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Member of PSSA: <http://www.pssa.co.za>

United Church: 28 Bright Street, Somerset West, 7130

Meeting: Second Tuesday of Each Month @ 19h15

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### MONTHLY COMPETITION

This month, no scoring of the competition entries was carried out. As such, no winning images were identified. However, at this month's meeting there were a few images by a new member that grabbed my attention. So, I decided to feature three of these images. We welcome Elizabeth Cook to HPS and look forward to more of her interesting works. I also asked Elizabeth to provide a brief introduction to herself, which you may read below.

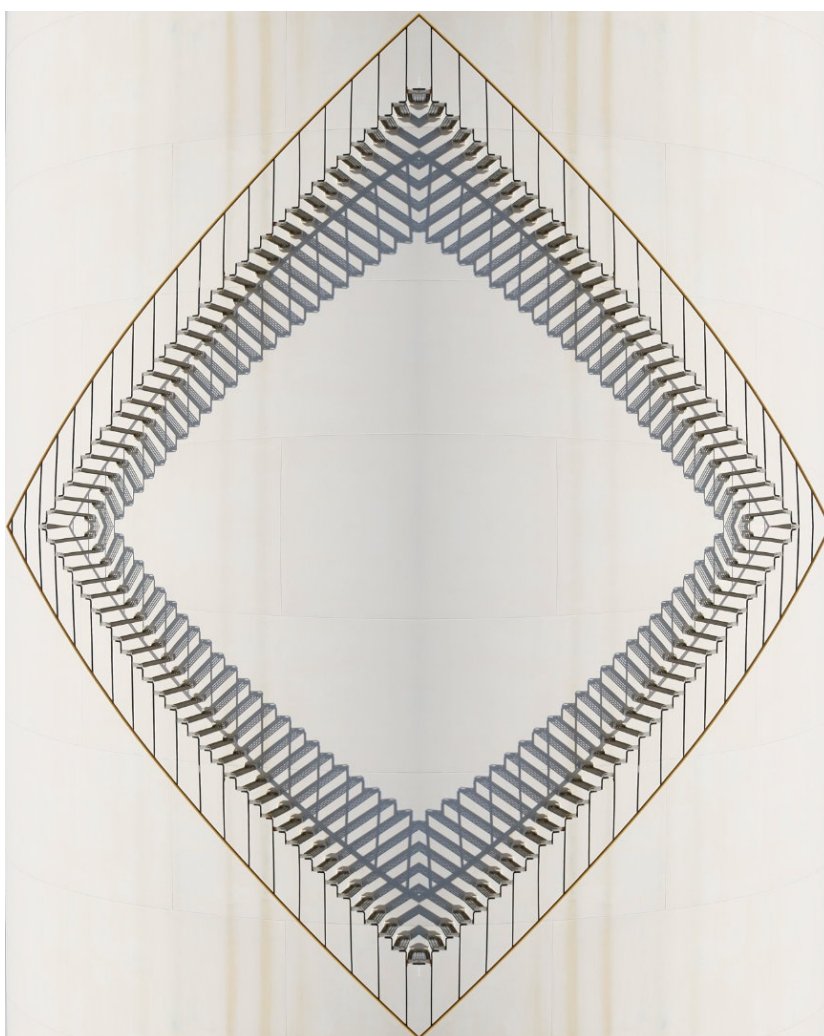


Image Title: No End Nor Beginning  
Author: Elizabeth Cook



Image Title: What Do You See?  
Author: Elizabeth Cook



Image Title: Before The Rain  
Author: Elizabeth Cook



## FROM THE CHAIR

By this time of the year I am sure we are all wishing for some warmer weather ... snow on the mountains, rain and more rain, storm surges and low temperatures do not exactly welcome the braai season ... Heritage Day falling on Monday 25th September this year .... Hopefully we will be able to light a braai fire, and celebrate the start of the Season!

The highlight this month was definitely the outing to Paternoster ... convened by Steve Trimby (thanks Steve!). We stayed in very well appointed accommodation at La Baleine – a cluster of different types of accommodation, with views of the bay. Friday afternoon was the time to reconnoitre – after which we all met up at Steve and Yvonne's unit where Wessel Wessels proceeded to do a fantastic braai (much too much food, of course...). Then it was rugby time with much advice and comments bandied about.



