

Dr̥ṣṭi

YOUTH
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Inside: Astrophotography: Exploring the Beauty of the Cosmos from East Java and Bali | Focus Stacking



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Dr̥ṣṭi (दृष्टि) in Sanskrit language means vision. The vision in the mind of a photographer, aligned in a creative manner with what one sees around, produces an artistic image. This resonates with the spirit of YPS, which strives to promote the photographic art.

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Front cover: © Mr Vishaka Guru

Rear cover: © H Sathish

An eventful two months

Dear YPS Family,

I hope this message finds you all well and in high spirits. I trust everyone enjoyed the celebrations with family and had wonderful moments during the festivities of Gowri Ganesha, Onam, Dasara, and Deepavali. I also hope you took advantage of the long weekends to travel. The past two months have been filled with activities, including a workshop, the salon closing, presentations, wildlife week celebrations, and a vibrant exhibition at Chitrakala Parishath.

On behalf of the YPS Executive Committee and all our members, I congratulate our Life Member, Mr Sathyanaraya C R, who was elected unopposed as the President of The Federation of Indian Photography for the Year 2025-26.

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the entire Dr̥ṣṭi Journal committee for winning awards at the PSA Interclub Newsletter Contest for the fourth consecutive year.

The month of September started with the announcement of the results of the KAPA Photo Awards which was a unique contest arranged by the Kolhapur Amateur Photographers Association (KAPA) in collaboration with the Youth Photographic Society. This was the beginning of an unique collaboration that YPS embarked upon to support any charitable activities for the promotion of photography. One such opportunity was the KAPA photo awards which was organized as a Tribute to Mr Kalyan Chattopadhyay for which YPS provided the complete photography contest infrastructure end to end, free of cost. We would take this opportunity to bring it to the kind notice of all our members that if you come across any such events, feel free to bring it to the notice of the Executive Committee.

The 15th YPS International Salon had very good participation from 257 authors submitting 3227 pictures from 38 countries. The Exhibition was held at Chitrakala Parishath on the 20th Oct 2024, which had a very good footfall despite the heavy rains. It was extremely good to interact with the Chief Guest Mr Raghuram Krishnan, CFO of Adobe, which has paved the way to collaborate with Adobe in due course. Guest of Honor Mr M C Ramesh,

Deputy Director, DYES graced the award ceremony and showered praises for the kind of work YPS has been doing to promote photography. He also assured full support in the long term, from the department.

YPS conducted a very successful full-day photography workshop - Enigmatic Smoke mentored by Mr Grirish Mayachari, at the YPS hall on Sep 21, 2024. It was a very educational and hands-on workshop where all the participants were very happy about the learning process. The icing on the cake was that they could not only shoot pictures but also process their picture with the guidance of the mentor.

Birding Dairies was a webinar presented by Jainy Maria that showcased bird-watching experiences from Brazil, Borneo and China. This program had a good viewership, especially from photo enthusiasts outside of Bengaluru.

Vivid Vietnam, a presentation by none other than our own H Satish took the viewers through a captivating journey to Vietnam - The Future Destination. The program had a good turnout at the YPS Hall as well as viewers online through Google Meet.

World Wildlife Week celebrations were held at YPS with a variety of programs organized during the 1st week of October.

A special clean-up drive and a sunrise photo session were organized at Narayanagiri hills, led by our member Padmanabha K G, which was well participated by our members in contributing our bit toward the conservation of our environment.

Scuba Diving & Underwater photography was yet another unique presentation by the ever energetic wildlife photographer, Mr Nandakumar M N which took us all through a virtual ride underwater showcasing the marine life on the seabed. It was a visual feast for the eye of the audience.

Thinking Different was also a part of Wildlife Week programs presented by Mr Gurcharan Roopra from Kenya. He presented captivating images that offer unique perspectives on familiar subjects, inviting viewers to see the wildlife in new ways.

An exclusive Wildlife Week contest was held for members with a unique thought-provoking theme - Abstracts of Wildlife. Congratulations to all the winners. While we were happy to see a very good turnout of submissions, we did observe that a lot of members had missed out on reading the instructions in detail or else they could have won awards.

An international photo tour to Cambodia was announced and could garner decent registrations for which the preparations are in full swing for the upcoming travel in December.

YPS hit another milestone of achieving 400 Best Club Awards. Congratulations to all the contributors and the Sub-Committee Leads Venkatesh and Digwas for encouraging our members by giving all the support and guidance to make this happen.

An International photo tour to Kenya has been announced in collaboration with one of our members, Karthick Sridharan. The enquiries have been extremely good and the motivation of our members has been evident. We hope this will be a successful one and lead to many more such exhilarating trips in the future.

We look forward to the active involvement of all our members in upcoming YPS events.

Bye for now... until the next publication



Manju Vikas Sastry V
ESFIP, AFIP

President, Youth Photographic Society and Editor, Dr̥ṣṭi

Mr K G Padmanabha



Whenever we come across an accomplished photographer it often turns out that the person is an entirely different profession and photography happens to be a spare time hobby. Photography is such a wonderful avocation that draws into its fold people from various walks of life such as doctors, lawyers, businessmen

and bankers. One such keen photographer who developed photography as a hobby and made great strides in the field over the years is Mr KG Padmanabha.

A banker by profession, Padmanabha was born in Kolar, had his initial education in Bengaluru and later joined the services of State Bank of Mysore. Even as a student he had an inborn instinct for photography and toiled with the simple Agfa-click III camera. However, his first exposure to the field was when he saw an exhibition of brilliant images by YPS in 1980. And that was the turning point for Padmanabha to take the hobby seriously and he at once acquired a Minolta. Success was immediate as one of his pictures won the first prize in an All India competition conducted by Konika and was published in many newspapers. Spurred by the

achievement he began to study and follow the works of veteran photographers such as M/s E Hanumantha Rao, Rajagopal, TNA Perumal, B Srinivasa, and H Satish from YPS. Inspired by their images Padmanabha joined the YPS fraternity and followed the learning process. Attending numerous workshops and several phototours conducted by YPS he honed his skills thoroughly and participated in various national and international salons with noteworthy success. To date, he has to his credit many acceptances and awards from different salons. His photographs have also been displayed in many countries around the world. He remembers with gratitude that his association with experienced photographers and their works was what transpired him to emerge as a competent photographer.



POLAR BEAR ©Mr K G Padmanabha

Padmanabha soon realized that to become a versatile photographer one has to travel far and wide which made him develop a liking for trekking and travelling. In course of time he became a keen trekker and took part in not less than 300 treks and more than 30 high altitude treks above 14000 ft. in the Himalayas as well.

His photographic pursuits cover all genres like landscapes, portraits, culture and rituals, macro subjects, and wildlife. He has not only visited almost all the bird and wildlife sanctuaries in India but has travelled to Norway, Iceland, Scotland, Switzerland, Kazakhstan, Vietnam, Dubai, and Indonesia. He also took part in the Svalbard Polar bear wildlife expedition in the arctic ocean. After 2017 when he opted for retirement he focused more on wildlife photography and visited Masai Mara and Serengeti in Africa.

During his photographic journey he has crossed many milestones such as receiving the best landscape award of a YPS salon from veteran actor late Vishnuvardhan. More recently his landscape picture was adjudged one of the best out of some 7000 entries at the DJMPC salon in Coimbatore.

Padmanabha's photographs display a high acumen and his images have brought him several distinctions such as EFIP, EFIAP, and Master of Light.



BOY AND THE BALL ©Mr K G Padmanabha



BULL RACER ©Mr K G Padmanabha



SEA LION ©Mr K G Padmanabha



KING EIDER IN FLIGHT ©Mr K G Padmanabha



I AM THE KILLER ©Mr K G Padmanabha



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RELAXING WALRUS ©Mr K G Padmanabha



B V Prakash

Prakash is an avid mountaineer, photographer and travel writer. He is a life member of YPS and member of Dr̥ṣṭi editorial team.

Astrophotography: Exploring the Beauty of the Cosmos from East Java and Bali

Astrophotography is a captivating art form that merges photography with astronomy, allowing us to capture the wonders of the night sky. From distant galaxies to planetary details and awe-inspiring landscapes illuminated by the stars, astrophotography takes many forms, each requiring specialized equipment and techniques. In this article, we'll explore the sub-genres of astrophotography, the essential gear, and techniques, and delve deeper into the stunning world of astro landscapes.

Sub-Genres of Astrophotography

1. Deep-Sky Photography

Deep-sky astrophotography captures distant celestial objects beyond our solar system, such as nebulae, star clusters, and galaxies. This genre often involves long exposure techniques to reveal the faint light emitted by these distant objects.

Objects captured: Galaxies (e.g., Andromeda), Nebulae (e.g., the Orion Nebula), and star clusters (e.g., Pleiades)

Equipment: Telescopes/Lenses with long focal lengths, high ISO-capable cameras (DSLR's, Mirrorless or cooled astro cameras), and motorized mounts to track the sky's movement.

2. Planetary Photography

This sub-genre focuses on photographing planets in our solar system, along with the Moon and Sun. Due to the closer proximity of these objects compared to deep-sky targets, planetary photography often emphasizes high magnification.

Objects captured: Planets like Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, and features on the Moon.

Equipment: High magnification telescopes, cameras capable of shooting in video mode, and filters (for solar imaging).

3. Wide-Field Photography

Wide-field astrophotography captures large sections of the night sky, often showing constellations or the Milky Way stretching across the horizon. This genre is perfect for capturing meteor showers or star trails.

Objects captured: The Milky Way, constellations, and meteor showers.

Equipment: Wide-angle lenses, DSLRs or mirrorless cameras, trackers and tripods.

4. Star Trail Photography

Star trails capture the apparent motion of stars as Earth rotates, creating circular patterns across the sky. This is achieved through long exposure times or stacking multiple images together.

Objects captured: Circular star trails, highlighting Earth's rotation.

Equipment: DSLRs or mirrorless cameras, wide-angle lenses, and sturdy tripods.

5. Astro Landscapes

Astro landscapes combine elements of the night sky with Earth-bound subjects, such as mountains, forests, or lakes. This genre aims to blend terrestrial landscapes with celestial beauty, often highlighting the Milky Way or other starry skies.

Essential Equipment for Astrophotography

Astrophotography demands specific gear to capture the faint light from celestial objects. Here's a breakdown of the essential equipment:

Camera: A DSLR or mirrorless camera with manual control over settings such as ISO, aperture, and shutter speed is key. Astrophotography also often has modified high-sensitivity sensors.

Wide-angle lenses are ideal for capturing the Milky Way or starry skies.

