Rustenburg Photographic Society

CLUB INFORMATION BROCHURE

(Last revised: January 2018)

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1.   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide the reader with general information on the activities and operation of the Rustenburg Photographic Society (RPS).

The Club Year commences in July with the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Club Evenings are booked for the third Wednesday of each month and the Committee posts these dates on its website after the first Club Committee meeting in August. Club Committee meetings are held on pre-agreed dates within one week prior to the Club Evening. These meetings are to get the Committee together to address matters related to the affairs and administration of the Club.

Other Club activities include participation in inter-club competitions and social outings which the Committee will communicate to the Club Members at Club Evenings and via the various communication channels that it has its disposal.

The RPS is affiliated to the Photographic Society of South Africa (PSSA) and follows their guidelines related to judging and the member's star-rating. The Committee encourages its members to become members of the PSSA and participate in the National and International events and salons.

1.1.   Purpose of the Club

The purpose of the RPS is to create and maintain an active photographic community which supports members in their growth and development as photographers and provides varied opportunities for gaining new knowledge, skills, technical understanding, expansion of perspective, sharing of photographic art and enjoyment of the craft.

1.2.   The Club Committee

New Committee Members are selected at the AGM and will serve the Club in the following portfolios:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Communications, Judging and Accreditation
- Technical

Please see the Club website (www.rtbphotoclub.co.za) for the details of the RPS Club Committee Members. If you require further information regarding the Club and its activities, please do not hesitate to contact the Chairman or any member of the committee.

2.   MEMBERSHIP

2.1.   Application for Membership

Should you wish to join the Club, the RPS membership application form must be completed in full and returned to any Club Committee Member for further processing. This membership application form will be available at the Club Meetings as it is recommended that any potential new member first attend a Club Evening to see the events of the evening and meet some of the Club Members.

2.2. Membership Fees

Membership fees are payable annually (a Club Year running from 1 July to 30 June) and the fee payable is R400.00 per year for ordinary members, R200.00 for scholars and R200-00 for pensioners. For families, the first family member pays the R400.00 whilst the second and subsequent members, pay R150.00 per person.

Membership fees are payable within the first two months of a new Club Year and become due on the first day of July. If any member fails to pay his or her membership fee within said two months, membership of such member is automatically terminated.

3. MEETINGS AND NEWSLETTERS

3.1. Meetings

Club Meetings are held monthly at the Protea Park Dutch Reformed Church at 13 Bergbos Avenue (GPS Co-ordinates S25.69'67''07° and E27.21'74"69°) on the third Wednesday of every month at 18h30. The meeting starts with a brief presentation on the various activities, announcements and happenings of the Club followed by the viewing and judging of the images entered the set and technical subjects. A winner is selected for each of these sections by the judges. Thereafter there is a break where members are encouraged to socialize over a coffee and some snacks.

From time to time the Club will invite a guest speaker who will share his/her experiences, techniques, methodologies, etc. with the Club Members.

After these discussions and/or presentation, the open junior and senior images are viewed and judged in random order and a winner for each section is selected by the Club Members.

The junior and senior winning images for the evening are also then entered into the monthly PSSA Photo of the Month Competition. The four winning images are posted onto the Club's website and are updated after each subsequent Club Evening.

3.2. Newsletter

A club newsletter is produced on a monthly basis and will be e-mailed to all Club Members, but this will also be available on the Club's website.

4. WORKSHOPS AND OUTINGS

4.1. Workshops

Workshops for the year will be planned around the set and technical subjects. The details of such workshops will be communicated to all Club Members within the first month of the new club year. The Club Committee reserves the right to make changes to these workshops as and when the need arises.

The Club Committee would like to encourage all Club Members to participate in these workshops as there may be some valuable information shared that could be of benefit to those Club Members attending.

4.2. Outings

The Club Committee also plans a few outings during the course of the Club Year. This is to allow the Club Members to practice certain techniques and aspects of photography as discussed in the various workshops. Details of such outings will be communicated by the Club Committee at Club Evenings.

5. STAR RATING SYSTEM

The club utilises the star rating system based on the PSSA's guidelines for grading and advancement purposes of its Club Members. It is important to note that this star rating system follows the PSSA's guidelines and has a few modifications tailored to the needs of RPS. The details of this rating system are contained below:

5.1. Ratings

There are 10 star ratings at RPS. Each Club Member will have a star rating based on their experience and progression through the star rating requirements.

