



Monthly Newsletter: February 2026

February Photography Club Highlights

Thank you to every member who joined us for our February club meeting and AGM. It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces and to share another evening of photography together.

A special thank you to our committee members for all your hard work during 2025. Your time, dedication, and passion keep the club running smoothly and create a space where creativity can flourish.

To all our HPS members, thank you for being part of this club. Without you, the club would not exist. We appreciate every entry, every month, and every unique photograph that is shared. Each image tells a story and adds something special to our community.

But let's pause for a moment: The year is already on its back. On paper the year looks long, but in life it's just a quick scroll. Just as light fades quickly at sunset, so too does time slip away. The window for new habits, innovative ideas, and fresh creative rituals is closing fast.

In photography terms, the year is like a long exposure, on paper it seems endless, but it's just a quick scroll. January is already gone, February is behind us, and soon March will be filled with Easter plans. Each month races past like frames in a timelapse. Before we know it, we'll be asking ourselves: "What just happened?"

So, everyone agrees: Time is short. But here's the truth, your joy, your laughter, your happiness, even in difficult times, will be shaped by the decisions you make now. The choices you take in the next five months will frame your story, just like the way you choose to frame a photograph.

Let's continue to grow from strength to strength, welcome new members, and support one another on this creative journey. Believe in your vision, trust your growth, and never doubt yourself or your photography journey.

Here's to many more inspiring meetings, memorable images, and decisive moments captured before time runs out

The editor

February Results

Our usual “Open Category” and the set subject, “Spirals in Nature,” both had amazing and creative entries. From glowing sunsets to powerful wildlife moments and striking minimalist images, members truly impressed with their variety and vision.

For the set subject, many members went out of their way to search for spirals in the natural world, finding inspiration in leaves, vines, shells, and textures.

A truly inspiring Month. Thank you to everyone who participated and shared their work.

The Silence of Shadows- Overall winning Image

By Carima van den Berg

Taken At Sunset Dam in the Kruger National Park, the world often seems to hold its breath. In the fading light, this ancient predator glides just beneath the surface, its presence both silent and commanding. The black and white tones strip away distraction, leaving only texture, shape, and the quiet tension of the moment.

Every scale, every ripple, and every shadow speaks of patience and power. The crocodile does not rush; it waits, perfectly still, blending into the water like a living sculpture. In this stillness lies its strength, an unspoken reminder that true power rarely announces itself.

“The Silence of Shadows” captures that fleeting moment where nature pauses, the air thick with anticipation, and the line between calm and danger disappears into the water

Congratulations to all our winners:

Top 4 Open

1st – Carima van den Berg – *The Silence of Shadows*

1st – Riaan van den Berg – *Giants Castle Cape Vulture flyby*

2nd – Steve Trimby – *Forth Road and Rail Bridges*

2nd – Laurette van der Merwe – *Rippling Sunset*

Top 3 Set Subject: Spirals in Nature

1st – Laurette van der Merwe – *Peaceful Beauty*

2nd – Peter Dewar – *Artichoke Agave*

2nd – Hilddidge Beer – *Vine entwined*

Top 3 Prints

1st – Peter Dewar – *Royal Agave*

2nd – Peter Dewar – *Pre Dawn Weskus*

3rd – Peter Dewar – *Twisted Vine*

OVERALL WINNER: FEBRUARY'26

THE SILENCE OF SHADOWS
BY
CARIMA VAN DEN BERG



Top 4 Open



The Silence of Shadows- Carima van den Berg



Giants castle Cape Vulture flyby- Riaan van den Berg!

