





Affiliated to the Photographic Society of South Africa

Table of Contents

| VENUE1 |
|---|
| MEETING TIMES1 |
| CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS1 |
| NEXT MEETING1 |
| NOTES FROM THE EDITOR1 |
| ANNUAL COMPETITION RESULTS2 |
| WORKER OF THE YEAR RESULTS2 |
| COMPETITION RESULT2 |
| INDIVIDUAL RESULTS2 |
| OPEN SESSIONS |
| ANNUAL SCHEDULE |
| MEMBER DIRECTORY3 |
| COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2002/20033 |
| CLUB MEMBERS |
| SALON SCENE4 |
| NATIONAL |
| |
| INTERNATIONAL4 |
| INTERNATIONAL |
| INTERNATIONAL4 PROPOSAL: NEW ADVANCEMENT SYSTEM FOR VPS MEMBERS |
| INTERNATIONAL4 PROPOSAL: NEW ADVANCEMENT SYSTEM FOR VPS MEMBERS5 PROPOSAL – REVISED ANNUAL COMPETITION CATEGORIES |
| INTERNATIONAL |
| INTERNATIONAL 4 PROPOSAL: NEW ADVANCEMENT SYSTEM FOR VPS MEMBERS 5 PROPOSAL – REVISED ANNUAL COMPETITION CATEGORIES 5 PROPOSAL - MONTHLY COMPETITION JUDGING 6 CLOSE-UP AND MACRO PHOTOGRAPHY 6 DEFINITIONS 6 TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS 7 EQUIPMENT 8 DEFENSION 14 |
| INTERNATIONAL |
| INTERNATIONAL |
| INTERNATIONAL |
| INTERNATIONAL |

Meetings

Venue

NG Kerk 13 Hazel Street Three Rivers

Meeting Times

- Slides and Prints 1st Tuesday of every month
- Workshop 3rd Tuesday of every month

Correspondence Address

PO Box 263051

Three Rivers, 1935

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on the 2nd September 2003. During this session the annual general meeting will take place. The next practical session will be held on the 16th September 2003. At this occasion Thinus Mathee of the Vaal Triangle Technikon will be the guest speaker.

Notes from the Editor

This month's newsletter is all about the end of our photographic year. You will find the results of our annual competition in this edition, as well as the results of the Worker of the Year competition. Congratulations to John Rowntree for winning the WofY competition. I know you worked hard for this title during the year and we all admire your perseverance and tremendous skill when it comes to bird photography. John, we expect at least an audio visual presentation on the subject early in the next year! While busy congratulating, Leana van der Walt's LPSSA panel in colour prints was accepted. (Continue on page 4)

August 2003

Annual Competition Results

Worker of the Year Results

| Category | Name | Points |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------|
| 1st Overall | John Rowntree | 194 |
| 2nd Overall | Ernest Arnold | 180 |
| 3rd Overall | Pat Tyler | 135 |
| 5* Slides | Ernest Arnold | 132 |
| 4* Slides | John Rowntree | 134 |
| 3* Slides | Pat Tyler | 135 |
| 2* Slides | Petrus Harmse | 16 |
| 1* Slides | None | |
| 5* Prints/Digital | None | |
| 4* Prints/Digital | Johann van der Walt | 132 |
| 3* Prints/Digital | Uwe Soltau | 74 |
| 2* Prints/Digital | None | |
| 1* Prints/Digital | Tersia Nel | 18 |

Competition result

| | Most Impact | | Mini Series | |
|--------|---------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Slides | John Rowntree | Spider Woman | Pat Tyler | Polystyrene Art |
| Print | Mike Tarmey | Speed 1890 | Johann vd Walt | Candid Aardklop |