Telephoto lenses and telescopes are used for deep-sky or planetary photography.

Medium Telephoto lenses in the range 70-150 mm are used for panoramas, and more detailed shots of celestial bodies with identifiable land-bound landmarks.

Mounts: A sturdy tripod is a must for stability, but a motorized equatorial mount is needed to track the movement of the stars over time, especially for deep-sky imaging.

Filters: Light pollution filters help reduce unwanted light from urban areas. Solar filters are essential when photographing the Sun.

Shutter Release: Remote or intervalometers help in taking long exposure shots without introducing a camera shake.

Techniques for Capturing the Night Sky

Astrophotography relies on a few core techniques to successfully capture the night sky:

1. Long Exposure

Long exposure is fundamental for capturing faint stars and deep-sky objects. It involves keeping the camera's shutter open for extended periods, typically for several seconds to minutes, to allow more light onto the sensor.

2. Tracking

Due to the Earth's rotation, stars appear to move across the sky. Astrophotographers use motorized mounts, called star trackers, to counter this movement, keeping the stars stationary in their images during long exposures.

3. Stacking

To reduce noise and enhance detail, multiple images are often stacked together in post-processing.

4. Post-Processing

Post-processing is an essential step, where software like Photoshop or specialized astro-editing programs (e.g., DeepSkyStacker) helps bring out details, reduce noise, and enhance colors. Adjustments to contrast and brightness can make faint objects like Nebulae or the Milky Way more prominent.

Astro Landscapes: Merging Earth and Sky

This genre captures the night sky in tandem with terrestrial features, creating a breathtaking blend of Earth-bound beauty and cosmic wonder. Here's how to shoot astro landscapes:

1. Planning and Location

Dark Skies: Find a location far from city lights, ideally in a dark sky reserve or remote area with minimal light pollution.

Time of Year: Some celestial objects, like the Milky Way, are best visible during

certain times of the year. Apps like Stellarium or PhotoPills can help plan your shoot by showing the position of stars and celestial objects.

Foreground Interest: Incorporating foreground elements, such as mountains, trees, or lakes, adds depth and interest to astro landscapes.

2. Exposure Settings

Aperture: Use the widest aperture your lens allows (f/2.8 or wider) to capture more light from the stars.

Shutter Speed: Keep exposures short enough (typically 15-30 seconds) to avoid star trails if you're not using a tracker. Shutter speed would be a function of the focal length of the lens being used and that will define the max permissible shutter speed for pinpoint stars. Apps like Photo pills help you arrive at the optimum ones.

ISO: Use a high ISO (e.g., 1600-3200) to capture the faint light from stars, but balance it to avoid excessive noise. These are thumb rules and dependent on your camera sensor's ISO invariance.

3. Composition

The key to great astro landscape photography is finding a balance between

the sky and the foreground. Frame the Milky Way or prominent constellations against a silhouette of mountains or trees.

4. Post-Processing Astro Landscapes

Astro landscape images benefit greatly from post-processing. Adjustments to exposure, contrast, and white balance help bring out the stars and enhance the color of the sky. Tools like Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop can help create that balance between the sky and the foreground elements.

East Java and Bali Astro Landscapes :

With stunning natural and man made points of interest this part of Indonesia is an Astro Landscape photographer's dream location. The area of the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park has voluntarily adopted (despite the absence of a formal policy and directive) an approach to minimize light pollution. The park management and the people living in the area understand the importance of preserving the night sky for a more natural environment and for visitors who come there to StarGaze and photograph its natural treasures. Artificial lighting is restricted to low impact lighting solutions and visitors are often educated by the

tour companies on keeping the use of flashlights to the minimum.

Also, being in the southern hemisphere the locations offer other advantages like better visibility of the Milky Way core and longer photography season. It also offers viewing of some astronomical highlights that cannot be viewed from the Northern Hemisphere and prominent among them are the Magellanic cloud complex (satellite galaxies to our Milky Way Galaxy) and the Southern Cross (Crux) instead of the Polaris in the North.

Equipment:

Given the luggage limitations of international air travel I left behind my tracker and carried the basic gear required for Astro Photography. All the images were shot using a H – Alpha modified Canon 6D, a Tamron 15-30 mm F2.8 lens. A sturdy tripod and a remote shutter release were the other pieces of equipment.

The available equipment also dictated that I could only indulge in Astro Landscapes and Star Trails.

Presenting a set of images with the story behind them.



Bromo with Magellanic Cloud Complex : I had previsualized this shot by working on Stellarium app to figure when I would get to see both the Small and the Large Magellanic clouds aligned with Mount Bromo. What you see in the image is an active Mount Bromo smoking away. Directly on top of the fuming Bromo is the Large Magellanic Cloud and to the left is the Small Magellanic Cloud. These are the bright smudgy clouds like structures you see.

This was shot at around 5 am on a bitterly cold morning. The viewpoint was already filling up with other tourists.

I had set the camera to shoot 10 exposures to enable me to stack given the low brightness of the Magellanic clouds. But after the first stop one of the many tourists at the view point seemed to have bumped the focus ring and all exposures after this were out of focus. So, I had to make do with this single image.

The light trail you see are thousands of jeeps headed to the various viewpoints to catch the sunrise.



Bromo at Dawn : Shot from the same location about 45 min later was this image of Smoking Mount Bromo, Mount Batok and an erupting Mount Semeru in the background with a small orange blob on top that is the red hot lava. The Large and the small Magellanic clouds are still visible.

The crowds at the viewpoint had multiplied and everyone was struggling to be at the front to get a view of the sunrise. People were packed elbow to elbow.

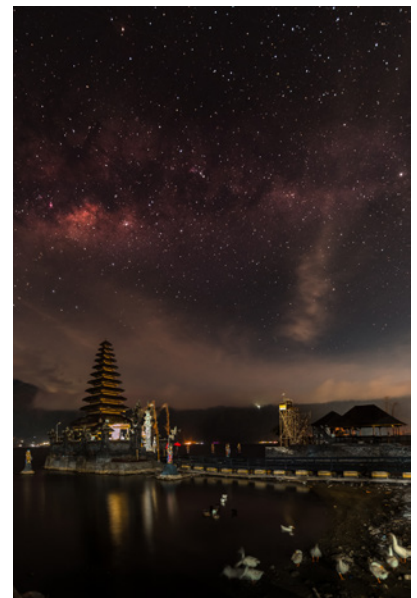
Since I had shot the image with a H Alpha modified camera the reds at dawn were captured to the fullest.

Milky Way and Batok : Post the sunset shoot we decided to head to the foothills of Mount Batok to get the Milky Way along with Mount Batok. The temperatures had dropped and there was a stiff wind blowing. However, that did not deter us from getting some images with Mount Batok and a light- painted small tree. As we were shooting, Mount Bromo gurgled and belched out a column of smoke. Only the smoke is visible in the frame as Mount Bromo was covered entirely from this angle.



Milky way over Pura Luhur Poten: This temple formed the foreground to our next attempt to capture the Milky Way. This temple is dedicated to Brahma and is a sacred temple for the Tengerese people who are Hindus.

This temple is set in the sea of sand (Segara Wedi) at the foot of Mount Bromo. Standing there in front of this magnificent structure under the million stars one truly feels one's own insignificance.



The geese of Ulun Danu Batur: In Siberia the Milky Way is often referred to as the "Path of the Geese" and this gave me the idea for this picture. I noticed a gaggle of geese that were quite active and thought of this shot. The geese are supposed to take the path of the milky way when migrating according to folklore.

Moon setting on Bajulmati : Bajulmati is a large water reservoir in East Java and we went there on the way to Bali. The water reservoir was formed because of a dam, and we were pleasantly surprised to see other people there enjoying the scenic views. No strict security because of the dam nor were special permissions required. I spotted a crescent moon following the setting sun.



Trails at Tamblingan: Another bitterly cold morning that was preceded by a 2.30 am wake-up led us to this spot. The high altitude location on the banks of Tamblingan Lake made the cold worse. In the rainy season, the temple gives an illusion of floating as the water surrounds the temple. It is a popular spot for pre-wedding shoots and camping. When we arrived at around 5 am there were many tents, the inhabitants of which were stirring awake. As we set up, more cars full of pre-wedding shoot couples kept on arriving. Amidst this, I set up a 7 min exposure to get a mild star trail framing the temple.

The possibilities of more compositions at each of these locations are immense and will require multiple trips before the itch subsides. All in all East Java and Bali are great locations for astrophotography.

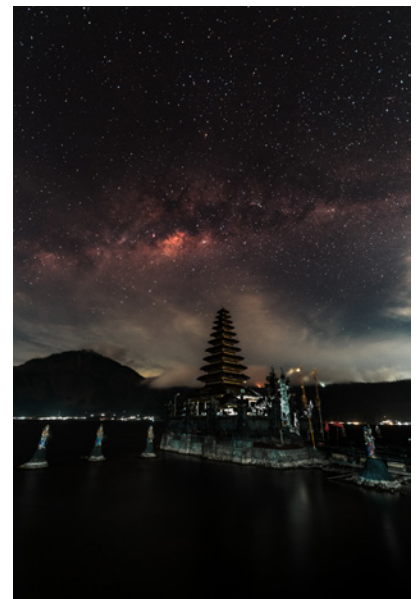


Yogesh Mokashi

Yogesh is a serial entrepreneur based in Bangalore. He founded the city-based diner chain "The Egg Factory".

He took to every trend that middle-aged men take to, golf, running, hiking and photography. It looks like photography might stick.

He loves to travel and travels for both photography and with family. He has perfected the art of balancing family holidays with photography, often coming back from a holiday needing a vacation.



Galaxy and Holiness: The next image was planned at Segara Ulun Danu Batur temple, Batur in Bali. This is the oldest temple of the Balinese Hindus and the holiest. It is built on Lake Batur in Kintamani village and near Mount Batur. It is fairly remote and spares one of the usual Bali crowds. What surprised us was that even here no special permissions were required either to stay late or use a tripod. After the sunset, the lights that lit up the temple had been placed with some thought and did not interfere with our work.

Happy souls



© Suhas Muthmurdu

The moment was perfect, a boy holding a small dog, both bathed in golden rim lighting from the setting sun. This candid photograph, titled 'Happy Souls', captures exactly what Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004), the master of street photography, called the 'decisive moment' – that split second when significance and form align to create something magical.