No	Star Rating	Level
1	Novice	Junior
2	1 Star	
3	2 Star	
4	3 Star	
5	4 Star	Senior
6	5 Star	
7	Master Silver	
8	Master Gold	
9	Master Platinum	
10	Grand Master	

5.2. New Members

All new Club Members that have not belonged to a photographic club before, will commence their photographic journey as a Novice with zero points, awards and credits.

A new Club Member that has been a member of another photographic club will be placed in the same rating that he/she was in at the previous club, but will start with zero club points and awards.

Should the new Club Member already be a 5 star or higher, the new Club Member will be required to submit a panel of 10 photos to the Club Committee for review and approval. The new Club Member's PhotoVaultOnline Advancement Schedule will also be submitted as part of the new member's application.

In the event of salon points, the Club Committee will review the panel in conjunction with the PhotoVaultOnline Advancement Schedule and will advise whether the salon points will be accepted or not.

6. MONTHLY IMAGE ENTRIES

6.1. Number of Image Entries

Each member may enter a maximum of four images in one of the following combinations:

one technical subject **one** set subject **two** open subjects	or	**one** technical subject **three** open subjects	or	**one** set subject **three** open subjects

Images which have been submitted for advancement judging at a monthly club meeting, may not be submitted again at another monthly Club Evening, unless it is on an appeal or re-judging as described in point 7.3 of this Club Information Brochure. These images however, are eligible for entry into salons and inter-club competitions.

6.2. Set and Technical Subjects

A set subject, as well as a technical subject, is provided for each monthly Club Evening. These subjects are based on specific themes or topics, which are announced in advance at the monthly Club Evenings and are also available on the Club's website.

The objective of the set subject is to encourage Club Members' creativity and to expose the Club Members to subjects that they would ordinarily not take photos of.

The objective of the technical subject is to help and challenge Club Members to practice specific technical aspects of photography and thereby learn the do's and don'ts associated with submitting photographs for competitions.

Please note that these entries must be relevant to the set and technical subjects. An image may be disqualified for its failure to depict the theme or topic. These images are judged and points awarded at the Club Evening and are credited towards the Club Members' advancement in line with the Club's star rating system.

7. JUDGING PROCESS & CRITERIA

7.1. The Judging Process

There are three judges that evaluate each projected digital image (PDI). When these judges evaluate the images, they take the following criteria into account and will award a score out of a potential 15 points per judge:

Criteria	Explanation
Focus:	1 - 3 points if acceptable as viewed
Exposure:	1 - 3 points if acceptable as viewed (Colour natural, not washed out or too dark).
Composition:	1 - 3 points if reasonable composition is present (i.e. Rule of Thirds, Leading Lines, Pattern Shot)
Action/Impact:	Action/movement, if present and handled well, also deserves additional points.
No Flaw:	Additional points if no flaw can be found and the photo 'blows' you away! This is Certificate of Merit (COM) quality.

Each of the three judges will allocate a mark out of 15 for the image. All three marks will then be added up giving a total out of 45.

The final award will then be given based on the following Image Award Matrix:

	STAR GRADING									
Award	**Novice**	**1 Star**	**2 Star**	**3 Star**	**4 Star**	**5 Star**	**Master Silver**	**Master Gold**	**Master Platinum**	**Grand Master**
COM	39 to 45	39 to 45	39 to 45	39 to 45	39 to 45	39 to 45	39 to 45	39 to 45	39 to 45	39 to 45
Gold	21 to 38	23 to 38	25 to 38	27 to 38	29 to 38	31 to 38	33 to 38	33 to 38	33 to 38	33 to 38
Silver	12 to 20	14 to 22	16 to 24	18 to 26	20 to 28	22 to 30	24 to 32	24 to 32	24 to 32	24 to 32
Bronze	3 to 11	5 to 13	7 to 15	9 to 17	11 to 19	13 to 21	15 to 23	15 to 23	15 to 23	15 to 23
No Award	0 to 2	0 to 4	0 to 6	0 to 8	0 to 10	0 to 12	0 to 14	0 to 14	0 to 14	0 to 14

Points achieved at Club Evenings are added towards the Club Member's advancement scores are as follows:

Club Points:

Award	Points
No Award	0
Bronze	1
Silver	2
Gold	3
National Salon Acceptance	4
Certificate of Merit	5
International Salon Acceptance	6

Salon Points:

Award	National	International
Acceptance	1	2
Special Achievement	2	3
Division Winner	3	4

7.2. The Judging Criteria

7.2.1. Focus

The focus in an image must be on the subject of the photograph and the subject should be sharply in focus with the background blurred out to prevent distraction showing. Blurring the background is achieved by using a large aperture (small f-stop) such as f/5.6 to keep only the subject in focus.

