

NEWSLETTER



PSSA affiliated
camera club

Judging and Learning

Karl Blossfeldt – Nature's
macro photographer

May Show and Tell

Comments and me

GCC News

May 2025



Bike race to the finish
Image: Evelyn Gibson

The first half of the year 2025 is nearly over. How time flies! What have you done photographically so far? Have you created something new? Or have you just regurgitated what was in your many hard drives? These are questions that have occupied my thoughts in recent weeks quite a bit. As we grow older, we tend to become a bit more docile, happy in the little we do every day. Is that inevitable or can I do something about it?

A few weeks ago, I told myself that I need to take at least one decent photo every day. It need not be a Judging & Learning competition winner, but it needs to be an image I am happy with. I thought that would be an easy task. Well, it turns out not to be that easy at all. On the other hand, I have read somewhere that it takes about six weeks to establish a new way of doing things, fix it as a routine or a habit. So, I still have a chance to make it work; I just must keep at it.

There have been famous photographers in the past who did just that. The one whose name escapes me took one image every day on one slide film. He was a professional photographer and his series of 30 images was published by National Geographic many years ago. It was well received by the critics.

If you check out the Internet you will find many that advocate this approach, citing all sorts of healing that they have experienced doing it. I have no emotional issue to be healed I know of, but it will nevertheless do me well to get into the habit of taking photos every day whilst I still can. Who knows, there might even be a winner here and there.

We had our second Show and Tell where members spoke about their photography earlier this month. Like the first one last month, this one was also a great success. Certainly, a format we will repeat. A variety of photography approaches were discussed, with the audience participating actively. Read all about it in this newsletter.

The photographer of yesteryear we feature this month did not pursue photography to become famous. Karl Blossfeldt took the photographs he became famous for more than a hundred years ago as teaching aids in his art classes. When they were published in a book, however, they created quite a stir in the photographic world, and his book has often been identified as one of the most influential books of the previous century.

In the past two newsletters I described the system we use in GCC for judging images entered in the Judging and Learning competition. In this month I conclude the series with how we should respond to the judging and comments. It is a two-way activity; it is not something that we just sit and listen to and do nothing. We have a responsibility too.

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

Martin, May 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 Photo-vault 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



