

Helderberg Photographic Society – Monthly Meeting Judging

Month: September

Judge: Issi Potgieter

 **Overall Winner**

Title: Himba boy

Photographer: Steve Trimby

Mark: 1415

 **Top Entries – Open Category**

Himba boy– Steve Trimby 14/15

Yelleo Billed Kite taking flight, Riaan vd Berg 14/15

Bearded Vulture flyby – Riaan vd Berg 14/15

Gawking gannet – Hilldidge Beer 14/15

 **Top Entries – Set Subject: Black and White**

Thinker of the trees – Carima vd Berg – 14/15

Ghostlight Pas de Deux – Carima vd Berg – 14/15

Silhouette Symphony – Hannes vd Walt – 14/15

Zeitz Silo steps – Neels Beyers – 13/15



Himba boy



Thinker of the trees

Open Category

Angel of Fire – Antenie Carstens (Score: 13) Stunning concept and composition the red and black create striking drama. My only suggestion would be to soften the outer edge of the angle so that it blends a little more seamlessly into the photo.

Wonderwek Grot – Bernard Seymour Hall (Score: 12) Lovely scenery. The handling of the light is superb, and the focus is impressively sharp on the cave. The eye of the Milky Way is beautifully exposed, adding depth and brilliance to the composition.

A Mouthful of Attitude – Carima van den Berg (Score: 12) Well,executed shot, especially considering the time of day. The photo is sharp, and the concentric circle adds great visual interest. I do feel, however, that the crop at the top is a bit tight but that's just my opinion.

River Owl – Fiona Nell (Score: 11) Very nice B&W conversion. The lines form a strong contrast with the circles in the right bottom corner. Well done on spotting this abstract composition.

Castle Through The Archway – Hannes Vaa Der Walt (Score: 11) My kind of photo lovely textures in the foreground wall. By bringing out the detail in the foreground, the castle and the sky appear just a tad overexposed. My suggestion to improve the photo: you could either use the perspective crop tool to straighten the foreground wall (this would lose the brick part), or crop it on the left to remove the brick section.

Gawking Gannet – Hilldidge Beer (Score: 14) Superb image the light is delicate, and the catchlight in the gannet's eye is a real bonus. The choice of lens opening creates a magnificent, interesting blurred background that beautifully echoes the bird's colours. Focus is spot,on. Well done!

Abandoned in Calvinia – Jane Pieterse (Score: 11) Nicely seen, with good detail in the foreground. The two windows form a natural frame that leads the viewer into the scene. Unfortunately, the time of day lets you down a bit, as the detail in the shadow of the first window is getting lost. My suggestion would be to bring the highlights down and lift the shadows to recover more balance.

Reflections – Laurette van der Merwe (Score: 12) Love the reflections in each droplet. The exposure and depth of field are perfect, and the colours are very appealing. However, there is quite a lot of background, and to place more emphasis on the droplet it would benefit from a tighter crop. The fact that there are four droplets doesn't bother me, as there are others visible too. Just my humble opinion.

Wine Glasses – Neels Beyers (Score: 11) A very well,lit scene of wine glasses. The warm colours and reflections form a major part of the composition. The only slight letdown is the light at the back and the reflection on the wall but that's just nitpicking. Personally, I would prefer a tighter crop to place more emphasis on the glasses, allowing the viewer to get lost in the reflections and the repetition of the forms.

Breakfast Time – Peter Dewar (Score: 12) This photo draws you down to the estuary with its soft breeze blowing no South Easter! The almost monotone palette creates a peaceful atmosphere, while the white vignette adds a dreamy quality to the scene. The flamingos are mostly hiding their faces, which doesn't really engage the viewer, as they seem indifferent to your presence. I can imagine this image hanging in a dentist's waiting room, calming patients as they wait to be called.

Bearded Vulture Flyby (68024) – Riaan van den Berg (Score: 14) Well,executed photograph. The colours are pleasing, and the mottled background makes the vulture stand out beautifully. The bird is super sharp, with excellent detail in the eye. Just be careful not to overwork the image, as a white edge is beginning to form around the bird.

Malaysian Fire Dancers – Sandra Snyman (Score: 12) A very pleasing photo – well exposed and sharp. Well done on avoiding a horizon running through the figures, which keeps the composition clean and engaging.

Himba Woman – Steve Trimby (Score: 13) This is such a dream destination for photographers! A magnificent portrait of a Himba woman – the detail is amazing, from the ochre-coated hair and traditional adornments to the layered necklaces and textures of her attire. The exposure is beautifully handled, and the eye contact is just incredible, especially with the reflection of the photographer in her eyes. Truly captivating!

Sunset at the Waterfront – Wynand Muntingh (Score: 11) Beautiful waterfront sunset! The colours are vibrant, the bridge leads the eye perfectly, and the reflections add depth. The people on the bridge bring life to the scene – maybe a slightly tighter crop could make it even stronger.