If the subject is a person, animal or insect, the eyes should first always be clear and sharply in focus and then preferably the rest of the subject as well.

If the photograph is a landscape/seascape/cityscape, the depth of field should be such that the whole image is in sharp focus. This is achieved by using a small aperture (large f-stop) such as f/22.

7.2.2. Exposure

Exposure is the balance between the light sensitivity of the sensor (the ISO setting) and the brightness values in a scene. The exposure in a photograph should be such that you do not loose details due to too much light (clipped highlights) or too little light (clipped shadows) being captured in the image.

Correct exposure also has to do with when you take the photograph. The early morning or late afternoon the sunlight is much less intense than the sunlight at midday and therefore makes for better exposed photographs.

7.2.3. Composition

Composition is the way the various elements of an image is positioned within the frame in relation to each other. This includes the foreground (twigs, leaves, rocks, etc partially obscuring the subject or creating distractions), the background (along with any distracting bright spots and colours) and the prime subject. The various aspects of composition are:

- Rule of thirds
- Leading lines
- Space to move / look into
- Shapes and Patterns, etc.

7.2.4. Action

Images depicting action should show the effect of the action through some form of blurring. Blurring of the background when panning or blurring of the wheels of a vehicle or the prop/rotor of an aircraft. Action in nature can be achieved with birds landing / taking off or a herd of animals running (or even a single animal) or animals fighting.

7.3. Re-entries and Appeals

Often the judges would say "fix this" or "do that" to improve an image, but there was never an incentive to do what the judges suggested. Club Members may re-enter an image after some work has been done on it, but there are certain conditions that should be complied to:

- Re-submissions must be within the next two months of the Club Evening of the initial entry.
- The re-submission must form part of the Club Member's normal entry and not as an additional entry i.e. only 4 images entered as stipulated in point 6 above.
- The image's name must indicate it is a re-submission in the Category field by adding an "r" in front of the image name e.g. r-Image Name.jpg.
- The new award given to the re-submitted image will then be final.
- In the event that a Club Member is unhappy with an award given to his / her image, the Club Member may also resubmit that image for a re-award. The same image may then be entered as an additional entry at the next Club Evening. **The points allocated during this meeting will be regarded as final.**

8.   RULES FOR PROMOTION

The promotion criteria for the club are as follows:

No	Category	Current Level	Next Level	Club Points	Gold / COM	Nat Salons	Nat Salon Cum	Int Salons	Int Salon Cum	Other Requirements
1	Junior	Novice	1 Star	15	5	0	0	0	0	*None*
2	Junior	1 Star	2 Star	45	15	0	0	0	0	*None*
3	Junior	2 Star	3 Star	125	35	5	5	0	0	*None*
4	Junior	3 Star	4 Star	230	50	20	25	0	0	*PSSA Membership*
5	Senior	4 Star	5 Star	490	80	55	80	5	5	*PSSA Membership*
6	Senior	5 Star	Master Silver	640	100	70	150	10	15	*PSSA Membership & Honours*
7	Senior	Master Silver	Master Gold	820	100	100	250	20	35	*PSSA Membership & Honours*
8	Senior	Master Gold	Master Platinum	880	100	100	350	30	65	*PSSA Membership & Honours*
9	Senior	Master Platinum	Grand Master	940	100	100	450	40	105	*PSSA Membership & Honours*
10	Senior	Grand Master	INFINITE	100290	100	9999	10449	9999	10104	*PSSA Membership & Honours*

9.   DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

A digital image for the purpose of this Club Information Brochure is defined as a raster, 2-dimensional, rectangular array of static data elements called pixels, intended for display on a computer monitor or projected with a digital data projector. Images may be acquired on traditional film and scanned to an electronic file, or acquired electronically with a digital camera.

The number of pixels along the height and width of a digital image is called the pixel dimensions of an image. The resolution of an image is determined by the number of pixels per inch (ppi) printed on a page.

9.1. Ethics

- All elements used in the creation of an image must be sourced from the author's own work.

- All processing work on the image must be done by the author him - or herself.

- All actions in reaching the final presentation must be carried out by the photographer himself.

- The operation and use of all computer software must be done by the photographer and may not be done by any other person, whether under the photographer's guidance or otherwise.

