



www.knysnaphotosociety.com

NEWSLETTER: July 2023

Pictures of the Month

Senior



Kubu Island baobabs – Pieter Mare

Junior



Keeping watch – Maureen vd Heever

The Knysna Photographic Society is proudly affiliated with the
PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA



Editor's note

Cathy Birkett has been kind enough to share her photographic journey with us this month.

Cathy is a Master Silver or 7 star worker who consistently produces superb images, some of which are shared with us this month.

Also, this month, by kind permission we publish an article by Cole Thompson, "Seeing for yourself".

Cole is an American fine art photographer who mainly photographs in black and white. As he says - "For me color records the image, but black and white captures the feelings that lie beneath the surface."

For more about Cole see <https://colethompsonphotography.com/about/>

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Message from the Chair

July 2023

Welcome to our new members:

We welcome Lawrence Boatright and Ettienne Muller. Both are 5-Star workers.

It's good to have you all with us we wish you a long, happy and stimulating time at KPS.

Congratulations

Congrats to Claudette Gericke, for coming 1st in the Junior section of the June PSSA "Image of the Month" competition and to Luana Laubscher for coming 7th in the Senior section. Well done to both of you.

AGM and Prize-giving; 24th August

We appeal to our members to attend our AGM and Prize-giving event, if not out of town.

Full details will be circulated by email.

This is a good opportunity to mix with your fellow members, to be appraised of the state of the club, to elect your new committee and to recognise the achievements of our prize-winners.

Annual Subscriptions

These are now due, and details have been circulated by email. Thank you to the 75% of our members who have already paid. 12 members have already made use of our prepaid discount for club night entry fees and judging fees. That is a win-win arrangement for both the club and those members.

Web page rejuvenation,

For some months now, a subcommittee, headed by Maureen van den Heever, has been hard at work rejuvenating and refreshing our web page. We have decided to make this our "landing platform" for our social media initiatives which include Facebook and Instagram. The new site will have significantly more resources and functionality than the previous site and will become a powerful tool for us all to use.

The public will also enjoy a warm and welcoming experience when visiting, and joining our club will be easier by using this facility.

Roll-out is imminent, so watch this space and let us have your feedback.

Use of AI for club entries.

We have published a "Policy Note" on the use of artificial intelligence in the context of image entries. In summary, AI can be used if it is part of a post processing tool, but it cannot be used to generate an image or a sub-element of an image. Another new age is upon us.

