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HONOURS & AWARDS DIVISION



HONOURS MANUAL
DIGITAL
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PREFACE

The Photographic Society of South Africa makes provision for various types of Honours and Awards. This manual contains important information relating specifically to the application for Honours in recognition of photographic mastery in digital photography.

2 December 2011

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HONOURS OVERVIEW

1.1 TYPES OF HONOURS

There are various awards in recognition of photographic skill and achievement. These awards are made to successful applicants in recognition of photographic mastery, skill and achievement.

Only full members of PSSA may apply for Honours and the use of honours is only permissible while the individual remains a full member of PSSA in good standing. A person may join PSSA at the same time as he/she first submits an application for honours. Members submitting applications at the June session must ensure that their fees are paid up for the following year prior to submitting their entry.

The following types of Honours may be applied for:

Licentiate ship: The LPSSA is the entry level Honours and is awarded for a high level of basic skill and competence. Based on the PSSA club judging summary the LPSSA standard is that of a Gold Award in the 3 Star club grading in a relatively strong club. The applicant must hold a 1 Diamond Rating in Digital.

Associateship: The APSSA is awarded for a high standard of technical skill, competence and creative ability. This award recognizes a high standard of achievement in the art and science of the medium and is awarded in recognition of work of a good aesthetic and technical standard. The applicant must already hold a LPSSA in digital or must have been awarded a 3 Diamond Rating in Digital.

Fellowship: The FPSSA is awarded for excellence and distinguished ability. The Fellowship recognizes a high standard of achievement in the art and science of the medium and is awarded for excellence. The applicant must already hold an APSSA in Digital.

1.2 SAME OR SIMILAR

No panel may include similar images.

No image (or similar) used in any successful application may be used in any further application - this includes those converted from Monochrome to Colour and vice versa - but excludes those used in an Audio-Visual or Applied application.



1.3 MEDIUMS & CATEGORIES FOR HONOURS IN DIGITAL

Application may be made in either

Colour – Digital Projected Images
or Monochrome - Digital Projected Images.

No panel may include both monochrome and colour images.

If an image contains any colour element in it that image will be classified as a colour image.

A panel may either be a general panel encompassing a variety of subjects and techniques or a specialised panel.

As a guideline when presenting a general panel one should try to include at least three subjects/techniques for the LPSSA, four for the APSSA and six for the FPSSA. A panel should be balanced in terms of subject matter and techniques used.

A wider understanding and mastering of technique and treatment will be required as the applicant moves up through the various levels.

A Specialist Panel refers to the concept of focusing on a single theme, subject or aspect and could include a single subject or a specific photographic technique.

It must be realized that there is a difference between specialization and repetitiveness within a panel. If an applicant intends to specialize he/she must ensure that the panel shows full understanding and handling of the subject. Specialization is, for example, not merely a collection of a number of portraits. The portraits have to show a variety of techniques and styles.

1.4 GENERAL INFORMATION

Submission of an application for honours implies acceptance of the conditions of application as published in this manual.

When listing honours after ones name one only lists a specific honour once and only the highest honour achieved. In the case of honorary awards for service etc both these and the achievement award would be listed e.g. Hon FPSSA, FPSSA.

PSSA reserves the right to withhold or disqualify any work, which is considered to infringe the common laws relating to indecency, plagiarism or copyright. By virtue of submission the applicant certifies that the images and all elements included therein are his/her own and that no second party can claim authorship of any part of the said work.

PSSA, through its Directors, Executive Committee and Honours and Awards Committee may withdraw any class of membership and award from any individual should the Board feel that the



activities and actions of the individual has brought the organisation into disrepute in any way whatsoever by his/her actions.

A selection from the successful applications will be shown during the Annual Congress.

Wherever possible, all certificates will be presented to successful candidates at the PSSA Congress Honours and Awards Banquet. Such certificates remain the property of the Society and must be surrendered if the individual ceases to be a full member of the Society.

1.5 DEFINITION OF A DIGITAL IMAGE

A digital image 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 data projector.

Images may be acquired on traditional film and scanned to an electronic file, or acquired electronically with a digital camera.

The digital image must be original and may not include any elements produced by anyone else but the photographer. All processing procedures performed on the digital image must be done by the photographer.

