

# PSA News

AUSTRALIA

February 2023



## Welcome

Our new member in January was:

*Kai Sit Lee, Curtin, ACT*

## Congratulations

**Nilmini De Silva** has been awarded PPSA

Unfortunately, I no longer get notified when an Australian member gains a ROPA or Portfolio distinction - so I have to rely on you letting me know.

If you gain a new ROPA or Portfolio distinction, or achieved anything else that you would like to share with other PSA members please let me know.

## The Photography World is Changing

For quite a while now, most of us who edit images in Photoshop and similar programs have been using the so-called AI programs (such as Topaz AI Sharpen). It should not be a surprise that the next step was the development of programs that would use AI to generate images from word prompts (Midjourney, Dall-E, etc). For an interesting discussion of this, check out the Blake Rudis videos <https://f64elite.com/leveraging-ai/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOr85koOWMw>.



AI  
or not?



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## Unforgettable landscapes from home and abroad.

**Brian Menzies**

Shooting powerful or intimate Landscapes is like entering a joyful time capsule that takes me to another place. I'm focused in the moment, with all my thoughts concentrated on capturing the surge of excitement and exhilaration I'm experiencing. This can last for hours as I become immersed in the shoot and get drawn into the scene in and around me. Does my composition feel right? What alternatives are there? Are my settings correct etc.? The ever-changing nature of Landscapes makes for a challenging absorbing, and uplifting experience.

**The Scorpion's tail:** My Northern lights trip to the Lofoten Islands, Norway, lasted 12 days, and only one night came good for the lights. Long cold, late nights and sleep deprivation (you must capture the sunrise, of course) were finally rewarded. Taken around 1.00 am.



**Lake Argyle aerial:** Kimberley region, West Australia. This was on a sunset chopper flight over the Ragged ranges returning over the Lake with the sun setting. The lighting was surreal.



**Twin lightning bolts at Sunset:** At sunset over the mouth of the Manning River on the north coast of NSW. I could hear a summer thunderstorm rumbling away and set my camera up with a lightning trigger, then retreated to cover. It did well and gave me a wonderful surprise with a twin bolt at sunset.



**Waiting to be planted:** On the road to Shangri La City, Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan, China. I was attracted to the textures and geometric patterns of fields, ready for cropping. These fields were worked with Bullock and plough and the farmers. All the fences were crafted by hand.



## How Much Are Your Image Files Worth?

I have mentioned before that there are some new rules for 2023 exhibitions. One of these, is that before entering a PSA-recognized exhibition you must agree to the “Exhibition Entrant’s Agreement” that you can download here <https://psa-photo.org/page/ethical-practices>. One of the key statements in that document is:

1. I accept that FIAP and PSA have the right to investigate all suspicions of breaches of these Conditions of Entry, at any time before, during or after the judging. If requested by the exhibition organiser or by an authorised FIAP or PSA official, I will co-operate with investigation into the images I enter in this exhibition and respond promptly and honestly to any requests for information. *If requested, I will provide the original, unedited version of each image I entered with original EXIF data intact, and any other information the investigator considers necessary to establish the legitimacy of my images.*

The requirement for agreeing to this statement is yet another reason for capturing RAW files instead of JPG files. If you capture RAW files and backup all files downloaded to your computer before starting to edit them, you will always be able to provide the *original, unedited version of each image* if requested.

Even if you never enter a competition, the prime reason for capturing and saving RAW files is that you can come back at any time in the future and reprocess the images if you want or need to. Software is continually improving and the best processing results you can get today are not necessarily the best processing results you will be able to achieve on the same files in future years.

Of course, saving RAW files and backing them up requires disk space and some people seem to worry about that cost of that. Not so long ago, the cost of storing files was rather high but that is not the case these days. A typical 12TB external drive costs around \$300. RAW files for modern camera are typical around 70MB or less. So, as a rough estimate you can store 200,000 RAW files on an 12TB hard drive. That works out at approximately 0.2 cents per file. If you follow good practice and back up all those files to another 12TB disk then the cost doubles but is still less than 0.5 cents per file. I reckon that any file worth keeping is worth at least 1/2 cent!

Of course, the bush lawyers will argue that the above calculations are only relevant if the disk is filled to capacity and anything less than that effectively increases the cost per file of storage. But my point is simple - the relatively minor cost of storing your RAW files is a good investment that represents just a fraction of the total cost of your great hobby of photography. And the peace of mind you will have, knowing that you will always have the original files if you need them, will more than compensate for that cost of saving and backing up all your ‘keepers’.

## Street Photography at the Lunar Festival

Nilmini De Silva (PPSA, AFIAP, MAPS)

Splashes of red. Yummy pot stickers. Street food. Conversations with strangers. Brightly lit Chinese lanterns. The sound of beating drums. Lion dances. Exploding fireworks. Red envelopes with money. Families having fun together. The first new moon in the Lunar Calendar. Rabbits. All this can only mean it's that time again, when the Lunar New Year is celebrated, and street photographers hit the streets.

