



# BPS NEWS BULLETIN

## Issue No 17: December 2023

### Call for Beckenham Members to enter RHS Photographic Competition

Beckenham member Polina Plotnikova is a judge for the prestigious Royal Horticultural Photographic Competition in which winning entries are shown at the world-famous Saatchi Gallery. She wants to encourage fellow members to take the opportunity to exhibit a portfolio of work based on the common theme of plants, gardens and natural landscapes. Polina says: "I think there is plenty of talent within BPS and some members' portfolios -based on what I have seen in the last few years of panel evenings - would have good chances to do well in the competition."

There is still time to put together an entry with the deadline at 10am on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February. If you are interested in the competition, you can read some tips and advice in a piece that Polina and her fellow judges have written for DIGIT, the magazine of the RPS' Digital Imaging Group. A couple of pages are below, and members will receive a copy of the full article by email.

#### THE RHS BOTANICAL ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW



The annual RHS Botanical Art and Photography Show gives both amateur and professional photographers the unique opportunity to exhibit a portfolio of work based on a common theme of plants, gardens and natural landscapes.

In the following pages, four of the RHS photography judges provide an insight into some of the key elements to consider when entering the portfolio photography competition and pick some memorable entries.

##### Q: What do you look for in terms of the horticultural content of a portfolio?

Paul Debois RHS Photography Judge  
"Botanical or horticultural content is key to your image selection. And the identification of plant species or varieties in your photographs needs to be accurate."

But we want your interpretation or your way of seeing the world of plants, gardens, natural or wild environments and the people associated with these themes. It is not intended to be a plant directory.

You may well come across a national collection of plants in your travels. You could approach this in quite a stylised way, with formal portraits

of six different species. It could be in a studio. It could be on location. It could be in colour or black and white. Another way of approaching this scenario could be looking at the people involved with a garden. Watch them working. Do they propagate their own plants? How do they do it? Is it a small garden? Or a large estate or commercial enterprise? Indeed, we would love to see more people stories.

Use your imagination, but note that a connection with the botanical world is imperative. Vanda Raleva's 2023 Gold Medal winning portfolio *Winter Sun* perfectly captures that connection with the botanical world and explores the resilience of nature, depicting with sympathy the ability of the natural world to overcome adversity.

Be mindful that you do not have to constrain yourself to technical plant portraits. You can use special techniques (think natural), if it adds to your theme.

Obviously look at gardens and wild landscapes. We would like to see more folios illustrating these too. Close-ups and vistas. With broad views, you would only have to name one or two focal point plant specimens in captions or simply name the specific location itself.

Whichever route you take, be strict with yourself. We want visual continuity, as you can only present six images.

But the possibilities are much wider than most people realise. Simply put, tell us a story about the botanical world."



Winter Sun by Vanda Raleva



##### Q: What do you look for in terms of the photographic qualities of a portfolio?

Polina Plotnikova RHS Photography Judge

"Quality of your photography is extremely important. You have artistic licence to use various creative techniques, in camera or in post processing. Whichever your preferred technique is, it should not be used just for the sake of showcasing that you can do it, but rather to enhance your final picture. It's very easy to get carried away and use a huge range of creating filters, plugins or clever gadgets that have potential to elevate your photography to the next level. Intentional camera movement, multiple exposure, vintage lenses - there are no restrictions, but it's very important to remember that all these clever techniques are not taking focus away from the main

subject of your portfolio.

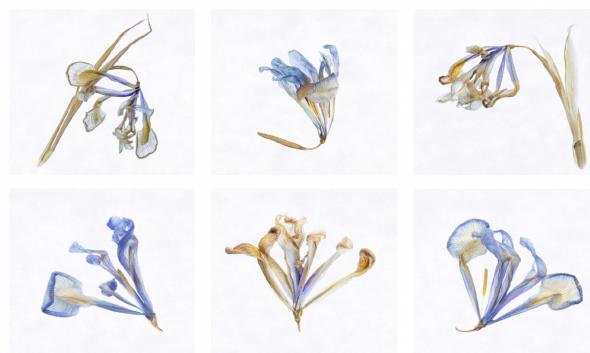
When we're looking at beautiful blooms, stunning landscapes, meadows with wildflowers it's very easy to admire them, but you need to be able to translate that into an image using your camera. We want to feel and understand what prompted you to focus on a particular theme.

There are, of course, the usual suspects to take care of - light, composition, camera settings. Whether you photograph in the studio or outdoors, take your time to compose your frame. Good composition is essential to every single image within a portfolio. We will be looking at your choice of what to include in your frame, how you lead viewer's eyes to your main point of interest in the shot, which part of the flower or scenery you decided to focus on.

The Best Portfolio Photography Exhibit 2023 was awarded to Irene Stupples for her entry *Faded Iris*. This portfolio demonstrated with incredible poise great control of light, well balanced composition on each image and sharp focus which suited the nature of the chosen subject.

