



Monthly Newsletter: September 2026

September Photography Club Highlights

September in the Western Cape means spring is here days are warming, sunrises come earlier, and the light lingers longer into the evening. Crisp mornings and misty landscapes remind us that the season is shifting, tempting us outdoors with our cameras to chase colour and atmosphere.

And chase it we did. From sweeping landscapes to intimate portraits, dance, wildlife, and abstract art, our members captured it all. The creativity and energy in every frame were inspiring proof that spring brings not just colour, but imagination too.

This month, though, we're turning the lens inward to those moments *when the shoot just doesn't feel right*. Because every photographer, beginner or pro, knows the frustration of coming home with images that don't match the vision. The challenge isn't always technical; often it's internal. Mood, confidence, and creative energy play a bigger role than we realise.

Recognising this is the first step toward growth. So, as you read, ask yourself: what happens when your creativity stalls and how do you find your way back behind the lens?

The editor



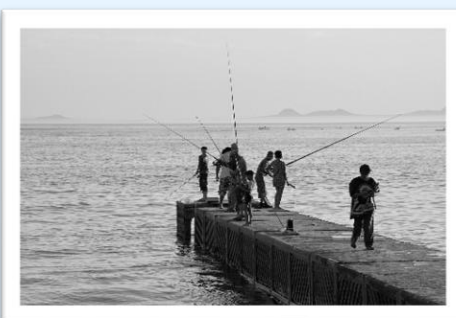
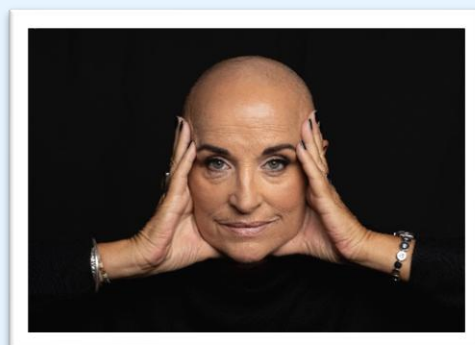
A Proud Moment for Helderberg Photographic Society

A few weeks ago, Helderberg Photographic Society took part in the Western Cape Interclub, joining photographic clubs from across the province for a wonderful celebration of photography, creativity and talent.

And we are absolutely delighted to share that HPS placed 9th overall! For our club, this is a fantastic achievement and one we are very proud of.

We may be a friendly bunch who get together because we love photography, but when our images are placed alongside those from clubs across the Western Cape, it is wonderful to see that our members can hold their own! Behind every image entered are hours of learning, experimenting, making mistakes, trying again, and simply going out with a camera and seeing the world a little differently.

A huge congratulations to all our HPS members who contributed images and thank you for representing our club so beautifully. Most importantly, this is what we love about photography, we learn together, we encourage each other, we celebrate each other's successes, and we keep growing. Here is just a few.



September Results

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

The **Open Category** was a true display of talent. Members went all out, bringing us sweeping landscapes, intimate human portraits, expressive dance, wildlife encounters, bold creative slow-motion abstracts, and more. Each frame carried its own story, proving once again how diverse and imaginative our community can be.

In contrast, the **Set Subject – Black & White** stripped away all colour, challenging members to show us how they see the world without it. Suddenly, textures, shapes, and light took centre stage. Architecture became sharper, wildlife more dramatic, and everyday scenes transformed into something timeless.

Together, these categories reminded us that photography isn't just about what we see it's about *how* we see. Whether bursting with colour or pared down to monochrome, each image revealed a unique vision and a fresh perspective.

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.