Starlinks Falling Out of Orbit – Antenie Carstens (Score: 12) The flowing trails and bold colours against the dark background create a striking sense of movement. A focal point could make it even stronger.

Kgalagadi By Night – Bernard Seymour Hall (Score: 12) Photographing the night sky is always challenging, and doing so with light pollution makes this an excellent achievement. It's a pleasant scene that transports the viewer to a specific place. The dreamy atmosphere works well, though the sky replacement is noticeable – especially with stars appearing in the trees on the left side. Just be mindful of those details, as they can distract from an otherwise strong image.

The Art of Movement_Nathi – Carima van den Berg (Score: 12) The motion blur beautifully captures the energy and rhythm of the dance. The red dress pops against the dark stage, making the image vibrant and dynamic. A sharper focal point could anchor the movement even more.

Sea Foam – Fiona Nell (Score: 11) A striking black-and-white capture of the power of the sea. The textures in the cresting wave and foam are beautifully detailed, and the tonal contrast between light and dark can be slightly more to add drama. Overall it's a strong and evocative image full of movement.

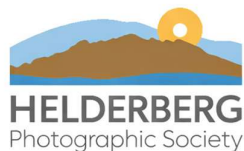
Leprechaun Hideout – Hannes Vaa Der Walt (Score: 13) This is a peaceful and beautiful shot. The green moss and ferns make the forest feel alive, and the textures are breathtaking. The path naturally leads the viewer's eyes deeper into the picture, while the dark opening at the end adds a touch of mystery. But overall it's a calm and inviting scene.

Viskuns – Hilddidge Beer (Score: 12) By adding texture, this ordinary shot of fish is transformed into a lovely artistic picture. The neutral colours lift it from ordinary to extraordinary, giving the image a calm yet striking feel.

Is it a Bee – Laurette van der Merwe (Score: 11) This is a detailed close-up. The stripes on the body and the clear wings really stand out, and the blurred background makes the insect pop nicely. The focus on the eyes isn't sharp, which lets the image down a bit, but the overall composition still shows off the insect's delicate features beautifully.

Two Paragliders – Neels Beyers (Score: 11) An interesting shot that captures the paragliders in action. The bright colours of the canopies look great and contrast nicely with the mountains in the background. The only drawback is that the gliders are moving away from the viewer, so there's little detail visible on them. Still, it's a lively and colourful scene that shows the sport well.

Langstrand Sunset – Peter Dewar (Score: 12) What a pleasant image! The pastel-like colours of the sunset are beautiful, and the reflections on the water are excellent. The sunlight hitting the flags is a lovely bonus. Even though the building on the pier is almost centered, it doesn't hurt the



composition. The silhouetted person adds a human touch. There isn't much to improve, but cropping a little off the left side would remove the extra pier that doesn't add value. Also, there's a small dust spot in the sky to clean up.

Yelleo Billed Kite Taking Flight (M) – Riaan van den Berg (Score: 14) The shutter speed and the high ISO allows the photographer to freeze the bird in mid action. The focus on the eye is sharp and a large part of the bird. The one half of the background does tend to compete with the subject and a smaller lens opening can resolve that... that is 'n a real world were we all can afford f2.8 lenses. Very well done.

Clouds on Fire – Sandra Snyman (Score: 11) A warm, pastel sunset with stunning reflections and silhouettes tranquil and inviting, My suggestion... just crop the bottom for a panoramic feel and clean the dust spot for perfection.

Himba Boy – Steve Trimby (Score: 14) A striking and detailed portrait. The braids, jewelry, and patterned belt are beautifully captured, and the black background makes the subject stand out strongly. The lighting highlights the details of the face well. Overall, it's a powerful and expressive image.

Historical Manor – Wynand Muntingh (Score: 11) A charming photo of a historic house with ornate gables and well,defined details. Some of the wall texture is lost due to the overcast light, which reduces impact. The handrail of the balustrade unfortunately cuts through the heads of the people on the stoep, distracting from the composition. Well seen.

Look I Got a Skateboard for My Birthday – Nettie Warnick (Score: 11) Humor lifts us all, and this photo does just that. The placement of the two birds is excellent, and the black,and,white conversion adds to the story. However, some detail is lost in the very bright whites and the deep darks, which slightly reduces impact. Still, it's a well,spotted and engaging shot.

Today's Catch – Nettie Warnick (Score: 11) A strong documentary,style image. The rows of fish create rhythm and repetition, while the black,and,white treatment emphasizes texture. The conversion adds mood, with good detail preserved in both light and dark areas. The composition is strengthened by the diagonal lines, which guide the viewer's eye and add dynamism to the scene.

