

Monthly Newsletter: July 2026

July Photography Club Highlights

July has a way of quietly disappearing. Between the cold mornings, misty landscapes, and shorter days, it seems to slip past before we even realise it. While winter encourages us to stay indoors with a warm cup of coffee, it also offers photographers some of the most beautiful light and atmospheric scenes of the year if we're willing to brave the chill.

As photographers, we often believe that better equipment, a new lens, or the latest editing software will instantly improve our images. But the truth is, the biggest obstacles are usually not found in our camera bags they're found within ourselves.

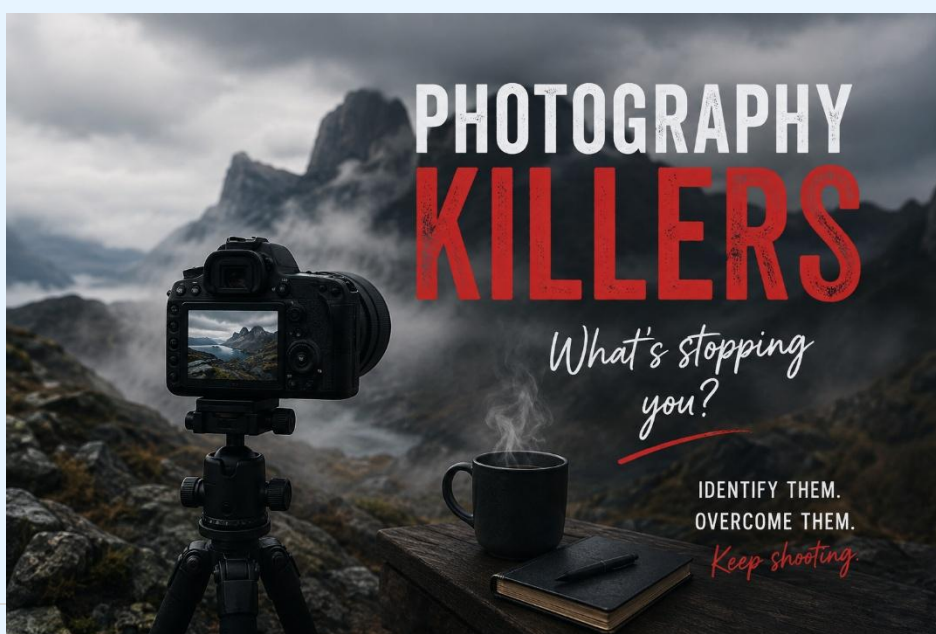
This month's theme is **Photography Killers** - the hidden roadblocks that prevent us from growing and reaching the next level. Whether it's fear of failure, lack of confidence, comparing ourselves to others, staying inside our comfort zones, or simply not taking our camera out often enough, we've all experienced these struggles. They affect beginners and experienced photographers alike.

The good news? Every Photography Killer can be overcome. The first step is recognising what's holding us back. Once we understand the challenges, we can begin replacing them with curiosity, practice, and a willingness to learn.

Photography isn't about being perfect. It's about seeing the world differently, telling stories, capturing emotions, and preserving moments that can never be repeated. Every photograph is another opportunity to improve, experiment, and discover something new.

So, this month, we invite you to ask yourself: **What's holding you back from becoming the photographer you want to be?** Together, let's identify our Photography Killers and leave them behind as we continue our journey, one photograph at a time.

The editor



July Results

What an incredible evening of photography! Our July Club Evening once again reminded us that photography is about so much more than simply pressing the shutter it is about seeing the world differently, telling stories, and sharing the moments that inspire us.

This month's categories **Open, Lighthouses, and Human Portraits** - produced an exceptional collection of images. The standard was remarkably high, making the judging a real challenge. Every photograph reflected the dedication, creativity, and passion of our members, proving once again that our club is filled with photographers who are constantly learning, growing, and inspiring one another.

One of the greatest strengths of our club is the willingness of members to enter their work, receive constructive feedback, and continue improving. Every image entered, whether it scores highly or not, represents another step on the journey to becoming a stronger photographer. Remember, even the world's greatest photographers started somewhere. They learned through practice, perseverance, and the courage to share their work.

To those who are new to photography or perhaps didn't achieve the score they hoped for don't be discouraged. Every outing, every competition, and every photograph teaches us something new. Keep experimenting, keep asking questions, and most importantly, keep enjoying the process. Photography isn't about perfection; it's about growth, creativity, and capturing moments that matter.