The story behind the image is as spontaneous as the photograph itself. In 2018, photographer, Mr Suhas Muthmurdu was walking through the streets of Haridwar, Uttarakhand, making his way to capture the traditional Ganga Aarti ceremony. He noticed a cluster of 8-10 huts along a quiet road where children were playing. When he took out his camera and took some of their pictures, the curious kids gathered around, delighting in seeing their portraits in the viewfinder. Then, as if on cue, a small dog appeared. One boy scooped it up lovingly in his arms and recognising the moment, Suhas dropped to ground level. The sunbeams from the opposite direction created perfect rim-lighting on both the boy and dog and he captured the scene with his Nikon D810 handheld with a lens of focal length 155mm, f4.5, shutter speed 1/400 and ISO 640.

The photographer himself brings a unique perspective to his craft. As a lead software engineer at Adobe's Lightroom team in Bengaluru, Suhas has merged



his passion with his profession. An avid snow skier and trekker for over 14 years, he regularly ventures into the Himalayas, capturing the mountains' majesty, local culture, and rich heritage through his storytelling lens.

Technically, the image masterfully handles the challenging opposite lighting conditions. The wide aperture allows for moderate ISO while balancing the harsh contrast between sunlit areas and shadows, ensuring both the boy and dog are properly exposed despite the dramatic lighting.

Aesthetically, the photograph excels in several key areas:

- Impact: The image immediately demands attention, achieving what masters of pictorial photography call the 'pictorial imperative' –the quality that makes a viewer stop and 'look'.
- Interest: Beyond the initial impact, the photograph maintains its hold through two key elements:
 1. It establishes an instant emotional connection with the viewer
 2. It rewards repeated viewing with new details and nuances

- Balance: The composition achieves harmony through the careful placement of elements. The boy's illuminated face sits at the golden cross point according to the Rule of Thirds; the dog's friendly face provides a perfect counterweight from the opposite side and the elements create a sense of unity and fairness within the frame
- Rhythm: The image guides the viewer's eye in a natural flow, moving smoothly between elements without losing interest. From the boy's expression to the dog's face, from light to shadow, each element leads naturally to the next, creating a visual journey that keeps the viewer engaged.

In capturing this 'decisive moment,' Suhas Muthmurdu has used his expertise more than just a photograph. He has created a story of joy, connection and the simple beauty of an unplanned moment. The image perfectly embodies Henri Cartier-Bresson's philosophy that "Photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as the precise organization of forms which gives that event its proper expression, the smallest thing can be a great subject and the little, human detail can become a leit-motif (aalap)."

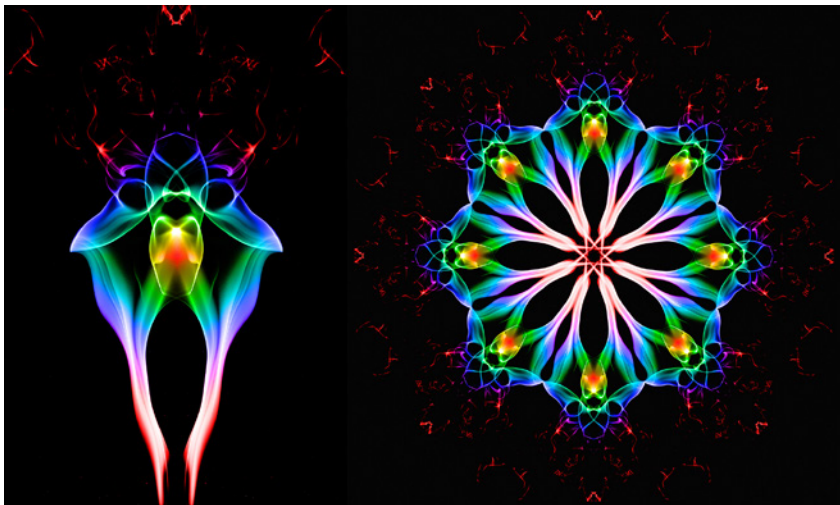


K S Rajaram

AFIAP, Hon FIP, Hon YPS

Mr Rajaram is a life member of YPS and has served in different capacities in its executive committees including that of president during 1989 - 92. He is an author, teacher, and mentor in the field of photography.

Capturing the Essence of Smoke: A Creative Photography Workshop



Luminous Symmetry - A Dance of Light and Color ©Srijith Sreedharan



The Smokey Jelly Fish ©Minaketan Sabar

On September 21, 2024, fifteen eager photographers gathered at YPS Hall in the State Youth Centre for an immersive smoke photography workshop, organized by Youth Photographic Society (YPS). The workshop, which ran from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM, was a deep dive into the creative potential of Smoke Photography. Led by the trainer and coach Girish Mayachari, participants explored techniques for capturing and editing smoke images, learning to transform them into mesmerizing works of art.

A Day of Creative Exploration

The workshop began with an introductory session, during which Girish shared his experience and insights into the art of smoke photography. Attendees were then introduced to the tools and setup required

to capture smoke images, including tips on lighting, camera settings, and creating dynamic smoke patterns.

Learning the Art of Digital Processing

One of the most anticipated parts of the workshop was the extensive session on post-processing smoke images in Photoshop. Girish led the group through each step, explaining how to work with layers, enhance contrast, add colors, and manipulate the shapes to create stunning effects. The Photoshop session was hands-on, with each participant following along on their laptops, experimenting with their images and watching it transform before their eyes.

Girish showed how simple adjustments in color gradients could transform ordinary

smoke trails into surreal designs. He also introduced methods for duplicating and mirroring the smoke patterns, creating symmetrical, kaleidoscopic visuals that took on a life of their own.

The Highlight: Mandala Art with Smoke

The highlight of the workshop was learning to create mandala art out of smoke using Photoshop. Girish demonstrated how to mirror and rotate smoke images to form intricate mandala patterns, transforming smoke trails into structured, captivating designs. This exercise pushed participants to think creatively and explore new artistic possibilities. The session left everyone in awe of the beauty that could be crafted from something as intangible as smoke.

A Supportive and Interactive Experience

Throughout the workshop, Girish's approachable style and clear instructions created an encouraging environment. Participants felt comfortable asking questions and sharing their work, receiving valuable feedback and guidance. This supportive atmosphere helped foster a sense of community, as the photographers learned from each other and shared their creative output in the workshop and post that on WhatsApp groups.

Wrapping Up!

Thanks to the vision of YPS, the workshop provided a rewarding experience for everyone involved. Special thanks to Vikas Sastry for being there in person and helping organize the event.

With Girish Mayachari's expert guidance, participants left inspired, equipped with new skills, and ready to explore further creative possibilities in their photography journeys.



Srijith Sreedharan

Srijith, an IT professional, embraces photography to unwind and connect with nature. His interests span macro, birding, wildlife and abstract photography.

A day in San Diego, California

This was not supposed to happen. The breathtaking vista that greeted me at Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial was an unexpected gift born from chaos.

I came here in search of the perfect angles to shoot San Diego's skyline, looking to capture its glossy, postcard perfection. But what I found was something raw, untamed—clouds hanging low, smothering the horizon, and a cold wind whipping through the open memorial. It wasn't the picture-perfect scene I had envisioned. Instead, it felt gritty. I could see glimpses of the city below—San Diego's heart beating under layers of grey. This wasn't the San Diego I expected, but it was the one I wanted—a city alive with imperfections, and flaws hidden in its beauty.

It had started two days earlier during breakfast at my Los Angeles hotel. A text message from Southwest Airlines lit up my phone, an unusual occurrence that immediately caught my attention. The message offered to reschedule my next-day flight to Houston, suggesting a two-day postponement at no extra cost. I knew why: an Arctic Blast was wreaking havoc across the US airports. News reports showed stranded passengers sleeping in terminals, endless lines snaking through concourses, and what would later be called the airline industry's worst crisis in recent memory.

The disruption presented an unexpected opportunity. Those two extra days could allow us to visit San Diego - a detour we hadn't originally planned as a part of our California trip. Perhaps by then, I thought hopefully, the travel chaos would subside. Acting quickly, I accepted Southwest's offer, extended our rental car reservation, and booked a hotel in San Diego.

Mount Soledad National Veterans Memorial

The drive up to Mount Soledad that morning seemed to challenge my spontaneous decision. The winding road disappeared into clouds and mist, with tiny water droplets collecting on the windshield faster than the wipers could clear them. My research the previous day had shown promising photos - stunning drone shots captured on sunny days that showcased the memorial park's spectacular viewpoint. But as we ascended through the thick fog, I grew increasingly nervous. Would we see anything at all, or had we driven all this way for a white-out?

Then, as we pulled into the hilltop parking lot, nature began orchestrating a masterpiece that would put any theatre production to shame. Like a grand curtain being drawn back by invisible hands, the dense fog began to part, revealing glimpses of the world below. But rather than dissipating entirely, the

clouds performed an ethereal dance, arranging themselves into smaller bits that hung suspended in the air. Each layer was distinct yet flowing into the next - some pearly white, others tinged with subtle greys and silvers, creating an otherworldly cascade that stretched from heaven to earth.

The scene before us was more magnificent than any carefully composed drone photograph could dream of capturing. The misty layers acted like translucent veils, alternately concealing and revealing snippets of the landscape beneath - a flash of the ocean here, a glimpse of cityscape there, each revelation more breathtaking than the last.

What had begun as a hastily cobbled-together Plan B, a mere consolation prize for our disrupted travel plans, had somehow morphed into the kind of moment that makes you believe in serendipity. Here, atop Mount Soledad, we weren't just looking at a view; we were witnessing nature's own theatrical production, a once-in-a-lifetime performance that no camera could truly capture, no words could adequately describe, and no amount of planning could have deliberately created.

Mount Soledad National Veterans Memorial features concentric walls displaying over 5,000 black granite plaques honoring veterans from the Revolutionary War to current conflicts.

As I wandered among the memorial walls, studying the countless plaques, an elderly gentleman slowly approached the same section. He moved with purpose, using a wooden cane for support, his baseball cap embroidered with "USS Midway Veteran." I noticed his hands trembling slightly as he reached out to touch one particular plaque.

"That's my brother Jimmy," he said softly, catching me by surprise. "He never made it back from Vietnam, but every year on his birthday, I drive up here from Arizona to see him." He paused, a gentle smile crossing his weathered face. "Jimmy loved fog like this. Said it reminded him of San Francisco, where we grew up. Funny thing is, in twenty years of visiting, this is the first time I have seen the memorial draped in fog just like this."



Clouds Over San Diego city



Clouds over San Diego Beaches



San Diego Downtown © Thejas K R

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small, worn photograph of two young men in uniform, arms around each other's shoulders, broad smiles on their faces. "That's us before he shipped out," he said, his voice thick with emotion. "Sometimes I think the fog rolls in just to bring him a little closer to home."