Top 4 Open



Forth Road and Rail Bridges - Steve Trimby



Rippling Sunset- Laurette van der Merwe

Top 3 Set Subject

Spirals in Nature



Peaceful Beauty- Laurette van der Merwe



Artichoke Agave- Peter Dewar



Vine entwined- Hilldige Beer

Top 4 Prints



Royal Agave- Peter Dewar



Pre dawn Weskus - Peter Dewar

Top 4 Prints

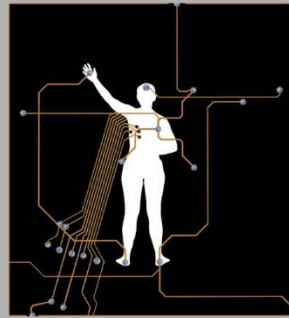


Twisted Vine - Peter Dewar



Horse Head Rock- Peter Dewar

Set Subject: Open



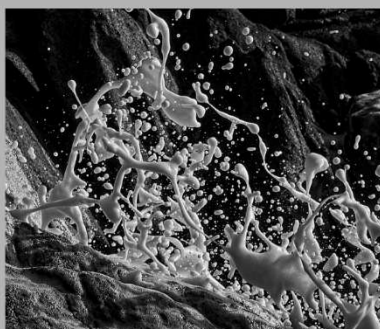
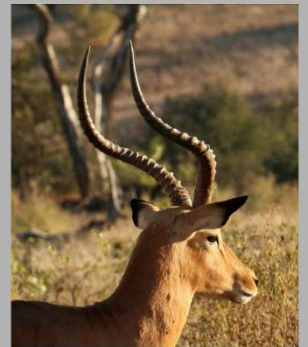
Set Subject: Open



Set Subject: Spirals in nature



Set Subject: Spirals in nature



Club Meeting Information:

Our next meetings will be on the following dates in March remember the closing dates of Photo Vault (PV)

Meeting	PV Closing Date	Meeting Date	Set Subject
Club Normal	06 March 2026	10 March 2026	High or Low Key

Take note:

- February **Set Subject** is High or Low Key
- The image must clearly demonstrate either a high-key style (predominantly light tones, minimal shadows, bright ambience) or a low-key style (predominantly dark tones, strong shadows, minimal bright areas) and that style must be purposeful and evident. The subject matter is otherwise open, but the lighting/tonal treatment must define the mood. Manipulation is allowed to emphasise the chosen key, provided the original capture remains the basis and the image is not entirely fabricated.

Outings, Workshops and Courses

Outings

Velddrif Kuifkop Weekend 25-28 August.

Self-catering midweek break, bird cruise on Cracklin' Rosie, maybe wildflowers are in bloom ect ect.

Contact Nettie for more information



We have a few exciting outings planned, as soon as dates have been confirmed we will inform all members.

If you see something interesting on Facebook or any groups, please share with the group.

Audio-Visual

Invitation: AV Showcase Day

Join the AV community for a relaxed evening of sharing

Audio-Visual productions on the big screen, not a competition, just creativity, stories, and good company.

Next JAP training starts 10 Oct 2026

A general application form will be available to download from this section of the PSSA website as of **1st July 2026**. The closing date for applications will be **1st August 2026**.

Light & Lens Monthly Articles – looking for some ideas on what you want to read about and send me some interesting articles that I can use

Growing HPS: Attracting New Members

Photography clubs are creative communities where people learn, share, and grow together. For a club to stay active and inspiring, it needs new members. Fresh faces bring new ideas, energy, and perspectives. But how do we attract them? Let's look at ideas, if you have any ideas please let us know.

Create a friendly, welcoming atmosphere

First impressions matter. New members, especially younger photographers, can feel intimidated if a club seems divided into cliques. It's important that everyone is friendly, approachable, and inclusive. A warm welcome and simple introductions can make all the difference.

Host open days

Open days are a great way to introduce the public to the club. Invite people to come and see what you do, ask questions, and even try out different types of cameras. Many people have never handled a DSLR or mirrorless camera, and a hands-on experience can spark their interest in photography.

Teach smartphone photography

Photography isn't only about expensive cameras. Modern smartphones are powerful tools, and many people start their journey with them. Offering smartphone photography sessions makes the club more accessible and can inspire beginners to develop a deeper interest in the art.

Encourage members to invite others

Word of mouth is one of the best ways to grow. Encourage members to invite friends, family, and colleagues who are interested in photography. A personal invitation often works better than any advertisement.