Light can, indeed, make or break a photograph. If shooting outdoors make sure you are taking advantage of good natural light, harsh direct sunlight can ruin your shot, make sure you are at your chosen location for the best light. Depth of field is one of the most important choices to make when photographing flowers, some would benefit from shallow depth of field, and others would require pin sharp focus throughout your image.

Whatever the case, we would expect perfection in all details."



Faded Iris by Irene Stupples

### Final deadlines for Annual Exhibition and Perigny Exchange

This coming Wednesday (December 20<sup>th</sup>) is the very last date that members can submit prints and digital images for the exhibition – as Roger Ford kindly extended the deadline by one week. If you haven't yet submitted a maximum of three prints and two PDIs, please don't miss the opportunity to showcase your work.

The Exhibition will be held as in the last two years in the Main Hall at Christ Church, Beckenham. The member preview opening will be on Wednesday 14 February 2024 when Judge Tony Bramley FRPS will reveal his decisions and present the awards. Then the exhibition is open to the public between Thursday 15 February and Saturday 17 February. More details to follow in due course but as ever volunteers will be needed for a variety of tasks, including transport and erection of our display panels, the hanging of the images as well as stewarding and after it is all over, taking down the exhibition.

Please don't forget that you will need to submit images on the theme of Borders for our very successful exchange evening with twin club Image'in Perigny by January 17<sup>th</sup>. Something to keep you occupied over the festive season! Every member can send two PDIs 1400 x 1050 300dpi send to [angelafor19@hotmail.com](mailto:angelafor19@hotmail.com).

## Christmas Social

This coming Wednesday (December 20<sup>th</sup>) will be our last meeting before Christmas, and we are marking the evening with nibbles, drinks and picture quizzes. Drinks will be provided but please bring a **small** contribution – either sweet or savoury. Nenne Van Dijk has donated a lovely calendar of her images, and we will raffle it for club funds. There will be prizes for the winning quiz team.

## Astrophotography

I included this item in the last newsletter but wanted to remind members that we may be able to organise an event led by Tom Maguire at appropriate venues such as Birling Gap – or further afield in Dorset. Before any planning starts, we would like to gauge likely interest. I did have some responses to my last request but want to check if there is any more interest. Could you email Sheree on [scdodd@mac.com](mailto:scdodd@mac.com) if you are interested and whether you would be interested in a single evening or a longer visit. Any astrophotography workshop must carry a weather warning – clouds could ruin the chances of good shots.

Another opportunity for astrophotography is to join an observing event run by the Flamstead Astronomy Society. They are holding a free public observing event at Blackheath on January 13<sup>th</sup>. Details here: <https://www.flamstead.info/event-details/blackheath-observing-event-13-january-2024-weather-back-up-14-20-21-january>

## Early evening shoot in London

Many members have enjoyed photography workshops with Steve Hedges – a charming and helpful teacher. He does run bespoke classes for photography clubs, and I want to gauge whether there would be interest in a photography shoot in London to capture the blue hour either around the City or Westminster. A session – to be held during the week – would begin about 2.30 and end around 5.30 and cost £39 each. I would need a group of around six photographers to make this work; can you let me know if you are interested and I will explore dates with Steve. If there is a lot of interest, it will be first come, first served.

## Events for Your Diary

### Portrait and Wildlife Exhibitions

There is still time to catch some great exhibitions – perhaps also to walk off Christmas excess! Wildlife Photographer of the Year is currently on show at the National History Museum until June next year – see <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/visit/exhibitions/wildlife-photographer-of-the-year.html>. And at the National Portrait Gallery the winners in the Taylor Wessing Photo Portrait Prize 2023 can be seen until February: <https://www.npg.org.uk/whatson/exhibitions/2023/taylor-wessing-photo-portrait-prize-2023/>

### **Skateboard Photography**

The Design Museum is running Skateboard Photography workshops to complement its current Skateboard exhibition that runs until June 2024. The workshop will focus on how to compose, light and shoot action shots. Equipment will be provided. Sessions are 10-12.30 or 14.00-16.30 on 20<sup>th</sup> January and 14.00-16.30 on 9<sup>th</sup> March. More information here:

<https://designmuseum.org/whats-on/talks-courses-and-workshops/workshop-skate-photography>

### **London Photo Trade Show and Convention**

Free tickets are available for the show between 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> January if you register before January 1<sup>st</sup>. The show takes place at the Novotel London West, Hammersmith and includes a wide range of speakers and kit on display. Fred is willing to coordinate a group visit. Details here:

<https://thesocieties.net/convention/>

### **BPS WhatsApp Site**

We will continue to let you know of events and visits by email and newsletter but for last-minute trips BPS WhatsApp site is a useful way of sharing information. If you haven't yet joined the site let Sheree ([scdodd@mac.com](mailto:scdodd@mac.com)) know and she will add you to the list of participants.

**THANK YOU** for reading this News Bulletin. Look out for Issue No 18 in late January/early February. Please send any articles, feedback, images, news items, suggestions, advice, announcements to [beckenhampscomms@gmail.com](mailto:beckenhampscomms@gmail.com)

**Deadline for copy for the next issue is midday on 16th January**