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

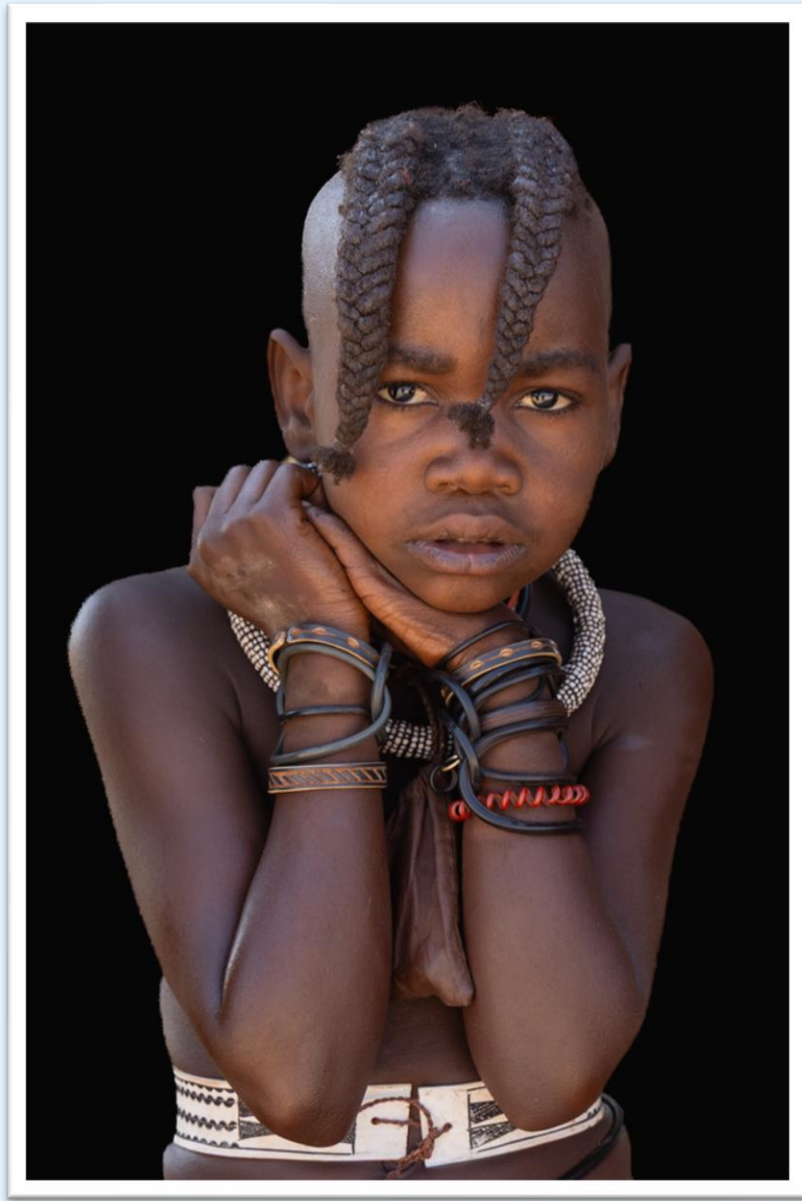
Title: Himba Boy
Photographer: Steve Trimby
Mark: 14/ 15

Top Entries – Open Category

Himba boy– Steve Trimby 14/15	Yelleow 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



Overall, Winner: Title: Himba boy

Photographer: Steve Trimby

Mark: 14/15

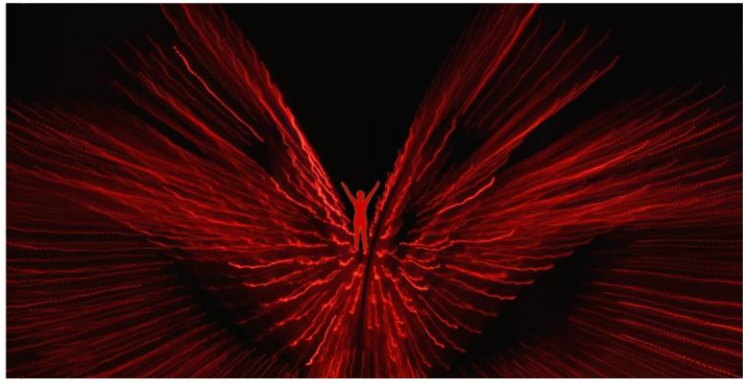
In the heart of Namibia's sun-baked plains, a young Himba boy stands still, his gaze steady and unflinching. The world around him hums with life the rustle of cattle, the whisper of wind through ochre dust yet he remains composed, a figure of calm dignity.

His braids, carefully woven and coated with ochre, speak of tradition passed down through generations. Each strand tells a story of belonging, of identity shaped by the rhythm of the desert. The bracelets circling his wrists glint softly in the light, symbols of craftsmanship and pride.

Against the deep black background, his presence becomes timeless a study in contrast and character. The light falls gently across his face, revealing the quiet confidence of youth and the wisdom of heritage.

This portrait captures more than a moment; it holds a legacy. It is a celebration of culture, artistry, and the photographer's eye for truth a reminder that beauty often lies in stillness, and power in simplicity.