"Orange Cana Lily" – Gerald Nicholson

The best Senior OPEN image - Audience choice



"Surfing the sunrise" – Joggie van Staden

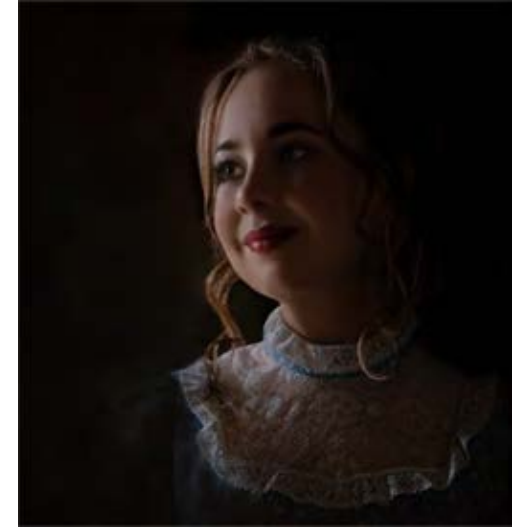
High scoring OPEN images



"The bodies" – Evelyn Gibson



"Savannah light rays" – Schalk Engelbrecht



"Jeugdige skoonheid" – Reneé van Zyl



"Voorbaai jetty" – Alan King



"Arch at Buffels" – Alan King



"Vrolike hond Adamski" – Trix Jonker



"PJ Simola hillclimb 2025 1" – Bill Zurich



"PJ Simola hillclimb 2025 2" – Bill Zurich



"Hippo eating" – Laetitia Chandler



"As duie see groei" – Amanda Whiteman

High scoring OPEN images



“Storey sky” – Ben Schoeman



“Argus clown” – Zenobia Geldenhuys



“That look” – Henry Vorster



“Vicbay awaiting the sun” – Lynette Neethling



“Biker boy” – Luana Laubscher



“The fight” – Rob Glensiter



"Dana Bay surfing" – Anton la Grange



"Echoes of steam and steel" – Scott Ormerod



"Delicious" – Adelle Beukes



"Knysna harbour sunset" – Lorraine Blackwell

NATURE SECTION

The best Junior NATURE image – Audience choice



“Hippos fighting” – Laetitia Chandler

The best Senior NATURE image – Audience choice



“Naaldekoker ontbyt” – Trix Jonker

High scoring
NATURE images



“Lonely rock” – Schalk Engelbrecht



“Nest building” – Deon Barnard

High scoring NATURE images



"Final approach" – Peter Betts



"Diederick Cuckoo" – Marianna Erasmus



"Had enough" - Deon Barnard



"Velvet wings in stillness"
Scott Ormerod



"Grooming" – Gertie Joubert



"Finding pollen" – Martin Kellermann

High scoring NATURE images



"Good morning" – Henk Chandler



"Natuurlied" – Reneé van Zyl



"Three Zebras" – Paul Rixom



"Buffalo wallow" – Paul Rixom



"Don't fight in front of the children" – Anton la Grange



"Hippos fighting" – Laetitia Chandler

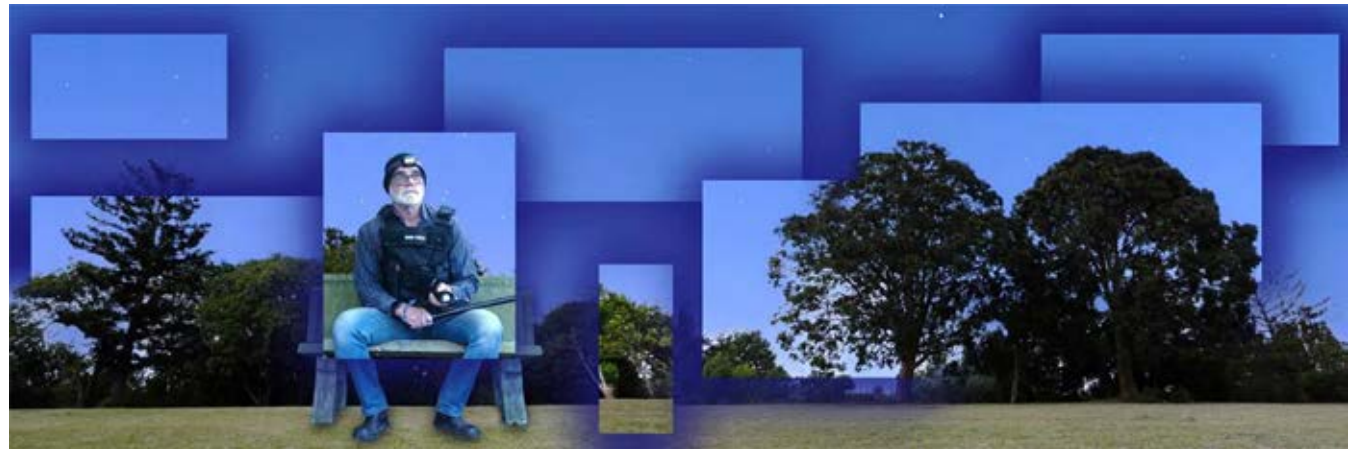
PHOTOGRAPHIC ART SECTION

The best Junior PHOTOGRAPHIC ART image – Audience choice



“Ballet on the sand” – Adelle Beukes

The best Senior PHOTOGRAPHIC ART image – Audience choice



“Guard of the park” – Ben Schoeman

High scoring PHOTOGRAPHIC ART images



"Tashkent Minaret" – Nellian Bekker



"A storied life" – Olga Schoeman



"All that wil remain" – Luana Laubscher



"Creative bike race to the finish" – Evelyn Gibson



"Boxed in" – Olga Schoeman

THEME: OLD HOUSE IN LANDSCAPE

Best THEME image - Audience choice



“Huisie met sononder” – Trix Jonker

High scoring THEME images



“Ghost house” – Laetitia Chandler

High scoring THEME images



“Napier district” – Deon Barnard



“Agave house” – Martin Kellermann



“Failed the test of time” – Henk Chandler



“Foggy moody famous castle” – Evelyn Gibson



“Whispers beneath the Milky Way” – Scott Ormerod

High scoring THEME images



"Kylemore Abbey" – Bill Zurich



"I once was" – Ben Schoeman



"Huisie by Posberg" – Leola Joubert



"Windermere boatshed" – Lynette Neethling



"Maidens Tower" – Alan King

KARL BLOSSFELDT – NATURE'S MACRO PHOTOGRAPHER

Karl Blossfeldt was a pioneering German photographer who captured the intricate beauty and structural marvels of plant life like few others before him. His images not only served as a scientific study, but also as an artistic expression, showcasing the artistry inherent in botanical aesthetics.



Karl Blossfeldt in 1895

EARLY LIFE

We know only a few verifiable facts about Blossfeldt's early life that was spent in the tumultuous, waning years of the Wilhelmine era and in the Weimar Republic. Blossfeldt was born in 1865 into humble family circumstances in Schielo, near the Harz Mountains in Germany. He attended secondary

school in nearby Harzgerode. Thereafter he completed an apprenticeship in the foundry for art in close by Mägdesprung.

He started studying illustration in the education department of the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin. Then a state scholarship enabled him to further his studies under professor Moritz Meurer at the teaching institute of the same. Moritz Meurer, inspired by Gottfried Semper and the writings of Erich Haekel, was exploring new paths in art teaching based on the basic biological forms from nature, the *Urformen*.

PHOTOGRAPHY BEGINNINGS

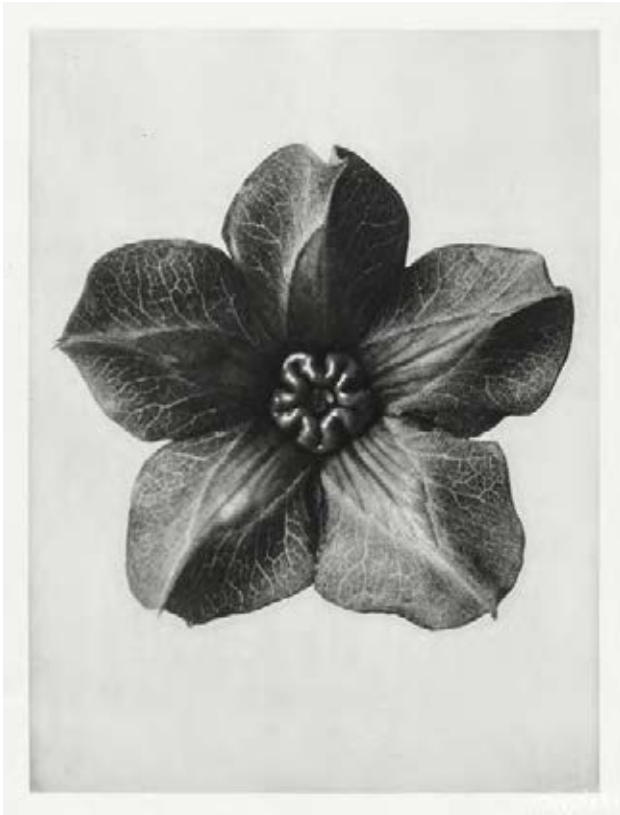
Blossfeldt started working for professor Meurer in Rome in 1890. He travelled, along with other assistants, around Europe and North Africa, collecting pedagogical material to support Meurer's new teaching programme. Whereas the group started drawing and modelling plant parts, it was soon apparent that photography would serve this purpose even better.