Festivals are wonderful opportunities to practice street photography because everyone is in a great mood unless you are a street food vendor battling the demands of a hungry mob! But wait—there's also loads of people milling around, children in prams, more lenses than you can poke a stick at and that's before one accounts for all those pesky selfie sticks. Festivals can also be frustrating and challenging places to take images as there is always something or someone in your way.

I hadn't expected the first day of this 15-day festival to be jam packed, but it happened to fall on a Saturday when Sydney has also been unusually blessed with sunshine. Coupled with the past few years of lockdown, it appears that everyone is



more than ready to celebrate summer. The festival will last for 15 days of celebrations across our city and end when the first full moon of the Lunar calendar appears. There'll be lots of Kodak moments, if you are brave enough to battle the crowds.

When we arrived at China Town, it

appeared that the festivities would be quite spontaneous, and no one was quite sure when or where the lion dancing might be. The street food vendors were doing a roaring trade and it was only five in the evening.

There are some unwritten rules for capturing festivals. Firstly, pack only what you can carry for long periods. I've come armed with my RF 24-105mm lens and my Canon R6. There's enough flexibility with this zoom lens but later I would find that I could have been more creative had I also packed a wider lens! I always pack a spare battery and card and make sure I'm wearing comfortable walking shoes. Be flexible and prepared for anything. The weather can and did change. Spontaneous moments are never repeated when it comes to performers. Fortunately, the storm was just a summer afternoon burst that didn't last long. I hadn't packed any wet weather gear because the forecast was clear, but it's best to come prepared. Find good vantage points although this is easier said than done. I wish I could carry a ladder with me or be lifted up like the little kids were!

Engage with both the performers and the crowds who are there to have fun and are usually most obliging when it comes to having a photograph taken. While I am not a fan of posed shots, sometimes the beautiful costumes and playful moods can combine to give you a keeper. Capture the details and go wide as this will enable you to put together a portfolio of images that tell a compelling story. Wide shots will help you capture the masses of people, the lights, the excitement, and the energy of the event which is important for your narrative.



After asking around, we walk toward Haymarket where there were performers on a makeshift stage. I can hear the lion dances and squeeze my way toward the action but find myself wedged against a side fence surrounding the stage which is covered in black cloth. The only way I could get any images was to hold my camera above the fence while peeking through to also enjoy the concert.

The Canon R6 has a great live view screen that can be pulled out and rotated. It gives me a good view of the images I was trying to capture. I have enabled the 'touch shutter' function so I can both focus and take an image by touching my screen. I've also enabled eye-detection for people. My shutter speed is fast around 1/300 sec, to account for the movement on stage. I'm shooting on Manual with Auto ISO and an aperture of F/4. My subjects are about 3m away, so at 6m, there's enough depth of field.

But the shooting is tricky and eventually I walk away, only to find that the lion dances are still hanging around. At festivals and events, the best images are often found either before or after the performance. We start chatting. A few pose for me and I hear they will be doing a street parade soon. They start walking to some unknown destination and I follow them, hoping that if I stick close to the group, I might get some good shots.

Suddenly it starts bucketing. We take shelter because the lion head dresses must be protected at all costs. We chat some more. The rain clears and we walk a little more. I stick close to the performers and suddenly they are getting into position, and I find I am in prime position mingling with the event photographers. Nobody asks me to leave. My black outfit helps me to fit right in. The crowd is quite thick and pushing in so getting clean shots is almost out of the question. I try different perspective, go low to get some reflection, and go high to eliminate the heads and other obstructions. There isn't much time to think. I keep shooting and before I know it the drummers are drowning out everyone else and the lion dancers are on the move.

Everyone is in a wonderful mood, and I know this is going to be a fun evening.



## The Dog Ate My Computer

Well actually I do not have a dog and if I did it would have to be a very large dog to eat my computer. However, that scenario is not far removed from some of the weird excuses that people give for not being able to provide evidence to establish the legitimacy of their images when requested to do so by a PSA Ethics Investigator.

As I have mentioned many times in my newsletters, (including earlier in this one) when you enter an international exhibition you agree to certain rules, one of which is that you can provide the [original, unedited version of each image](#) that you enter.

You might wonder why PSA and FIAP have such a rule. The answer is simply - to try to deter cheats and to make it easier to detect those who do cheat. Hang on a minute (you might be thinking) all photographers are honest! Well, maybe in some ideal world but not in the real world of today's exhibitions.

When someone is suspected of violating Conditions of Entry in a serious way, they are reported to the PSA Ethics Investigation Team. An investigator is assigned and their role is to gather evidence, including asking the alleged offender to respond to the allegation and provide evidence that might disprove it. The investigator compiles a detailed report that goes to the Ethics Review Board (ERB). The ERB reviews all the evidence and, when satisfied that an ethics violation has occurred, recommends a penalty to PSA Executive Committee.