1.6 DIGITAL MANIPULATION

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, e.g. 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

- Cropping and resizing

1.7 REQUIRED STANDARD

The standard required is above average, stimulating and exciting - this does not automatically disqualify mundane subjects but a good digital image should leave the judge feeling satisfied and not bored.



The standard required for all Honours is above average good technique and interesting subject matter. As one progresses from LPSSA through to FPSSA the standard of work should improve - each level does not require merely an increased number of images, but also an increased understanding and appreciation of the art and science of the medium.

Consistency in standard is a prerequisite at all levels.

By the time an applicant reaches the FPSSA level he/she should have developed his/her own personal style which is an important aspect of the FPSSA.

1.8 JUDGES AND JUDGING

A panel of judges from around the country is invited to assess the entries. Members who have achieved Honours may be invited to judge future Honours applications. It is acceptable for all honours holders to judge higher applications.

It is a privilege to be invited to judge and although the holding of a PSSA Honour does indicate a competent photographer it does not necessarily translate to being a good judge. Members should improve their judging skills by participating in the JAP programme and judging at club and salon level.

Specialist judges will be invited to judge where necessary. These specialists need not be members of PSSA

Judging of Digital Honours applications generally takes place twice a year.

Photography is a subjective art and as such no hard and fast rules can be set down for judging. Assessing photography is an extremely subjective exercise and as such can provoke controversy. This is healthy, in that discussion usually follows and hopefully more knowledge can be imparted. Judges should strive to ensure that they are judging competently and fairly whatever the occasion.

All of us have special likes and dislikes but a good judge does not let these influence his judging. There are also regional biases and judges should immerse themselves in as much photography as possible to prevent regional bias from becoming a dominating factor in the judging of honours applications.

1.9 CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION

The Honours and Awards Division of PSSA administers all applications for awards. The decision of the Board of Directors on all matters is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Candidates will be informed, via email, of the results of their application. Telephonic results will only be given to the applicant his/herself.



APPLICATION FOR HONOURS

2.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR HONOURS IN DIGITAL

Applications for LPSSA, APSSA and FPSSA require submission of a panel of ten (10), fifteen (15), twenty-five (25) original images respectively.

These may not include any elements produced by anyone else but the applicant. All actions (including the use computer software) in reaching the final image must be done by the photographer.

Image manipulation is allowed, but must be done by the photographer and not by anyone else whether under the photographers guidance or otherwise.

No panel may include both manipulated and un-manipulated Nature.

Photojournalism images that have been manipulated fall under the Open category.

Images must be resized to fit the maximum display resolution of a XGA digital projector, with true resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels.

Horizontal images must be resized to a maximum of 1024 pixels on the horizontal axis and 768 pixels or less on the vertical axis.

Vertical images must be resized to a maximum of 768 pixels on the vertical axis and less than that on the horizontal axis.

All images must be converted to 8 bits/channel

Images may only be submitted in Adobe RGB or sRGB

All images must be saved as JPEG files with a maximum size of 500kb.

The applicant's name should not be visible on any of the images.

Frames and borders are acceptable but are not a requirement and should not detract from the image. When text or wording is an integral part of the image it may be included. However, the photographic image is the most important element.

2.2 CLOSING DATE FOR REGISTRATION

The closing date for submission of entries is the 25th of January and 25th June of every year.



2.3 SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES

Digital honours panels must be entered online via www.photovaultonline.com which is a free service to PSSA members. Entries will be judged in the order in which they are uploaded onto photovaultonline.

2.4 REGISTRATION NUMBER

On registering for your application on Photovaultonline.com you will automatically be given a panel number which you will keep either until your application is successful or for four successive judging sessions.

2.5 REGISTRATION FEES

The amount payable as registration fee may be found on the website.

Fees are payable for each application.

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to:

PSSA Honours Awards Committee

Electronic deposits should be made to:

PSSA Honours Awards Committee, ABSA Account number 974 028 8580.

2.6 JUDGING AND THE CREDIT SYSTEM

All images in the panel have to be passed by 66.6% of the judges.

In the event that sufficient judges do not pass the panel, it is analyzed for credits.