The task of photographing plant parts was handed to Blossfeldt by Meurer. From this we can infer two things. Firstly, Blossfeldt must have had some photography experience, and secondly, he did not pursue photography as an autonomous desire to become an artist. His photography stood in the service of a serious teaching project. This is important to understand, since the focus of photography as an art



Arguably Blossfeldt's best-known image.
Maidenhair fern (Adiantum pedatum), ca. 1900

form at that time was pictorialism, with blurry images passionately given a boost as a counterpoint to commercial photography focusing on realism.



Cup and saucer (Cobea scandens) 1928

TEACHING CAREER

After six years in Rome, Blossfeldt returned to Berlin in 1898. He began teaching as an assistant in the teaching institute of the Kunstgewerbeschule Berlin. With Meurer's support he was given a lecturer position in the newly established subject "Modelling according to living plants". It was a position he would

hold until his retirement in 1930, even though its title changed a few times.

It was during this time that Blossfeldt started the systematic use of photographs as templates for students to make models and drawings. He collected the plants himself along dirt roads and railway embankments; he also received some of it from the botanical garden. He mentioned the use of his photographs for his lectures the first time in a letter dated 1906.

In 1921 he was made a professor. His macro photographs of plants featured a few times in the exhibitions of the teaching institute which was amalgamated in 1924 with the *Hochschule der bildenden Künste* to form the *Vereinigten Staatsschulen für Freie und Angewandte Kunst*. Blossfeldt's photographs were still very much unknown in the photography art world.

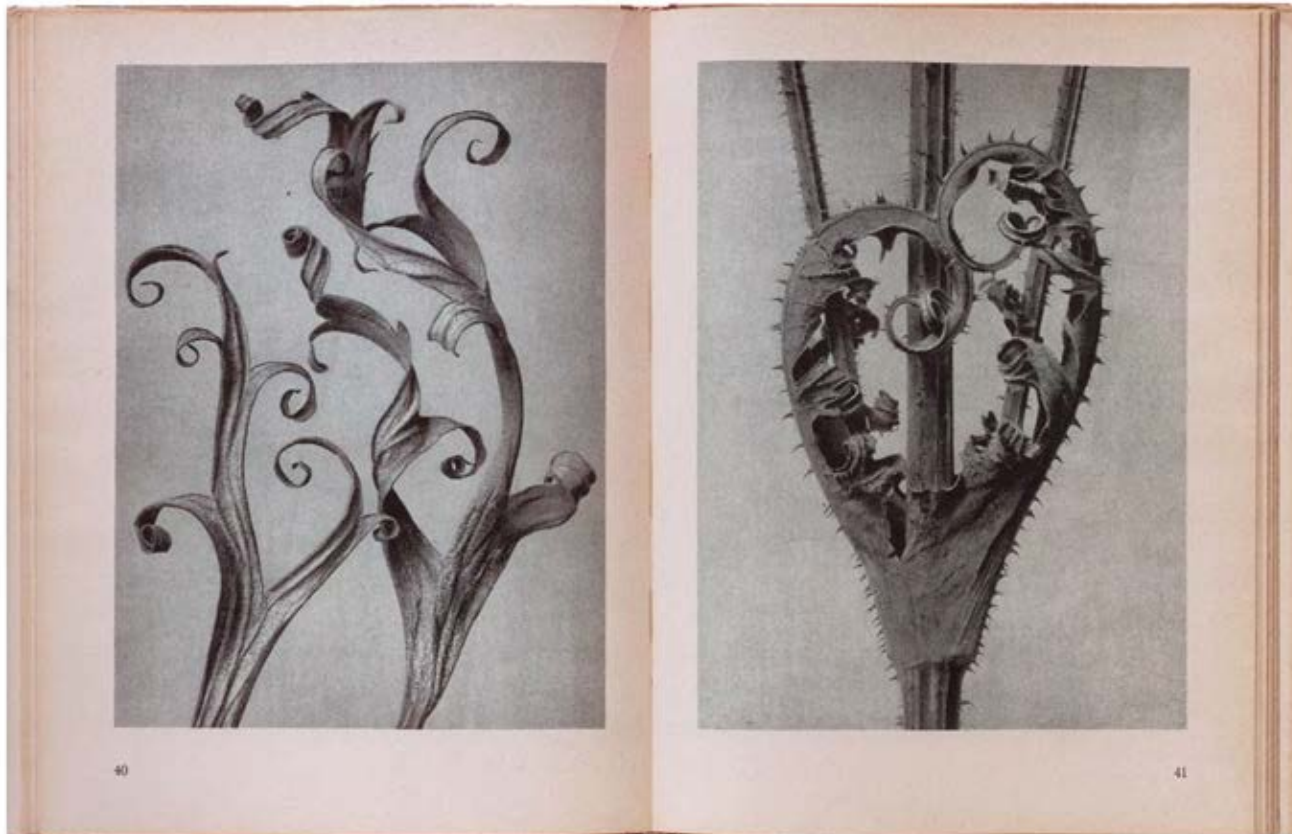
BECOMING KNOWN

All of that changed in 1926. The Berlin art dealer and gallery owner Karl Nierendorf, deeply impressed by the special aesthetics of the highly detailed plant photographs of Blossfeldt, organized a first exhibition of his work outside of the teaching institute. Nierendorf exhibited the photographs together with sculptures from Papua-New Guinea and paintings of Richard Janthur under the title "Exotics, Cacti and Janthur" in his Berlin gallery. It was acclaimed by the critics.



Pumpkin plant tendrils (Cucurbita)

Nierendorf was also instrumental in the publication of Blossfeldt's first book *Urformen der Kunst* published by Ernst Wasmuth in 1928. Blossfeldt became famous almost overnight. The book was sold out within months, and a French, English and Swedish edition followed, as well as various further printings in German.



Two pages from Blossfeldt's book "*Urformen der Kunst*" in 1928. It created a sensation when published and is considered by noted critics as one of the 100 most influential books of the previous century.

This book and the enthusiastic way in which critics viewed it, "consecrated" Blossfeldt as a New Objectivity artist by the end of the 1920s. He was made an "*avant garde* artist against his will" with photographs that were originally taken exclusively for teaching purposes in arts and craft lessons.