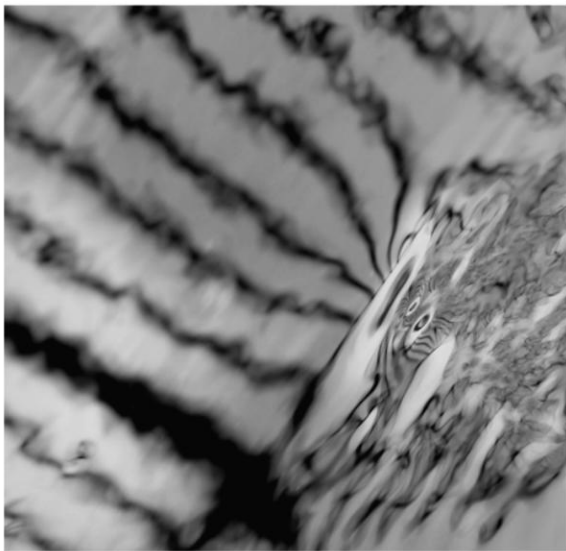
Open Category: Members Photos



Angel of Fire – Antenie Carstens (Score: 13)



A Mouthful of Attitude – Carima vd Berg (Score: 12)



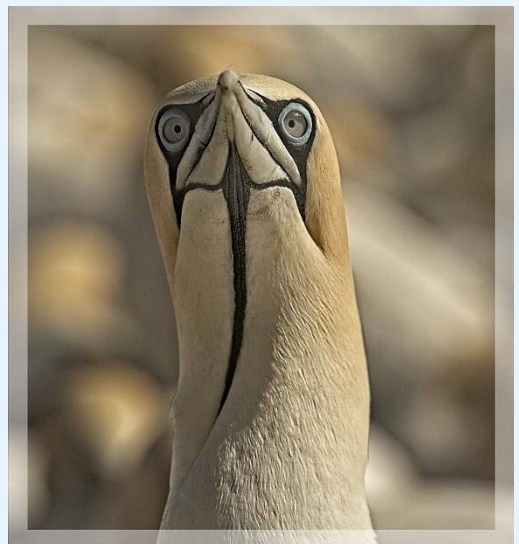
River Owl – Fiona Nell (Score: 11)



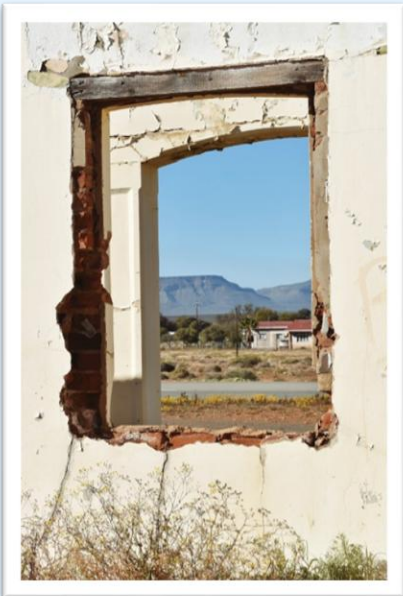
Wonderwek Grot – Bernard Seymour Hall (Score: 12)



Castle Through The Archway – Hannes vd Walt (Score: 11)



Gawking Gannet – Hilldidge Beer (Score: 14)



Abandoned in Calvinia – Jane Pieterse (Score: 11)



Bearded Vulture Flyby – Riaan vd Berg (Score: 14)



Wine Glasses – Neels Beyers (Score: 11)



Reflections – Laurette van der Merwe (Score: 12)



Breakfast Time – Peter Dewar (Score: 12)



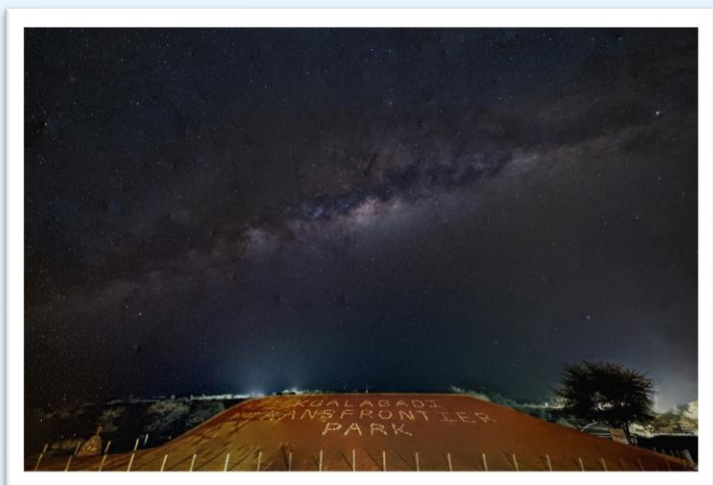
Malaysian Fire Dancers – Sandra Snyman (Score: 12)