By building a friendly, open, and active club, you create a place where photographers of all ages and skill levels feel welcome, and that's the best way to grow any community

Light & Lens Monthly Article

by Carima van den Berg

10 Simple Ways to Improve Your Photography

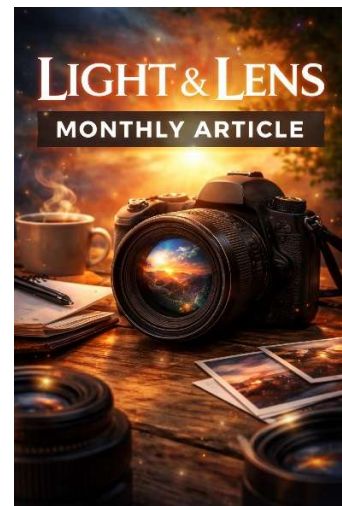
Great photography isn't about having the most expensive camera or the latest gear. It's about understanding light, seeing moments, and making intentional choices with every frame you create.

Whether you're using a smartphone or a professional camera, a few small adjustments in the way you shoot can make a big difference. These simple tips will help you build stronger, more beautiful images and grow your confidence behind the camera. Yes, we all know these things, but we forget or just get to relaxed.

1. Start with Strong Composition

Composition is the foundation of every great photo. It's the way you arrange elements inside the frame to guide the viewer's eye. One of the easiest and most effective rules to follow is the **Rule of Thirds**. Imagine your frame divided into nine equal squares. Placing your subject along these lines or at their intersections creates a more balanced and visually pleasing image.

Also pay attention to what's happening around your subject. Look for distracting objects near the edges of the frame, keep the horizon level, and simplify the scene where possible. A clean, well-composed image always feels more professional and intentional.



2. Understand Exposure

Photography is all about capturing light. Exposure determines how bright or dark your image appears, and it's controlled by three key settings:

- **Aperture** – how much light enters the lens
- **Shutter speed** – how long the sensor is exposed to light
- **ISO** – how sensitive the sensor is to light

Together, these form the exposure triangle. Learning how they work together gives you full control over the mood and brightness of your photo. If your image looks too bright or too dark, use **exposure compensation** or adjust your settings manually to correct it.



3. Choose the Right Camera Mode

Many beginners rely on Auto mode, and that's perfectly fine when you're starting out. But exploring other modes will open more creative possibilities.

- **Program (P):** A simple mode with some exposure control
- **Shutter Priority (S/Tv):** Ideal for freezing or blurring motion
- **Aperture Priority (A/Av):** Perfect for controlling background blur
- **Manual (M):** Full creative control over exposure

Each mode serves a purpose. As you grow more comfortable, you'll naturally begin choosing modes based on the look you want to achieve.

4. Keep Your Lens Clean

It may sound obvious, but a dirty lens can ruin an otherwise perfect photo. Fingerprints, dust, or smudges reduce sharpness and contrast, leaving your images looking dull or hazy.

Make it a habit to clean your lens before every shoot. A simple soft lens cloth in your camera bag can make a surprising difference in the result.

5. Focus on the Right Subject

Sharp focus is essential in photography. Your viewer's eye should naturally fall on the most important part of the image. Instead of letting the camera decide where to focus, move the focus point manually and place it over your main subject.

If your subject is moving, switch to **continuous autofocus (AF-C or AI Servo)**. This allows the camera to track the subject and keep it sharp as it moves.



6. Watch the Background

A beautiful subject can easily be ruined by a messy or distracting background. Before you take the photo, pause for a moment and scan the entire frame.

Ask yourself:

- Is there anything distracting behind the subject?
- Can I move slightly to simplify the background?
- Can I blur it using a wider aperture?

Sometimes just a small step to the side or forward can completely transform a photo.

7. Get Creative with Perspective

Most photos are taken from standing eye level, simply because it's comfortable. But changing your perspective can make your images feel more dynamic and engaging.

Try:

- Getting down to **eye level** with children or pets
- Shooting from a **low angle** for a dramatic look
- Using a **high angle** for a fresh viewpoint

These small changes in position often lead to much more interesting compositions.

8. Use Depth of Field to Isolate Your Subject

Depth of field refers to how much of your photo is in focus from front to back. By using a **wide aperture (low f-number)**, you can create a shallow depth of field that blurs the background and makes your subject stand out.

This technique is especially powerful for portraits, close-ups, and detail shots, where you want all attention on one subject.

9. Keep the Camera Steady

Sharp images depend on a steady camera, especially in low light. Even the slightest movement can cause blur when using slower shutter speeds.