FAMILY LIFE

Blossfeldt married Caroline Maria Plank in 1898. The couple lived in the Gr newald area of Berlin. The marriage lasted until their divorce in 1910. Grossfeldt married again in 1912. His second wife was the

opera singer Helene Wegener. They lived in Stieglitz, Berlin.

Helene accompanied Grossfeldt on several journeys to southern Europe and northern Africa, where he sought new plant material to photograph. They remained together until his death. Grossfeldt died in December 1932, two years after he was pensioned from his teaching position.

TECHNIQUE

Blossfeldt used his photography as teaching material in his lectures and drawing lessons. He was not intent on achieving fame as an artist. He needed clear, sharply contoured images of plants to get his students to appreciate the abundant wealth of forms in nature.

Blossfeldt used cameras he built himself. He used glass plate negatives with orthochromatic emulsion of various sizes to get the contour sharpness he was looking for. His lens choice allowed him to photograph the small plant details up to 40x magnification. He used soft daylight or diffuse grazing light as light source, which make the images look darkish.

He used clear glass plates to place specimens on with space to the background to render it out-of-focus. The background was always plain, mostly white, or grey and sometimes black. Dried plants were sometimes stood upright in modelling clay or hung from

supports. In some of his negatives you can still see the clothe pegs he used to keep plants in place, which were removed by retouching before enlargement and publication.

For his art lessons he made 9 x 12 cm slides from the negatives which were projected on a screen, and for exhibitions 30 x 24cm or 60 x 24 cm silver gelatine prints.

He kept meticulous notes on all his photographs, over 6000, always noting their scientific name as well. These records still exist, and help tremendously in cataloguing his legacy.

LEGACY

Karl Blossfeldt's legacy is a testament to the profound connection between art, science, and nature. Through his pioneering botanical photography, Blossfeldt not only documented the intricate details of plant forms but also revealed the inherent artistic beauty within them.

His work continues to inspire and influence artists, photographers, and scientists alike, reminding us of the boundless creativity and wonder found in the natural world. Blossfeldt's ability to capture the essence of botanical structures in a way that transcends mere documentation has secured his place as a visionary artist whose impact reverberates across disciplines and time, enriching our understanding and appreciation of both art and nature.

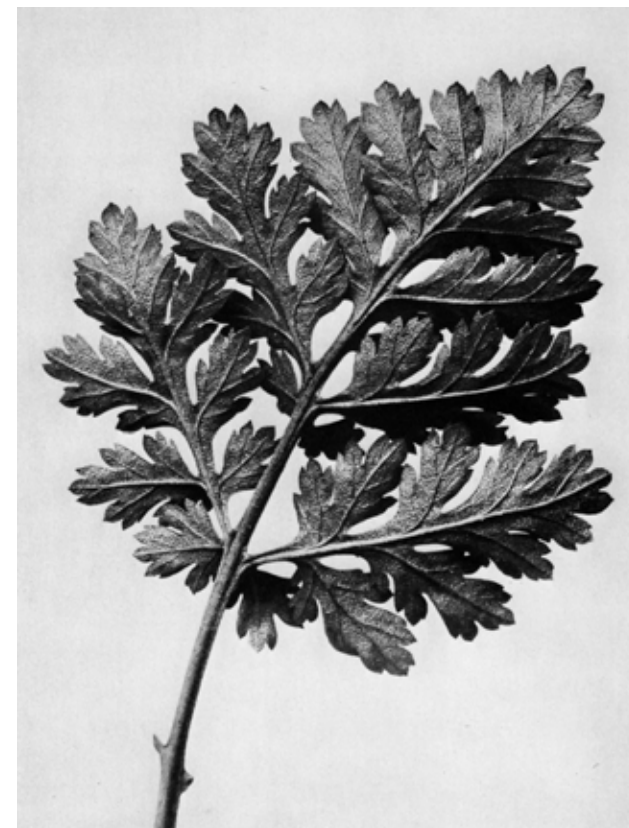


Rosette of leaves (Saxifraga wilkommiana) ca. 1900

REFERENCES

Koezle, Hans-Michael (2011), *50 Photo Icons – the story behind the pictures*. Taschen GmbH, Cologne, Germany. ISBN 978-3-8365-2603-7

<https://artincontext.org/karl-blossfeldt/> (accessed May 2025)



From the book "Artforms in Nature" 1928

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Blossfeldt (accessed May 2025)

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Karl-Blossfeldt> (accessed May 2025)

SHOW AND TELL MEETING 13TH MAY – MEMBERS TALKING ABOUT THEIR IMAGES

Five of our members shared specific images during this month's Show and Tell. Each one's approach was different, and the audience participated actively in the discussions. Depicted here is a selection of their images and the summary of the discussions.

JOGGIE VAN STADEN

Joggie showed a series of images depicting the splendour of sea waves. He explained how each one of them is built around a specific idea or mood. This indicates the way in which he needs to photograph them:

- The choice of focal length comes first. A long focal length to focus the attention of the viewer on the majestic size and details of waves. A super wide-angle lens to transfer the viewer into the action, make him/her experience what is happening.
- Then the shutter speed, a high shutter speed to either freeze the action totally or a slow shutter speed for a panning shot, i.e. a 1/4000ths or half a second for example.
- Thereafter the aperture to ensure that the depth of field is adequate to retain the details he is wishing to showcase, usually around f8.
- Lastly, the ISO to get to the appropriate exposure for the selected shutter speed and aperture.

Being there at the right time, often long before sunrise is just as important. And when you are there, you need to work the scene, take as many images as you possibly can. Often the best image only emerges after you have taken many failures.

On the question whether he does a lot of post-processing, Joggie explained that he tries to do as much as

he can in camera, i.e. making sure that the image is what he is looking for. Post-processing is then used to fine tune the image to emphasise the mood and story he wants to tell.

A long lens, 500mm, to get the detail and a high shutter



speed of 1/5000ths to freeze all motion, required an ISO of 400 to depict the majestic force of this breaking wave.