Doug Emanuel

June gallery of high scoring images

Senior



Flamingo line – Cathy Birkett



In Deep Thought – Etienne Muller



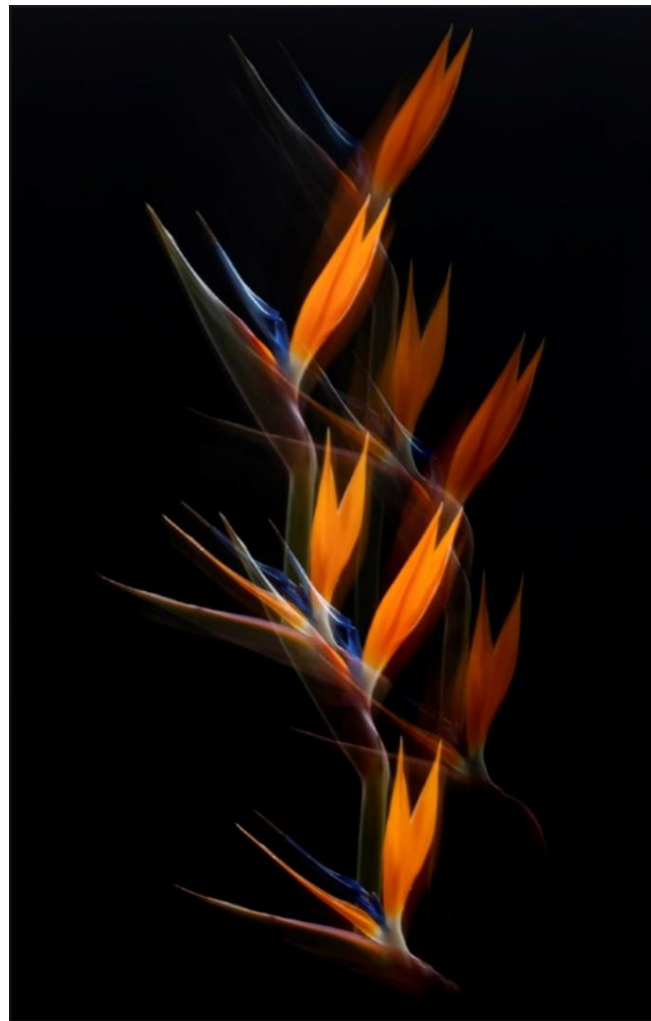
Leopard Couch – Pieter Mare



Hesperantha - Peter Oosthuizen



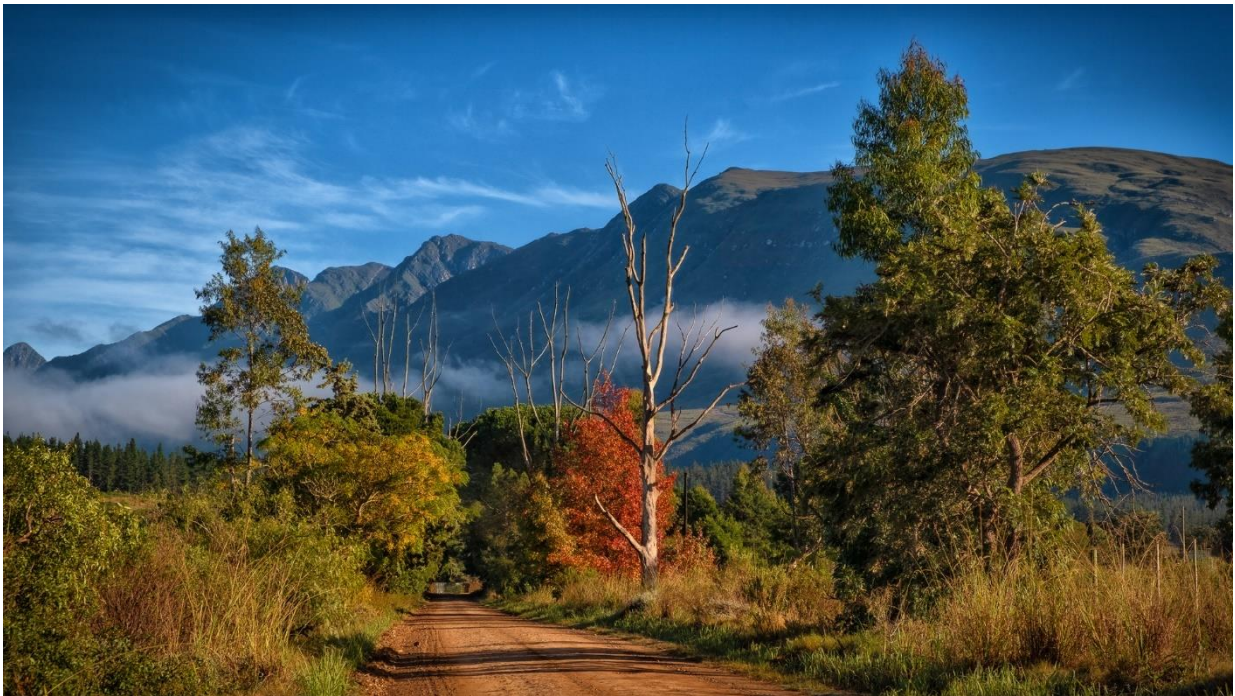
Winter flypast – Lawrence Boatwright



Strelitzias – Pam Brighton



Tug of War – Willie Dalglish



Last of the autumn colours – Eileen Covarr

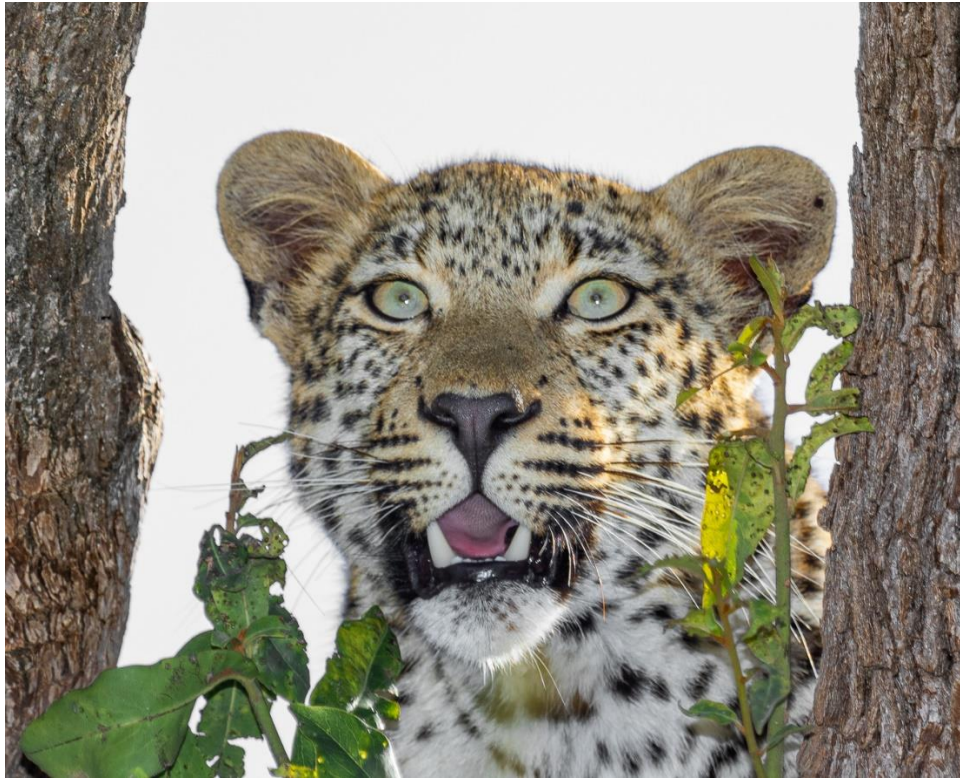
Juniors



House on the hill – Maureen vd Heever



Hi Good looking – Alan King



Peek-a-boo – Claudette Gericke



Knysna dinghies - Gary Hansel



Smokin Joe – Alan King



Young Lion - Claudette Gericke



Silhouette cousins – Gary Hansel



Knysna nights – Terence Clark

Salon Acceptances - July

SA VISUAL ARTS SAVAS 23RD SALON

Alan	1
Peter	1
Pam	2
Cathy	2
Anne	2
Gill	2
Carol	3

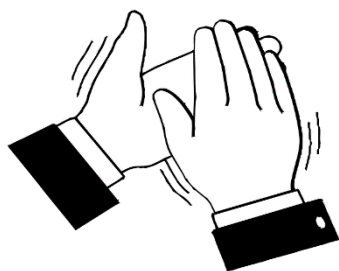
SPRINGS CAMERA CLUB 2ND SALON

Eileen	1
Cathy	2
Alan	2
Carol	3

WESTERN CAPE YOUTH SALON

Cathy	3
Eileen	3

PSSA JUNIOR PICTURE OF THE MONTH



Claudette came 1st out of 51 club entries.

Well done, Claudette!! It's a while since we came first, you make us proud 😊

PSSA SENIOR PICTURE OF THE MONTH

Luana came 7th shared with 3 photographers out of 49 entries!

Editor's Choice

Cathy Birkett - My photographic journey.

"If I could tell a story in words, I wouldn't need to lug around a camera." – Lewis Hine

I have always had a camera – as a kid it was a little plastic Kodak one (I think) that took black & white square photos that were my memories of family life and holidays. Through the years my love of photography has continued, and my cameras and skills have improved along the way. My love of capturing the moment is always present and sometimes I wonder if my passion is more of an addiction these days.

Travelling has been another passion. Photography and travel where a good combination and as far back as I remember every trip had an album. When I completed my studies, I started working as a Physiotherapist in a Government hospital. Salaries were not great then and so I always did extra work to help fund my travels. I went through a period of making wedding dresses for friends and colleagues and then I started doing their wedding photographs too – I enjoyed the challenge then but realised I didn't like photographing people much. I had purchased my first SLR Minolta camera in London on one of my first overseas trips – I loved the camera, and we did many trips together (but I always had to set a limit of how many photos I could take on a day)

When I met my husband Peter, he was a traveler too, and we continued traveling at every opportunity and my Minolta was still my trusty companion. Digital cameras were just entering the market but still expensive. Peter always said I spent more on the photo developments than on the trip!! Luckily his business bought a digital camera, so I got to try it out (until we lost it with everything else in a hijacking). I then got my first little digital Olympus camera that kept me going for many years.