We stood there in silence for a moment, before he nodded goodbye and moved on, leaving me with a profound sense of how this place held not just names and dates, but living memories that continued to echo through time.

By this time the cloud had cleared more and I was able to get a picture of complete San Diego downtown.

Balboa Park

Imagine a place where Spanish Colonial architecture meets lush gardens, where science mingles with art, and where history lives with modernity. This is Balboa Park - San Diego's cultural crown jewel and one of the largest urban cultural parks in North America.



Balboa Park Entrance over Cabrillo Bridge



Walker in Balboa Park

The drive through Balboa Park feels like travelling through different chapters of a storybook, each turn revealing a new enchantment. As I guide my car along Cabrillo Bridge, I feel like floating above the canyon, and through my open windows, I catch the sweet, wild scent of eucalyptus rising from the depths below.

Emerging from the bridge, the magnificent California Tower comes into view, its weathered dome piercing the impossibly blue San Diego sky. My car moves slowly now as if understanding that this journey deserves to be savoured. Around me, walkers weave along the palm-lined paths.

The road curves past the Alcazar Garden.

A group of tai chi practitioners moves in silent harmony near the garden's edge, their slow gestures adding to the scene's dreamlike quality.

As I wind down Park Boulevard, a family crosses at the pedestrian walkway, the children pointing excitedly at something in the distance, probably one of the street performers who regularly dot the park's landscape.

The drive is not long in terms of distance, but each section feels like entering a different world, from the shaded canopy near the Japanese Friendship Garden to the open expanses near the great lawn. My favourite part comes near the end, where the road dips slightly and the whole park seems to spread out before me like a living postcard, with its mix of architecture, gardens, and people creating a perfect tableau of San Diego life.



Casa Del Prado

Casa del Prado is a historical building that almost never made it into the 21st century. Originally constructed as a temporary structure for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, it was made of wood, plaster, and burlap and was meant to last just a year. Yet its ornate facade, adorned with botanical motifs, cherubs, and Spanish Baroque decoration, proved too beautiful to lose. When the original began crumbling dangerously in the late 1960s, San Diegans rallied together in an extraordinary preservation effort.

Every single decorative element, from the whimsical faces of children to the intricate grape vines and theatrical masks, was carefully cast from the originals before the building was demolished. These molds were then used to recreate the elaborate ornamentation in durable concrete for the new structure, completed in 1971.

San Diego Zoo

San Diego Zoo feels like stepping into a living storybook. It is a place where the pathways weave like jungle rivers, each turn promising a new discovery. You might find yourself eye-to-eye with a drowsy koala nestled in its eucalyptus perch, or watching a family of orangutans gracefully swinging overhead in their aerial playground. In the Lost Forest, where mist curls around ancient trees, gorillas contemplate visitors with ancient wisdom in their eyes, while nearby, the

playful antics of red river hogs bring smiles to passing faces.

At one point on the pathway we were very close to the lionesses. Only an 8 feet thin fence separated the lions from the rest.

"Don't worry, they are raised in captivity and are well fed. They won't care about jumping the fence. You are safe," a park volunteer told me. 'Hasn't she seen the Jurassic Park?' I wondered.

At the far end of the zoo is the African Safari. The moment you board the Africa Tram, you leave San Diego behind and enter a world where the horizon stretches endlessly like the Serengeti plains. The tram winds along the edge of a vast savanna, a sprawling 300-acre landscape where Africa's story unfolds before your eyes. Unlike the structured exhibits of a traditional zoo, here the animals roam freely in a choreographed chaos that feels wonderfully wild.



Lionesses in San Diego Zoo



African Safari in San Diego Zoo



La Jolla Cove © Thejas K R

Rhinos graze peacefully alongside giraffes, their long necks swaying like gentle metronomes as they reach for acacia leaves. A crash of rhinos might suddenly decide to cool off in a muddy wallow, their prehistoric forms bringing to mind ancient tales of giants. Young gazelles prong across the grassland, their joyful leaps a testament to the freedom they enjoy in this carefully crafted wilderness.

The most magical moments often come unexpectedly, perhaps when a cheetah chooses to rest in the shade near your tram, its spotted coat dappled by sunshine filtering through the trees, or when a herd of elephants decides to trumpet their afternoon greetings, the sound echoing across the man-made savanna. Sometimes, you'll catch sight of a cape buffalo eyeing your tram with mild curiosity, its imposing horns a reminder of Africa's raw power.

What makes this safari truly remarkable isn't just the animals or the landscape, it's how the boundaries between observer and observed seem to blur. Here, you're not just watching Africa's wildlife; you're being welcomed into their world, if only for a precious hour, as a privileged

guest in this corner of Africa, carefully transplanted into Southern California.

La Jolla Cove

La Jolla Cove is where nature stages its daily theatre of wonder - a small, crescent-shaped beach tucked between sandstone cliffs that seems to have been carved by an artist's hand. The jewel of La Jolla, this cosy cove is where emerald waters meet golden cliffs in a display that would make any postcard jealous.

But the real show stealers are its charismatic residents: plump harbour seals and vocal sea lions who have claimed the nearby rocks as their personal sunbathing spots. They lounge like lazy celebrities on their rocky perches, occasionally barking their opinions to passersby or gracefully slipping into the crystal-clear waters that make this spot a snorkeler's paradise.

Near the cove's parking lot, there's a store that offers access to a hidden gem—a staircase leading to the cave below, a bit of an open secret, for just \$5.

I thought I was clever for discovering this online.

What I didn't realise, though, is that they close at 4:15 PM. We had reached at 4:30 PM.

As I drove away from the coast, watching La Jolla shrink in my rearview mirror, I couldn't help but marvel at how an unplanned detour had turned into a string of little adventures. From the ethereal fog show at Mount Soledad to the theatrical sea lions of La Jolla Cove, from Balboa Park's Spanish colonial grandeur to the hidden pathways I didn't get to explore like that tantalising cave that closed too early, San Diego had revealed itself as a city of serendipitous moments. What began as a forced schedule change due to winter storms had transformed into a gift of unexpected discoveries. Sometimes, I realised, the best memories are born from disrupted plans - when time slows down just enough to let you wander through a new city's stories.



Thejas K R
AFIAP, AFIP

Thejas K R has been a passionate art photographer for over two decades. He was on the boards of Houston Photographic Society, and Houston Camera Club.

Focus Stacking

Depth of Field (DOF in short) is one of the most important aspects of photography. Strictly speaking, when a lens is focused at a particular distance, only those points at that focused distance are in perfect focus. However, in practice points that are before and after the plane are also in “acceptable” focus. This zone of acceptable focus is called DOF.

So, do we need a large DOF or not? That largely depends on the application. As you may recall, portrait photographs usually need a shallow DOF as it gives an uncluttered background. On the other hand, landscape photographs need everything from foreground to background to be in focus and hence need a large DOF. Macro photography is a special case where DOF is minuscule. Here, photographers are in dire need of DOF and any increase you can get is a boon!

Let us look at the three factors that influence DOF.

1. Circle of confusion (COC), which in turn depends on
 - a. Format (size) of the sensor
 - b. Size of the print
 - c. Viewing distance of the print
2. Magnification (depends on focal length and subject distance)
3. Aperture size (f/number)

Point #1 is sort of pre-determined and unalterable in the field. Even Point #2 is often not under control as the composition and other factors will come into play. The only factor that is fully under our control is the aperture but there is an upper limit on how much you can stop down. For example, in macro photography, the DOF is very shallow. At 1:1 (life size) the DOF will be as small as 2 mm at f/16. Further stopping down will not increase the DOF much but the overall sharpness of the image will reduce due to diffraction. This limitation comes due to laws of physics which are inviolable. So, is there a way out?

Well, we are in the digital age and we can employ some post-processing tricks to get a substantially large DOF. How to do so is the subject of this article.

The technique used for increasing DOF is called ‘Focus Stacking’. It involves taking

multiple images, each at a slightly different focusing point from the nearest to the farthest point of interest. The images thus captured (called a stack) are merged to form a new image that is in sharp focus from beginning to end! This can be done in Adobe Photoshop and is quite simple as you will see.

This procedure involves three steps: the first is to set up your camera, then capture multiple images, and finally post-process them. Let us look at these in detail.

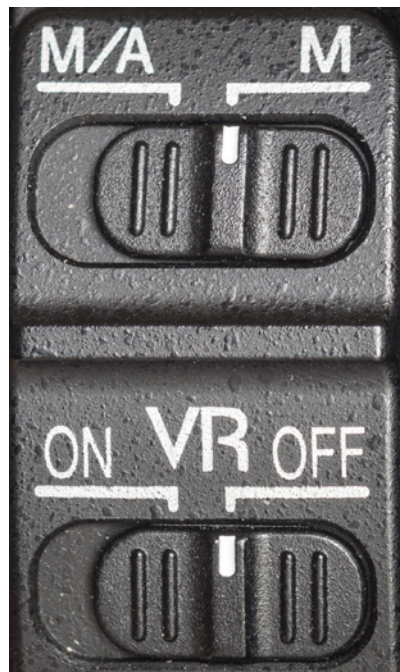
Setting up your camera

Do the following to set up your camera for focus stacking.

Tripod: Your camera must be mounted on a tripod. Don't try focus stacking by hand holding the camera.

Focus: Set your camera to manual focus as you need to vary focus from frame to frame (Picture 1).

Image Stabilization (IS) or Vibration Reduction (VR): This should be switched off since your camera is mounted on a tripod. Switching it on may give you blurred images (Picture 1).



Picture 1: Set focus to manual and switch off IS/VR.

Exposure: Set your camera to manual exposure and keep ISO fixed at the lowest value that conditions permit. This will ensure that the exposure does not change while you capture the stack.

Choose a reasonably narrow aperture to get more DOF. This means around f/8 or f/11 for a full-frame camera. The corresponding settings will be f/5.6 and f/8 for APS-C cameras.

White balance: Do not use auto white balance. Set it to a fixed value using the custom white balance. Thus, you will get consistent color across all the images, something that cannot be guaranteed with auto-white balance. So, the same color correction (if needed) can be applied to all images.

File format: Use RAW and if it is not available use the best quality JPEG with the maximum number of pixels and minimum compression.

Self-timer: You need to release the shutter without shaking the camera. You can use a remote release for this purpose. An easier way is to use your camera's self-timer. If you have a variable self-timer, set it to 2 seconds so that you do not waste time between the captures.