Using a **tripod or monopod** gives you stability and control. It's particularly useful for:

- Night photography
- Long exposures
- Landscapes
- Self-portraits and group shots

A steady camera allows you to focus on composition and timing without worrying about blur.

10. Experiment and Take Multiple Shots

One of the biggest advantages of digital photography is the freedom to experiment. You're not limited by film, so take advantage of it.

Try different:

- Focal lengths
- Exposure settings
- Compositions

Don't be afraid to take several shots of the same scene. Often, the best photo is the one you capture after a bit of experimentation.

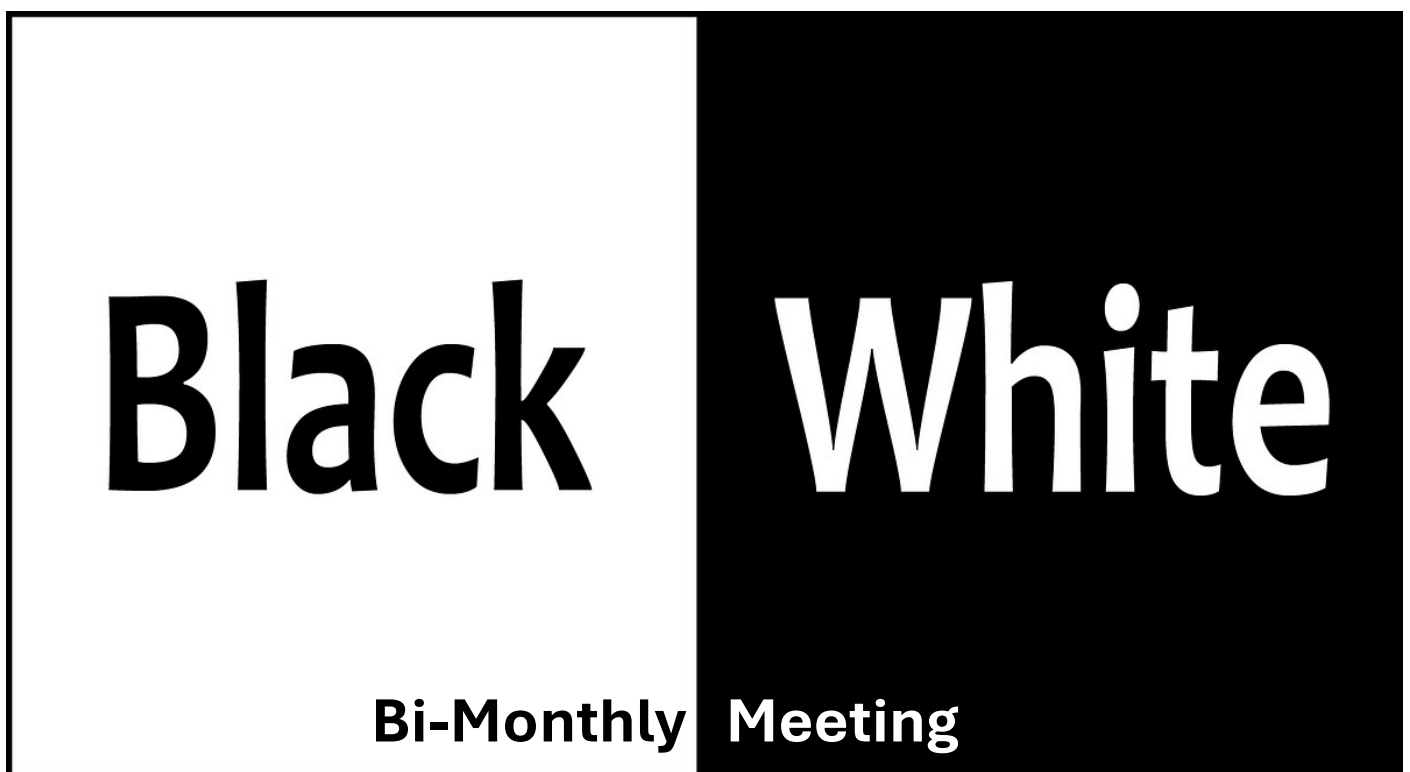
Bonus Tip: Pay Attention to White Balance and Flash

Different light sources produce different colour tones. If your photo looks too yellow, blue, or green, adjust your **white balance** settings to make the colours look more natural.

