. A moving vehicle, a book falling off a table, water flowing from a tap, rattling windows, are just a few examples of things exhibiting motion – there are endless examples. In this image the motion of an object must elicit emotion, e.g. a person’s reaction to the thing that is moving. The strength of the interplay between the “motion” and the “emotion” will determine the impact the image has.

APRIL: Rim light

Rim light highlights the edges of your subject by having a light source behind it, aimed toward the camera. This can be used to create images with either a rim-lit subject against a dark background or a well-lit subject with emphasized edges. This lighting highlights the contours of a subject and can create a dramatic or mysterious effect. It can add depth and make the subject stand out. It works best if the edges are interesting, thereby adding to the impact of the image.

MAY: Old building in the landscape

Landscape photography at its best with the added feature of an old building as a strong centre of interest is what this theme is about. An old building on its own, without the landscape is not adequate, the landscape must also feature prominently. High level composition, gorgeous light, sumptuous clouds, attractive lines taking you into and keeping you in the image are elements that will gain you high marks.

JUNE: Macro or close-up patterns in nature

Nature is awash with patterns. The image needs to be a close-up or macro photograph, highlighting the world of the small. Patterns often showcase repetition and texture, even abstract renditions of the same. Exquisite sharpness over the entire frame and clever lighting technique to highlight the patterns are imperatives.

JULY: Shadow

In Dante’s Inferno, prisoners lit by a fire burning on their one side create their shadows on the opposite wall that become their reality of the world. For this theme, the shadow needs to be of similar significance compared to what creates the shadow. It needs to take centre stage; it cannot be a tame shadow of what causes it. Imagination in creating the image will go a long way to a “wow” moment.

AUGUST: Wide angle

Wide angle photography, on the one hand, is about depicting wide vistas on the little square of the camera sensor. On the other hand, using the propensity of the wide angle, especially super wide-angle lens, to enhance any subject in the foreground compared to the background that recedes very rapidly, can lead to an image with high impact if done well – otherwise known as foreshortening. The choice is yours, but the latter approach probably has a better chance to impress.

NOTE 1: If you don't have a super wide-angle lens, stitching five or six portrait orientation images taken with a normal lens can also do it. See the September 2024 GCC Newsletter for examples.

NOTE 2: The August 2024 GCC Newsletter contains two articles on super wide-angle photography.

SEPTEMBER: Monochrome portrait

A portrait can be anything from a full-length portrait to a head shot, maybe even just part of a head, but not only an eye or a mouth or an ear. You must be able to identify the person. The image must be monochrome, any additional colour will lead to its disqualification. It may be toned blue for a colder rendering or sepia for a warmer feel, but split toning is not allowed. In split toning highlights are toned one colour and shadows another to create specific effects, but such images will be disallowed.

OCTOBER: Blue hour

The blue hour is the period of twilight when the sun is still or already below the horizon, and the remaining light takes on a blue shade bathing the subject matter in soft, velvety light. It takes place 20 to 45 minutes before sunrise or after sunset, depending on the location and time of year. The blue hour sets a tranquil mood with its soft lighting; hence your image should depict this clearly. The subject matter is your choice, but landscapes, cityscapes, buildings, monuments, bridges, maybe even portraiture come to mind. Including artificial light sources as a contrasting yellowish colour may add impact to the overall blue of the image.

GEORGE CAMERA CLUB PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME 2025

NOTE: Please take note of the latest changes to the programme as communicated from time to time in the WhatsApp groups.

MONTH	DATE	ACTIVITY	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	THEME	
APRIL	Tues	8	Show & Tell Meeting – Member image discussion	Alan, Fabiola, Rob, Chris, Peter vd Byl	Rim Light
	Sun	13	Photovault deadline		
	Tues	22	Judging & Learning Meeting 6p.m. for 6:30p.m.	Emmaus	
MAY	Sat	3	GCC Outing	BLUE HOUR at THE TOLLHOUSE – with pancakes & coffee	Old building in the landscape
	Tues	13	Show & Tell Meeting – Member image discussion	Johan Retief, Joggie, Ian, Olga, Paul, Gerhard Dreyer	
	Thu	15	GCC Committee Meeting 5pm		
	Sun	18	Photovault deadline		
	Tues	27	Judging & Learning Meeting 6p.m. for 6:30p.m.	Emmaus	
JUNE	Sat	7	GCC Outing	TO BE ADVISED	Macro or close-up patterns in nature
	Tues	10	Show & Tell Meeting	TO BE ADVISED	
	Sun	15	Photovault deadline		
	Sat	21	Audio Visual meeting		
	Tues	24	Judging & Learning Meeting 6p.m. for 6:30p.m.	Emmaus	
JULY			SCHOOL HOLIDAYS (30 June to 21 July)		Shadow
	Sun	13	Photovault deadline		
	Tues	22	Judging & Learning Meeting 6p.m. for 6:30p.m.	Emmaus	
AUG			PSSA CONGRESS STRUISBAAI 11-15 AUGUST		Wide angle
	Tues	12	Show & Tell Meeting	TO BE ADVISED	
	Thu	21	GCC Committee Meeting 5pm		
	Sun	17	Photovault deadline		
	Tues	26	Judging & Learning Meeting 6p.m. for 6:30p.m.	Emmaus	
		28	SANDDRIF 28/8 to 4/9 – do your own booking	EARLY BOOKING ABSOLUTE ESSENTIAL	
SEPT	Tues	9	Show & Tell Meeting	TO BE ADVISED	Monochrome portrait
	Sat	13	Audio Visual meeting		
	Sun	14	Photovault deadline		
	Tues	23	Judging & Learning Meeting 6p.m. for 6:30p.m.	Emmaus	
OCT	Sat	11	GCC Outing		Blue hour