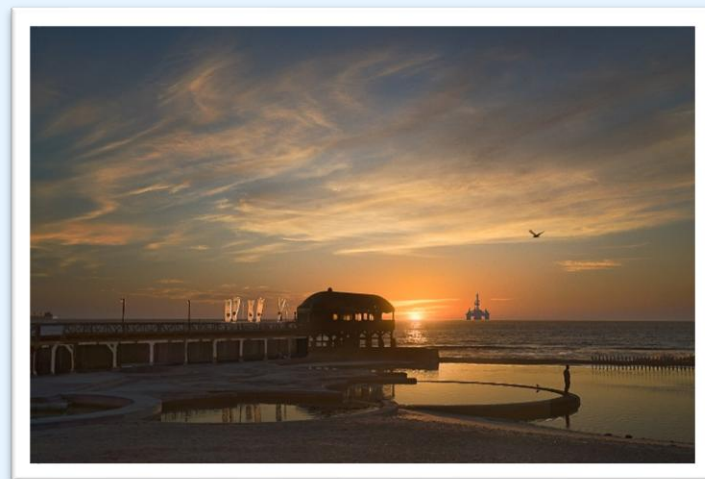
The Art of Movement_Nathi – Carima vd Berg (Score: 12)



Sea Foam – Fiona Nell (Score: 11)



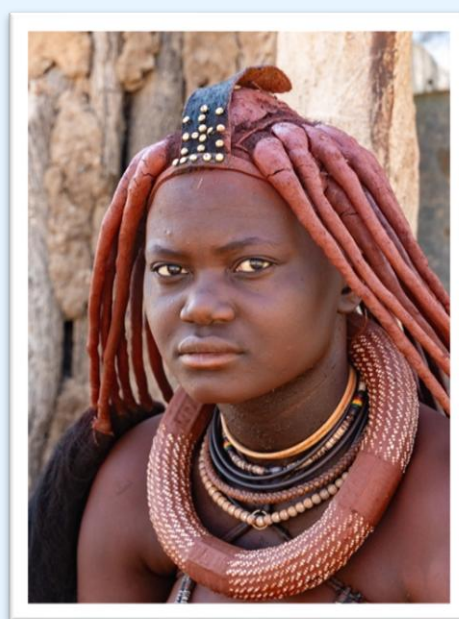
Kgalagadi By Night – Bernard Seymour Hall (Score: 12)



Langstrand Sunset – Peter Dewar (Score: 12)



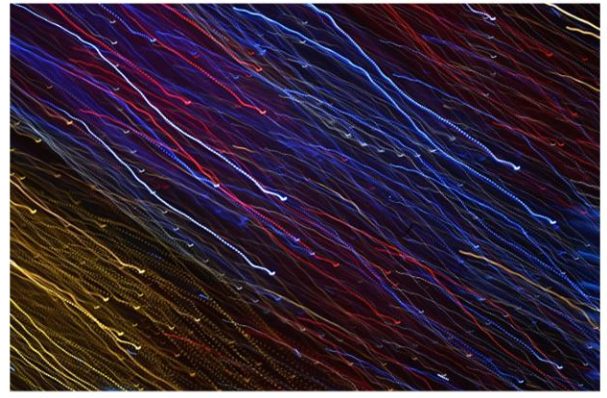
Viskuns – Hilldidge Beer (Score: 12)



Himba Woman – Steve Trimby (Score: 13)



Sunset at the Waterfront – Wynand Muntingh (Score: 11)



Starlinks Falling Out of Orbit – Antenie Carstens (Score: 12)



Leprechaun Hideout – Hannes VD Walt (Score: 13)



Two Paragliders – Neels Beyers (Score: 11)



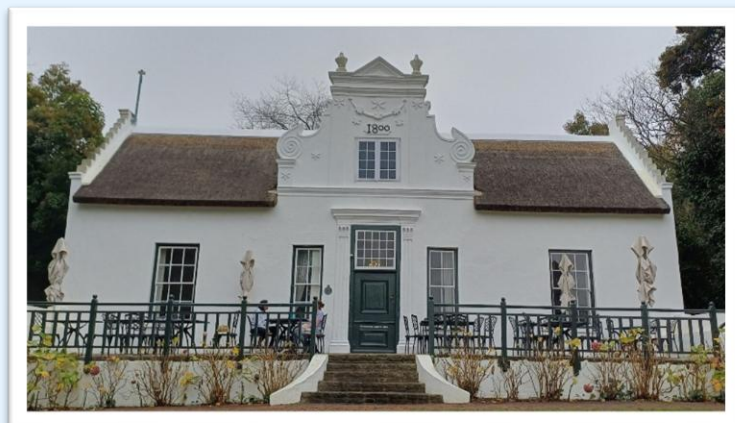
Yelleo Billed Kite Taking Flight– Riaan vd Berg (Score: 14)