Audio/Visual

None

Individual Results

Slides

| | Best in Category | Best Portrait | Best Land / Seascape | Best Wildlife |
|-------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 5* | Milton Evangelou | Milton Evangelou | Ernest Arnold | Ernest Arnold |
| | Nine Barrels | Vanita | Dune Colours | Feasting |
| 4* | John Rowntree | John Rowntree | None | John Rowntree |
| | Sitting Pretty | Spiderwoman | | Sitting Pretty |
| 3* | Pat Tyler | Jerry Fowlds | Pat Tyler | Jean Roy |
| | Floating Cosmos | Samantha | Marble Baths | Resting Monarch |
| Print | ts/Digital | | | |
| | Best in Category | Best Portrait | Best Land / Seascape | Best Wildlife |
| 4* | Johann vd Walt | Leana vd Walt | Johann vd Walt | None |
| | The Masks | Enlightenment | Morning Curves | |
| 3* | John Rowntree | Hendre vd Walt | Ernest Arnold | John Rowntree |
| | Avian Beauty | Destiny's Child | Nature's Mix | Avian Beauty |

Open Sessions

The following list shows the topics for the open sessions for the rest of 2003:

| September | Tinus Mathee from Vaal Triangle Technikon | |
|-----------|---|--|
| October | Outdoor Portraiture by Jerry Fowlds | |
| November | Interior Photography by Milton Evangelou | |

Annual Schedule

| Month | Refreshments | Judges | Set Subject |
|--------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Sep-03 | Mike, Chris | Mike, Jerry, John | Rust and Scrap Metal |
| Oct-03 | Johann, Leana | Martin, Marie, Eric | Floral |
| Nov-03 | Martin, TBA | Visitors | Glass |
| Dec-03 | All for Christmas | Horst, Milton | Movement |

Member Directory

Committee Members 2002/2003

| Honorary Life President: | Mel Jones | 0164232264 |
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| Chairman: | Milton Evangelou LPSSA | 0164236525 |
| Vice chairman / Newsletter editor: | Johann van der Walt LPSSA | 0169711968 |
| Activities Coordinator: | Horst Müller | 0169873315 |
| Treasurer: | John Rowntree | 0164232736 |
| Competition Secretary: | Mike Tarmey LPSSA | 0169763046 |
| Secretary: | Pat Tyler | 0163661095 |

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| Salon Scene | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|------------------------|--|
| Salons | Closing | Courier | Sections | Directors | |
| National | | | | | |
| Highveld | 22 Sep 03 | | Slides Only | Willie Labuschagne | |
| | | | | 017 631 3397 | |
| | | | | Nhksecunda@hotmail.com | |
| Southern | 12 Sep 2003 | | Prints Only | Nelson Lopes | |
| Suburbs | | | | (011) 434 2684 | |
| | | | | pflopes@global.co.za | |
| Pietersburg | 27 Oct 2003 | | Prints Only | Chris Swanepoel | |
| | | | | 083 655 2439 | |
| | | | | chrissw@mweb.co.za | |
| International | | | | | |
| Border | Aug 04 | | Slides & Prints | Terry Smit | |
| | | | | | |

Editor's Notes - continued from page 1

We (and particularly I!) are very proud of your achievement! You must be one of the youngest PSSA members reaching this level of recognition in the history of the PSSA! Our club now has six members who have received PSSA honours awards. I think this is a great achievement for a small club like ours!

As mentioned in our diary, next month is our annual general meeting. In this newsletter you will find several suggestions to be discussed at this meeting. Please take the time to read through these suggestions and then make sure that you attend the meeting in order to help us making the right decisions.

Johann van der Walt

Editor

Proposal: New Advancement System

Last month, in my article on our visit to the JPS monthly Print Meeting, I mentioned that I would like us to consider such an approach for our club meetings. I intend to propose the following trial system at our Annual General Meeting in September:

Part of this proposal is the trial implementation of the system for a 3 month period only (October, November and December 2003). At the December meeting we will discuss the feasibility of continuing with this new system or whether we should revert back to the old system for the January 2004 meeting.

The proposal is only to be tested in the print section and not in the slide section. During the December 2003 evaluation we can discuss the possibility of expanding it to the slide section.

The purpose of the new system will be:

- To stimulate better interaction between VPS members at monthly meetings.
- To allow participating members to get a broader opinion of their work.
- To better prepare members for participating in National and International Photo Salons and PSSA Honours.
- To allow members that does not actively participate in the current setup the opportunity for participation outside the competitive paradigm.

