

FOCAL PLANE

May 2005



Auckland Photographic Society Inc Est 1883

News & Muse

Hello and Welcome to the May edition of Focal Plane. This month Chris Piper talks about the trip to the Gt Barrier, we have a very special exhibition pending and Robert Jaques demonstrates his expertise, sharing a macro abstract image for inspiration.

So there we were sitting in the sun the other day. Cat was stretched out on the floor, one eye open, the end of her tail twitching. My darling wife was patiently (as ever) giving the occasional constructive comment on some new prints of mine, while reading the paper. Suddenly she said quite profoundly - "Photographing landscapes is quite a *lot* like oil exploration - isn't it".

She was an accountant for Fletcher Energy in a past life; I was curious to know where this was going. Paraphrasing, she said; "you spend quite a lot of time, with specialised equipment going to unusual places that you *think* are likely to reveal something useful. But there's no guarantees."

Of course she was right (as ever)....

It led me to think about the images that have made famous photographers famous, to the everyday observer. Dorothea Lange - 'Migrant Mother', Marti Friedlander - the steaming sheep in a country road, Cartier-Bresson - the grinning Parisian boy carrying wine. Often it seems to be a few or even just one photograph. St Ansel made a lot of images in his fifty years of activity. But how many of those were really well known - 100 ... 150 ... perhaps 200? That's four per year. Not a lot.

One could become discouraged at the thought (that is if they harboured a wish to become famous at all). Except that; even photographers who have gained world-wide acclaim seem largely to be driven by the chase and capture, rather than any notoriety that may come from wide publication of the resulting image.

A few of us were fortunate to share dinner with one of the great magnum photographers Elliot Erwitt last year. He is probably most well known for his photograph of Pres. Nixon stabbing a forefinger at Prem. Gorbachev's chest during Nixon's election campaign. When speaking to a large audience Erwitt comes across as well polished, his rye humour holds the audience enraptured just to hear the

author speaking about *his own images*.

But one gets the feeling he has been doing this a long time and, being well into his eighties he seems a little tired and bored. The notoriety is now just taxing.

In the quiet away from budding photojournalists nervously waiting for an autograph, I talked to him about the photography that he still enjoys - dogs! His eyes completely lit up and his message was clear - just do it because you love it, you might be successful.

..... Oh yes, almost forgot. Then she said "they cost about the same too!" ... oil exploration and photography that is. -

New Members

A big welcome to the new members who have joined the Auckland Photographic Society!

Dinesh Parmar, Jackie Xie, John Gillespie, Sharlene Ferguson, William Jordon, Will Henden.

Looking forward to getting to know you a little and trust you will enjoy your time with us.

Thanks to

Thanks to Brian Cudby for judging our May club night competition.

Thanks to Don Campbell for judging our April Guest club night competition.

Thanks to Dharmendra Krisson - for taking the Matt Cutting

Upcoming Competitions, Workshops

Workshop: Macro Photography

Presenter: Robert Jaques

When: Thurs 2nd June, starting 7.45pm

Where: Lounge Room, St Lukes Community Centre, 130 Remuera Rd

Robert will be discussing and demonstrating various techniques & equipment required for the fascinating world of Macro photography.

If anyone has any suggestions for future workshop topics or potential guest speakers then please forward your suggestions to president@aps.net.nz.

Presidents Corner

Well April certainly was a busy month. Little did I realise that attending the National Convention over Anzac weekend would turn out to be such a memorable event. The five invited world renowned photographers spoke with both flair and sincerity and it was refreshing to see professionals at their level taking their work seriously but not themselves.

Andy Rouse dazzled us with his wildlife photography and comedic wit. In fact at times one had to wonder if the man wasn't a stray act from this year's Comedy Festival!

Joe Cornish and Colin Prior presented some stunning landscape and travel images and spoke generously about their techniques and experiences. Admittedly, I'm still a little star struck and our now "personally signed" copy of Joe Cornish's "First Light" has taken pride of place on our bookshelf....!

The scholarly Heather Angel captivated us with both her intellect and her Nature/Natural History photography which combined both scientific accuracy and a strong pictorial appeal.