A shorter focal length of 200mm, but still a high shutter speed of 1/2000ths to stop most of the motion, provides a more serene feeling of the massive waves.



For the next image a similar focal length of 200mm was used, but with a slow shutter speed of about half a second, necessitated dialling the ISO down to 50 and closing the aperture to f-22. Thereafter Joggie panned from right to left going with the movement of the waves, all the time keeping the crest of the wave in the same spot in the frame. The result is a tranquil image



taken before sunrise; the pastel colours of the blue hour reflected in the sea surface.

Thinking about the way in which his grandchildren experience breaking waves, Joggie used a 24mm wide-angle lens, crouched down in the breaking waves with the camera only 300mm above the sand, making sure the

camera is not hit by the spray, set a high shutter speed of 1/400ths and an aperture of f9 to gain depth of field, resulted in this compelling image. Is this how a small child experiences the waves breaking on the beach?



To showcase the power of breaking waves, Joggie set the lens at 70mm, a fast shutter speed of 1/640ths and a medium aperture of f7,1 and shot into the rising sun. His friend DeWet on the rock provides scale to reveal the immensity of the breaking waves. The lack of detail in the rocks was questioned by the audience, but Joggie explained that if detail is brought out in post-processing, the image loses much of its impact.

SCHALK ENGELBRECHT

Schalk talked about exposure challenges, at the same time reminiscing about the way he got into photography when he spent a year as a scientist in Antarctica. He was advised to purchase an Asahi Pentax Spotmatic SLR, which was one of the first cameras that had through the lens metering. He did not have money for extra lenses, so the 50mm standard lens had to do.

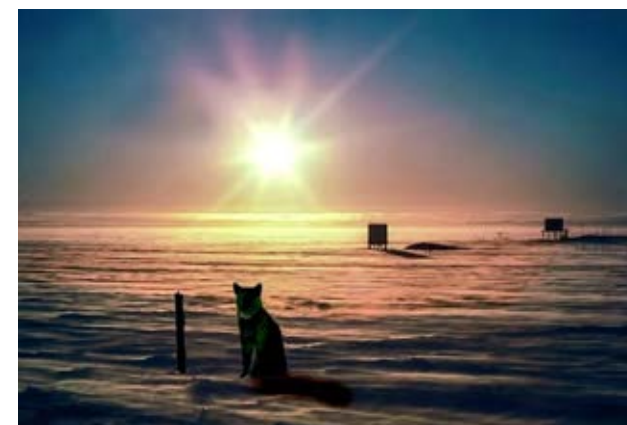
They developed the Ektachrome slide films themselves at the base.



With white snow everywhere, exposure was a challenge. If you expose according to the light meter reading everything will be middle grey. They had to learn very quickly to compensate the exposure, as there is no way the slide can be enhanced once processed. What you took is what you get. In this image their party is on the way to an ice shelf by sled pulled by their Norwegian Huskies. The snow is correctly exposed, bright but not lacking any detail.

At the South African base camp, the midnight sun was very much a feature. During these summer days the sun never sets. It turns around at midnight before going down below the horizon. Schalk wanted to photograph the midnight sun, but the image with the sun in the middle with the husky looking on offers no clue as to whether it is the midnight sun or not.

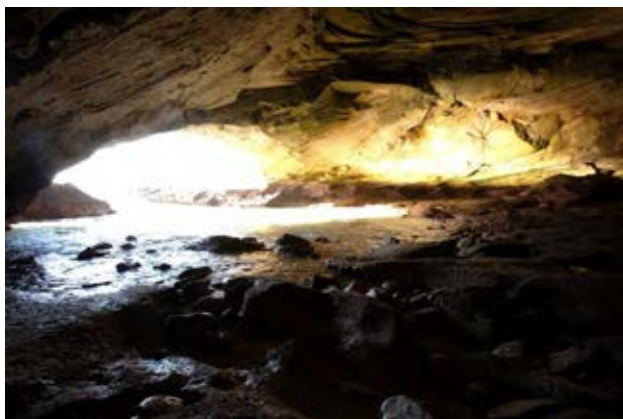
To show that it was really the midnight sun, Schalk took a series of images on top of each other without



advancing the film. This was a trick you could do with some film cameras. The resulting image, with the sun taken at half hour intervals and the outside temperature a freezing -15°C tells the story. Each of the images was exposed for a fifth of the proper exposure time, because the exposures add up if the film is not advanced.



[Ed: Shades of the image that Emil Schulthess took in the far north at about the same time, the difference being that Schulthess took 24 images one every hour to show the complete journey of the sun over the day.]



The massive Waenhuiskrans cave near Arniston is a worthwhile visit. Photographing it however, is not straightforward. In the above single exposure, the far side of the cave is sort of properly exposed, but the opening to the sea is totally overexposed and blown out. The rocks in the foreground are underexposed and lack detail.



The only way to rectify this situation is to take a series of images at various exposures and blend them in post-

processing. In this way one can overcome the vast range of brightness values that the camera is just not capable of recording in a single exposure. The difference in exposure between the open sea and the dark side of the cave is six f-stops for example!

The final blended image showcases the beauty of the Waenhuiskrans sea cave nicely. High Dynamic Range (HDR) at its best.

TRIX JONKER

Trix asked a philosophical question, namely is it OK to practice sky replacement in landscape photography now that it has become so sophisticated in post-processing software like Photoshop for example. She showed landscapes with great clouds, and asked the audience whether the sky had been replaced or not. For some of the images it was obvious that the sky was not part of the original image, whereas others the audience could not agree on whether it had been done or not.

Her question and the discussion by the audience did not deal with the technicalities of sky replacement, but rather the ethical or emotional issues of sky replacement. Landscapes entered in nature categories obviously may not have the sky replaced, it would be against the rules. But this was not part of Trix's question.

For the tree image most of the audience thought this was a sky replacement, and they were right. Few



could say why they thought so. The difference in light on the tree and the clouds may be a clue.