Flash can also be useful when used correctly. Indoors, increase your ISO so the flash doesn't overpower the scene. Outdoors, use flash as **fill light** to soften shadows and balance bright backgrounds.

Final Thoughts

Improving your photography doesn't happen overnight, but small, consistent changes can make a big difference. By paying attention to composition, light, focus, and perspective, you'll start to see stronger, more confident images. Photography is a journey of observation and creativity. The more you practice, the more your eye will develop, and the more your unique style will begin to shine through

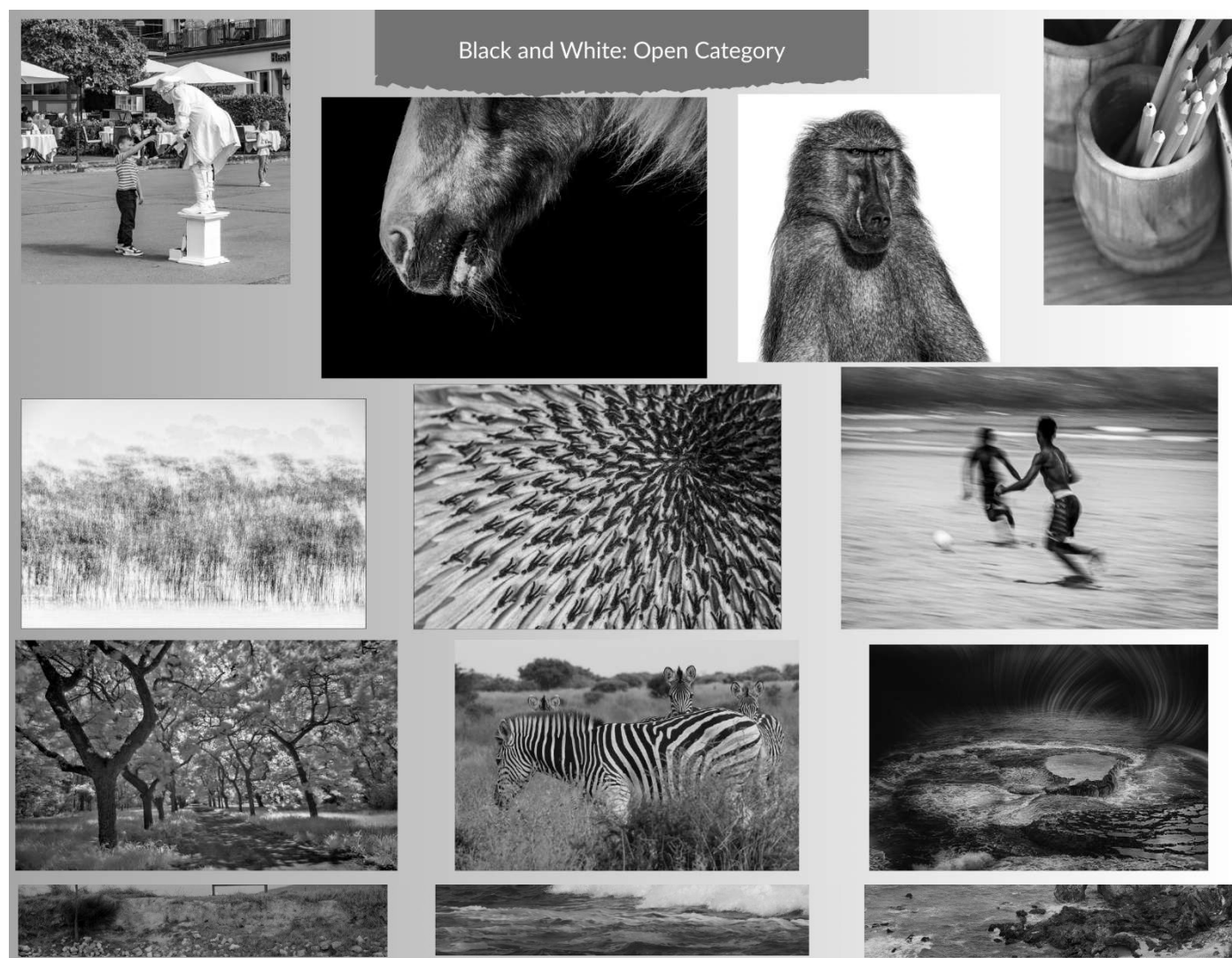


February marked our first HPS Bi-Monthly Black & White photography meeting of the year, and what a beautiful way to start.