Saturday was overcast but we all set forth ... lunch at Voorstrandt Restaurant on the beach, followed by a photoshoot with three horse riders (despite the drizzle and wind). It really was a wonderful experience ... everyone was enthusiastically hoping for great images!!!

Mari provided a wonderful cheese table that evening. The red wine flowed, and the rugby provided entertainment.

On Sunday, we had brunch at the Whale's Rib at the Paternoster Waterfront - it's a Belgian Waffle Restaurant offering huge waffles with any kind of topping you can imagine! After this brunch, some of us headed home (for the rugby?), while others stayed for another night. Thanks to everyone who came out on the weekend ... we had a great time!

Our next Set Subject is 'Back Light/Rim Light' (October) – look out for the sun popping out from behind the clouds (take your camera everywhere!)

I will be staying in touch as we go along this month ... take care and stay warm if you can!

Best regards,  
Nettie

## MEMBER SHOWCASE



At the last HPS Meeting, my interest was piqued by the images submitted by a new member, Elizabeth Cook. I contacted Elizabeth and asked if she would be prepared to provide us with an introduction to herself, and her life in photography. She produced the following:

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### My Life in Photography - by Elizabeth Cook

Picture 1957 ..... small 7 y old girl watching her dad in a darkened kitchen developing photos - it was magical!

Early 1980 I bought a good old second-hand Pentax (it did look like a relic from the past!) and with very little knowledge, I tried to learn as much as possible.

(Which was not much!)

Fast-track to 1993 when my real photographic journey started – a dear friend bought me a Canon camera, I fell in love with Photography, and joined a camera club – spent many years on every outing possible, with lots of advice and help from other photographers.

So from basic knowledge I “developed” my photographic passion trying various genres, to try and find a direction that worked for me!

I called it 4th Dimension, or common name is quadding.

The JAP course was a great way to learn and gave me courage to enter a body of works for LPSSA (with a lot of advice and help from Antenie )

Then Fate played a hand in my photographic journey – well actually it played some tricks on me –

1. Never turn your back on the sea while taking a photo of a jelly fish on your knees
2. Never leave your camera “alone” on a kitchen table –

Say no more !

Insurance was very prompt in paying out and, with a December bonus, I was able to upgrade to my current camera Canon EOS R mirrorless full frame.

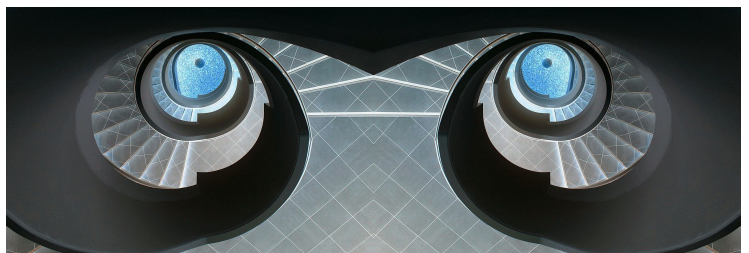
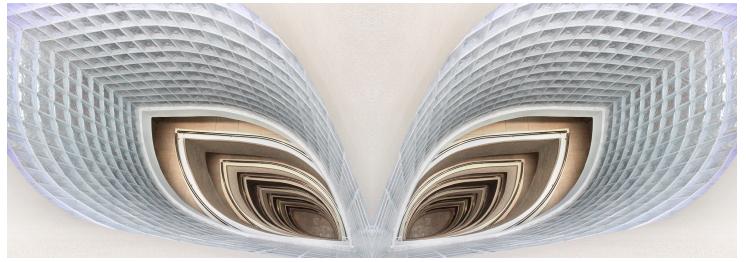
What genre of photography do I like?

Whatever catches my eye , I will photograph.



## MEMBER SHOWCASE (CONTINUED)

Elizabeth did provide some further examples of her work. Here are a few of them:



## FUTURE SET SUBJECTS

The end of the year is now in sight, and the Set Subject list for 2023 is growing shorter! Please remember to have a go at the Project for the year, "Broken but Beautiful". Thoughts on this topic were covered in the July 2023 newsletter - please look at my ideas in that issue. (Ignore the heading on Page 1 by the way - sometimes your editor's checking process leaves something to be desired!)