Overall Winner

Echoes of Giants

Photographer: Carima van den Berg

Score: 14/15

Open Category

 **Echoes of Giants** – Carima van den Berg – **14/15** (*Overall Winner*)

 **Sievers Point Depiction** – Peter Dewar – **14/15**

 **G Beck Wine Cellar** – Neels Beyers – **13/15**

 **Surfs Up** – Bernard Seymour Hall – **13/15**

Set Subject – Human Portraits

 **Crowned by Nature, Veiled in Smoke** – Carima van den Berg – **13/15**

 **Smiling** – Neels Beyers – **13/15**

 **Tereen** – Steve Trimby – **13/15**

 **Post Bank Client** – Peter Dewar – **13/15**

Set Subject – Lighthouses

 **Agulhas** – Carima van den Berg – **13/15**

 **Castle Point** – Bernard Seymour Hall – **13/15**

 **Versus a Beacon** – Hilldidge Beer – **13/15**

 **Cape Agulhas Lighthouse** – Steve Trimby – **13/15**

Congratulations to all our photographers and especially to our category winners. Thank you to every member who entered, attended, and contributed to another memorable club evening. Your enthusiasm and willingness to share your work are what make the Helderberg Photographic Society such a welcoming and inspiring community.

As we look ahead to next month's competition, challenge yourself to try something different. Visit a new location, experiment with a new technique, or photograph a subject you've never attempted before. Every

click of the shutter is another opportunity to learn, and every photograph—whether a masterpiece or a lesson brings you one step closer to achieving your photographic goals.

Keep photographing. Keep learning. Keep sharing. Most importantly, never stop enjoying the journey.

OPEN & OVERALL WINNER: JULY '26

ECHOES OF GIANTS
FROM
CARIMA VAN DEN BERG



Echoes of Giants by Carima van den Berg

There are moments in nature when time seems to stand still. This was one of them.

As the first light gently filtered through the clouds over **Sanbona Wildlife Reserve** in the Western Cape, the silence was broken only by the soft, deliberate footsteps of a family of elephants emerging from a dry riverbed after the rain. Leading the way was a magnificent bull calm, confident, and wise his weathered face bearing the marks of a lifetime spent walking these ancient landscapes. Behind him, the rest of the herd followed in quiet unity, each step a reminder of the deep bonds that have held elephant families together for generations.

Standing behind my camera, I felt incredibly small in their presence. There was no need for movement or sound only patience, respect, and gratitude for being allowed to witness such an intimate moment. For a few precious seconds, the world slowed down, and all that existed were these gentle giants and the echoes of countless journeys that had come before them.

By presenting the image in black and white, I wanted to strip away distractions and allow the viewer to connect with what truly matters: the remarkable textures of weathered skin, the contrast of ivory against shadow, the quiet strength in the elephant's gaze, and the timeless spirit of Africa itself.

Echoes of Giants is more than a wildlife photograph. It is a story of resilience, family, wisdom, and survival a reminder that some of the most powerful moments in photography are not those filled with action, but those filled with presence. It is an invitation to pause, reflect, and appreciate the enduring majesty of one of nature's greatest treasures.