Soon after moving to the Garden Route, I got myself my first Digital SLR camera – a Canon 550D. I had more time to spend on photography and I decided I needed to improve my photography skills. I joined the Wilderness camera club and then in 2014 joined KPS and that is when my photography really started to improve. Being a member of KPS has been a great learning curve for me and has got me from just taking travel snaps to where I am today. I am inspired by the club photographers and the photographs submitted each month, love the themes and competitions as they push me out of my comfort zones and then the courses and outings offer different opportunities to me to improve my technical and creative skills. I migrated from SLR to Fujifilm (Mirrorless) and have added a few gadgets & lenses to my camera bag. Covid got me looking for things to photograph closer to home and I started with some macro photography, photo stacking and now I am even trying a few composites. My journey continues – it gets me out of the house every evening at sunset, into the garden looking for insects and raindrops, and out on the open roads to explore the beautiful surrounding country we are so privileged to live in.

I would like to thank everyone at KPS who has been part of my photographic journey. It will continue....

"I think this is the most exciting time in the history of photography. Technology is expanding what photographers can do, just like the microscope and telescope expanded what scientists can do." – Richard Misrach

"It is an illusion that photos are made with the camera... they are made with the eye, heart, and head." – Henri Cartier-Bresson

Some of Cathy's stunning images



Kowloon scape



Bagan sunset



Fiery skies



Tram



Young monk



Smoking lady

Featured Article

Seeing for Yourself

- By Cole Thompson



Learning to see for yourself? Who else would I see for?

Well for many years I did not see for myself. I saw through the lens of Ansel Adams, through the lens of my mentors, through the lens of rules. I saw things how I was told that I should see them, by many well meaning people who wanted to help me create better photographs.

And sometimes, when I did see for myself, I was gently reminded that I shouldn't do certain things like "center the subject" or "block up my shadows."

And so to win approval, likes and praise... I learned to conform and to see like other people. All of my early experiences taught me that the more approval an image received, the better the image was.

And even though I went along willingly, there was always a part of me that was unsettled. Something about this just didn't feel right.

Often the images I loved the most, performed poorly in the eyes of popularity. And the images that were mundane to me, performed the best. But I was learning to get more "likes" and that's what was important, I told myself.

But going down this path did not make me happy. In fact, the more I did it, the less happy I became. I was "winning" but I felt dishonest. I was creating what it took to win, but I wasn't creating what I loved. I was

selling out.

And so I paused to take stock of what I was doing...and WHY I was doing it.

I was seeking success, but had never stopped to ask myself: what did success mean to me? I had just assumed it meant being recognized as a great photographer, getting in a big name gallery, selling my work for big dollars, and having a book published.

But as I started to achieve some of that, I found that it wasn't bringing satisfaction.

And so I decided to define what success meant for me. Here's what I came up with:

To be able to create what I want, when I want, and to create work that I love.

My new definition had nothing to do with likes, sales, being published or receiving accolades.



The result was that I was much happier and created better work (in my opinion, which is the only one that matters).

And sometimes when I created work that I loved, I was fortunate and others appreciated it also.

That external appreciation is what I call the cherry on top. The cherry is not the prize, but rather that little extra treat on top of the real prize: creating work that I love.



Now it's easy to say: I'm going to stop caring what other's think of my work and see for myself.

But how do you do that?

For me, it came about after realizing that accolades are like drugs, they only bring a temporary high, which needs to be followed by another fix and another and another. And as I focused on accolades, I came to realize that this approach didn't put me in control of my happiness, because it was dependent upon the approval of others.

Being dependent upon others for my happiness, just didn't seem like real happiness.

- I wanted to be in control.
- I wanted to see for myself.
- I wanted to create images that I loved.
- I wanted to judge my work by my standards.
- I wanted to be independent, not dependent.



There were two men who helped me make these mental shifts, one real and one fictitious: Edward Weston and Howard Roark.

I love Edward Weston's work, but what I admire most about him was his thinking. Here's what Ansel Adams wrote upon meeting him for the first time at a mutual friend's home:

"After dinner, Albert asked Edward to show his prints. They were the first work of such serious quality I had ever seen, but surprisingly I did not immediately understand or even like them; I thought them hard and mannered.

Edward never gave the impression that he expected anyone to like his work. His prints were what they were. He gave no explanations; in creating them his obligation to the viewer was completed."

This is classic Weston: he followed his Vision, was comfortable with his work and did not seek, nor need the approval of others.