Image capture

First you need to decide on the number of frames. While there are no rules for this, around 25 images in the stack should be enough for the apertures mentioned for work up to 1:3. Generally speaking, landscapes may require less and macro work more. Start by focusing on the closest point of your subject and end with the farthest point. Note, that the latter could be even towards the left or right of the frame. That is, it may not necessarily be along the lens axis. Take a picture at every point (Pictures 2 and 3) till you complete the full set. These form the stack that needs to be processed now.

1. Lens - Zeiss Makro Planar 50 mm at f/8 on a Nikon Z6, Shutter speed 1/2 second, ISO 400.
2. Each dragon toy is around 2.5 cm in width.
3. Total depth from the first dragon's nose to the second one's tail - around 10 cm
4. Magnification: From a little greater than 1:2.7 to less than 1:4, Focus shifting was done manually with the focus ring.
5. A total of 27 images were taken.
6. Lighting: Window with a reflector.



Pictures 2 and 3: These are the first and the last pictures of the stack. For the former, the point of focus is at the closest point, and for the latter at the farthest point.

Post-processing

You need to load the captured images, with each forming an individual layer in a single file in Photoshop.

Go to the main menu of Photoshop -

File > Scripts > Load Files into Stack

Then, from the screen that pops up choose the images that you want to merge.

Alternatively, if you are using Lightroom, first go to the Library module and select all the images. From the Lightroom main menu, select-

Photo > Edit In > Open as Layers in Photoshop

In both cases, you will now go to Photoshop and all the files you have selected will appear as layers in a single file. Save this file.

Even though you have used a tripod, you have touched the camera a few times for focusing and this might have caused an imperceptible shift in the camera position. Therefore, before you proceed further, it is absolutely necessary that the layers are aligned properly.

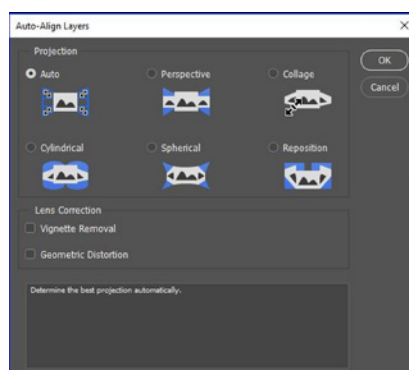
To do this, open the Layers panel in Photoshop and select all layers by clicking on each layer while keeping the CTRL key pressed. Alternatively, click on the first and the last layer while keeping the Shift key pressed.

Now go to the Photoshop main menu, select-

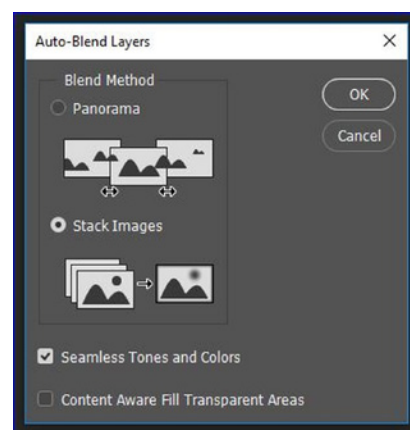
Edit > Auto-Align Layers

You will see a screen (Picture 4).

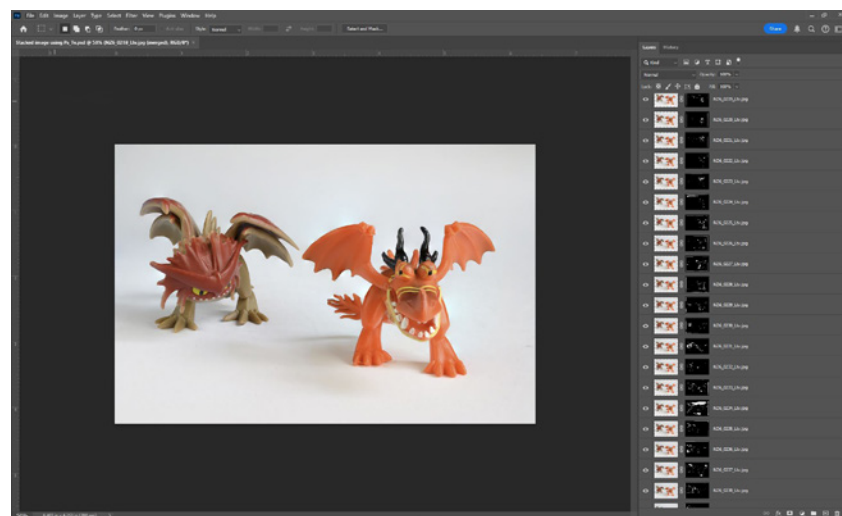
Select Auto and then click on OK. Photoshop will now align the layers and in the process, may scale, shift, or rotate



Picture 4: The Auto-Align menu in Photoshop.



Picture 5: The Auto-Blend menu in Photoshop.



Picture 6: This is the Layers panel of the Photoshop screen. Notice that each layer has an automatically generated mask (as a result of the "Auto-Blend" process) that masks out the unwanted portion.

the images a little bit. Check each layer after another and crop to get a uniform rectangle. This is why you should frame the images during capture a little liberally so that you will not cut off anything important.

Once again select all the layers (as just described) and from the Photoshop, main menu, choose-

Edit > Auto-Blend Layers

You will see a screen (Picture 5). Select Stack Images and then click on OK.

After Photoshop completes the operation, enable the Layers panel in Photoshop and have a look (Picture 6). Photoshop has taken each layer, kept the sharp part, and masked out the unsharp part, automatically!

Save the resulting file (Picture 7). That's all to it! Be aware that these steps may take

time, up to several minutes. Compare this image (Picture 7) with Pictures 2 and 3. You can see that due to blending all the parts of the subject are in sharp focus.

Limitations

As you can see this method is useful only if your subject is static. Hence, it is ideally suited for landscapes, tabletop photography, macro photography where the subject is stationary, etc. If any object in the scene has moved, the final processed image may exhibit some artifacts.

Conclusion

This technique allows you to do something that would otherwise not be possible due to the laws of physics. It is effective when there are no moving elements in the scene. With good practice, you can complete the capture of the stack in less than a minute. Another advantage of this technique is that you can get excellent results with any camera. The only requirement is that you should be able to focus it manually and set exposure mode to manual.



Picture 7: The final image after focus stacking. Compare this image with Pictures 2 and 3. Notice how both the dragon toys are in focus from nose to tail.



Ashok Kandimalla

Ashok Kandimalla has been authoring articles since 2009, titled 'Basics of Photography' in Smart Photography magazine. He has conducted more than 100 workshops and photography courses for reputed corporates.



YPS Saturday Meet Sessions

Birding Diaries!



A passionate birdwatcher and a photographer, Ms Jainy Maria captures the beauty and elegance of birds that she presents before the members of the Youth Photography Society in the 'YPS Saturday online Meets' on 14th September 2024.

Jainy's passion for vibrant hues led her initially to photograph flowers and butterflies, but she eventually narrowed her focus to birds. Her preference lies in capturing birds within their natural habitats, and she has amassed a collection of photographs encompassing nearly eleven hundred Indian bird species, with this number continually rising.

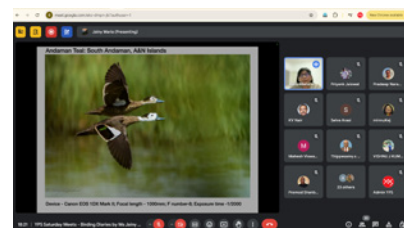
Jainy also imparts her knowledge and expertise by sharing videos and portraits featuring an array of colourful birds, spanning locations such as Brazil, China, Malaysia, and remote regions of India. Portraits of colourful birds were breathtaking; notable species include

Owls, Ceylon frogmouth, Guianan cock of the rock, golden pheasant, and Cabot's Tragopan.

She engages in extensive discussions regarding the intricacies of bird photography, stressing the requisite skills for identifying and capturing avian subjects. Jainy highlights the significance of conducting thorough research on target species before embarking on field trips and the critical role played by a knowledgeable naturalist.

Jainy Maria spoke about her amazingly sharp images taken, keeping in mind to focus the eye of a bird; anticipating perfect moments and handheld gears, by developing stability without a tripod. Furthermore, she underscored the value of meticulous preparation, which involves familiarising oneself with bird behaviours, calls, and habitats to optimise photographic opportunities.

Her preferred lens encompasses the 100mm-500mm range, and she presently uses interchangeable Canon gears, including a mirrorless camera that facilitates her endeavours. Her



compelling presentation eloquently conveys her profound enthusiasm and affection for avifauna, reflected throughout the presentation.

Jainy Maria ended with a note, dwelling upon the importance of displaying reverence toward nature and wildlife while acknowledging the collaborative and collective efforts involved in bird photography and its potential impact on birding tourism and local economies.



Dr Minnu Kejriwal PhD

is an art historian, and visual artist. She has a passion for architecture, landscape, and macro photography.

Vivid Vietnam - Travel and Street Photography

At the YPS meeting held in Bangalore on September 28th, 2024, Satish H, a seasoned photographer and cinematographer with four decades of experience, captivated the audience with his vibrant imagery of Vietnam.



Known for its allure to photographers worldwide, Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam, served as the focal point of Satish's presentation. Through

his lens, he expertly depicted the streets, people, and culture of Vietnam offering a comprehensive portrayal of the country's geographical, climatic, and demographic facets, as well as its economic and social dynamics.

Satish's keen observational skills were evident as he shared intriguing insights, such as the common sight of individuals engaging in activities like playing Chinese checkers and taking selfies in the streets. He also noted the amiable nature of the Vietnamese people, particularly their willingness to be photographed. Furthermore, he highlighted the significant role of Vietnamese women in various societal roles, showcasing their ubiquitous presence in different activities within the community.

Not confining himself to a specific genre, Satish's exploration encompassed a wide array of subjects, including portraits, street scenes, landscapes, lotus ponds, architectural elements, and heritage sites, his affinity for vibrant murals displayed his attentiveness, mindfulness, and receptiveness to the hues surrounding him. From capturing beach activities and

water sports to depicting the ambience of local markets, Satish infused his images with the essence of Vietnam.

Notably, his foray into night photography showcased the exotic hues and the prevalent sight of lanterns during evening hours.

During his presentation, Satish enthusiastically shared his experiences and opportunities as a photographer during his trip to Vietnam. Equipped with his mirrorless camera, 24mm-120mm and 80mm-400mm lenses, and a Polarized filter, he adeptly conveyed the essence of Vietnam through his artistry and technical expertise.



Dr Minnu Kejriwal PhD

is an art historian, and visual artist. She has a passion for architecture, landscape, and macro photography.



Printers: Printing At Home

From the simplicity of analogue days to the complex world of digital photography, the art of photo printing has evolved dramatically. Explore essential insights to bring your images to life beyond the screen.