Implementing this system will have a direct influence on competitions such

as our Worker of the Year competition – even if we decide not to implement the system after the evaluation period, it will still have an influence on the traditional way of calculating the WofY points.

With this in mind the first suggestion is that we split the WofY into two separate groups, one for Slides and one for Prints. This way a worker participating in the new print evaluation technique will not feel penalised when competing for the WofY title. We will therefore not have an overall WofY winner in 2004, but rather one in the Slide category and one in the Print category. (It could very well happen that the Slide WofY and the Print WofY is the same person).

The second suggestion is then that the prints will not be judged in the traditional way until the end of the vear, but rather be discussed at the club meetings by all members attending the meeting. The purpose of the discussion will be to evaluate whether the specific photo under discussion is of such a standard that author may use it in the an advancement panel. An advancement panel will be judged bv the advancement committee as elected by members of the club. We will, therefore, also need to elect the advancement committee at the Annual General Meeting. The first task of the advancement committee will be to determine the rules for advancement. as well as the advancement levels. and to publish these rules and levels in the September 2003 newsletter.

Proposal – Revised Annual Competition Categories

Mike Tarmey suggests that we discuss and rationalise the current categories used for the club annual competition at the Annual General Meeting in September 2003.

Proposal - Monthly Competition Judging

1. The proposal has three objectives in mind, being mainly to improve club judging overall for consistency, to identify judges being too lenient and to identify those being too strict.

2. This will require that each judge's score per entry is scored in a log book which in turn shows all three scores and the total that depicts the award, i.e. Gold.

3. At the end of each month's session the separate judges' variance is counted which highlights the swing, i.e. Too lenient.

4. This info is then forwarded to the committee member responsible for judging, who in turn gives each judge feedback and who can then arrange Judging Refresher Courses when deemed necessary. The feedback to the judges alone will be advantageous. The question arises what to do when a judge continues regardless of the swing feedback!

5. I personally feel that the judging score sheet should be open to all.

6. A summary sheet listing all judges and their respective 'swing' scores can be utilized to determine when judging workshops are needed etc.

7. The committee member responsible for judging can add a column reflecting the judge's critique and constructive comments. This once again can be used for 6 and 4 above.

Ernest Arnold

Close-up and Macro Photography

By Johann van der Walt

This article was used as the introduction to our practical session on Macro photography that took place in July 2003. It may serve as an introductory guide for photographers who want to get acquainted with the equipment and techniques involved in macro photography. If you want to get serious about macro photography, then this guide will not be enough to teach you the finer points. At the end of this guide you will find a list of books and articles that I used to produce this article and I would like to encourage you to consult at least one of these books for a more indepth guide on the topic.

Definitions

Magnification

Before defining macro photography, it is necessary to understand what we mean by magnification. Magnification is the height of the image on the medium (film or digital) divided by the height of the real life image. For 35 mm film, the frame is about 24mm long by 36mm wide. Example: When taking a photo of a rose where the rose flower is about 12cm in diameter, and the rose flower fills the height of the frame, this means that the 12cm (120mm) flower is represented on the film in 24mm. Thus calculating the magnification as described above $(24 \div 120 = 0.2)$ resulted in a magnification of (reduction in this case) 20% or 1/5 of the actual image size. The notation used for this magnification is 1:5. If we were able to get a "closer" photo of say only a 24mm area of the rose flower, then we will end up with a $(24 \div 24 = 1)$ life size image on film or a 1:1 magnification.

Now that we have defined magnification, we can move on to defining macro photography and its close relatives (close-up photography and micro photography).

Finding a clear definition for macro photography is not easy. Every book and article has its own definition of what it regards as close-up photography and what is regarded as macro photography. And then just to add to the confusion, one must

also distinguish between macro photography and micro photography. I have decided to define these terms by means of deduction.

Micro Photography

I will start with micro photography. The real term is actually photomicrography, which is a subject that requires specialized microscopic instruments. Most books refer to photomicrography when magnification higher than 40x (or in some books higher than 100x) is achieved. But looking at the achievements of macro photography with 35mm equipment, I have decided to define Micro photography as photography where magnification higher that 10x is achieved.