For her next image (previous page) the question was Is this the original image or has the sky been replaced? The audience was not sure. The next image with sky replacement made it clear, it is the original. The next image contains not only the sky replacement, but also a tree that was grafted over the small outbuilding on the right.



The question-and-answer session then descended into a bit of merriment, as the audience was not always sure, and Trix enjoyed their discomfort. The message got home. It is sometimes easy to spot the sky replacement, but this is not always the case. It is mostly a feeling more than anything else that the sky and the landscape do not integrate well. The direction of the sunlight on the clouds and the landscape is slightly different, the time-of-day difference is noticeable, or the sky just does not make sense in that specific setting.



This image of the well-known little church near Swellendam was correctly called as with a sky replacement by the audience, probably because many have tried to photograph it in circumstances with a bland sky. The original image below corroborated this call.



Then Trix showed the next image of this church with different perspective, much more close-up, and the call was still sky replacement. This time however, the audience got it all wrong. Trix remarked dryly



that if you are there at the right time or wait a bit there are nice clouds as well.

In the final discussion most agreed that sky replacement is an appropriate tool to make an image that resonates with your feelings. It was made clear that sky replacement is not just about replacing a bland sky with any nice sky with the click of a button, there is much more involved.

The sky must be selected carefully, so that the new sky and the original landscape integrate seamlessly, the light must be similar, and the setting must make sense. It was also mentioned that for some images a blue sky is fine, there is no rule that says you must have clouds in the sky to make a good image.

IAN JAY

Ian showed three images and discussed his journey looking for something special in an otherwise mundane photo.

He casually photographed these Mouse Birds sitting on the aloe flowers. When considering the image later, he thought a good title would be “Confer on a hot topic”,



an allegory of the birds sitting in a group on the reddish flowers of the aloe. He cropped the image to get rid of the outer parts focussing on the birds, and enhanced the colour of the flowers to get a more saturated red in support of the title.



A discussion on the so-called rule of odds ensued. Some in the audience considered this as rubbish. But

there is method in this “rule”, which should not be seen as an absolute, but rather as good guidance for pleasant composition that is based on sound psychological realities.

The brain always tries to find shapes and patterns. Two objects are therefore often perceived as a single object, i.e. two lovers walking together on the beach. With three objects the brain connects them to form a triangle, which is a powerful compositional element.

Once the number of objects becomes too great however, the brain will stop trying to perceive them as a single shape, and will start to look for groups, lines, and patterns. Like in this image, the birds and the tops of the flowers form a nice half circle standing on its base conveying a sense of stability.



Ian's next image was a rather mundane landscape in not-so-great light. But he knows that in a landscape with a little bit of back-lighting, if enhanced can render leaves more translucent. Alternatively, the reflections

off the leaves if enhanced, become specular highlight patterns that add another level of interest.

And this is what Ian was looking for when he ran the image through post-processing, calling it “Silver tree golden forest”.



His final image he took pottering around the garden after a rain shower with a compact camera. He



photographed the water droplets that had accumulated on the leaves of the plants. But the image out-of-camera did not thrill him. So, he looked for something more out-worldly.



By removing the green colour and enhancing the contrast, Ian created an image that reminded him of the images of outer space that we see from time to time. So, he called his creation “Universe on a leaf”.

The audience appreciated Ian’s efforts trying to create something out of nearly nothing as regards the images the camera gave him

GERHARD DREYER

Gerhard showed two scenes he sought advice from the audience on how to strengthen them in post-processing and whether they would be fine as prints.

Gerhard showed a colour and a monochrome version as his first image. As regards the composition, the advice was to crop the half tree on the left-hand side, and to crop the bottom 15% to make the image more of a panorama, the road being too overpowering.



The contrast in the monochrome image could be enhanced quite a bit, and the sky darkened a lot to create a more ominous mood. Selective darkening of bright areas is also indicated to force the eye of the viewer more towards the house rather than trapping it in the bright, diffuse trees on the skyline.

Similar post-processing could be considered for the colour image, even though the brighter trees in the background are much more of an advantageous composition element as compared to the monochrome image.

For his final image, Gerhard showed a scene with building cranes in the mist with the tops of kelp showing as foreground. He asked the audience what would be the best approach in editing to render it a much better image.

Most of the audience thought that the foreground is a distraction and could be cropped altogether, thereby focussing on the cranes in the mist. Further enhancement of that part would also be indicted.



As regards printing, those who have done it, said that you should select your printer carefully. Pay a bit more, instead of going to one of the quick print shops, talk about what you want and then place the order. Remember, what you get in a print is different to what you see on your computer screen.

Criticism of my work . . . now means something to me whereas previously my self-deception admitted nothing.
Paul Klee