In the days of analogue photo printing, the process was quite straightforward. If your photographs were in colour, you simply handed the film roll to a processing lab and received colour prints in return. You had two options to specify: “AGO,” meaning “All Good Ones” should be printed, or “Print All,” which meant every frame would be printed regardless of quality. Additionally, you had to decide the size of the prints and choose between a glossy or matte finish—glossy being the most common.

For black-and-white (B&W) films, many serious photographers opted for DIY (do-it-yourself) processing. Alternatively, you could outsource it to a colour lab that offered B&W services, or drop it off at one of the thousands of photo studios across the country, or, for a more discerning option, rely on specialized professional B&W labs known for their superior work. You also had to specify whether you wanted single-weight fibre-based paper (a thinner substrate), double-weight fibre-based paper (thicker), or medium-weight resin-coated (RC) paper, which dried instantly and was water-resistant. For this article, we will set aside discussions about multigrade, chlorobromide, and other specialized photo papers. All of these materials fall under the broader Silver Halide (AgX) category.

Life was relatively simple until the arrival of digital cameras and digital printing, which disrupted the entire photo print workflow. Suddenly, photographers were confronted with an overwhelming number of choices. The learning curve became steep, and the options difficult to navigate. In the analogue era, the focus was solely on AgX technology, a light-sensitive medium. With digital, multiple print technologies became available, such as inkjet (basic 4-colours or pigment-based museum-grade, multi-coloured inks), electrophotography (both liquid and dry toner), dye-sublimation,

D2T2/thermal printing, and even Silver Halide.

In addition to the different print technologies, photographers also encountered a variety of base substrates, surface finishes, thicknesses, and post-print treatments, enabling them to take their images far beyond what was previously possible. Without proper training, many photographers struggled—and still do—to figure out what works best for them. Most either end up at entry-level document-printing shops, which cannot do justice to photo printing, or they give up printing altogether. Some even choose to limit their images to social media, which restricts their creative potential.

However, digital photography and printing have actually opened up a vast array of possibilities. Today, photographers can choose from numerous substrates and print technologies, allowing them to showcase their work in unique and compelling ways. For example, it is possible to invest in a basic A4-sized, 4-color (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black) inkjet printer and produce quality prints at home using photo paper. For better skin tones, smoother gradations, and a slightly larger colour gamut, one could opt for a 6-color printer, which additionally includes light cyan and light magenta. A small additional investment can also include a built-in scanner. With bulk ink tanks replacing ink cartridges, the cost of printing becomes drastically lower—so affordable that you would not mind printing for your entire neighbourhood!

For home printing, it is always a good idea to stock up on inkjet photo papers and avoid using regular copier paper. Inkjet photo papers, available in glossy and lustre finishes, are coated with an ink-receptive layer that produces vibrant, lifelike prints. There is also a choice between cast-coated and resin-coated papers, the latter offering better water resistance.

A word of advice: Never try to save money by using third-party inks. Always stick to original inkjet inks, as they come with quality assurance, are compatible with your printer, and ensure that you do not lose your printer warranty by using third-party inks.

When it comes to colour gamut, most DSLRs capture images in the Adobe

RGB colour space, which is wider than the sRGB colour space. Modern digital printers, especially large-format inkjet printers that use pigment-based inks, often utilize more than six colours, allowing them to exceed the sRGB gamut. JPEG files, being lossy, result in a smaller colour gamut compared to TIFF files, but the ultimate colour range is also dependent on the print technology and the specific printer model in use. It is always a good idea to work closely with your print service provider to ensure that your print captures the maximum colour gamut possible. For instance, a 10-color printer will produce more colours than a 4-color printer—assuming the original file contains that information.

Due to space limitations, I cannot dive into the various print technologies, substrates, and photo print products available. However, I encourage you to explore the world of print to enhance your photography experience. Remember, your amazing images are not meant to be confined to a small screen—printing them is the best way to showcase a good photograph.



Vimal Parmar

An independent marketing consultant and digital print evangelist, Vimal Parmar brings over 40 years of expertise in the imaging industry, driven by a deep passion for advancing photo printing technologies and promoting the art of photography.

PSA 2024 Newsletter award for Drṣṭi

It is time to celebrate another award for Drṣṭi at the PSA 2024 Newsletter Competition. After winning prestigious awards for the last three years, this is the fourth consecutive year that the jury of the competition has highly acclaimed Drṣṭi and awarded it an Honorable Mention, along with the Director's Choice Award and Best Cover Page. This award is of great significance given that twenty-five magazines were submitted out of which twenty-two were from the USA, two from India and one from the UK.



The cover page picture was of Mr Sathya Vagale, shot during the YPS Vietnam photo tour, while the rear cover page, acclaimed by one of the judges, is by Mr H Satish.

Some of the accolades from the three judges:

- Drsti is a comprehensive educational, reportorial, and inspirational publication. I truly enjoyed reading and learning from it.
- Starting with the striking cover, which sets the tone for what is to come, one can see that this is a professional, high-quality work. The photographs throughout are arranged nicely and correspond well to the articles. The competition images are especially well presented.
- This massive magazine/newsletter meets all of the PSA criteria. This Youth Photographic Society is a large national and international Society.

No suggestions. It is one of the Best Magazine-style newsletters.

- This is a tremendous magazine with so much information, alongside the articles, that covers so much within this issue. Well done editor for having brought this together.
- The variety of articles is outstanding, as is the quality. I especially enjoyed reading the technical article about memory cards. I also found the article about Ladakh interesting and beautifully illustrated. The article about Mohammed Arfan Asif is well-written and the portfolio of images accompanying it is excellent.
- The images within this issue are beautiful and structured in a way that enhances the whole set-up. The editorial team has worked well to bring this to fruition.
- The text flows quite freely with the different headings, articles and items, although quite a few take time to digest and take in.
- I did appreciate the new members' corner as it highlights what this club is all about.
- The consideration of the members is excellent and I feel that this is a good thing for us all to consider.
- The article "Ladakh - The Land of High Passes" by B V Prakash is a tremendous read and I felt drawn into this area not only by the text but the images too. Nicely documented.
- The article about Ladakh (which, as I said, was one of my favorites) is well-organized, packed with details, and has a pleasant tone.
- Fantastic Cover and Back image.

2023 was a momentous year for Drsti when it won the top, Arthur P.

Henrick's Memorial Award, having learnt significantly from the judges' comments of the past two years

This submission also received the special awards for the Best Layout and the Best Technical Article: Getting Started with Photomicrography by Raghuram Annadana.

For this submission, the Competition Chairman summarised the three judges comments:

You are to be congratulated on producing a magazine that looks very professional. The layout is clean, simple and consistently applied. There is a wealth of information for the reader, information about the organization and activities, technical, photographic technique and "how-to" articles, as well as information about members and competition results.

The cover and backpage are both striking and will draw the attention of anyone picking up this publication.

The material is generally very well-written and easy to read.


During its formative years in 2021 and 2022, Drsti was amongst the awards, but not the top honors. The editorial team quickly learnt, from the juries' comments, what it took to climb up the ladder and made the necessary changes in its content, etc.

In 2022, it won the Best Banner and Best Layout awards, while in 2021 it won Best Front Page, Best Use of Photography and Best Table of Contents.




M S Kakade

Director, YPS and Drsti Editorial Team



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Wildlife Week Celebrations

Youth Photographic Society is well known for its Wildlife Photographers right from its inception in 1971. YPS celebrates Wildlife Week every year with various programs. This year the following programs were organized:

- A Wildlife abstract photography contest
- Oct 02 - Online presentation of Scuba Diving & Underwater Photography by Mr Nandakumar MN
- Oct 05 - Macro Photography Walk at Kalkere Arboretum led by Mr Satish H
- Oct 06 - Landscape photography and a Clean-up drive in Sri Narayanagiri Hill led by Mr Padmanabha K G
- Oct 06 - Online presentation of wildlife photography 'Thinking Different' by Mr Gurcharan Roopra

Wildlife Abstract Photo Contest:

Wildlife comes with exotic patterns, be it the design and texture on the coat of animals, colors and patterns on butterfly and bird wings, the close-up pattern of an insects' eye, so on and so forth.

This year, we wanted the members to think out of the box, look at wildlife closely, get their creative juices flowing and make abstract pictures.

The 149 pictures submitted were judged by Mr R Dev, Mr Raghuram Annadana and Ms Prema Kakade with support from Mr Manju Vikas Sastry. Wildlife Photo Contest winners were awarded on 20th Nov at the YPS International Salon 2024 exhibition and award ceremony at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath.

The awardees were as follows:

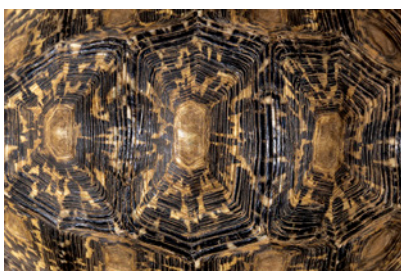
- 1st award - Rs 5,000 to Mr ADWAIT APHALE (IM-1021) for his picture 'Illusion'
- 2nd award - Rs 3,000 to Mr MANJU MOHAN K S (LM-271) for his picture 'Feather Art'
- 3rd award - Rs 2,000 to Dr KALYANPUR ANAND (LM-345) for his picture 'I can see you all'
- Certificate of Merit to Rs 1000 to Mr KISHAN HARWALKAR (IM-0696) for his picture 'Translucent Treasure'
- Certificate of Merit to Rs 1000 to Mr KARTHICK SRIDHARAN (IM-1009) for his picture 'Nature's Mosaic on a Living Canvas'
- Certificate of Merit to Rs 1000 to Mr Satish Hanumantharao (LM-006) for his picture 'Symmetry'



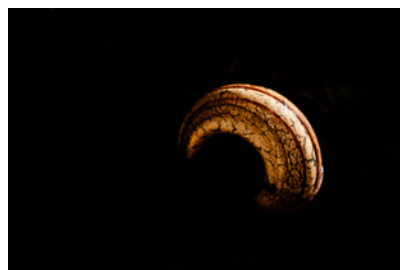
Illusion ©ADWAIT APHALE



I can see you all ©Dr KALYANPUR ANAND



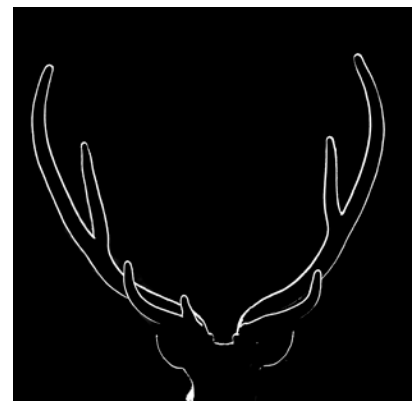
Nature's Mosaic on a Living Canvas
©KARTHICK SRIDHARAN



Translucent Treasure ©KISHAN HARWALKAR



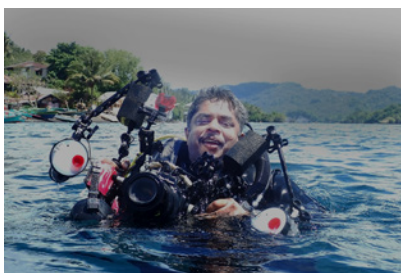
Feather Art ©MANJU MOHAN K S.