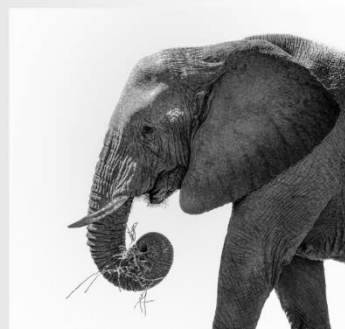
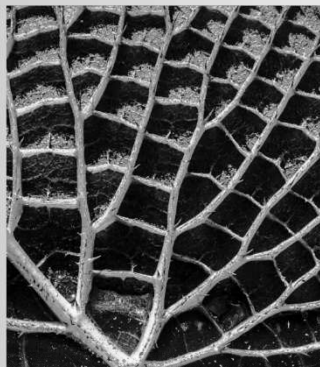
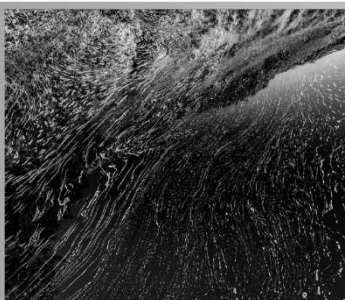
We invite all members to come a little earlier every second month on our normal club meeting night, as the Black & White session takes place on the same evening, starting at 18h00. It's a wonderful opportunity to explore the timeless art of monochrome photography together.

Black & white photography has a unique power. By removing colour, it draws the eye to light, shadow, texture and emotion. It simplifies the scene and often reveals details and stories that might otherwise go unnoticed, turning ordinary moments into striking, timeless images.

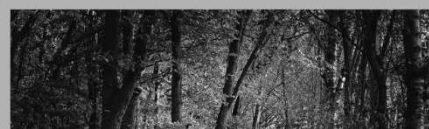
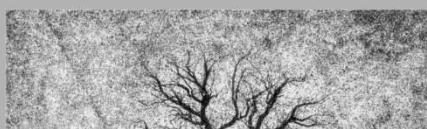
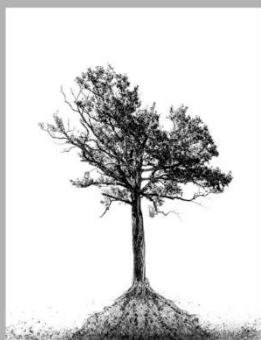
In February our Open Category once again proved that there are truly no limits to our members' creativity. From striking wildlife moments to expansive landscapes, each image told its own story.



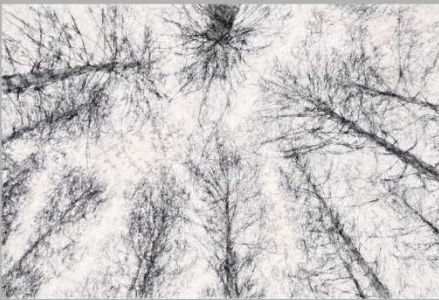
Black and White: Open Category



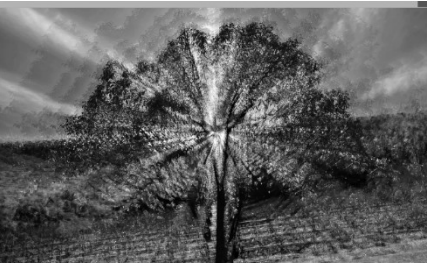
Black and White Set Subject:
Trees / Forest



Black and White Set Subject:
Trees / Forest



Black and White Set Subject:
Spirals in Nature



Black and White Set Subject:
Spirals in Nature



Additional Information:

Our **website** is being updated regularly, go and have a look.

Visit our **Facebook** page, invite friends to like our Facebook page.

Webpage: <https://helderbergphoto.com/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/helderbergphoto/>