Set Subject: Black and White

Skiff at Dawn – Bernard Seymour Hall (Score: 13) A strong minimalistic photograph. The black, and, white treatment enhances mood, while the reflection creates balance. The tonal range is excellent, and the slight movement in the water keeps the image alive rather than static. Nicely done.

Thinker of the Trees – Carima van den Berg (Score: 14) Beautiful capture. The composition is spot on and the focus is tack sharp. The black, and, white treatment enhances the fur's texture and tonal range, while the background cleanly separates the subject. Congratulations on catching the perfect moment to reveal their curiosity.

One Euro House – Fiona Nell (Score: 12) Strong composition with the diagonal steps leading the eye. The textures of decay and contrasted with vegetation are well captured, and the B&W treatment enhances mood with a good tonal range. Pushing the whites could add more drama. A suggestion maybe to cropping the left side would avoid distraction.

Rhythm in Monochrome – Hannes Vaa Der Walt (Score: 12) Great energy in this shot. The central dancer's pose grabs attention, while the surrounding movement adds rhythm and flow. The black, and, white treatment highlights motion and expression, and the background doesn't compete, letting the dancers shine.

Remembered the Milk – Hilddidge Beer (Score: 11) Great timing the interaction between the two gulls makes the shot dynamic. The black, and, white treatment works well, giving strong contrast against the bright background and bringing out feather detail, though some detail in the whites has been lost. The composition is balanced, with the rock anchoring the scene and the birds creating motion.

Tankwa Ostrich – Jane Pieterse (Score: 11) Nice capture the ostrich stands out clearly against the open landscape. The black, and, white treatment emphasizes its shape and feathers, while the wide background conveys space and isolation. The composition is balanced, though a little more room at the bottom would help. The tonal range highlights both bird and terrain well. My most hated judging remark: Next time going lower would improve the horizon placement so it doesn't cut through the neck.

Owl – Laurette van der Merwe (Score: 13) Beautiful close up the owl's intense gaze really draws you in. The black, and, white treatment brings out the feather detail and textures nicely, while the blurred background keeps the focus on the face. The tonal range works well, giving depth to the eyes and beak. A strong, striking portrait of the bird's character. Well done!

Zeitz Silo Steps – Neels Beyers (Score: 13) Really striking shot the spiral pattern pulls the eye right into the center, almost like looking into an abstract design or an eye. The black, and, white treatment works well, emphasizing the symmetry and depth. The clean lines and curves make it visually strong and balanced. Nicely captured piece of architectural art.

Bracket Fungi BW – Peter Dewar (Score: 12) Nice detail shot the rough bark and layered fungi make a strong textural contrast. The black, and, white treatment emphasizes the patterns and shapes, giving it a natural, almost abstract feel. The composition works well, keeping the eye moving across the shelves of fungi and grooves in the wood. Well done.

Hermanus Horny Rock Slowmotion BW – Riaan van den Berg (Score: 13) Beautiful scene the jagged rocks against the misty water create a dramatic contrast. The long exposure gives the sea a soft, dreamy feel, while the black, and, white treatment emphasizes the texture of the rocks. In Afrikaans we would say Skille kontras. The distant shoreline and cloudy sky add depth, making it a strong composition. Suggestion maybe rethink the name LOL.

Hand of the Giver – Sandra Snyman (Score: 11) Good capture of two iconic structures – the Ferris wheel and the lotus-shaped museum balance each other well. The black and white treatment emphasizes architectural detail and contrast, while the water foreground adds depth. Strong composition overall – just remove the dust spot in the sky for a cleaner finish.

Taking a Break – Steve Trimby (Score: 12) This is a good storytelling photo. The B&W treatment brings out the textures of the machine and the shade of the trees, giving it a timeless feel. The composition works well, with the tractor dominating but the human presence adding balance and interest.

At the Cathedral – Wynand Muntingh (Score: 11) The clean lines and geometric design give the building a modern feel. The B&W conversion brings out the contrast between the light facade and cloudy sky, adding mood. The circular window and layered arches provide strong focal points, while the composition keeps the structure balanced and striking. I'm less sure about the building on the left – it feels as though it's leaning, which slightly distracts from the overall harmony.

Under the Night Sky – Bernard Seymour Hall (Score: 12) The lone tree beneath the Milky Way makes for a striking composition. The countless stars and luminous band of the galaxy contrast beautifully with the dark foreground, creating a sense of vastness and serenity. The diagonal sweep of the Milky Way adds movement, while the tree anchors the frame. A very well-executed nightscape.

Ghostlight Pas de Deux – Carima van den Berg (Score: 14) Beautifully done – the long exposure captures the dancer's grace, turning movement into a ghostly presence. The outlines against the black background create rhythm and flow, while the strong pose anchors the frame. The contrast highlights both the delicacy of the skirt and the strength of the dancer's form. A striking and artistic interpretation of dance.