Its it a Bee – Laurette van der Merwe (Score: 11)



Look I Got a Skateboard for My Birthday – Nettie Warnick (Score: 11)



Historical Manor – Wynand Muntingh (Score: 11)



Clouds on Fire – Sandra Snyman (Score: 11)



Today's Catch – Nettie Warnick (Score: 11)

Set Subject: Black and White - Members Photos



Thinker of the Trees – Carima vdBerg (Score: 14)



Rhythm in Monochrome – Hannes vd Walt (Score: 12)



Skiff at Dawn – Bernard Seymour Hall (Score: 13)



One Euro House – Fiona Nell (Score: 12)

Remembered the Milk – Hilldidge Beer (Score: 11)





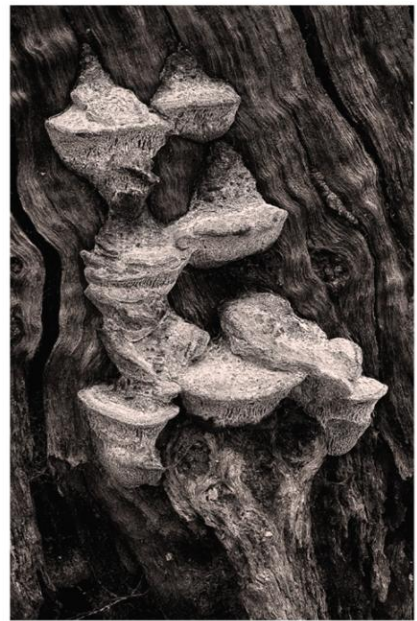
Tankwa Ostrich – Jane Pieterse (Score: 11)



Zeitz Silo Steps – Neels Beyers (Score: 13)



Hand of the Giver – Sandra Snyman (Score: 11)



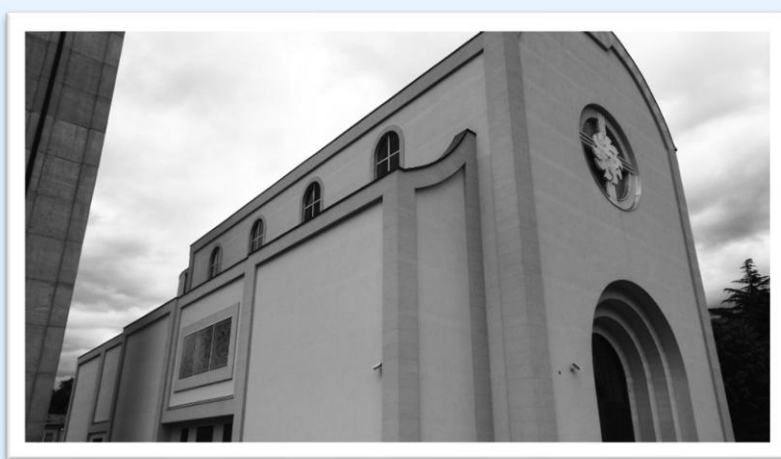
Bracket Fungi BW – Peter Dewar (Score: 12)



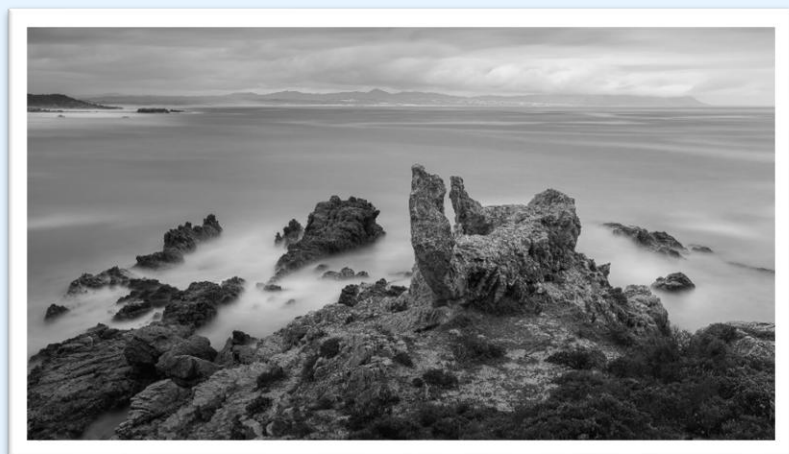
Owl – Laurette van der Merwe (Score: 13)