October	Back Light / Rim Light	PROJECT	Broken but Beautiful
November	Rust		

Thoughts on Set Subject for November - Rust

Our HPS starter document states:

"Rust can transform everyday objects into dynamic photo subjects with rich colors and pleasant textures. You can find rusty subjects anywhere there is iron, steel, and moisture (that's everywhere)."

Well, most of us don't need any encouragement to make images of rust. And we've certainly had enough rainwater this past season. Past? Well, you know what I mean!



## FUTURE SET SUBJECTS (CONTINUED)

Looking at what is available, Google certainly has many suggestions. Let's examine a few:

The first thing one thinks of, is the rusted motor vehicles at the Wijnland Auto Museum.

Lots of scope for effective images to be found there.



Being close to the ocean as we are, there are many old relics along the coast that have become seriously rusted.

One such is this old anchor in the area of the Crayfish Factory near Misty Cliffs. I turned this one into a monochrome sepia "Sea Monster" image some years ago.



Another idea might be, the production of an image showing juxtaposition, the new versus the rusted. You may need to do a bit of planning here, of course.



Here is another popular idea. Locks on a rusty old trunk.

This was part of the decorations in a B&B we stayed in. Here, I obviously applied a bit of editing to give the image a painterly look.



Anyway, you get the idea. Rust abounds, and it attracts all genres of photographer. So, let's see what you can come up with for the November meeting.



## AUDIO VISUALS

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Jill, PSSA President, is inviting all members to join the PSSA AV Honours Judges AV Show.

Have you ever wondered who the AV Honours Judges are, and what sort of AVs they do?

Well now is your chance - join us at 10:00 am on Saturday 14th October via zoom to enjoy a selection of their AVs. The programme will be hosted by AV Makers South Africa.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83576815419?pwd=NIBxTlVlVUJnMTBYVnRuQVJhdTcvZz09>

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## OUTINGS

### Parternoster

Much has already been mentioned about our weekend at Parternoster. Although the weather didn't quite play its part, I think all of us had a wonderful time, and must have ended up with some good images.





## EDITOR'S COMMENT

### The Making of "Theewaterskloof Dam"

I was struggling to come up with an idea as to what I could cover in my Editor's Comment this month. So, once again, I decided to base it on a recently edited image.

I presented two B&W versions of this at the B&W meeting on the 4th of September; a projected early version with the old tree, and a printed version with the new tree (see text below). At that stage I had not completed the coloured version, which was only finished just before the Parternoster weekend. I also explained some of the editing problems at the B&W meeting.

This final coloured version was presented as a print at the normal HPS meeting on Tuesday 12, September.



Last month I realized that I needed at least one more open image for my September HPS competition entries. My Lightroom Quick Collection has a large number of images (currently 2790) that I thought of as having promise when they were originally downloaded from the camera. I decided to pick a landscape from there, more or less at random, and see what I could make out of it.

I chose an image that I captured on 28th August 2021 at Theewaterskloof Dam. That day there was some snow on the mountains, so we went that way with Gavin and Denise to see if we could grab any good shots. At the time, the level of the dam had recovered following many years of drought, and many of the trees that had developed there, were now partially covered by water. Anyway, the start image raw conversion looked like this:



## EDITOR'S COMMENT (CONTINUED)



I actually took two images of the same drowned tree from slightly different positions. I preferred this image because of the background mountains. In both cases, I had decided that I would want to get rid of foliage etc. in the immediate foreground edges.

At an early stage I decided that I would move the tree (being the envisaged Centre of Interest) over to the right third. This is mainly

because I prefer my COI to be on the right third wherever possible. I also decided to make the tree larger and lighter – i.e., more prominent. So, I would need a good mask of the tree in any case.

After loading the image into Photoshop, I initially tried out Topaz Sharpen AI on it. However, this was found to be tending to add halos to the tree, and doing some strange things to the ripples around the tree. So, I decided to continue without any pre-sharpening.

Next, I used Topaz ReMask 3 to make a mask of the tree. This too proved to be problematical, in that it was almost impossible to make a good mask due to the dark ripples in the water beyond the tree. However, I spent a long time doing the best I could. Afterwards, I expanded the selection produced from the mask, and used this to cut the “tree” pixels from the image. At the same time, I cut out the pixels of the offensive foreground foliage. I then used Photoshop’s Content Aware Fill tool to replace the cut pixels, giving me a water area unimpeded by vegetation. As usual, it was necessary to do some hand cloning/local sharpening to improve the fill left by PS.