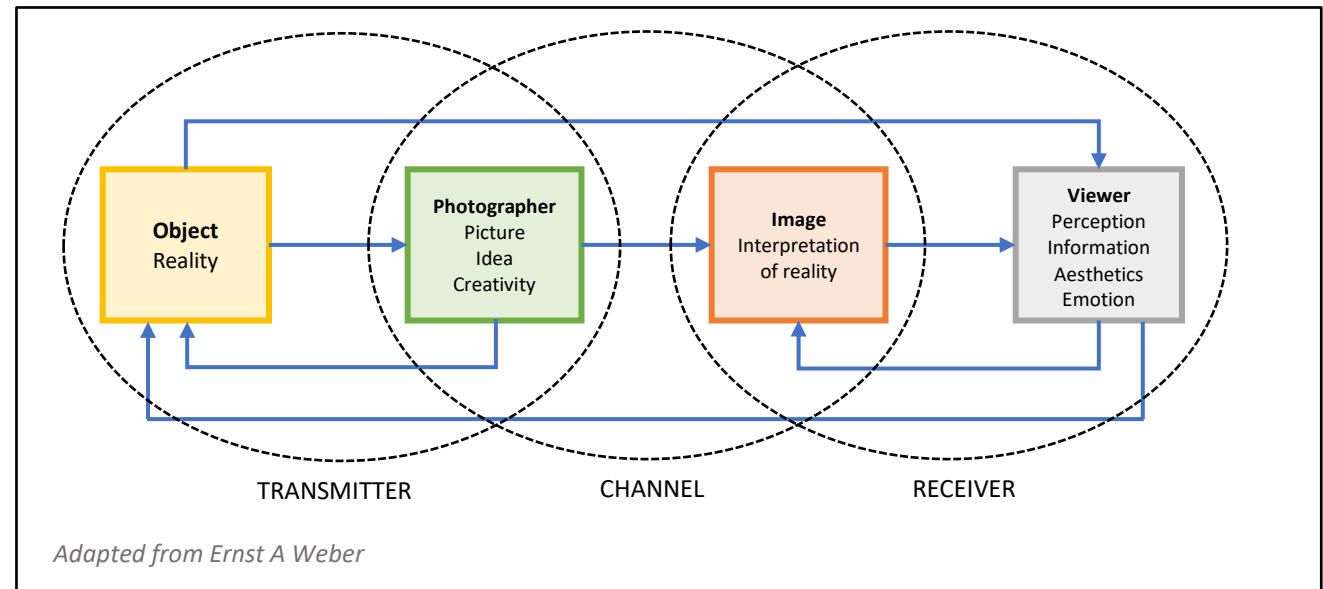
Over the last two newsletters we have looked at the various club competition systems in use in camera clubs and what we do in GCC. Now let us look at what we, the members experience. It is not only the comments of the judge that is important when I enter my images in the Judging and Learning competition. It is also how I react to these comments I get during the competition that determines the value I get from the comments.

The photograph as communication

NOTE: An in-depth article on a photograph as communication was published in the GCC March 2021 Newsletter.

A photograph is a communication from the photographer to the viewer. Like in all communication there should be a transmitter, a channel, and a receiver. The figure on the right depicts the elements of the communication for a photograph. In normal communication there would be feedback loops between the transmitter and the receiver.

But in the case of an image entered for judging, these feedback loops are absent. The judge has no idea what the emotional state of the photographer was or is about the image. The judge can only evaluate the image as presented. Therefore, if I enjoy



my image because it depicts a special moment I cherish, the judge does not necessarily know this.

The judge may just see a “record” shot, unless I have managed to depict the emotion in no unmistakable terms. And if I have not, I will certainly not gain extra points for my emotions, and the score may be much lower than what I expected. The comments may even be critical about my lack of proper technique which is all too obvious.

Therefore, in selecting an image for entering the Judging and Learning competition, I will do well to develop an objective opinion as regards its impact on an independent, unattached viewer.

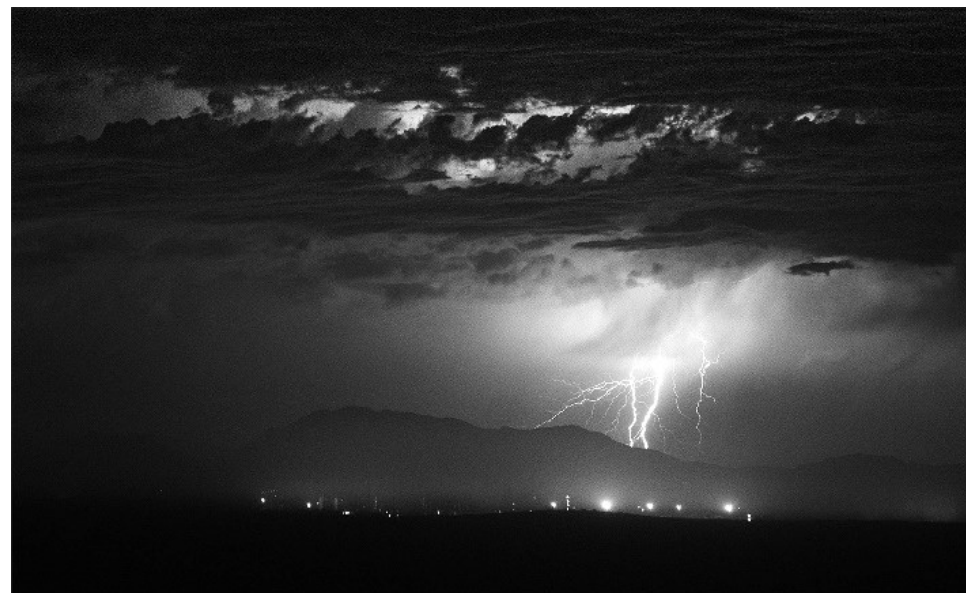
Being in “love” with my photograph

This is allied to the previous point. I have spent an inordinate time and expense getting it, and then lavished love and attention in editing, spending hours in front of the computer. Hence, I am seriously in “love” with the image I have created. I am therefore expecting only the best of the best regarding the score and comments.

The judge has no such feelings for the image, has no emotional connection to it. Hence, my “love” relationship with the image is of absolutely no value to the judge. The judge looks at the image as presented – a two-dimensional, often cold, unemotional depiction of reality. The score and comments may be



An image that I am in “love” with. Yellow is my favourite colour, and the image was taken during Marie and my visit to Namaqualand many years ago - a very special journey. But it did not do well in club competitions – the judges knew nothing of my love affair with the image. They judged the image as a flat rendition without much merit.



“Heaven’s fury” scored 9, 11 and 13 a few months ago. Hence it did not get the Gold I thought it was worth! One judge obviously did not like it at all, one thought it was great scoring it highly, and the third judge could not make up his/her mind and scored it middle of the road, leaving it to the other two judges to determine its fate. I must accept that is the way it is. Sadly, the comment was inconclusive, leaving me rather non-plussed.

something quite unlike my emotional attachment to the image.

I must be acutely aware of that when I select the images that I enter, my feelings about the image mean absolutely nothing to the judge, i.e. I must be fully objective in my choices. That is something that is quite difficult, and requires an objectivity regarding my images that is often beyond my capabilities.