Entrants who are being investigated often come up with excuses for breaking the rules - the most common one being "I did not read the rules". The most unbelievable I have received is "Someone else must have entered those images using my name". One that always makes me smile is "You have to excuse me, I am old" - particularly amusing when they are younger than me. The excuses for not being able to provide original files can be quite creative. A common one is "I don't shoot RAW" (not very creative - so just provide your original JPG file). Most common is "My hard drive crashed and I did not have a backup" (not very creative or very sensible if it is true). A frequent one is "I am travelling and will not be home for months" - OK, so how come your Facebook page shows you in your home town yesterday? If you read the rules and follow them, you will never have to worry about the dog eating your computer!

## PSA Journal

The February issue of the PSA Journal is available now and the PDF can be downloaded from the PSA website <https://psa-photo.org/page/journal> after you log in.



## The NEW Image Critique Course

PSA offers a range of services that are free to members, and one of these is participation in the Digital Dialogue groups (PID), Study groups (PID, Nature, Travel) or Discussion groups (PJ). This is where a group of 5-7 members, who share an interest, will, each month, put forward an image for comment. There is no cost to join these groups and they are a very safe place for you to get some feedback about your images. There are over 90 digital dialogue groups that cover every genre and interest, as well as specialty groups for photojournalism, nature, monochrome, and travel.

At the same time, when you belong to a group, you are also expected to comment on the other images within the group, and this can sometimes be a barrier for people to join in. The ability to provide a helpful review of an image, that points out the strengths, and areas needing improvement, is a learned skill, and one that does not come naturally to most people, however skilled the photographer might be.

PSA has two on-line courses (free to members) that can help you not only to review your own images but to be able to provide a review of another person's image.

**Image Evaluation** is a 6-lesson course that is designed to help you understand all of the elements in an image, and thus be able to objectively review your own images. This course covers topics such as impact, originality, point of interest, making suitable technical choices, composition, the art elements, and the best way to present your image. When you understand these elements, you are better placed to see them in your own images.

**Image Critique** is also a 6-lesson course that takes Image Evaluation one step further, that is, to be able to provide a review for another person's image. You need to understand the elements that might make up an image, then identify those that may be strong, or those that may need improvement. The key to Image Critique is HOW you might deliver these observations in a way that will support the person whose image you are reviewing.

The Image Critique course covers an overview of the elements, a discussion about bias and subjectivity, what language you use to provide a critique, how to select elements that relate to specific genres, along with some guidance to understand the difference between Open competition and Reality-Based competition. The final lesson of the course covers some basic presentation skills and scoring. Students are given images throughout the course, to review and comment on. These images represent a broad range of ability, and the student is guided to use suitable language that will assist the photographer.

Maybe you are thinking of starting the journey to become a judge, perhaps you just want to be able to help out with the beginners in your camera club, join a discussion group or maybe you just want to improve your own photography. Both of these courses will help you along this journey.

All of the information about the PSA study groups and the on-line education courses, can be found under the tabs at the top of the main page. Look for the tab 'Divisions', or 'Education' and the drop down boxes will answer some of your questions.

If anyone has any questions about the PSA on-line education program, I'm happy to help out.

**Jen Fawkes** (EPSA, SPSA)

PSA On-line education coordinator and instructor

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## Always Read the Fine Print (in CoE)

When you are entering exhibitions it is wise to read ALL the Conditions of Entry very carefully. You should not assume that the Conditions of Entry will be the same for all exhibitions. One easy trap to fall into is not realising that an exhibition is allowed to have rules (conditions) that are stricter than the rules applied by PSA or FIAP. For example, PSA has no general prohibition on images that show nudity, but an exhibition may impose a "no nudity" condition.

## Galleries on the PSA Website

On this page of the PSA website <https://psa-photo.org/page/galleries> you can access the galleries that PSA members are able to use:

Member Galleries - available to all members.

New Member Galleries - available to new members in their first year.

365-day Galleries - available to all members.

Portfolio Galleries - for those who have achieved Portfolio Distinctions.

ROPA Galleries - for those who have achieved ROPA distinctions. These galleries have not been yet transferred to the new website but you can access them from the link above.

Give it a go - upload some images!

## Some Upcoming Exhibitions

**Southern Cross International Exhibition of Stereo Photography** (PSA 2023-126). 3D digital - Open and Scapes. Entries close *3rd April, 2023*. Full details here <http://www.oz3d.info/>

**Queensland International Digital Circuit** (PSA 2023-206). Three PIDC sections (Open, Weather, Seasons) and two PIDM sections (Open and Smoke, Fire, Fog or Steam). Approval from PSA, FIAP, GPU and APS. Entries close *19th June, 2023*. Full details here <http://www.queensland-photo.com/>

**A full list of all PSA-recognized exhibitions for 2023 is available here** <https://listings.psaems.org/>

**Thank you to all those who contributed to  
this month's newsletter.  
Everyone, please send me some news or  
articles for my next newsletter!**

If you need help with any PSA matters please contact me.

Regards,

Roy

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