May Photos: Open



May Photos



May Photos



May Photos: Lighthouse

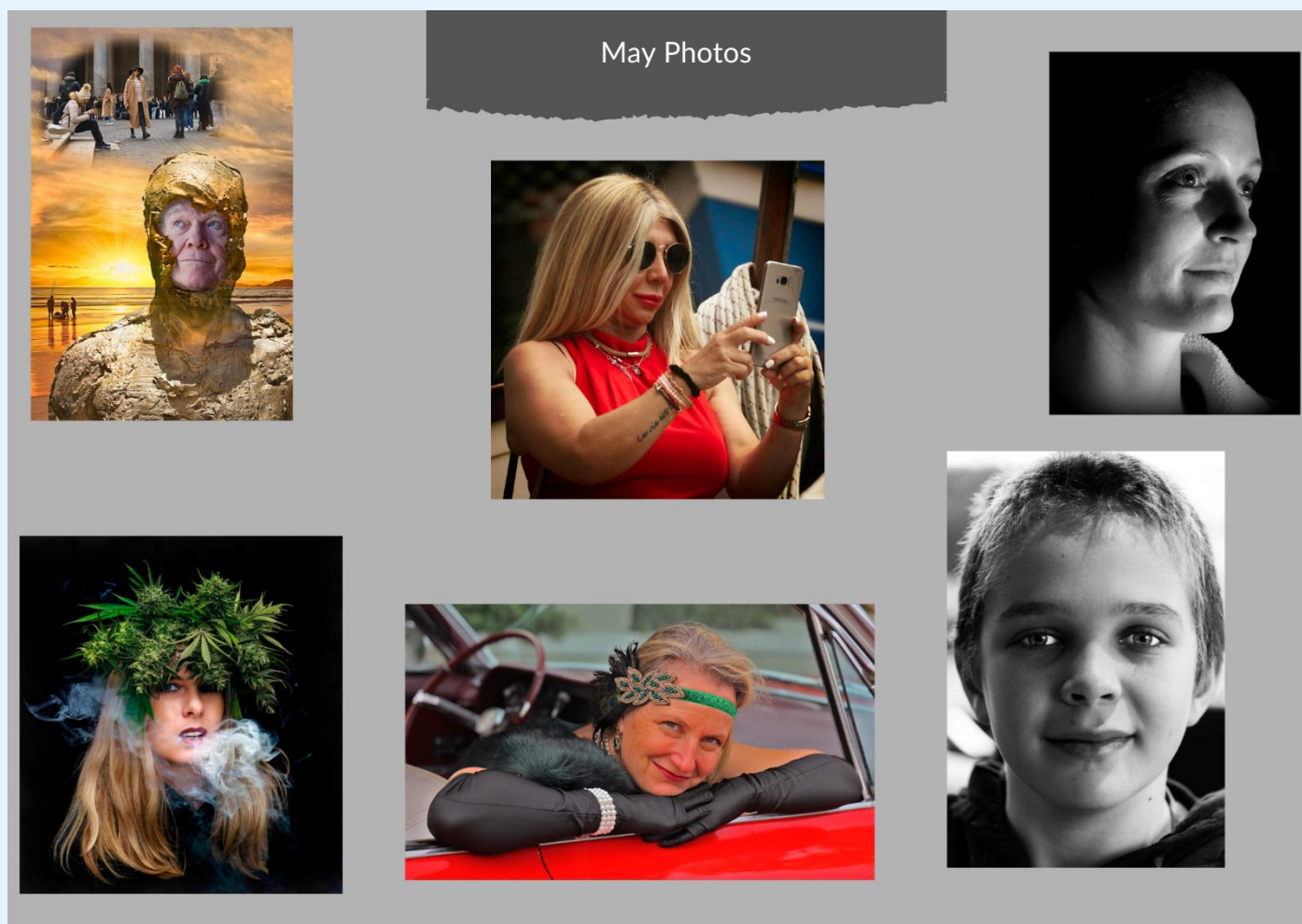


May Photos



May Photos : Human Portraits





May Photos

Club Meeting Information:

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

Meeting	PV Closing Date	Meeting Date	Set Subject
Club Black&White @ 18h00	7 Aug 2026	11 Aug 2026	Flowers & Human Portraits
Club Normal @ 19h15	7 Aug 2026	11 Aug 2026	Flowers

Take note:

- July **Set Subject** Flowers
- June is also our **Bi-Monthly Black White Meeting**

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.
Contact Nettie for more information.

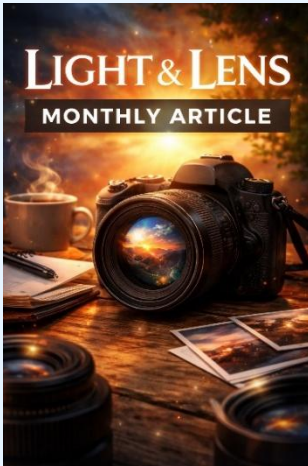
Audio-Visual

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.

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.



Light & Lens Monthly Article

by Carima van den Berg

The Top 10 Photography Killers: *The Hidden Mistakes That Hold Every Photographer Back*

Have you ever looked at someone else's photographs and wondered, "*Why don't my images look like that?*"

Most photographers assume the answer is a better camera or a more expensive lens. While quality equipment certainly has its place, it isn't what separates a good photographer from a great one. Over the years, I've discovered that photographers from complete beginners to seasoned professionals often struggle with the same challenges. I call these The Top 10 Photography Killers because they quietly prevent photographers from reaching their full potential. The good news? Every one of them can be overcome.

1. Not Understanding Light

Photography is, quite literally, painting with light. Without understanding light, it's impossible to consistently create compelling photographs.

Light determines mood, depth, colour, texture, and emotion. A portrait taken in harsh midday sunlight will feel completely different from one captured during the soft glow of golden hour.

Learn to observe:

- The direction of light
- The quality of light (soft or harsh)
- The colour of light
- Shadows and highlights
- Reflected light

The best photographers don't just find beautiful subjects they find beautiful light.