....and streuth, beaut and bonzer!.....Richard White, the one Australian presenter, enchanted us all with his poignant display of black and white portraiture all the while entertaining us with the humorous tales behind them. Hats off to the man for taking all the Aussie bashing in his stride.....

If next year's convention is anything like this years...you can count me in! It was also great to see APS members work represented in this year's National Exhibition...keep up the great work.

May and June promise to be busy months for APS with weekend trips planned to both Tongariro National Park and Mangawhai Heads in addition to our regular club nights. Having recently been on an entertaining club trip to the Barrier I can certainly vouch that club trips are a great way to learn and share from your peers and generally improve your technique. If anyone has suggestions on possible weekend or day trips then please don't hesitate to contact our Outings Coordinator - Dharmendra Krisson (dharmendra@clear.net.nz).

Also on through June is the 2005 Festival of Photography. Be sure to check out some of the exhibitions and events.

It has also been fantastic to receive a number of positive comments lately from our guest judges and visitors about the abundant levels of enthusiasm and quality of images being presented by members at APS....always great to hear.

Parting Words....

Brian Cudby commented recently that when judging he always looks for the "photographer" in the image. So, how do *you* put a little of yourself into your images?...something to think about. In the wise words of Freeman Patterson - *"The camera always points both ways. In expressing your subject, you also express yourself."*

Well, next month is a Trophy night - the set subject is Experimental/Abstract.....so let's see everyone stepping outside the square and pushing those creative boundaries! Till then.

Cheers, Alka

What's On ...

Artstation 1 Ponsonby Rd, Newton. 7-18th June. Our very own Meredith Brocklebank, Katherina Nobbs, Terry Buick, Alka Krisson and Andie Pryce.

7-18 JUNE 2005
OPENING 5-7PM, TUESDAY 7 JUNE 2005
ARTISTS TALK: 1PM SATURDAY 11 JUNE 2005

LOOKING IN

LOOKING OUT

ARTSTATION
1 Ponsonby Road, Newton
Gallery Hours: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Sat 11am-4pm
Ph: 09 376 3221, www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/artstation

MEREDITH BROCKLEBANK, KATHARINA NOBBS, TERRIE BUICK, ALKA KRISSON, ANDIE PRYCE

Images of Paradise - *Chris Piper*

When the invitation to Great Barrier was announced I jumped at the chance expecting there would be overwhelming interest. I am pleased that there was only a small group of 10, as this made for a more manageable group, allowed us to stay at one venue, and enabled more interaction with each other.

Catching an early flight on Friday morning gave me my first photo opportunity to take advantage of the early morning light bouncing off the tidal mudflats of the Manukau and Hauraki harbours. Little did I know there would be many more opportunities over the weekend to enjoy sunrise, sunset and everything in between.

Chris and Bridget generously provided accommodation on a patch of paradise at Palmers Beach at the northern end of Kaitoki Beach, the largest stretch of sand on the east coast of the island. Set in farmland on the edge of the ocean we enjoyed the old farmhouse atmosphere and managed to eat and drink our way through a remarkable larder.

As the new boy on the block I was welcomed and made to feel part of the group. This made it easy to participate fully in the activities, including helping to cook a feast on Saturday night. Although water was in limited supply the consumption of wine seemed to make up for it.

For me the special moments were the opportunities to photograph the wildlife - particularly the birds. Great Barrier is relatively predator free and this allows some of our endangered birds to breed successfully on the island, especially the brown teal, banded rail, kaka, dotterel and black petrel. A trip to Awana beach, a short drive north, gave me an opportunity to grovel on my belly at the edge of the estuary trying to capture the brown teal in the late afternoon sun. I spent the next half hour shaking the sand out of my pockets. It was a privilege to share the unique beauty of our native flora and fauna with like-minded conservationists, including the local I met who claimed stewardship for the brown teal - all 700-900 survivors. Urgent conservation is now required to prevent further decline in numbers and being able to photograph them felt like an opportunity to help conservation, if only to record them on film.