Judges are not clones of each other

Judging a photograph is a subjective task, always has been. This despite good intentions and training

programmes by GCC or the PSSA JAP programme to enhance the proficiency of judges for example. This is easy to demonstrate by showing the same image to several judges independently and asking them to score and comment.

Many of us can also testify as to these vagaries in that we have images that scored highly in club competitions and then get nowhere in a salon. The obverse is also true. It gets even more colourful in that an image scores a COM in one salon, and does not even get accepted in the next. The judges are different, the result equally so.

VERY IMPORTANT: Note to self

I must accept this variability of responses to my images, listen to what the judges have to say. But I must always retain my belief in my own work. I should take that which is relevant for my progress as a photographer, and disregard the rest without getting uptight about it. I must not let any judge’s comments poison the joy that I have in doing photography. Enough said!

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: Monochrome portrait (NB: CHANGE)

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.

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: 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.

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.

GCC COMMITTEE MEETING FEEDBACK

The GCC Committee met on 15 May and other than routine issues that are standing items on the agenda, also discussed one or two new items impacting the way GCC is running.

- The finances of GCC are in good shape. Riana Pienaar who has taken over as treasurer from Henri le Roux, is doing a great job. We are indeed privileged in GCC to have so many members that are prepared to give of their time and expertise to make GCC run smoothly.
- The GCC membership remains stable at just over 70 members, but younger members are still in "short supply". If you know of younger people looking for a camera club, please point them towards GCC, invite them to our meetings, make them feel at home.
- The GCC programme for the rest of the year has been fleshed out with some exiting entries. The

programme published further on in this newsletter contains all of them. Please have a good look and keep on participating – you are making GCC what it is.

- We have embarked on a series of training sessions for our judges with the view to enhance the comments to be more meaningful for the member whose image is being discussed as well as for the uplifting of the photography prowess of all members.

One of the main points of discussion was about changing the format of the GCC Judging and Learning competition. During a recent judging training session, the idea of having the star rating of the member entering made known before comments are developed was proposed. The committee considered the following information:

- The reason for commenting beginners differently, e.g. concentrating mostly on focus and exposure, has its roots in the past when slides were entered and such technical errors could not be rectified after the photo was taken. It was the first skill to be mastered. Modern digital camera technology has rendered this largely redundant.
- The average score differences for the first four months in 2025 for the GCC junior and senior members was 2 points, whereas the difference between a 5-star and a 3-star gaining gold is four points, namely 36 versus 32. For a 4-star and 1-star the difference is even bigger at six points,

namely 34 versus 28. The average scores of the junior members are therefore much higher than the sliding scale allowances, indicating junior members are not far behind senior members as regards the quality of their images.

- Hence it is questionable what should or could be said differently in a meaningful way for a beginner relative to a master photographer. It is therefore doubtful whether “dumbing down” the comments for beginners is helpful for the junior member or for the general membership.
- Quite a variety of approaches are followed by the clubs in the Garden Route. There is no preferred pattern. It varies from the star rating known even before scoring, through to the rating made known once the scoring has been done but before commenting, to the star rating not known when scoring and commenting.

- Experience by GCC judges judging at other clubs indicates that their comments did not change if the star rating of the author was made known before comments were given.
- Although some senior members within PSSA may prefer a system whereby the star rating should be known before comments are provided, PSSA has not published any definitive preference.

The Committee therefore decided to maintain the current GCC system.

SALON RESULTS

We have the results of two 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 salons.

1st Hillcrest Camera Club Digital Salon

Zenobia Geldenhuys – 1 acceptance
 Anton Gericke – 1 acceptance
 Rob Glenister – 3 acceptances
 Alan King – 3 acceptances
 Anton la Grange – 9 acceptances, 2 COMs
 Lynette Neethling – 1 acceptance
 Elaine van der Toorn – 7 acceptances
 Amanda Whiteman – 2 acceptances, 1 COM

7th Paarl National Salon of Photography

Peter Betts – 2 acceptances
 Anton Gericke – 3 acceptances
 Rob Glenister – 3 acceptances
 Alan King – 4 acceptances
 Lynette Neethling – 1 acceptance
 Elaine van der Toorn – 9 acceptances
 Amanda Whiteman – 2 acceptances, 1 COM

GEORGE CAMERA CLUB PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME 2025

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

MONTH	DATE	ACTIVITY	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	THEME
JUNE	Sat 7	Victoria Bay – slow wave action – 6h30 am latest	Contact Ben Schoeman for more information	Monochrome portrait
	Tues 10	Show & Tell Meeting –Mackie Rixom	Presentation on her trek to the Langtang Valley in Nepal	
	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 – Martin Kellermann	Focus stacking in macro and close up photography	
	Sun 17	Photovault deadline		
	Thu 21	GCC Committee Meeting 5pm		
	Tues 26	Judging & Learning Meeting 6p.m. for 6:30p.m.	Emmaus	
		SANDDRIF 28/8 to 4/9 – do your own booking	EARLY BOOKING ABSOLUTE ESSENTIAL	
SEPT	Tues 9	Show & Tell Meeting – Ben Schoeman	Blending of light painted scenes in photoshop	Macro or close up patterns in nature
	Sat 13	Audio Visual meeting		
	Sun 14	Photovault deadline		
	Tues 23	Judging & Learning Meeting 6p.m. for 6:30p.m.	Emmaus	
OCT	Tues 14	Show & Tell Meeting – GCC AV Group	Showcasing some of their best	Blue hour
	Sat 17	De Rust outing 17 th and 18 th – do your own booking	Stay at House Martin –programme detail in WhatsApp group	
	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		



*....admit it. You only think about your
photoshop doings!*

PUBLISHING DETAILS

This newsletter is published by the George Camera Club. Whereas every care is taken to ensure that the information contained in it is correct, GCC cannot be held responsible for any unintentional errors. The views expressed by authors in articles are that of the author, and may not reflect the view of GCC. Should you wish to use articles in the newsletter in another publication, please contact the Editor.

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