Underwater Wildlife Photography:

Scuba diving and underwater photography

Mr Nandakumar M N, a proficient scuba diver and dedicated underwater photographer, was a distinguished guest at the YPS 'Online Saturday Meet' on 2nd October 2024. An entrepreneur from Mysore, Nandakumar, has traveled extensively to thirty-four countries and completed eight hundred and fifty dives.



Entering the realm of underwater photography necessitates mastery of scuba diving and subsequently photography skills. Essential requisites include adequate lighting, a proficient dive guide, a spotter, suitable location, stability, and buoyancy. Furthermore, safety measures such as prudent use of oxygen and depth awareness are crucial when engaging in underwater photography.

Nandakumar emphasized the need for photography to link the submerged wonders and the terrestrial world. Apart from macro photography, opportunities abound for capturing portraits and wide-angle frames. In the presentation, he gave examples of split images, where half the composition is submerged and the other half is above the water. While adjusting ISO settings between 1000 and 2000, a flash is imperative across all photography genres, despite the subdued colors seen while shooting.

He expounded on the challenges of macro photography underwater, where subjects may be as close as 4-5 centimeters. For instance, the Cuttlefish undergoes rapid color changes every thirty seconds, demanding absolute stillness from the photographer. Notable macro shots include the Lembeh Sea Dragon, Frogfish, and various tunicate species. Marine species such as the Stingray, Manta Ray, Honeycomb Moray, Striped Snappers,

Nudibranch, Jellyfish, and Tonga have been captured through his lens.

Nandakumar's choice of camera gear includes 5DSR with 8MM and 15MM lenses, providing coverage of 8-10 meters and an angle of 120 to 130 degrees, alongside a 100MM macro lens with a flash. The housing for underwater photography is custom-made for any camera and often features a touchscreen option, although at a significantly higher cost.

Nandakumar's expertise and the captivating underwater images he presented undeniably inspired the attendees to explore underwater wildlife photography, offering an unparalleled once-in-a-lifetime experience.



Dr Minnu Kejriwal PhD

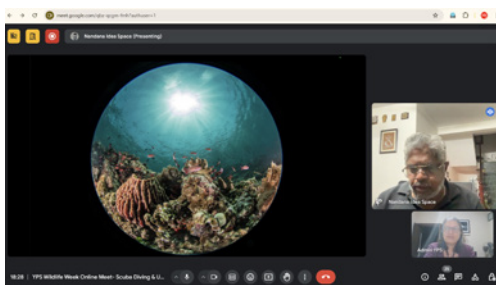
is an art historian, and visual artist. She has a passion for architecture, landscape, and macro photography.



Pair of Pygmy Seahorse



Ribboned sweetlips



A Macro Adventure: YPS Bengaluru's Photowalk to Kalkere Arboretum

The YPS Bengaluru photography enthusiasts embarked on a captivating macro photo walk to the serene Kalkere Arboretum on October 5th. Led by the dynamic duo, Prema Kakade and Madhu Kakade of the YPS Executive Committee, and mentored by Satish sir, one of the most acclaimed photographers of YPS, the walk brought together a group of 12 eager photographers.

The morning began with a warm cup of tea, courtesy of the Kakade couple, setting the perfect tone for a day of exploration and discovery. Satish sir, our mentor, provided a comprehensive briefing, guiding us through the intricacies of macro photography and highlighting the potential subjects that awaited us.

As we ventured deeper into the arboretum, the world transformed into a realm of miniature wonders. Snails glided gracefully across leaves, their shells glistening in the morning light. Caterpillars, in vibrant hues, crawled along branches, their fuzzy bodies a delight to capture. Moths, with their delicate wings and intricate patterns, fluttered amidst the foliage. The elusive bagworm, camouflaged in its protective casing, posed a fascinating challenge. And of course, the intricate spider webs, shimmering with morning dew, were a photographer's dream.

The walk was a delightful blend of learning, exploration, and camaraderie. Satish's expert guidance and the enthusiasm of the participants created a vibrant atmosphere. We captured the essence of nature's tiny marvels, each frame revealing a hidden beauty.

As the morning sun began to climb higher, we concluded our photowalk, leaving the Kalkere Arboretum with memories filled with the wonders of the natural world. This was my first-ever macro photography experience, and Satish's guidance was invaluable. This experience helped me to see the macro world in a whole new way, and I'm already looking forward to my next macro adventure.

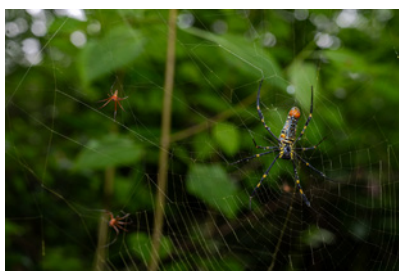
A special thanks to the YPS Bengaluru team for organizing this enriching experience and providing invaluable guidance.



Mushroom with a different perspective ©Arun Madan



Robberfly with a kill ©Arun Madan



Giant Wood Spider - Female and Male
©Nitesh K R



Magic of light ©Arun Madan



Spider Minimalism © Nitesh K R



Kishan Harwalkar

Landscape photography and a Clean-up drive

The Youth Photographic Society (YPS) organised a Wildlife Week celebration with a sunrise photography session and a clean-up drive at Narayanagiri hills on 6th October 2024. We were encouraged to carpool to the location by 5:30 AM for photography and 7:30 AM for the clean-up. Despite weather concerns due to recent rains, the event proceeded as planned with Padmanabha KG as the lead coordinator. Although many members confirmed their participation, only a handful of us attended on the day. Unfortunately, the sunrise photography didn't materialise as clouds enveloped the horizon, but we managed to capture a few landscapes with the cloud-filled backdrop.

Narayanagiri hills, located about 60 km from Bengaluru in the Ramanagara district of Karnataka, is a serene mountain peak at approximately 3,800 feet. Also known as Lakshmi Narayana Swamy Betta, it features the Laxmi Narayana Swamy Temple. The hill is part of the Shathashruna mountain range and is historically fortified with natural caves and a serene lake nearby, making it an

ideal spot for photography and camping.

Disappointed with the limited photo opportunities, we focused on the clean-up drive. Our task was vital: to clean up the litter left behind by careless visitors and ensure the natural beauty of Narayanagiri hills remained unspoiled. Despite the overcast sky and impending drizzle, we were committed to the cause, driven by a shared purpose of environmental protection and keeping the Devasthan's surroundings clean and hygienic.

It is crucial to avoid polluting the environment with plastic and other long-lasting human-made things such as glass and plastic bottles, containers and cigarette butts. These materials do not biodegrade quickly and can cause significant harm to wildlife and ecosystems. By reducing our reliance on single-use plastics and properly disposing of waste, we contribute to a healthier, more sustainable planet.

For nature photographers, the sight of pristine landscapes marred by litter, pollution and garbage is a source of deep frustration and sorrow. Our craft relies on capturing the natural world's unblemished beauty, yet humans'

careless actions often taint this beauty. Every piece of plastic, discarded bottles and garbage is an eyesore and a stark reminder of the negligence and selfishness plaguing our society. The aesthetic loss is profound; the vibrant hues of a sunrise over a mountain, the serene reflections in a clear lake, or the intricate patterns of a forest floor are all diminished by the jarring presence of waste. This abuse of nature disrupts visual harmony and threatens the delicate ecosystems we strive to document and preserve. Our angst reflects a more profound yearning for a world where natural beauty is respected and preserved for future generations.

We ended our walk with a sumptuous 'chindi chitranna and bombat thatte idli' (Lemon rice and idli) at Jaalamangala village. We left with heavy hearts, reflecting on the human impact on nature but satisfied that we did our bit to protect the environment.



Narendra KN



Thinking different: African Wildlife Photography



Mr Gurcharan Roopra was invited as a distinguished guest by the Youth Photography Society in the online 'Saturday Meet.' held on the 6th of October

2024 to showcase his photographic work and offer a unique perspective on African wildlife photography.

Hailing from Nairobi, Kenya, Gurcharan, an automotive engineer, attributes his keen interest in photography to his profound admiration for nature. His photographic endeavors are driven by a desire to capture and document his experiences, fostering a deep connection with the natural world.

Gurcharan's approach to wildlife photography can be described as meditative and introspective setting him apart from other wildlife photographers. His method involves delving into the emotions and behaviors of his subjects, resulting in mesmerizing minimalist visuals.

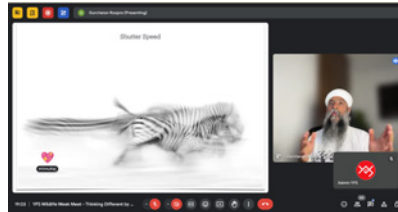
Gurcharan shared his experiences in telephoto, wide-angle, aerial, night, and documentary photography in his presentation. Notable highlights included his abstract aerial art and his remarkable portrayal of giraffes in varying environmental contexts, providing visually stimulating content.

In his view "the camera is the extension of your mind and hand," Gurcharan emphasizes aesthetics over technical specifications, placing significant importance on connecting with the subject and crafting compelling narratives. He also underlines the significance of light direction and composition in his work.



Gurcharan's thought-provoking images offered unique interpretations of familiar subjects through their aesthetic richness, dreamlike quality, exceptional compositions, and profound emotional connections displayed by the subjects.

His outstanding contributions to wildlife photography have earned him prestigious awards and featured articles in prominent publications, reflecting his unwavering dedication to conservation initiatives.



In addition to using the drone camera, Gurcharan employs a range of cutting-edge equipment, including Z series and D6 camera bodies, complemented by an assortment of high-quality lenses such as Z 14-30mm, 70-200mm, and 400mm, as well as several lenses ranging from F 24-400mm, and 105mm macro lenses.

The audience, comprising a substantial number of attendees were captivated and deeply inspired by Gurcharan's artistry and the profound thoughtfulness behind his work, which left a lasting impression.