I should also point out that, to do the PS fill operation on the dam water, it is best to start with an image that contains only the water. This is to avoid the PS Fill inserting pieces of the mountains, etc. into the holes. So, a rectangular block of the water was selected and copied to a new file. After the fill operation, the result was pasted back into the master file.

Next, masks were made of the water area, and the sky area. From these two, a mask of the land mass was made by difference.

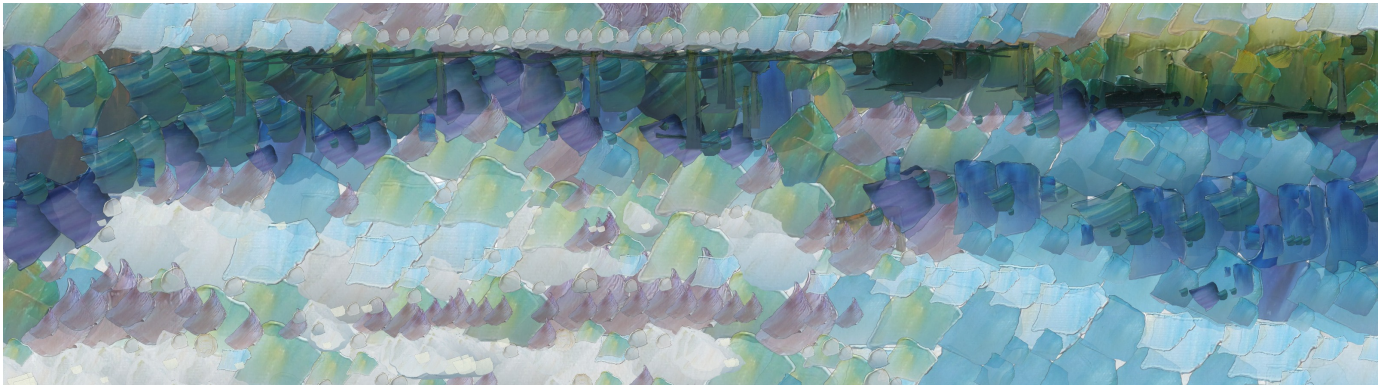
As usual for me, my top layer consisted of my artists armature. Using this as a guide, I stretched the three areas around to suit my vision of the image. As you can see, I stretched the land mass vertically slightly to give more prominence to the snowy mountains. The sky too, was stretched pretty radically from above the central white cloud. It’s important to remember that, when one does these stretching operations, one must make sure that the related masks are linked to the layer being stretched. If you don’t, the layer masks don’t work properly anymore. However, one does, in any case,

## EDITOR'S COMMENT (CONTINUED)

often have to fix the masks immediately after such stretching operations.

Next, I didn't like the strong micro texture of the water. I decided that I would like to soften the look. After trying out a couple of possible techniques, I decided to use a distortion displacement filter that adds ripples to the water. It uses an external psd file that I developed in Photoshop some years ago. This filter (and many other PS filters) does not work on 16-bit images. So, I made a rectangular copy of the water area in a new 8-bit file, and applied the displacement filter a few times, until I got what I was looking for. The easiest way to do this is to convert the water layer to a smart object first. After that one may alter the displacement variables, and see the effect without having to redo all of the steps.

At that stage, the colouration of the water seemed to need some "pop". So, I switched off the displacement filter and saved the 8-bit image as a jpg file. This I loaded into DAP (Dynamic Auto Painter) and applied a palette-knife type preset to it. This produces an image that tends to have exaggerated blocks of colour, taken from the original image. The DAP output file is shown below.



This was brought back into PS, and the overlay blending mode was used to add some interest to the water. The displacement filter was then reapplied. The final version was put back into the master PS image, and is basically the dam water that you see in the final picture.

Now, the main problem was that my COI (the Tree) was still non-existent. I spent many hours trying to fix it, but without any real success! I eventually decided to go back to the same spot on the Theewaterskloof Dam in the hopes of getting a better shot of the tree. However, the area had changed completely, and I suspect that the original tree is now completely under water. However, there were many other trees of the same type, and I was able to capture a shot of one, this time with a dark misty mountain behind it, which made masking a lot easier.

The new tree was masked, and used to complete the picture. The tree's reflection was manufactured by inverting an image of the tree, and applying the same displacement map as had previously been used on the water. This was blended into the water layer using the Multiply blending mode, and then reducing the Opacity slightly.