Under the Night Sky – Bernard Seymour Hall (Score: 12)



At the Cathedral – Wynand Muntingh (Score: 11)

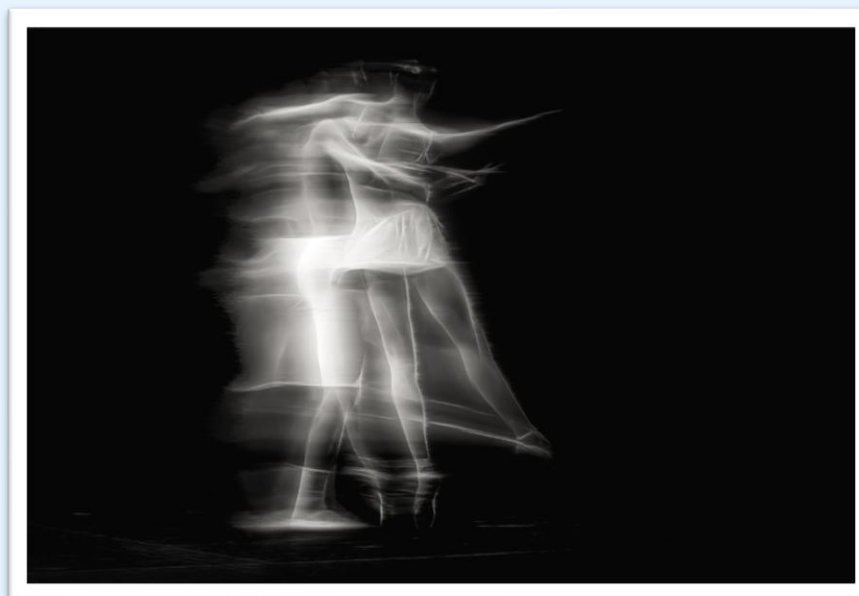


Hermanus Horny Rock Slowmotion – Riaan vd Berg (Score: 13)



Taking a Break – Steve Trimby (Score: 12)

**Ghostlight Pas de Deux – Carima vd Berg
(Score: 14)**





Life Perseveres – Jane Pieterse (Score: 11)



Laaiplek Lad – Fiona Nell (Score: 12)



Still Free for Now – Hilldidge Beer (Score: 12)



Spiderweb – Laurette van der Merwe (Score: 11)

Silhouette Symphony – Hannes vd Walt (Score: 14)





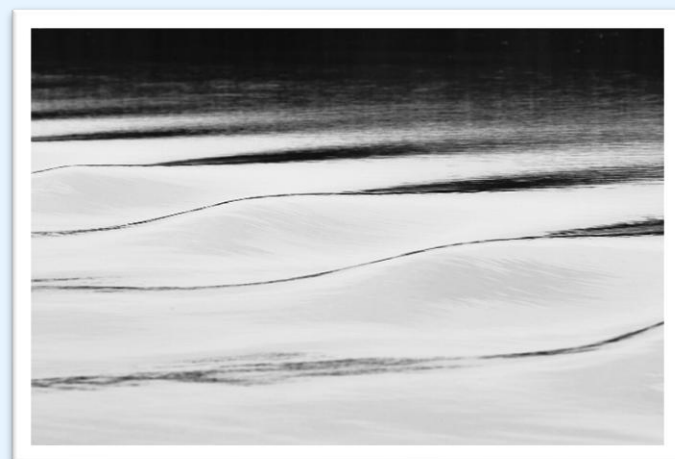
Welcome – Steve Trimby (Score: 13)



Pineapple in Mono – Sandra Snyman (Score: 12)



The Tree Line BW – Peter Dewar (Score: 11)



Abstract – Nettie Warnick (Score: 13)



Steam Engine at Elgin – Neels Beyers (Score: 11)



I Told You BW – Riaan van den Berg (Score: 13)



Holes in the Wall – Wynand Muntingh (Score: 12)

Night Heron – Nettie Warnick (Score: 13)



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	9 October	13 October	Black & White / Night Photography /Bell Books and Candle
Club Normal @ 19h15	9 October	13 October	Night Photography

Take note:

Night Photography: Images must be made after dusk or in low-light conditions. The challenge is to demonstrate control of exposure, light capture, creative use of ambient/artificial light, shadow and motion, while maintaining clarity of subject and composition. Manipulation is allowed in line with open category standards if the photograph was captured by the author and retains photographic integrity.