Laaiplek Lad – Fiona Nell (Score: 12) The small bird stands out crisply against the blurred background, making it the clear focal point. The texture of the rock adds interest without distracting, and the bird's posture feels natural and delicate. The contrast in plumage tones is well shown, highlighting its markings. A simple but elegant composition that conveys the bird's beauty.

Silhouette Symphony – Hannes Vaa Der Walt (Score: 14) Impressive capture – the near-silhouette of the figures conveys balance and strength beautifully. The inverted pose adds drama, while the backdrop creates a striking contrast between physical performance and artistic setting. The stage lighting highlights the forms and adds depth, making this a dynamic and visually engaging composition.

Still Free for Now – Hilldidge Beer (Score: 12) Strong wildlife portrait – the close-up captures the monkey's face beautifully, with fine detail in the eyes and fur. The hand gripping the tree adds context, grounding the shot in its natural environment. The blurred background isolates the subject effectively, keeping the focus sharp and engaging. A striking capture.

Life Perseveres – Jane Pieterse (Score: 11) The stark black branches against the bright sky create a dramatic, high-contrast effect. The nest at the center draws the eye and adds a clear focal point, while the upward perspective emphasizes scale. The minimalist composition works well, turning a simple subject into a striking, textured study of nature. Just be careful that some detail in the branches is lost against the light background, which slightly reduces clarity.

Spiderweb – Laurette van der Merwe (Score: 11) Delicate and detailed – the water droplets highlight the intricate weave of the web beautifully. The blurred background keeps the focus on the fine threads, while the glistening droplets add texture and sparkle. The dark branches frame the web well, though at times they compete with the finer strands. The darker tones introduce a slightly foreboding mood, adding atmosphere.

Steam Engine at Elgin – Neels Beyers (Score: 11) The black, and, white conversion showcases the locomotive's detail beautifully. The train cars stretching into the distance add depth and perspective, while the platform and figures provide context and a sense of story. There seems to be a faint white border along the edge where the sky meets the rest of the image possibly from post-processing which slightly distracts from the otherwise strong composition.

The Tree Line BW – Peter Dewar (Score: 11) The B&W treatment emphasizes the drama of the scene, with the silhouetted trees standing starkly against the thunderous sky. The sloping hill adds weight to the composition, while the swirling clouds convey movement and tension. The tonal contrast is striking, capturing the intensity of the sky. Just take care that in both the brightest and darkest areas, some finer detail is lost. Still, it remains a powerful and evocative landscape study.

I Told You BW – Riaan van den Berg (Score: 13) The interaction between the bird with the closed beak on the left and the one with the wide, open beak on the right creates a strong sense of dialogue or confrontation. The blurred background isolates the subjects effectively, allowing feather detail and textures to stand out. The monochrome treatment adds drama, though the darker tones slightly reduce separation between the birds and the backdrop. Overall, it's a striking capture of interaction and character.

Pineapple in Mono – Sandra Snyman (Score: 12) The geometric dome stands out boldly, its triangular panels creating a striking texture that works beautifully in B&W. The surrounding high-rise buildings and waterfront promenade provide context and scale, while the B&W brings out the contrast and detail. Take care some finer detail is lost in the brightest areas, which slightly reduces clarity. Overall, it's a striking image with strong architectural presence.

Welcome – Steve Trimby (Score: 13) Probably one of the best examples of leading lines the ceiling's pleated fabric creates a sense of elegance and height, while the checkered floor adds rhythm and visual interest. The symmetry of the composition provides balance, with the horse painting serving as a dynamic focal point. The B&W treatment has a good tonal range, though be mindful that in some bright areas finer detail is lost.

Holes in the Wall – Wynand Muntingh (Score: 12) The weathered facade tells a powerful story of decay and violence the gable roof with missing tiles and the wall scarred by gunshot holes make the scene tragic. The small circular window near the top adds character, contrasting with the newer window below and the roof's right corner. The black, and, white treatment emphasizes texture and decay, though in the darkest areas some finer detail is lost. Overall, it's a striking architectural capture of the lasting impact of time and conflict.

Night Heron – Nettie Warnick (Score: 13) The night heron with attitude is well captured, its stance and fine plume creating a strong contrast against the dark, stick-like foliage. The monochrome treatment brings out texture effectively, though in the deepest shadows some subtle detail is lost without much impact. However, the loss of detail in the white areas of the bird does weaken the image slightly.

Abstract – Nettie Warnick (Score: 13) The gentle curves of the waves create a minimalist rhythm, making this one of the strongest examples of natural abstraction. The monochrome treatment emphasizes texture and motion, with tonal contrast highlighting the fluid forms. The simplicity of the composition allows the viewer to focus on the interplay of light and shadow, though in the brightest highlights some subtle detail is lost. Overall, it's a striking image of movement and form.