9.2. Image Resolution, File Format, File Size and Colour Space

- Images intended for submission to a club, salon or competition must be resized to a true resolution of 1920 x 1080 pixels. Images must be resized to 1920 pixels or less on the horizontal axis and 1080 pixels or less on the vertical side. This termed a HD format.

- Due to file size considerations, the JPEG file format is recommended for all entries.

- The JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) file format retains all colour information in an RGB image but compresses file size by selectively discarding data. A higher level of compression results in lower image quality, and a lower level of compression results in better image quality.

- In most cases, the maximum quality option (compression setting of 12 in Adobe Photoshop) should produce an image indistinguishable from the original.

- Images must be converted to RGB colour space before being submitted for the Club Evenings as this is the colour space format of the projector.

- The Club Committee recommends that Club Members find out what colour space their digital camera uses. Most cameras use RGB, but Club Members are urged to read their camera's manual or use image editing software to determine what colour space their digital camera is using.

- If a Club Member's digital camera can capture images in Adobe RGB or RAW format, it is suggested that one of these formats is used. They can capture a wider range of colours, which can be manipulated before converting to RGB. Opinions differ on this matter. Some experienced photographers find that it makes little difference and capture their images directly in RGB/jpg to save the conversion step. Club Members should experiment with this to decide whether the use of these wider colour spaces improves the quality of their images.

- The JPEG images may not exceed 2000 kb. An appropriate JPEG compression value (preferably not less than a value of 10 in Photoshop) must be selected in the photo editing software to ensure that the image size does not exceed 2000 kb.

- For images intended for individual judging no text or wording will be permissible on such images, otherwise these images will be disqualified.

- Frames or borders are acceptable in all cases and may be included or omitted based on the preferences of the author.

9.3.   Pre-submission of entries

The Club utilises the internet based PhotoVaultOnline system for its members to submit images for judging at each month's Club Evening and to record the results from the judging session.

These results are available to each entrant under each Club Member's own PhotoVaultOnline profile, as well as a detailed record of all the images each Club Member has submitted over time.

A separate Advancement Schedule is also sent to each Club Member after each Club Evening where the details of the evening's judging and updated results overall are recorded. It is advisable that each Club Member kept their own Advancement Schedules after each Club Evening in the event of any possible discrepancies.

9.4.   Category Descriptions

The following may be used as a broad guideline to the categories:

9.4.1.   Pictorial (p)

Pictorial entries include all the subject material, which is not already defined for other categories for e.g. nature, photo travel, etc.

Digital manipulation is allowed, provided the end result "looks natural".

9.4.2.   Nature (n)

A nature image is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict observations from all branches of natural history in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject material and to certify to its honest presentation. This includes aspects of botany, geology, insects, fauna and flora, but excludes Anthropology and Archaeology.

Human elements shall not be present unless, on the rare occasion where human elements enhance the story but must be unobtrusive. For this reason, animals shown to be in captivity or domestic animals are not accepted.

Photographs of artificially produced hybrid plants or animals, mounted specimens, obviously set arrangements, derivations, or any form of photographic manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statements are ineligible.

Digital manipulation is not allowed.

9.4.3. Photojournalism (pj)

Photojournalism entries shall consist or story telling pictures or sequences such as are seen in the news media, including human interest, documentary and sport news. The images capture events in the photographer's time, be they of national importance or local neighbourhood pictures.

These images have one thing in common - they must be informative and have emotional impact, usually with human interest. The journalistic value of the image will be considered more than the pictorial quality.

Images may not misrepresent the truth and therefore, digital manipulation is not allowed.

9.4.4. Portraiture (pr)

A portrait arrests our gaze for what it reveals. However, fleeting the moment, the photographer must connect with the subject and extend the connection to the audience. Subjects include people, animals, insects etc. The image may be head and shoulders or full figure, but must depict the subject's character or emotion at that moment. Animal portraits are usually only of the neck and head.

Digital manipulation is allowed.

9.4.5. Contemporary/Altered Reality (ar)

This category stands apart from the other categories as a form of art and may be defined as a concept which stimulates the mind of the viewer to interpret the message conveyed through the creative uses of line, form and colour.

This definition specifically includes computer generated / manipulated images and covers technique, experimental work or contemporary work. The final result does not have to bear any relation to the original image since reality may be altered.

Digital manipulation is allowed.

9.4.6. Landscapes (l)

Images covering landscape scenes of land, sea, cloud and cityscapes may be entered in this section. Depictions of these scenes may include human elements or domestic animals.

Only images that do not alter the truth of the photographic statement will be eligible.

Digital manipulation is not allowed.

