

FOCAL PLANE

May 2004



Auckland Photographic Society Inc.
Established 1883

News & Muse

Hello and welcome to the May edition of the Focal Plane. This month, chief organiser Noel Hall reviews the PSNZ annual convention at Pataka, Janet McLeod tells us about her photographic adventure into the Taranaki with three other members of APS, and we have an in-depth look in to the life of Magnum living legend—Elliot Erwitt.

PSNZ Convention

A reflection on the PSNZ National Convention at Porirua — Noel Hall.

The PSNZ convention held at Porirua from 6 to 9 May 2004 has been hailed as the best ever. The standard of the convention exceeded the expectation of most and raised the jump bar for these conventions by a long way. As one seasoned observer noted: – “Brilliant planning, brilliant location, brilliant programme which, together with an outstanding group of presenters, produced a brilliant result.”

Far removed from the “camera club outing” concept, this convention focused on providing attendees in a professional manner a full programme of top presenters – and they were not disappointed.

The humour of Elliott Erwitt, a modest man, was evident as was his simple approach to his impressive work. It is he said, all about observation. Although still active at 76 yrs as a full time professional photographer, the majority of his work we are most familiar with is that done as his hobby. Gale Spring, from RMIT, Melbourne challenged in an entertaining way the truth in photography. His vitality, humour and scientific analysis of photography were a huge hit with all who heard him. Doug Spowart and Victoria Cooper from Queensland provoked people to extend their application of photography and move out of their comfort zones.

Local presenters were equally impressive. Bob Maysmor, curator at Pataka, photographer and consummate adventurer shared his travel journeys and experiences to various remote parts of the world with a polished presentation. Melinda Baigent from Nelson illustrated her versatility and talents in showing extracts of her work – from weddings to a funeral. The range of emotions conveyed to the viewers – an amazing experience, evidenced the power of her presentation. Professional photographers from Auckland, John Daley who launched his book “Big Smoke” during convention and Darryl Torckler were both generous in sharing their experiences and down to earth practical advice on the realities of making a living from photography.

At Pataka there are around 1,000 images on display. Doug Spowart and Victoria Cooper’s exhibition closes 23 May; Elliott Erwitt’s exhibition closes 13 June and the PSNZ National Exhibition (the separate Honours sets were on display until today) and John Daley’s “Big Smoke” exhibition close 20 June.

Thanks

Thanks very much to Robyn Forryan for judging our April club night competition.



Coffee Pickers— © Sebastiao Salgado

Upcoming Subjects / Competitions

June 17th *Dereliction and Open*

July 15th *Landscape (Trophy) Open*

Aug 19th *Structures and Open*

The North Shore National Salon of Photography 2004

Entries close: 30th July, 5:00pm

NZ Life and Open

Sections:

1) Open Slides, 2) NZ Life Slides, 3) Open Monochrome Prints, 4) NZ Life Prints, 5) Open Colour Prints

Enquiries to: Stephanie Handley 153 Beach Road, Castor Bay, Auckland. Ph: 09-410-3345 Fax: 09-410-3301

E-Mail: stegar@extra.co.nz

2004 Laurie Thomas Landscape Competition
- Christchurch Photographic Society.

Entries close: 9th June

Annual Competition for landscape slides only.

Organised by the Christchurch Photographic Society Inc. in memory of the late Laurie Thomas, Hon FPSNZ, APSA, a former member of CPS, founding member of PSNZ, and a keen landscape photographer of considerable ability.

Salon Entry Fee \$15.00. Entry forms available via the APS website in the competitions section.

What's On ...

Another Vietnam: Pictures of the War from the Other Side

Auckland War Memorial Museum, - until 6th June.

A collection of startling, never before published images of the Vietnam War by North Vietnamese photographers. The 113 haunting black and white photographs are by Nth Vietnamese soldier photographers who risked their lives to capture their country's struggle. Many perished—nine out of ten died from bullets, bombs, dysentery and malaria.

The exhibition is co produced by the National Geographic Museum at Explorers Hall, Washington, and the International Center of Photography, New York.

Wonder

22nd June - 3rd July 2004 at Artstation, Ponsonby

Julie Downie, Darryl Fausett, Michael Ng, Ann Poulsen and Richard Walton Curated by Ann Poulsen

Opening: 5 - 7pm Tuesday 22nd June

Artists' talk: 1.30pm Saturday 26th June

Magnified gardens. Preserved images. Fashion as identity. The museum of the marvellous. Moments of astonishment. This exhibition presents five photographers' responses to the idea of wonder, exploring new ways of seeing the world and alternative ways of making photographic images. Their work shows what it is like to fall in love with looking, to welcome life with curiosity, to celebrate it with admiration and awe.