Here are some of my favorite Weston quotes:

"Photography is a poor man's art and anyone who wants an original print should be able to own one."

~

"The fact is that relatively few photographers ever master their medium. Instead they allow the medium to master them and go on an endless squirrel cage chase from new lens to new paper to new developer to new gadget, never staying with one piece of equipment long enough to learn its full capacities, becoming

lost in a maze of technical information that is of little or no use since they don't know what to do with it."

~

"I should be able to look down at my feet and see something to photograph."

~

"Now to consult the rules of composition before making a picture is a little like consulting the law of gravitation before going for a walk. Such rules and laws are deduced from the accomplished fact; they are the products of reflection."

~

"When subject matter is forced to fit into preconceived patterns, there can be no freshness of vision. Following rules of composition can only lead to a tedious repetition of pictorial clichés."

~

"Why limit yourself to what your eyes see when you have such an opportunity to extend your Vision?"

~

"Anything more than 500 yards from the car just isn't photogenic."

~

Each year I peek into the mind of Edward Weston by reading his "Day Books," which is his two-volume diary from his time in Mexico. It inspires me to think for myself, to see for myself, and to create for myself.



Howard Roark is a fictitious character from Ayn Rand's novel: The Fountainhead. Roark is an architect who has a strong Vision of what he wants to create, but it flies in the face of what is popular, what is taught, and what the critics like. (the character is thought to be loosely based upon Frank Lloyd Wright, another hero of mine)

But Howard is true to his Vision, at great personal cost. He believes in unwavering integrity in his personal life and in his creations. Here are some of my favorite quotes from Howard Roark:

~

“He didn't want to be great, but to be thought great by others.”

~

“Men have been taught that it is a virtue to agree with others. But the creator is the man who disagrees. Men have been taught that it is a virtue to swim with the current. But the creator is the man who goes against the current. Men have been taught that it is a virtue to stand together. But the creator is the man who stands alone.”

~

“I don't make comparisons. I never think of myself in relation to anyone else. I just refuse to measure myself as part of anything. I'm an utter egotist.”

~

“Self respect is something that can't be killed. The worst thing is to kill a man's pretense at it”

~

This is Roark's response when told by the College Dean that no one would let him design buildings that followed his unique Vision:

“That's not the point. The point is, who will stop me?”

~

A newspaper's architectural critic, who had been savagely critical of Roark's designs, runs into Roark and asks:

“Mr. Roark, we're alone here. Why don't you tell me what you think of me? In any words you wish. No one will hear us.”

Roark: “But I don't think of you.”

~

Yes, Roark is a fictitious character, and he can be being anything the author wants him to be; independent, brave and defiant. But the philosophies espoused by the author, have inspired me to see more independently.



Thinking and seeing independently is incredibly hard, because it's in our DNA to conform, to go along with the crowd, and to fit in. And sometimes in life that's a good thing, but in art...it's deadly.

Art is a selfish pursuit, it's about expressing what's in you, even if it's ugly, doesn't conform or is unpopular. And when you conform and seek to please others, then your ability to see for yourself is squashed, and it will eventually shrivel and die.



How do you become independent, to think and see for yourself? Here's some of the things that I do:

Ask: why am I creating?

This is an important first step. The “why” you are creating will determine everything else that you do. If your desire is to “win and gain likes,” then you will go one way. If your desire is to express something that’s inside of you, then you’ll go another.

This step requires that you be completely honest with yourself, something that’s not easy to do.

Define success for yourself:

For some, the classic definition of success will be their goal: fame, fortune, gallery representation and a book.

But for me, success is freedom: the freedom to create what I love, without the desire to follow the crowds/experts/rules, and without worrying if others will like my work.

What is your definition of success? Write it down and read it often.

Stop Competing:

Art is not a competition, I shouldn’t be trying to be better than someone else, but working to express something that’s inside of me. Competition in art, brings out qualities that are incompatible with personal expression.

Competing also reinforces the mistaken belief that a winning image is a great image, and that one that doesn’t win, isn’t good.

Stop Comparing:

“Comparison is the thief of joy” said Theodore Roosevelt.

I used to spend hours looking at other’s images, comparing their work to my own...and feeling bad. Why hadn’t I created that image, or thought of that idea?

Comparing serves no useful purpose, and is harmful because it puts the focus on what “they” are doing instead of what “you” are doing.

And as my mother used to say to me: you stop worrying what others are doing, and just worry about Cole. Good advice mom.