There were a few other minor embellishments applied, such as using a luminosity mask + Screen blending mode to slightly lift the whiteness of the snow. Also, the mountain on



## EDITOR'S COMMENT (CONTINUED)

the left was dark and virtually devoid of any detail. So, I took a patch from the mountain on the right, flipped it horizontally, increased its size, set the blending mode to Soft Light, and lightly brushed white onto a black mask to add a hint of detail here and there.

I generated a sharpening layer, using my copy of Jeff Schewe's Progressive Sharpen PS Action. This sharpening step is used to attract the viewer's attention to certain aspects of the image. After examining the sharpened details, I decided that I wanted to only apply this sharpening to the mountains and the tree. So, I combined the tree mask and the mountains mask to provide the mask for the sharpening layer. The sky and water areas remained as is, i.e., without any sharpening.

Finally, I applied a vignette layer using the soft light blend mode. Again, this is done to draw the viewer's attention into the middle of the picture.

The image was saved as a tiff file in Lightroom. The printing was done later, directly out of Lightroom. Unfortunately, I am currently running short of inkjet paper, so the print was smaller than I would have liked, and not on a paper that I would have preferred. Se la vie.

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## ODDS & ENDS

### Celebration of Photography by CTPS

The Cape Town Photographic Society has invited the Western Cape camera clubs to submit images for this presentation. The images will be printed, and then displayed for public viewing at the Groot Constantia Wine Cellar & Tasting Room during November and December this year.

HPS has agreed to provide 10 images for display at this event.

The exhibition will be opened by Martin Barber on the evening of Friday 10th November. On the following morning, Saturday 11th, Martin "will entertain and enlighten attendees with two presentations on different aspects of photography, which he promises will be memorable – and fun!"

Having seen a number of Martin's presentations over the years, I am pretty sure this will be an event not to be missed.

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### Theewaterskloof Nationals: Final Shoot-Out 23/24 September 2023

This event for inflatable boats takes place over the coming long weekend. Racing will start at 09h30 on both days.

On Saturday, there will be circuit racing, which is conducted in the vicinity of the Theewater Sports Club. On Sunday, the long-haul event takes place. The boats pass under the bridge in both directions, which provides good opportunities for Photography. Keep an eye open for my neighbour, Marc Gleed, in the red M1 boat, ahead of the pack!



## ODDS & ENDS (CONTINUED)

### Lens Profiles

In the old days of film photography, one of the major problems for lens designers was to reduce the distortion of the image projected onto the film surface. This problem typically caused barrel distortion, or pincushion distortion. The problems were particularly onerous in the design of zoom lenses, where the distortion would tend to go from one end to the other, depending on how far out the lens was zoomed.

As time progressed, computer programs began to be used for lens design. This made it easier to combine the optical characteristics of the different glass types, and batches. This improved lens performance significantly. But it never quite solved the problem.

With the advent of digital photography, various editing programs provided slide adjustments, whereby the operator could dial in adjustments by eye. Again, this improved the situation, but never totally solved the problem. Some lenses exhibited moustache distortion, where both barrel and pincushion existed at the same time.

The next innovation was the introduction of lens profiles, where a given lens/camera combination distortion characteristics could be recorded in a digital file. When a raw file was imported, a profile could then be automatically applied to the image. No distortion! Also, it was possible to allow for the light fall-off towards the corners of the frame.

The above change resulted in a lot of lenses being tested, and the publication of many lens correction profiles.

Today, lens correction can be built into the camera. The camera has built-in distortion look-up tables, and can correct the distortion at the raw file level.

Obviously, the above changes have taken away one of the major lens design constraints, making lenses easier to design and manufacture.

But what if you have an old lens for which there is no published distortion correction table? Well, it is possible to make your own. For some years Adobe provided a free Lens Profile Creator. The software is no longer supported, but it appears that you can still find a copy out there (or get one from me!).

What one does is take multiple photographs of a printed target image (using one of the target images provided by Adobe), noting the particulars as you go (F-Stop, object distance, focal length, etc.). The images together with the details are loaded into Adobe's program, and it prepares a lens profile for the lens/camera combination. This file may then be used by ACR, Lightroom, etc. to automatically correct the image file. The details of how to go about this comes with the Adobe software.

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