Credits will be awarded to unsuccessful applicants. In order for a credit to be awarded 75% of the judges need to pass a specific image. Credits will be awarded at each of four successive judging sessions.

Unsuccessful panels will only be allowed to be submitted for a second round of judging provided that a minimum number (33%) of credits are obtained on the first application.

The required minimum number of credits is

LPSSA 3 Credits

APSSA 5 Credits

FPSSA 8 Credits

Should the applicant not receive the required minimum the panel will be rejected in its entirety and



the applicant will have to 'sit out' the next application date and may only apply at the application date thereafter (in effect 1 year later). These credits will not carry through to any future application but may be resubmitted in the new application.

If applicants who are currently in the system (as at Dec 2011) do not achieve the minimum number of credits required their panel will be treated in the same manner as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Credits that are awarded must be resubmitted with all applications made within two years of the date of the original application. Thereafter all the credits will become null and void. A credit may not be failed by a judge during the time of its validity.

The credits help to make up the necessary requirements for a submission to be successful. Credits in the resubmitted panel need not be in the same order or position as in the previous panel.

There is no limit to the number of times one may apply, but credits are only valid for the first four applications. Expired credits may be re-submitted in subsequent applications.

2.7 NUMBER OF SIMULTANEOUS APPLICATIONS

Only one application may be made in a specific medium at one time.

2.8 SUBSEQUENT APPLICATIONS

Applicants wanting to apply for additional honours at the **same** level in the **same** medium may do so immediately after obtaining their honours.

Applicants wanting to apply for a **higher level** of honours after obtaining their honours (e.g. after obtaining an APSSA and wanting to apply for a FPSSA) must wait for one judging session before applying. The exception being those members who achieved their honours on their first application.

ADVICE TO APPLICANTS

3.1 PRESENTATION OF THE PANEL

The Society does not prescribe to applicants how a panel should be compiled, but rather makes recommendations.



A panel should be presented in such a manner as to satisfy the judges that the work hangs together as a panel and does not appear to be a series of disparate images. The work will be viewed by the judges in number order and all entries should thus be numbered.

If borders are used it is suggested that, in the interest of consistency, the same border is used throughout. The images should at no time be overpowered by the borders.

3.2 SUBJECT MATTER

The subject matter is entirely open. Applicants should acquaint themselves with the rules pertaining to their specific field of entry. PSSA reserves the right to withhold or disqualify any image, which is considered to infringe the common laws of indecency, plagiarism or copyright.

Both general and specialist panels may be entered and an LPSSA/APSSA/FPSSA applicant may apply for more than one honour at the same level using different specialist subjects. An applicant could, for example, apply in nature, in pictorial and in portraiture. If the applicant was successful in each application, three equal honours would be awarded and in addition the applicant may apply for the Vers award subject to the requirements as set out in the Vers manual.

Any subject matter is acceptable and originality is welcomed. No judge can be expected to be continually stimulated by a large number of similar pictures. Something different will attract his attention far more successfully than another similar picture. Choose only your best pictures and make sure that if your friends have similar images, that they do not submit them at the same time as you will be doing one another a disservice.

If a number of similar panels are submitted the judges cannot help but compare one with the other and so the average pictures will be shown up as average and will probably not receive credits. Good pictures should stand out as good pictures. The judges can, at any time, ask to re-run a panel if they feel the need to re-assess it.

As a guideline when presenting a general panel one should try to include at least three subjects/techniques for the LPSSA, four for the APSSA and six for the FPSSA. A panel should be balanced in terms of subject matter and techniques used.

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3.3 TECHNIQUE

One should consider technique as an integral part of the picture. In an Honours application one's technique should be impeccable. A picture well handled should hardly need to be considered for technique. If the image is not technically correct the subject matter is unlikely to be considered unless the picture is exceptional.

What is technique? It is the orthodox/correct use of exposure, focus, composition, lighting etc. Bear in mind that unorthodox technique is very effective in many instances, particularly in creative work. Sloppy technique, i.e. bad focus, bad lighting etc. is not acceptable.

We can ask ourselves if there are any technical faults which detract from the picture and whether the technique has enhanced the picture, or was it merely used as a gimmick.

It should be evident in the panel that the applicant has a good knowledge of the use of the camera, lenses and post processing.