9.4.7. Still Life (s)

Inanimate objects pictorially arranged.

Digital manipulation is allowed.

9.4.8.   Photo travel (pt)

Subject matter must portray photo travel. A photo travel entry should capture the feeling of a time and place, and portrays a land, its people, and its culture in its natural state. Ultra close-ups that lose the identity, model shots or manipulated images do not qualify. Entries should not be limited to geographical areas and may include, but are not limited to other lands or countries and may include those of domestic origin. The key differentiation between Photo Travel and other forms of photography is the portrayal of Culture.

Digital manipulation is not allowed.

9.5.   Post capture processing and ethics

In view of the perceived perception by some that digital photography is synonymous to digital manipulations, it is essential to address the ethics and "rules" of digital manipulations within the various divisions. While the aspect of manipulation or alteration of the "truth" of a photo is by no means unique to a digital image, it is a fact that the digital process allows much greater possibilities with regard to the alteration of the original image.

It is suggested that the "rules" regarding permissible post-processing of digital images be clearly stated and then to leave it to the photographer and his/her own integrity and conscience to abide by the rules. This is suggested since it is felt that there are very few practical measures that can be applied to verify whether an image was changed enough from the "truth of the original scene" to be classified as "altered" or "manipulated".

Imposing laborious measures to verify the authenticity of an image is likely to be flawed and might in the end only serve to discourage participants. To add to the complexity of this issue is the fact that it is very difficult to even try and define "altered" or "manipulated".

For the sake of practicality, the following post-capture processing procedures performed on a digital image with the aid of a computer and a digital image editing software package like Adobe Photoshop, within limits, will not be considered as digital manipulation:

- Adjustment / correction of the colour balance (especially relevant to scanned images).
- Removal of dust and scratch marks on scanned images or spots from dust particles on the CCD / CMOS sensors of digital cameras.
- Adjustment of exposure and contrast, including dodging and burning similar to those techniques that are commonly used in traditional printmaking.
- Adjustment of colour saturation.
- Sharpening.
- Image Cropping and Horizontal Rotation.
- Image Resizing.

Judges realise that some of the above adjustments (e.g. changing the colour balance) can be used in such a way as to create an unnatural / manipulated look, hence the cautionary reference to "within limits". However, the permissible range of use of the above will be almost impossible to quantify and it is thus left to the discretion of the photographer.

No additional alterations should be done to images intended for entering in the following divisions:

- All nature divisions including zoological and botanical/geological sub-divisions.
- Photo journalism divisions.

- Photo travel divisions.

As stipulated by the rules applicable to the various other divisions, additional digital alterations will be permissible to images entered in other sections like the open or pictorial sections. It is further assumed that the digital image will be original and does not incorporate elements produced by anyone else but the photographer. No copying of any kind of somebody else's work is permissible.

10. ANNUAL COMPETITIONS & AWARDS EVENING

10.1. Competitions

The Northern Gauteng Interclub Competition is held annually between the clubs of the Northern Gauteng Region and is hosted by a different club each year.

Any member of the Club may enter his/her images into the competition, but all the images are compiled and submitted under the auspices of the RPS. The Club Committee will select the best images from those submitted images and enter them as RPS's submission against the other club's submissions of the Northern Gauteng Region.

A maximum of 75 entries may be submitted for the competition with no more than 12 entries per photographer and at least 15 entries must be from junior photographers (Novice to 3-star rating).

Only images entered by Club Members for club judging between the dates of 1 July of the previous year and 30 June of the current year will be accepted for the competition.

The other Inter-Club Competition that RPS competes in, is the PSSA National Inter-Club Competition where we submit a set number of images from the junior and the senior photographers. There is also a limit on the number of images from any one photographer that is allowed to be submitted.

These rules are set ahead of each annual competition and the winning club of the previous year then has the task of judging all the entries for the competition.

10.2. Awards Evening

At the end of the Club Year in July, the Club holds an Awards Evening which is hosted together with the AGM. At this Awards Evening a number of awards will be handed out to Club Members for their achievements in different categories as mentioned below:

1. **Monochrome** – award for first, second and third place (no RPS Committee members);

2. **Open** - award for first, second and third place (no RPS Committee members);

3. **Nature** - award for first, second and third place (no RPS Committee members);

4. **Best Junior** – all COM award images to be judged by external judges and open to all Club Members;

5. **Best Senior** – all COM award images to be judged by external judges and open to all Club Members; and

6. **Progress Trophy** – awarded based on the overall scores accumulated over the 12-month period. This is open to all Club Members.