Dr Minnu Kejriwal PhD

is an art historian, and visual artist. She has a passion for architecture, landscape, and macro photography.



YPS International Salon 2024 - Award Ceremony

An exhibition of award-winning photographs from the 15th International Salon organised by YPS was held on the 19th and 20th of October 2024. The venue, as usual, was Chitrakala Parishath, Bengaluru. The exhibition displayed the winning photographs from the salon. As many as 104 photographs from different sections neatly framed and labelled were showcased. An added attraction was an ongoing display of all accepted images on a large TV screen. Being an international salon the images of winners from many countries as well as India made it all the more fascinating not only for the photographers but for the general public too. Both days saw a huge footfall despite the inclement weather. The highlight of the event, however, was the award ceremony on Sunday, the 20th at 11 am when the hall was packed with the audience. The programme began

with a soulful invocation by Ms Sunitha Rani, who had also donned the role of compering.

At the outset, Mr Vikas Shastri, YPS President and salon Chairperson welcomed the gathering and invited the chief guest Mr Raghuram Krishnan, CFO / Senior Director of Finance, Adobe India & Worldwide FP&A COE and Guest of Honour Mr M C Ramesh, Deputy Director (Admin & Welfare) Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports, Government of Karnataka to the dias. After a brief introduction of the guests, the ceremonial lamp was lit by the invitees. Ms Anitha Mysore, the salon secretary gave a brief report on the salon with relevant details. The colourful catalogue of award-winning images was released by the guests on the dais. It was followed by the most awaited part of the event, the award ceremony. Though winners from other countries

were not present, the many awardees from India who attended received great applause from the audience.

The guest of honour, Mr Ramesh said, that though he was not exposed to intricate details of photography, he was deeply fascinated by it all the same and appreciated the efforts of YPS and assured all the support from the department. The chief guest, Mr Raghuram said he was also impressed by the activities of YPS and shared how photography is being encouraged in his workplace also involving the employees. He also expressed his desire to extend a favourable package of the Lightroom processing software to YPS members.

The vote of thanks was given by Ms Anitha. She thanked the chief guests, visitors, YPS committee members, volunteers and all those who made the programme a memorable event.



New Member Corner

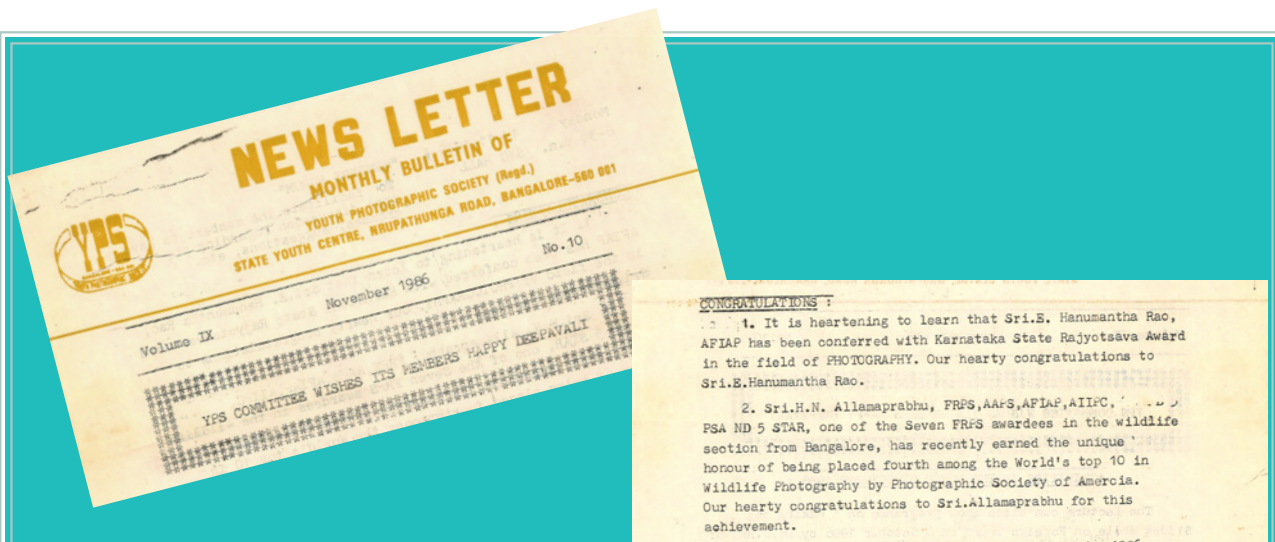
Mem No	Full Name
IM-1036	BARATH KARTHI R K
IM-1037	GOPAL BELOKAR
IM-1038	MANJULA RAO
IM-1039	SHARAD GUPTA
IM-1040	NIRMAL KUMAR R
IM-1041	PARAMESHWAR D. SHIGGAON
IM-1042	SANTOSH MULEGAVI
IM-1043	SATYA SUDHEER
IM-1044	PRABIR BISHAYEE
IM-1045	JYOTIKA KAMATH
IM-1046	RAVI KOTIAN
IM-1047	GOUTHAM CHANDRAMOULI
IM-1048	RAKESH P EETTISSERI



Come with Me ©SHESHADRI V



Cheetah Family Lunch Time ©BARATH KARTHI R K



Nostalgia

Photographs make memories.

Newsletters and Journals record happenings creating memories. Youth Photographic Society, going strong at 53 years has gathered many memories!

Nostalgia brings you these interesting titbits from the YPS Newsletters of yore or from fond memories stored with its many Members.

YPS Programme Calendar

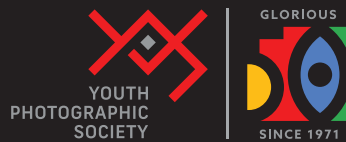
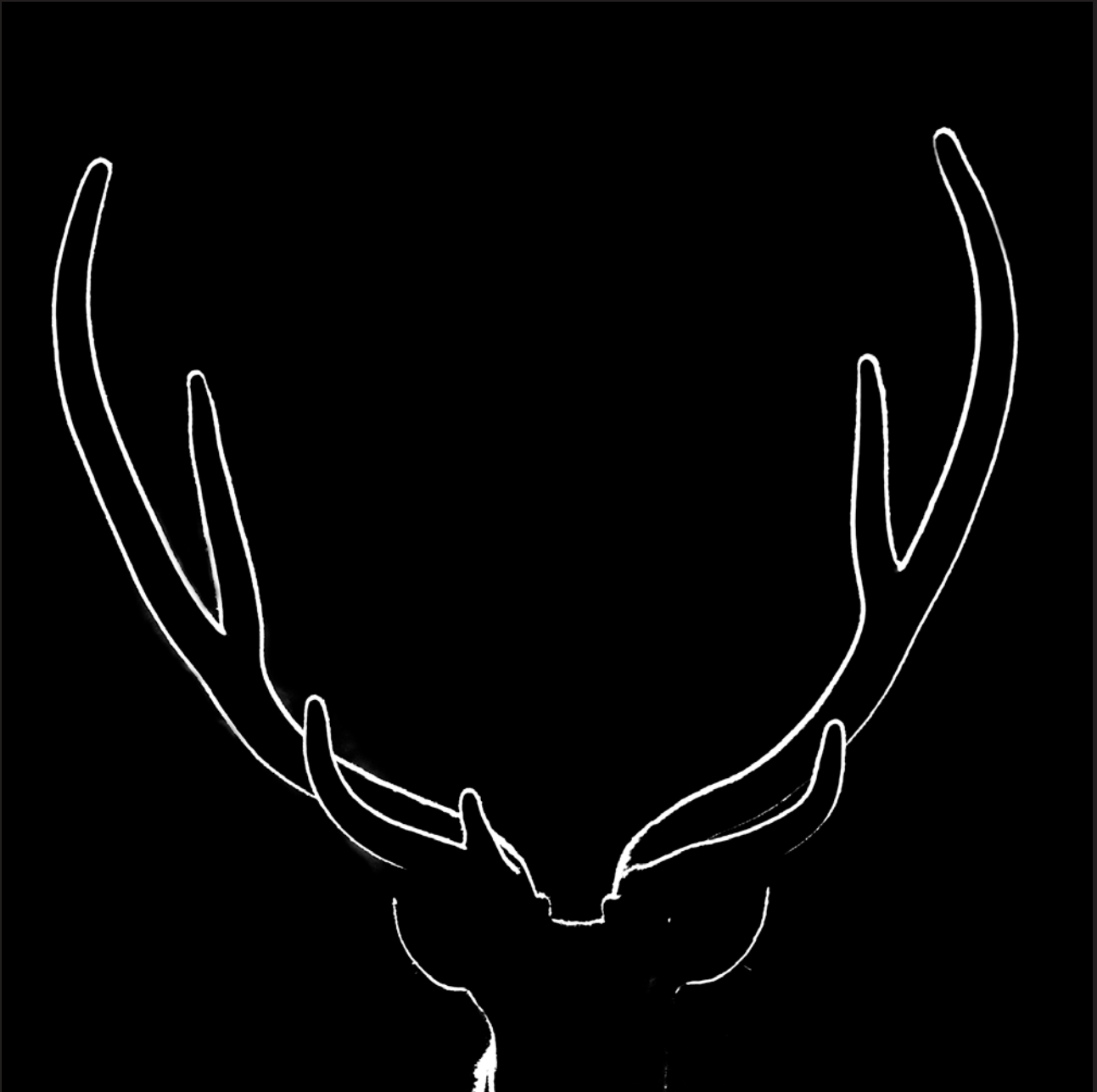
November 2024				
Date	Venue	Topic	Title	Presenter
Saturday, 02	Instagram	Photography with Red and Yellow colors	Rajyotsava Photography Contest	Hardik Shah, Koushik Rao
Saturday, 16	Google Meet	Conceptual Photography	Conceptual Portraits Photography	Vishaka Guru
Saturday, 23	Google Meet	Abstract Photography	Experimentation with Form & Colour	Anil Risal Singh

December 2024				
Date	Venue	Topic	Title	Presenter
Sunday, 01	YPS Hall	Still-life Photography Workshop	Art Of Tabletop Photography	Satish H
Saturday, 07	YPS Hall	Photoshop Post-Processing Workshop	CCC - Creating Conceptual Composites	Arjun Haarith
Saturday, 21	Google Meet	Wildlife	Half-Century of Stripes	Yashpal Rathore

Note: The above programmes are provisional. Confirmation for each of the programmes will be announced on the website, by email and WhatsApp broadcast.



Mushroom and a Snail ©Nitesh K R



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