Consider Photographic Celibacy:

Consider taking a break from looking at other people’s images, and focus on your Vision. I’ve been doing it for over 15 years now, and still find the practice incredibly useful. I recognize that most people are skeptical about the idea, but how about a 3 or 6 month trial?

You might be surprised at what you learn.

Skip the critiques:

Stop asking others for input on your work, because “their opinion” is based on their likes, dislikes and Vision. Following other’s advice is the exact opposite of seeing for yourself.

Instead learn to critique your own work by asking yourself these questions:

d

- What do I think of my image?
- Did it turn out the way I envisioned?
- If not, how so?
- What do I love about this image?
- How can I enhance those things that I love?
- What don’t I like about this image?
- How can I deemphasize or eliminate those things?
- Do I love what I’ve created?

Learning to self-critique is a much better way to see, than by following another’s advice or following rules. Asking other’s opinion is the easier path, but not the better one.

Believe in Your Creative Abilities:

This was a tough one for me, because I didn’t believe that I had any creative ability. And as I have talked with other photographers, I’ve discovered that I was not unique in my self-doubts. I think many of us were drawn to photography because we thought it was the perfect medium for we non-creative types.

But I’ve learned this important truth: we all have the ability to be creative, everyone single one of us. For some, that creativity lies close to the surface, and for the rest of us, we need to work a little harder to find it. But it’s there, I promise!

Find your Vision:

This is the most important step, because your Vision is simply how you see once you’ve pushed all of the other voices out of your head. Vision is the key to being successful, if your goal is to create images that you love.

And once you’ve found your Vision, you will gain a confidence that allows you to ignore what others are doing, not care what other’s think of your work, shake off criticism and love the work that you create.



None of this is easy, and it's not a one time exercise. I am constantly fighting the desire to conform, to see how others have seen and to create for likes. It's an addiction that never goes away, and one that I must constantly work to resist.

But it's worth it! Because at the end of the day, you will have created honest work that you love, and you will be in control of your happiness.

Judging Accreditation Programme

**Want to find out what judges are
supposed to look for and say?**

Have a look at the PSSA page below.

<https://pssa.co.za/judging-accreditation-programme/>

Next Meeting

16 August – live at Belvidere Manor

2 images may be submitted plus one for the set subject “Backlight”

Deadline for submissions via Photovault – 5 August before 12:00 p.m.

Judges

The judges for August will be Luana Laubscher, Cathy Birkett and Chris Daly

Annual Subscriptions

Ordinary members

Annual subs – single	450
Annual subs - couple	600
Annual subs – social	350
Annual subs – Junior	275

Club night fees

Venue fee (tea/coffee)	30
Judging fee	10

Note: Club night fee discount - total R360 for the year, if paid with subs renewal. (11 meetings entry and judging fee, for the cost of 9)

Social Media

Facebook

Our Facebook page gives members the opportunity to highlight images, talk about ideas, get honest feedback without fear of criticism. To join contact Carol for an invitation.

WhatsApp

Find the group on WhatsApp under KPS Creatives. There's usually interesting discussion as well as stimulating posts and links.

Website

Watch this space 😊

Club Calendar – 2023

	Closing Date for Entries	Monthly Meeting	Set subject Presentation	Set Subject	Bi-annual Competition
August	5	16		Backlight	
September	9	20	12		
October	7	18		Book or movie title	Wheels
November	5	16			16

National Salons (To December 2023)

[2023-08-12 – Sandton 9th National Digital Salon \(Brochure available\)](#)

[2023-08-26 – Midlens 2nd Digital Salon \(Brochure available\)](#)

[2023-09-09 – 1st Maritzburg Camera Club Salon \(Brochure available\)](#)

[2023-10-07 – Krugersdorp Camera Club 18th National Digital Salon \(Brochure available\)](#)

[2023-10-14 – PSSA 24th Up and Coming](#)

[2023-10-21 – Westville Camera Club 5th National Salon \(Brochure available\)](#)

[2023-10-28 – 2nd Swartland International Salon](#)

[2023-11-04 – 6th VFV National Digital Salon and 4th Print Salon](#)

[2023-11-11 – 2nd Amber AV International Salon](#)

[2023-11-18 – 4th SHPC Salon](#)

Anyone may enter a Salon. To find out more on how to do so, go to the Photographic Society of South Africa's website or ask one of the senior club members.