Auckland City Photo Day

12th June

Auckland City Photo Day is seeking photographs of "Your Auckland" from photographers and general public alike. The photos **must be taken** on 12th June 2004 - between midnight and midnight. Auckland City Photo Day invites people to take a photo that reflects "their" Auckland and to reflect and celebrate what Auckland City means to them on 12th June 2004.

For complete information on how to participate, check out the website <http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/whatson/events/>, contact Amanda Gilchrist 09 353 9610 or Peter Merrick at info@aps.net.nz

Other Creative Exposure events:

A Bit Of A Do (*Avondale Racecourse, June 12-20*) Images celebrating Aucklanders' celebrations.

Auckland City Photo Day (*June 12*) Aucklanders are invited to photograph their city.

Desire (*Ardor, June 19-July 1*) Showcasing Rebecca Swan's studies of gender and sexuality.

Dislocated (*George Fraser Gallery, June 8-26*) Photographers' explorations of their environment.

NZ Idle (*Urban Arthaus, June 6-27*) Artists' take on cosmopolitan society and photography.

Nothing Is Separate (www.photoforum-nz.org) An online exhibition of aspects of city life.

The Great Escape (*Aotea Gallery, June 7-28*) John McDermott's ethereal AK03 images.

Winter Exhibition (*FHE, June-July*) Includes works by iconic photographer Marti Friedlander.

Contributed Article - by Janet McLeod

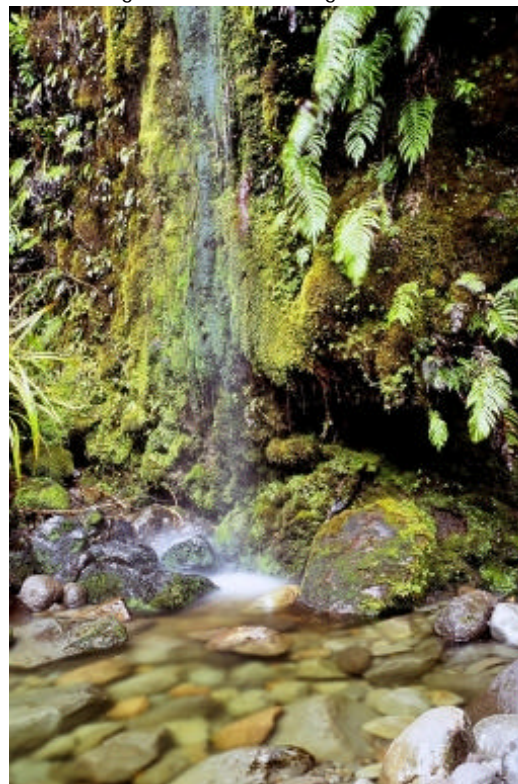
"Three Day Tramp in the Taranaki"

Janet shares with us her adventure and images tramping 3 days in the 'Naki with 3 blokes and their cameras.

DAY ONE

The guys set off from Auckland a little later than the planned 5:30am start which was just as well as my plane from Wellington to New Plymouth was late taking off due to the inclement weather. When I arrived in New Plymouth it was pouring with rain. While I waited for the guys to arrive I pondered over what I was doing heading off on a three day tramp to take photos of a mountain when you couldn't even see a few hundred metres down the runway!

We arrived at the North Egmont Visitors Centre, where there was hot coffee, warm muffins, an open fire and a pleasant woman warning us that we had to cross rivers that we should take seriously as with all the rain the levels would be high. "These are serious rivers you know, they have killed people!" Ours was the only car in the car park and yes we would undoubtedly have the huts to ourselves as everybody else was waiting for the weather to clear. "What am I doing here!" - I think again.



Waterfall © Janet McLeod

We kit ourselves in our wet weather gear and while doing so there is much discussion about the weight differences in our packs. Dharmendra won the heavy award and that was after leaving his precious large format camera behind. He had weighed his pack before leaving home and it was 29 kilos! Mine including camera bag was about 18 kgs. Dharmendra had managed to get his down to around 24kgs, next time I bet it is under 20.

The lovely women from the visitors centre had warned us that the first hour and a half of our planned four hour walk was pretty much uphill. She was right! The track was well formed with lots and lots of steps, very pretty track surrounded by bush but where there was the chance of a view there was little to see but rain and mist.

3 Days in the Taranaki—cont ...

After climbing to a high level we started to traverse the mountain side. The rain increased and the wind picked up and the track deteriorated. It was hard going and Dharmendra and Robert mumbled something about wishing they had started their training several months ago.

With our cameras tucked away in their dry bags we trudged on, getting somewhat apprehensive about the potential for seriously swollen rivers that we were due to cross just before Holly Hut. However, I think it may have been a while since the lovely lady from the visitors centre has been in there as we were able to cross these "creeks" without getting our feet wet - or wetter than they already were.