Macro Photography

Defining Macro photography is not so easy. The reason is the popularisation of zoom lenses that include a "macro" function. Some of these lenses are advertised as having a macro function that will only result in a one tenth magnification of the subject. Most of these lenses offer at least one fourth magnification while only a handful offer life size magnification. To add to the confusion, some of the new digital cameras offer a macro function based on how close they can focus (up to only 1cm!), but they do not mention the magnification ratio. For purposes of this document we will define macro photography as where the subject photographed will be at least represented at life size (1:1) or greater magnification but not as much magnification will be around 7x to 10x for 35 mm equipment.

Close-up Photography

By eliminating micro photography and macro photography as defined above, close-up photography can therefore be defined as any photo where the image is not at least life size (1:1) on the resulting medium (... and the photo is not taken with the focus point at infinity C).

Technical considerations

Magnification

In the section on definitions we have already defined how to calculation magnification. Based on this knowledge I would like to suggest a simplified "system" for calculating the magnification of any specific macro lens combination. It works as follows:

Step1: Determine your camera's viewfinder coverage. This you can normally find in your camera's user guide but if it is not possible, then proceed to step 2 to determine its coverage. When you have found its coverage proceed with step 3.

Step 2: Use a lens of which you know the magnification ratio, say 1:2. Focus on a metric ruler at its closest focus point and count the number of millimetres visible in the width. Let's say it is 66mm. You know it was supposed to be 72mm as the lens is giving you half life size magnification (twice 36mm). So, your viewfinder only shows you 66 / 72 or 91.66% or 92% coverage of the film size. Using this technique I determined that my Nikon F80 shows 92% of the film size in the viewfinder. This was confirmed using the Nikon's user manual.

Step 3: Once you know the viewfinder coverage, you can use this information to determine the magnification of your other lenses or lens combinations. To determine the magnification do the following: Focus at the closest point with your macro lens combination on the metric ruler, count the number of millimetres visible in the viewfinder (width) and add the percentage non-coverage millimetres. Use this number of millimetres to determine the magnification as described earlier. Example: Let's say we use the same lens as described in Step 2 but this time with a 2x converter. You count 33mm in the viewfinder. Remember that this 33mm only represents 92% of the actual millimetres on the film area, so to know the actual millimetres available we need to add the other 8%: 33*1.08=35.64 or 36mm. Thus

our 1:2 magnification lens with a 2x converter will result in a (36/36=1) 1:1 magnification on the film.

Depth of Field

As magnification increases, depth of field decreases drastically and becomes a major problem in many photos. The point of best focus is usually near the middle of the depth of field. This would be a very good arrangement were it not for the fact that the total depth is so small you often can't include a three dimensional subject within the depth of field.

You have to decide where to put the limited depth of field in each case, depending on what the subject is and how you want to show it. Often it is best to put good focus near the front of the subject and let the rear parts of the subject drift off into poor focus. In abstract arrangements, selective focusing must be used to draw the viewer's attention to the pattern being displayed.

Equipment

Reversed lenses

One of the oldest techniques (and the most cost effective) of achieving close focusing capability is to reverse a standard lens. All that is involved is to find a means of mounting the lens reversed to the camera body. This is easier done with one of the older model cameras and lenses where the lens still has a manual aperture switch. I have taken several close-up photos using a Mamiya TL500 35mm SLR camera with a standard 50mm lens. I "developed" a technique where I fix the lens to the camera body using my one hand with my index finger controlling the aperture pin of the lens to manually closing down the aperture just before taking the picture. There are commercial setups available to give your this functionality with more modern cameras. Such a setup consists of a reversing ring to attach the lens to the camera body as well as an aperture controller (called z-rings) that allow you to focus at open aperture and with a double cable will close down the aperture when taking the photo.

Unfortunately, most modern cameras have so many electronics build into the lens that the camera refuses to function without a lens mounted to the body in the correct manner.