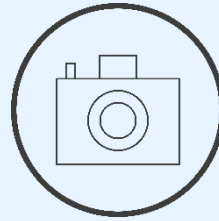
Photography Tip: Before looking at your subject, look at the light.

2. Not Knowing Your Camera

Modern cameras are incredibly powerful, yet many photographers only use a small percentage of their features.

Understanding your camera means knowing how to control:

- Aperture
- Shutter Speed
- ISO
- Focus Modes
- Metering
- White Balance



Rather than relying on Auto mode, learn what each setting does and, more importantly, why you would change it.

When you understand your camera, you stop reacting and start creating.

Photography Tip: Spend time practising with one setting at a time until it becomes second nature.

3. Weak Composition

You can have perfect exposure and sharp focus, but without strong composition, an image often lacks impact.

Composition is about guiding the viewer's eye through the photograph.

Some timeless techniques include:

- Rule of Thirds
- Leading Lines
- Framing
- Symmetry
- Negative Space
- Foreground Interest
- Layering

The difference between an average photo and an exceptional one is often just a change in viewpoint.

Photography Tip: Before pressing the shutter, ask yourself, *"What do I want my viewer to see first?"*

4. Shooting Without Purpose

Many photographers take hundreds of photographs hoping one will turn out well.

Instead, every photograph should answer one simple question:

"Why am I taking this picture?"

Photography with intention produces stronger images than photography by chance.

Set yourself challenges:

- Tell a story.
- Capture an emotion.
- Use only one lens.
- Photograph one colour.
- Shoot one subject from five different perspectives.

Purpose transforms practice into progress.

5. Buying Gear Instead of Building Skills

This is one of the biggest traps in photography.

We convince ourselves that the next camera, sharper lens, or latest accessory will magically improve our work.

It rarely does.

A skilled photographer can create remarkable images with entry-level equipment, while expensive gear cannot compensate for weak technique.

Invest in knowledge before equipment.

Photography Tip: Ask yourself, "Have I mastered the gear I already own?"

6. Comparing Yourself to Others

Social media is filled with incredible images but remember you are usually seeing someone's best work, not their everyday work.

Comparison steals creativity and confidence.

Instead of competing with other photographers, compete with yourself.

Ask:

- Am I improving?
- Am I learning?
- Am I enjoying photography more than I did last year?

Progress matters far more than perfection.



7. Ignoring the Background

It's easy to focus entirely on your subject and forget everything around it.

A distracting background can ruin an otherwise excellent photograph.

Watch for:

- Trees growing out of heads.
- Bright distractions
- Telephone poles
- Litter
- Clutter
- Bright patches of light

Professional photographers don't only photograph the subject they photograph everything inside the frame.

Photography Tip: Before pressing the shutter, quickly scan all four corners of your image.

8. Poor or Inconsistent Editing

Editing is part of modern photography. It isn't about changing reality it's about presenting your vision.

Good editing should enhance an image naturally by:

- Correcting exposure
- Improving colour
- Recovering detail
- Removing distractions
- Adding subtle contrast

Avoid heavy-handed editing that distracts from the subject.

Developing a consistent editing style also helps create a recognisable photographic identity.

Remember, people should notice your photograph not your editing.

9. Fear of Criticism

Every photographer experience self-doubt.

Many avoid competitions, exhibitions, or sharing their work because they're afraid of negative feedback.

The truth is that constructive criticism is one of the fastest ways to improve.

Every experienced photographer has made mistakes. Every award-winning image is built on years of learning.

Don't fear feedback embrace it.

Growth begins where comfort ends.

10. Forgetting Why You Started

Perhaps the biggest photography killer of all.

Photography should bring joy.

Over time, deadlines, competitions, client expectations, social media, and perfectionism can make photography feel more like work than passion.

Take time to photograph something simply because it makes you smile.

Watch a sunrise.

Photograph your grandchildren.

Explore a quiet beach.

Visit a nature reserve.

Capture everyday moments.

The photographs that mean the most are often not the ones that win awards they're the ones that preserve memories and tell stories.

Never lose the excitement of picking up your camera.

Final Thoughts

Every photographer encounters these challenges at some point. The difference between those who plateau and those who continue to grow is a willingness to learn, practise, and keep an open mind.

Remember:

- Learn to see the light.
- Master your camera.
- Compose with intention.
- Shoot with purpose.
- Build skills before buying gear.
- Compare yourself only to your past self.
- Pay attention to every part of the frame.
- Edit to enhance, not overpower.
- Welcome constructive feedback.
- And above all, never lose your love for photography.

Your camera is simply a tool.

The real magic has always been the photographer behind it.

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/>