MONTH	DATE	ACTIVITY	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	THEME
	Tues	14	Show & Tell Meeting	TO BE ADVISED
	Sun	19	Photovault deadline	
	Tues	28	Judging & Learning Meeting 6p.m. for 6:30p.m.	Emmaus
	Wed	30	End-of-the-Year competition Photovault entry deadline	
NOV	Sat	15	Audio Visual End-of-the-Year function	
	Fri	21	Annual General Meeting and the End-of-the-Year function	
	Thu	27	GCC Committee Meeting 5pm	

SALON RESULTS

We have the results of three salons since our previous newsletter. Not all the members listed compete in salons under the GCC banner, but they are all members of GCC, hence we wish to commend them nevertheless. Congratulations to all who gained acceptances in the most recent salon.

Western Cape Photo Forum PDI and Prints

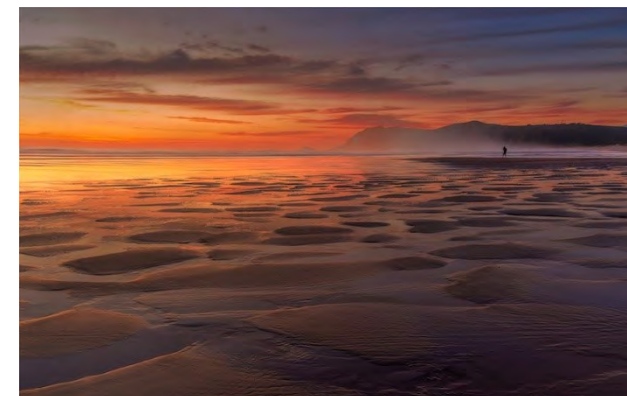
- Peter Betts – 2 acceptances
- Zenobia Geldenhuys – 4 acceptances
- Anton Gericke – 2 acceptances
- Rob Glenister – 2 acceptances, 1 COM
- Alan King – 4 acceptances
- Elaine van der Toorn – 6 acceptances
- Amanda Whiteman – 2 acceptances

Krugersdorp Camera Club 19th Digital Salon

- Peter Betts – 1 acceptance
- Zenobia Geldenhuys – 5 acceptances
- Anton Gericke – 5 acceptances
- Rob Glenister – 5 acceptances
- Alan King – 1 acceptance, PSSA Silver Medal
- Anton la Grange – 9 acceptances, 1 COM
- Elaine van der Toorn – 7 acceptances
- Amanda Whiteman – 3 acceptances

13th National AFO Salon

- Peter Betts – 2 acceptances
- Rob Glenister – 4 acceptances
- Alan King – 8 acceptances
- Elaine van der Toorn – 5 acceptances
- Amanda Whiteman – 1 acceptance