We eventually all arrived at Holly Hut a relatively large tamping hut with solar powered lighting and a very small pot belly fireplace so small that most of the ample fire wood would not fit in the wood box! Dharmendra tried his best to give away most of his food so he would have less to carry the next day.

DAY TWO

Still raining, Chris tried his best to be optimistic, "it's clearing - look". Look we did but no it was not clearing. We set off for Bells Falls regardless. A 30 minute walk which was very pleasant without the weight of our packs. Yes, it was still raining but we all took a number of shots trying as best we could to keep the rain drops off the lens and our camera dry.

Lunch was back at Holly Hut and then on the way to Pouakai Hut, a two and a half hour tramp and looking at the map a lot of down and a lot of up! It was a beautiful tramp but it was still raining and very misty. The terrain was interesting from mountain tussock to swamp and rugged bush clad hillsides with trees severely wind damaged. We did take some photos but again keeping the fine misty rain off the lens was a challenge.

After arriving at Pouakai Hut the weather did lift a little to give us a gorgeous sunset and our first glimpse of the mighty volcano. We went to bed very excited about the prospect of a fine day and planned an early start as we also had a long tramp - est 6 hours!

DAY THREE

We rose in the dark at 5:30am and were very disappointed to find the hut again surrounded by mist. Oh well, we had a long tramp so we decided to get going anyway and left the hut in very pale light at 6:30am. And so pleased we did too, as we walked over the hill there was the Volcano dimly lit but virtually clear of cloud.



Evening Tussock © Janet McLeod

We waited at the little tarn on the side of the track for the sun to rise and were blessed with spectacular light and wonderful views. We shot away to our hearts content before heading off on our tramp feeling very pleased with ourselves. As we tramped along the mountain came in and out of view giving us some chances for some good moody shots.



Morning Taranaki © Janet McLeod

After an hour or so of going up, we started heading down and the track condition became very challenging, narrow, slippery and very muddy. It would have been okay without a pack but with one on the back and camera bag on the front it was hard going. We eventually came out into the most beautiful bush. I think it would challenge the beech forests of the Routeburn. It started to rain again. Do you know, they get more rain in this area of the country than Fiordland?! However, it didn't really matter in the bush so much and as we had plenty of time thanks to our early start, it was a pleasure to wander through the bush stopping to take photos as you pleased.

We all thoroughly enjoyed our few days in the mountains and bush and learnt a number of lessons on tramping and photography - not sure about weather forecasts!↵.

Special Interest Groups

The club has a number of special interest groups related to photography. These informal groups (or Cells) are a great way to interact with members and to foster specialised interest and knowledge. The following Cells are currently operating or in the process of getting underway:

1. Audio Visual - PeterM info@aps.net.nz
2. Competitions- PeterM info@aps.net.nz
3. Exhibitions - PeterM info@aps.net.nz
4. Judging - Alan Bilham profedg@clear.net.nz
5. Half Day Outings - Alan profedg@clear.net.nz

If you wish to be involved in one or more of the groups, please make contact with one of the individuals listed above.

Presidents Corner

Hi Everyone, just a very quick word from me this month.....

Well, winter's definitely arrived. Hopefully the frosty mornings and nights aren't discouraging people from getting out there with their cameras.

It was encouraging to see so many entries in our first digital competition this month and we appreciate everyone's efforts in sending their images through in the correct format.

The club is currently undergoing rapid growth . We're delighted to see so many new faces joining us and are certainly encouraged by the quality of some of the work coming through. Keep it up!

So what's ahead for APS in the following months? Well, we're currently finalising details for some upcoming workshops and outings....so stay tuned!

Cheers
Alka

Parting Note: "Your best photograph is the one you haven't taken yet"

New Members

The Auckland Photographic Society has ten new members since our last newsletter! A very warm welcome to ...

Anne Carpenter	Everist Desouza
Bridget Winstone	Kevin Sceats
Brendan Tubbs	Lucy Eglington
Michelle Tubbs	M Lasey Sceats
Deborah Meikle	Sonya Rennie

We're looking forward to getting to know you a little and trust you will enjoy your time with us.



"Derelict Barn" - Anonymous



"Last Light, Winter Aspens" © Eddie Soloway

"Make your photographs when you are touched unbearably and cannot restrain yourself, when it is something you must do. Consider the finished print to be a bonus. And if you follow your heart, whether your photographs are successful or not, you will at least have had the pleasure of the experience of their making. That is no small thing"

- Michael Smith

Special note—if you have something of interest that you would like to submit for the Focal Plane, please do so. Send your contribution to editor@aps.net.nz or post to 'Ed', 3B Webber St, Cocks Bay, Auckland.

'till next month - E d