Not only were we blessed with beautiful weather but also the camaraderie that comes with sharing an appreciation of this magical place. Also special were the opportunities we had to share our passion and knowledge.

Those with digital cameras could share their images on laptops as well. For the rest of us there was the anxious wait to process film back in Auckland. Unfortunately I lost all the images on one film that was incorrectly cross-processed at a local professional lab. Despite this the weekend gave me plenty of opportunities to discuss tripods, compare lenses and film, learn about filters and start to explore the digital realm with people eager to share their knowledge.

Just when we were packed and ready to leave on Sunday afternoon we had a visit from a native wood pigeon that came to feed on the strawberry guava in the garden. As with a lot of wildlife photography being alert and ready to catch the moment is paramount. I grabbed my camera and 2X extender thinking I would not be allowed too close and would need all the zoom I could muster. Away from the light this bird was just another dull shape against the sky, but when it moved onto the guava tree and was caught by a shaft of late afternoon light it suddenly became magnificent. I dropped my extender and filled most of the frame through my 100-400 lens at remarkably close range and I shot half a roll of film and luckily managed to get the shot I wanted. There is nothing more exciting than this, is there?

On the flight home to Auckland the setting sun gave more photo opportunities with the last rays of sun stretching beneath a belt of cloud to the west of the city. What a time to run out of film - and the best reason to move to a digital format.



J.McC.

Congratulations

Chris Piper on attaining his Licentiate ship. It should be noted that Chris only joined APS this year!

Dharmendra Krisson for having an image chosen for the PSNZ National Touring Exhibition.

Looking In/ Looking Out

An exploration of viewpoint by five photographers: Terrie Buick, Meredith Brocklebank, Alka Krisson, Katharina Nobbs, Andie Pryce

7-18 June 2005

Artsation Gallery, 1 Ponsonby Rd, Newton

Gallery Hours: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Mon-Thu 6-9pm, Sat 10am-4pm

More at www.scoop.co.nz/stories/AK0505/S00014.htm

Auckland City Photo Day

Call for Entries:

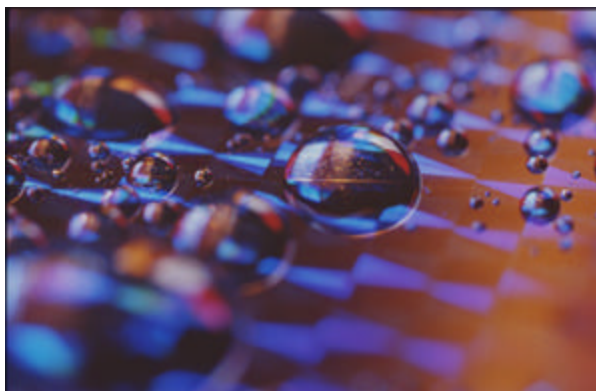
The Auckland City Photo Day is seeking photo entries from photographers and non photographers alike to be taken of "Your Auckland" on 11 June 2005 - between midnight and midnight.

Photo Day was initiated by the Auckland Festival of Photography in 2004. Last year's festival proved popular with audiences and budding photographers, as well as winning the support of established photographers, Auckland galleries and Auckland City Council.

Auckland City Photo Day offers people to take a photo that reflects 'their' Auckland and to celebrate what Auckland city means to them. The event in 2004 attracted more than 400 entries as individuals, camera clubs, students and families took up the challenge to capture their city and its inhabitants.

The winning photographer will win a **Kodak Easyshare CX7430** digital camera, courtesy of New Zealand Limited. The digital camera is valued at \$400. The winning photo will be published in a City Scene edition.

The best six photos will be selected for exhibition on the Auckland City website. The theme of Auckland City Photo Day is "Your Auckland". It offers an opportunity to capture the city we live in and reflect its uniqueness by taking photographs.



R.Jaques

Don't forget - if you have something that you feel may be of interest for Focal Plane readers, drop an email to editor@aps.net.nz or post to 'Ed', 3B Webber St, Cocks Bay, Auckland.

'till next month - Ed

"There are many photographs which are full of life but which are confusing and difficult to remember. It is the force of an image which matters."

- Brassai