Bell, Books and Candle: A creative thematic category inspired by the symbolic triad of bell, book(s) and candle. The image must incorporate one or more of these elements literally or metaphorically. The photographer is encouraged to interpret the theme imaginatively. Manipulations are permitted provided that all captured content is by the author and the result remains photographic.

Outings, Workshops and Courses

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.

Outings: Kuifkop 25-28 August

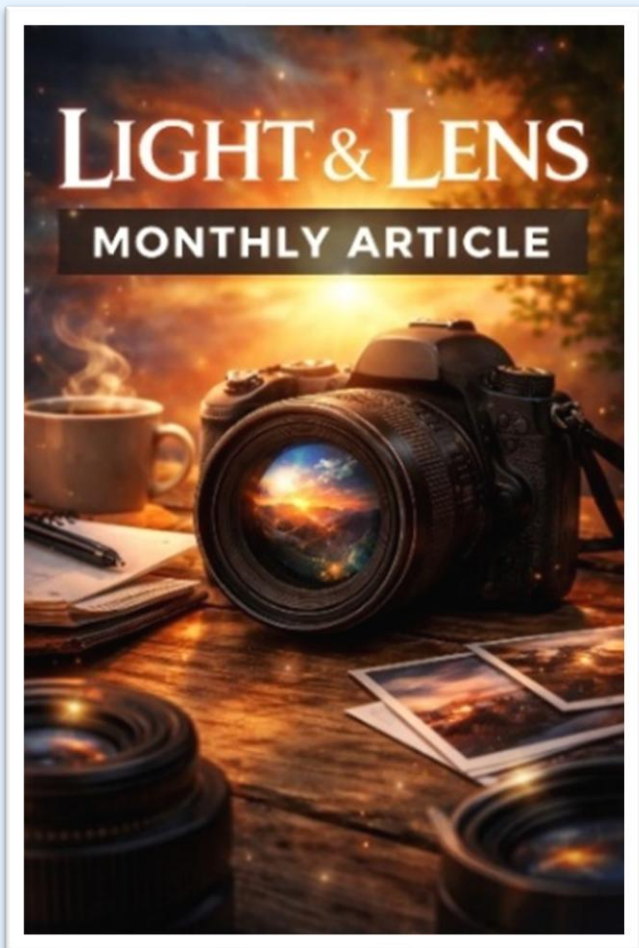
A group of eleven enthusiastic members booked into several cottages at the Kuifkopvisvanger Resort on the banks of the Berg River. Although the Spring flowers had disappeared early this year, there was still plenty to photograph.

Bird photographers were in their element, while others found Bokkomlaan to be very interesting and picturesque. Bokkom smokeries existed next to cafes and restaurants, while boats, birds and locals provided photographic interest. We went on an early morning cruise on the 'Cracklin' Rosie, a cute viewing boat which took us upriver to see the local birds viz. spoonbills, flamingos, pelicans, kingfishers, cormorants, and others.

As we had a few days at our disposal, we had time to visit Laaiplek, Elands Bay, and Paternoster, whilst also doing our 'homework' (a long-standing member, Paddy Howes, used to set up a list of photographic subjects to take so that we could show them at a follow-up meeting) we resurrected the idea, with good success!

We socialised in the evenings and there is talk of visiting Kuifkop again perhaps when the flowers are in bloom!

An outing is a brilliant way to get away from it all, with friends who have a common interest join us next time!



Light & Lens Monthly Article

by Carima van den Berg

When the Shoot Just Doesn't Feel Right

Every photographer, from the person who has just bought their first camera to the seasoned professional, has had *that* shoot. You go out with your camera, full of good intentions.

Maybe you have planned the location, checked the weather, packed the right lens and imagined all the beautiful photographs you are going to come home with.

Then **nothing**. The light isn't right. The weather doesn't cooperate. The location suddenly looks completely uninspiring. Your compositions feel flat. Your camera seems to have developed a personal grudge against you. Perhaps the biggest problem isn't the weather, the light or the camera at all.

Maybe you're just not in the mood. I know this one very well.

I recently came back from a shoot and, after looking at the photographs, I deleted every single one of them. Not because they were technically terrible. They just weren't *right*.

Or perhaps more honestly, **I wasn't right**. I wasn't in the mood. I wasn't seeing things creatively. Nothing was exciting me. I could look at a scene that, on another day, might have made me stop in my tracks, and that day I simply didn't see the photograph.

And that's something I have learned about myself over the years: My mood can have a surprisingly big influence on the way I photograph.