Zoom lenses

As mentioned in the beginning of this article, most modern zoom lenses are advertised as having a macro function. Truth is that most of these lenses do not support true macro photography but rather close-up photography. But, this is definitely one of the most popular ways to start experimenting with close-up and macro photography. If you are in the market of buying a zoom lens that includes a macro function, try to get a lens that supports at least a 1:2 magnification (half life size).

Sigma is most probably pioneers in this field with their 70-300 APO zoom lens with a 1:2 macro functionality and a dedicated auxiliary macro lens (AML) that gives you 1:1 magnification at a distance of about 30cm. This lens with its optional AML will cost you less than R3 000. Not a bad price for an entry level zoom lens with a 1:1 macro capability.

Extension tubes and Bellows

A camera lens needs to be moved away from the film focal plane in order to focus at close quarters and this, in turn, produces an enlarged image. You can obtain greater extension than that provided by the focusing thread of the lens in two ways:

• Use one or more extension tubes. These tubes can be combined in various ways to produce different degrees of magnification.

 Use a bellows attachment, which allows a continuous variation in magnification as the bellows extends.

Just as with the reversed lens setup, most bellows, however do not have a way of extending the electronics of the lens and are therefore limited to the older generation of cameras (or to more expensive bellows). Extension tubes on the other hand, connect the electronics of the lens correctly and will even allow things such as the auto focus functions of the lens to work correctly (however, not very practical in macro photography).

In my own setup, I have a set of Kenko extension tubes for use with Nikon lenses that support all the Nikon electronics. Using the Sigma Macro lens with two extension tubes stacked to give a 32mm extension, allows 1.5:1 magnification on the film.

Supplementary lenses

Supplementary lens attachments offer the quickest, easiest and least expensive entry into close-up photography. They come in a range of strengths, from 1 to 10, the higher numbers indicate greater magnifications. They increase the focal length of the lens.

The strength is measured in dioptres, a "dioptre" being the reciprocal of the close-up lens's focal length in meters (1/ focal length). Thus a +1 dioptre lens has a focal length of 1 meter, a +2 dioptre lens has the focal length of $\frac{1}{2}=0.5$ meter, etc. A dioptre acts as a magnifying glass when placed in front of a lens that is focused at its infinity setting. The lens to subject distance of closest focus is equal to the focal length of the dioptre. A +1 dioptre lens fitted to any lens focused at infinity will be able to focus on an object 1 metre away. Any object further than that cannot be brought into focus, but objects closer can be brought into focus up to a minimum distance determined by the lens. It is possible to use supplementary lenses in combination, but there is some reduction in image quality. This can be minimized by stepping down the aperture.

Stacked lenses

Stacked lenses are just a special case of dioptre lenses, where the dioptre is another standard lens. The lens of longer focal length is fixed to the camera, while the front lens is mounted in reverse onto the longer focal length lens to become a high quality, highly corrected supplementary lens.

This technique works very well with a prime lens of between 100mm and 200mm focal length and the "dioptre" lens of anything from 50mm to 24mm focal length. Experimentation is essential because certain combinations cause vignetting.

The magnification of the combination is found by dividing the focal length of the prime lens by that of the lens reversed on to its front. For example, my 90mm f2.8 lens and 50mm f1.7 lens give a magnification of $90 \div 50 = 1.8$ or 1.8:1. In theory, a 200mm prime lens with a 24mm wide angle reversed on to it would give nearly a 8 x magnification., but vignetting would be severe. In cases like this, a short extension tube between the camera and the lens can be used to enlarge the image circle and fill the frame, removing the dark edges.

Dedicated macro lenses

For the best quality in macro photography there is nothing to beat dedicated macro lenses. These lenses are designed to perform best at close focus, while their usage as a normal portrait lens performs just as well as any other portrait lens. The biggest drawback of a dedicated macro lens is the price, but by shopping around, a good second hand macro lens could be found for about the same price as a multi-purpose zoom lens. It is also important to remember that auto focus is seldom used in macro photography and therefore an older second hand manual focus dedicated lens could still be a better buy than buying a modern auto focus zoom lens with a macro capability. Most dedicated macro lenses gives 1:1 magnification on the film.