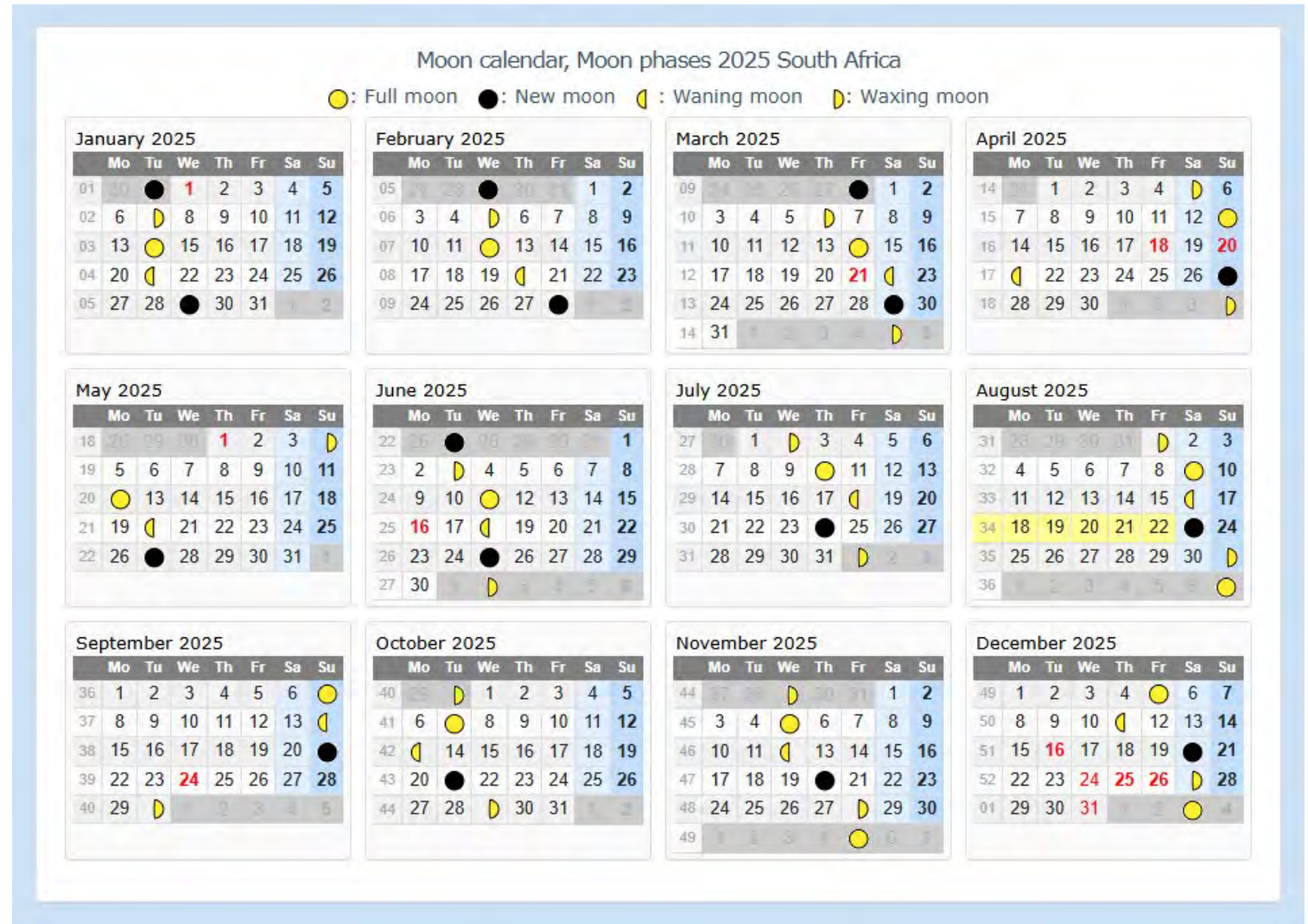
Congratulations to Alan King for his PSSA Silver Medal in the Krugersdorp Camera Club 19th Digital Salon for his image “Lonely photographer 2” in the Scapes section.

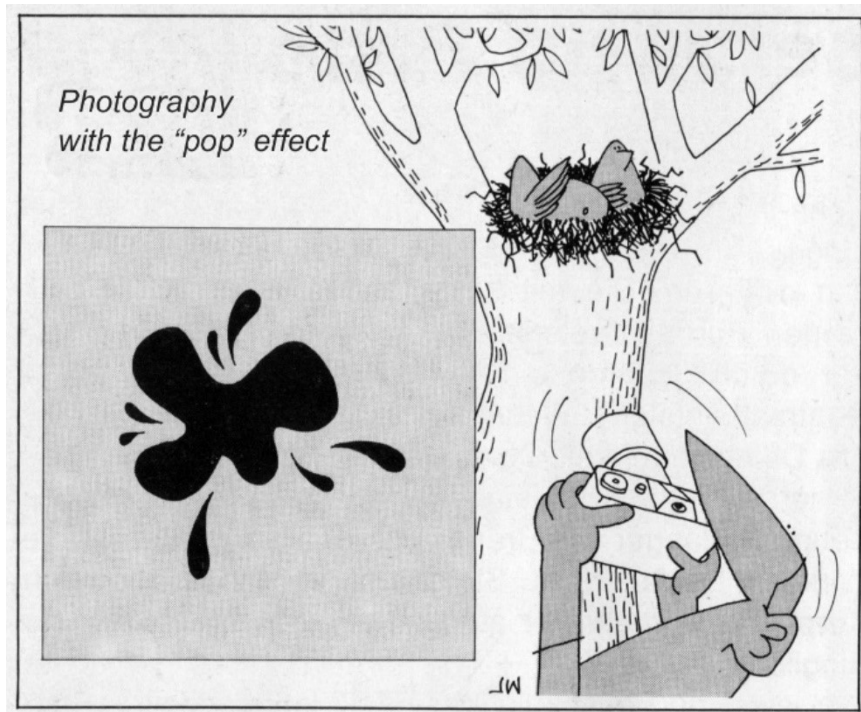
STAR PHOTOGRAPHY

Dark moon days are optimal for Milky Way photography. Actual outings are weather dependant. Full moon photography has its own charm. On the right is the calendar for the moon phases in South Africa for 2025.

Please consult latest communications on WhatsApp groups for GCC star photography outings. If part of the GCC group, the number of photographers allowed on an evening is strictly limited, therefore you must arrange with Ben Schoeman (082 466 3983) beforehand if you are interested.

On the other hand, there is nothing stopping you from doing your own thing on star photography. However, always be mindful of the safety situation at your planned destination. Most of the time it is safer to be part of a group.





PUBLISHING DETAILS

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