The Downside of a Bad Shoot

When you come home from a shoot feeling disappointed, it can be surprisingly hard on you.

You start asking yourself questions:

"What happened?"

"Have I lost my touch?"

"Why can't I see anything?"

"Maybe I'm just not good enough."

Suddenly one disappointing afternoon becomes a full-blown crisis of photographic confidence.

There are some very real downsides to bad shoots:

- **Creative burnout:** When nothing seems to work, you can lose the desire to pick up your camera again.
- **Self-doubt:** You begin questioning your creativity, your technical ability and even your eye.
- **Frustration:** You spent time, petrol, energy and possibly hours walking around with a camera, and came home with nothing you like.
- **Loss of momentum:** One bad experience can make you think twice about going out again.
- **The comparison trap:** You open Instagram and everyone else appears to be producing breathtaking photographs while you have just deleted an entire memory card.

Okay, perhaps that last one is just me. But here's the interesting part.

Perhaps It Wasn't a Bad Shoot

What if we stop calling it a bad shoot?

What if it was simply a shoot where we didn't make photographs we liked?

There is a difference. Sometimes the weather ruins everything. Sometimes the light is awful. Sometimes the location doesn't live up to what you imagined.



Sometimes you are simply not in the right headspace to photograph. Photography is creative. Creativity is affected by how we feel.

When I'm excited, curious or relaxed, I tend to notice little things. A patch of light. A strange shape. A reflection. A tiny detail hiding underneath the obvious scene.

When I'm tired, distracted, frustrated or simply not feeling it, I can walk straight past those things. The camera hasn't changed. I have.

Landscape Photography Has Another Problem

Landscape photographers have an additional challenge: we don't control very much.

We don't control the clouds.

We don't control the sunset.

We don't control the wind.

We don't control whether the beautiful golden light we drove an hour for, actually appears.

Mother Nature clearly has absolutely no respect for our photography plans.

You can carefully plan a sunrise shoot and arrive to a completely grey sky.

You can hike up a mountain expecting dramatic clouds and get a perfectly boring blue sky.

You can wait for that magical sunset and get nothing.

Sometimes that is simply photography.

But Here's Where the Learning Happens

A disappointing shoot can actually teach you quite a lot, if you give yourself enough time before judging it. Instead of immediately deciding "*I got nothing*," look back at the photographs later. Not with the intention of finding a masterpiece. Just ask:

What was actually wrong?

Was it the light?

Was the composition weak?

Were your settings wrong?

Was the subject simply boring?

Or were you having an off day?

That last question is important.

Because sometimes the answer isn't something you can fix in Lightroom.

You can't edit yourself into a better mood.



Give Yourself Permission to Have Off Days

I think photographers sometimes put enormous pressure on themselves to produce something every time they take their camera out. But that's not really how creativity works. Not every walk needs to produce a portfolio photograph. Not every outing needs to result in a competition entry.

Not every memory card needs to contain something worth keeping. Sometimes you go out, you look, you photograph, you come home and delete everything. And that's okay.

Perhaps the next time you go out, you'll see something completely differently.

Perhaps you'll notice the light you missed today.

Perhaps you'll photograph something you walked straight past.

Perhaps you'll simply enjoy carrying your camera without expecting anything from yourself.

The Sweet Success of Coming Back

One of the strange things about photography is that a terrible shoot can make a good shoot feel even better. After coming home with nothing, the first time you come back with an image that makes you stop and think, "**Ohhh there it is.**" it feels fantastic.

Because you know what it feels like when nothing works. You appreciate the good days more. You become more patient. You become better at adapting. And, perhaps most importantly, you learn that one disappointing shoot doesn't define you as a photographer.

So, What Do You Do After a Bad Shoot?

Don't throw your camera into the cupboard. Don't immediately decide you're rubbish. And perhaps don't delete everything while you're still annoyed with yourself.

Give it a little time.

Come back to the photographs when your mood has changed. Look at them with fresh eyes. You might still delete them all, and that's okay too. Because the photographs may be gone, but the experience isn't.

You learned something about the light.

You learned something about the location.

You learned something about your camera.

Perhaps you learned something about yourself as a photographer. Because photography isn't only about learning how to control your camera. It's also about learning how you see. Sometimes, how we see is influenced by how we feel. So yes, I deleted every photograph from my recent shoot.

Would I do it again?

Probably.

But next time, I might wait until I've had a cup of coffee first.



Because apparently, sometimes the biggest piece of photographic equipment I forget to pack is the right mood.

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/>