Diaphragm Shape

The shape of a lens diaphragm affects those tiny diffraction patterns which are the "points" making up an image. In ultra critical work it can be important to select a lens which maintains an aperture as nearly circular as possible as the lens is closed down. If you look through lenses with a six blade diaphragm, many apertures become noticeably hexagonal, or even star shaped as they close down unevenly. Diaphragms which have seven or more blades produce better circles. Tamron use a nine-blade diaphragm, for example. These differences in images are tiny – almost impossible to quantify – but they become important when you pursue the goal of sharpness.

Teleconverters and Multipliers

A teleconverter is a highly corrected negative lens (like a concave lens) often comprising half a dozen or more elements. The converter spreads out the light from the prime lens, magnifying the image (and any imperfections generated by the prime lens).

Adding a teleconverter directly behind a macro lens (or any other lens) set on infinity multiplies the focal length and because the converter spreads light, it also lowers the intensity of the light reaching the film.

As soon as the teleconverter is separated from the lens, either by changing its focus or adding an extension tube between converter and lens, it is better to think of the converter as a "multiplier" which changes magnification not focal length.

I have successfully used a combination of a 90mm macro lens with a reversed 50mm lens and a 2x teleconverter to achieve a magnification of 4:1.

Macro focuser

I have mentioned several times that the auto focus capability of a lens is of minimal use when taking macro photos. This is a result of the tiny depth of field when an image is magnified. In great magnifications, this depth of field becomes so critical that it is sometimes impossible to achieve optimum focus using the lens's focusing ring. In such cases it is easier to move the camera into focus than trying to focus the lens. For this purpose one can get a macro focuser. A macro focuser is a slide with rack and pinion gearing which moves the camera body back and forth (and even sideways for composition) rather than using the lens's focus ring.

Tripod

When taking macro photos, you are most of the time working in very low light conditions. This, as well as the tiny depth of field, makes it impossible to do any macro work without a tripod. Macro photography in the field places one extra demand on a tripod that is not needed for normal photography, namely the fact that the need for working very close to the ground will arise. It is therefore very important to get a tripod with a central column that can be adjusted to work very close to the ground, or to get yourself a good beanbag that can be used when working close to the ground (or floor).

Cable release

Although a very small portion of your setup, it is one of the most important pieces of equipment to ensure sharp images.

Copy Stand / Portable Studio

Macro photography lends itself to working in-house. Macro photography is also the ideal subject when weather does not permit outdoor expeditions. The great thing about macro photography is the fact that you do not need a big workspace. In fact, you "studio" can be made quite portable and easy to assemble / disassemble.

Probably the simplest setup may consist of a tabletop with enough light (natural light or study lamps) and space to erect you tripod.

A copy stand is also a good starting point as it already contains a macro focuser built into the "studio" for precise focusing.

I have built a portable stand that has two study lamps fixed to its sides to provide the necessary lighting for the subject.

It is also important to use blue daylight globes in your study lamps in order to keep the colour of the subject as natural as possible. If this is not possible, then use a blue correcting filter on your camera lens.

References

The Complete Guide to Close-up and Macro Photography. Paul H Davies. 1998. A David and Charles Book. ISBN 0-7153-0800-9

Macro and Close-up Photography Handbook. Stan Sholik & Ron Eggers. 2000. Amherst Media. ISBN 1-58428-026-3

SLR Photographers Handbook. Carl Shipman. 1977. HPBooks. ISBN 0-912656-59-X



Mounting Your Slides



The following rules apply when mounting your slides:

- Mark with a large spot in the top right hand corner with the image the right way round, but upside down
- The title should read the right way up when the slide is in the magazine
- The photographer's name, Club star rating and competition date should be included
- Add "Set Subject" where necessary

Preparing Your Prints

The following rules apply when preparing you prints:

- All prints should be mounted
- 1 and 2 star print workers may submit "Jumbo" prints (150 mm x 100 mm).
- Prints for 3, 4 and 5 star print workers must be at least 175 mm x 125 mm (7" x 5") excluding the mount, with a maximum size of 500 mm x 400 mm (20" x 16") including the mount
- Add "Set Subject" where necessary

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