"Aisha Holds On" – by Robin Stern

Best in Show (page 4)

CONTENTS

News and Views of Poly Photo Camera Club Members
July/August, 2016   Volume 7, No.6

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS AND COLUMNS

From the Editor

This month, we're featuring some of the images that were selected as the best in the San Diego County Fair Exhibition of Photography for 2016. Not all of them of course, but those from Poly members that got major awards. The top prize (Best in Show) went to our own Robin Stern. **Congratulations, Robin** for your great work.

Poly members won five First Place awards and had seven other images in the top four. Comgratulations to all of you.

If we think about the presentation of "*Art*," we can see that there is a certain consistency in the broad array of our visual art forms. An artist (in any medium) creates an image for others to see that he hopes will stir their emotions, and they will like and appreciate (and perhaps, buy).

A painter creates a two-dimensional image, designed to hang on a wall (or be a wall). He puts down individual bits (or bigger blobs) of single colors in combination with others, in various arrays and patterns that he hopes will provide a representation of what he sees and make some "sense" to a viewer.

Basically, a modern sculptor does the same thing aggregating blobs of clay, or whittling away chips of stone; and his creations are in three dimensions. Therefore, if the artist chooses, these can be "better" representations of reality.

Photography is mainly a two-dimensional art form and its images are displayed like paintings or by projection. But unlike the other two, it deals with selective combinations and presentations of full shapes and forms rather than their non-identifiable individual small elements.

Both of the classical disciplines are little changed since their inception. Material compositions for paints and pigments have changed, but they are still applied by hand, mostly to canvas panels and walls. Clay chemistries have been improved to make it easier to work with and more premanent when finished. Stone cutting tools have improved greatly, but how they are used requires the same old manual dexterity and skills. And no matter what is produced, the end-product will always require the artist's vision.

But we have been able to personally witness many of the vast changes that have occurred in photography as an art medium; and the changes keep coming. For me, that makes it wonderful. We can actually participate in helping progress continue.

For a long time, practical analog photography followed a normal evolutionary growth curve. In less than 100 years, photosensitive emulsions went from clumsy, wet, fragile, in-the-field processes to more permanent, dry, convenient higher-fidelity systems (film). Film and negative processing got better in every way; and color started to become practical in the 1930's. Photography followed the normal smooth refinement/improvement curve for the next 60 years.

But then in 1990, there was a major discontinuity. No one seemed to realize it at the time, but there was a large step function when the first practical, consumer, digital camera was released! Kodak followed with the first practical DSLR in 1991.

Photoshop for Macintosh started in early 1989, as a way to digitally manipulate scanned images. Then Adobe found there was a place for it with the new digital cameras.

The combination of electronic hardware, digital imaging, and digital processing followed Moore's Law, and exponential improvement in capability still continues.

I got to thinking about all this because I bought a new camera recently. So far, it seems to be a lot better (in many ways) than my old one. The basics work the same, but there's a lot of new "stuff." Discouragely, the instruction manual is 400-pages long.

But I realized that my Craft needs to stay up with my Art aspirations, and I need to understand how the technology has progressed, so that I can tell how it can better help me to reach my goals. I think that's a choice we all need to make, at some time or another.

In the mean time, enjoy our unprecented high-speed ride through this art form development. It can be filled with fun and discovery.

Musings from the President

When does an image become creative or illustrative art? Does using sharpen, contrast, vibrance, dodge and burn or vignetting make it creative? What about using filters such as neutral density, textures or toning? Can a piece of trash be cloned out and the image still be considered a realistic image? Does black light, bubbles on a rose in a tank or something like Rick Wiley's burning matchstick proposal qualify as artistic or creative art? As you can see, defining a creative category is very challenging.

Members of the new Competition Committee: Dan Palermo, Paul Shilling, Ernesto Corte, Bob Howe, Beverly Brock, Josi Ross, Diane Patterson and I have been struggling with this question. Thinking that it might benefit us to have judges on this committee to hear opinions from the "other side" of competition, Dan and Palermo and Paul Shilling were invited and accepted.

In response to the questionnaire, we met in June to discuss some of those comments and proposed changes to our monthly competitions. As stated, the biggest issue was that of creative art as opposed to realistic photography. After agreeing that a separate category was needed, the big task was how to define creative art. After much online research and consulting with Gene Wild (the photography coordinator at the Fair), it was agreed that it would be much easier to define what realistic photography is. We are currently researching wording that organizations such as PSA, Nat Geo. and others, use. Once we're satisfied with the wording, the proposal will be presented to the membership for a vote. I want to thank all of the committee members for their time and work in putting these and other proposed changes together.

In the last newsletter, I mentioned that new members would be introduced in a lengthier fashion at our competition meetings. In addition, mentors have been established to guide new members through competition rules and submissions, building hosting, the webpage and any other aspect of Poly that needs explaining. These volunteers are Jim Mildice, Bill G-A and Bill Gracey. Others may be added to this list in the future.   Thanks to these volunteers who will take the time to make newbies feel comfortable in Poly.

An "AHA" Moment - Gradient Mapping. I'd heard that term but didn't know what it was until I watched a tutorial recently. It's a cool way to add subtle toning, pop or split toning to an image.

To try it, open up an image in Photoshop and go to the Adjustments panel. It's the last icon in the bottom row. Make sure it says Gradient <u>Map</u> and NOT Gradient <u>Tool</u>. Click on the icon. A default B&W gradient will show. Click on the gradient to bring up presets. These are pretty wild and may work for some images. However, to check out other presents, click on the "wheel" opposite the word Presets over the preset displays. Once you've chosen one you'd like to try, click on it. Fine tuning can be done by moving the sliders, but for now, click OK and your image will be modified. Go to Mode and click on Soft Light. Make adjustments with Fill or Opacity. Try other Modes to see interesting results.

Lastly, I'm sending a big "Thank You" shoutout to: Garrett Shiroma, Richard Courtney, Joe Mahon, Bill G-A, Jean Eichenlaub, Carol Murdoch and Robin Stern for their help with the PAB cleanup last Saturday. Garrett brought doughnuts and made coffee. Richard braved the big ladder and changed the burned-out lightbulb in the bathroom area. Afterwards, some of us treated ourselves to a nice lunch in the Prado!

I hope everyone is having a very nice summer in spite of the heat.

Happy Shooting!
-dee

Best in Show –

First Place – Wild Animals, Mammals
"Aisha Holds On"
By Robin Stern
(Full size image shown on our cover)

First Place – Color - Waterscapes, seascapes, waterfalls, water details, etc.
"An Old Harbor in Maine" – By Dee Elwin

First Place – Color Architecture or Cityscapes
"Moody Street" – By Nick Angelidis

Third Place – B&W Architecture or Cityscapes
"Have a Seat" – By Nick Angelidis

First Place – All Things Mechanical
"Power Wagon" – By Alan Haynes

Third Place – Color Scenic – Fall
"San Biagio Sunset" – By Alan Haynes

Other Award Winners (not shown)

First Place – Fair Theme – Mad About the Fair   *"With Time to Kill" – By Michele McCain*

Fourth Place – Digital Artwork and Illustration   *"The Purchase" – By Michele McCain*

Third Place – Wild Animals – Mammals   *"Hummmm, What Do You Think" – By Beverly Brock*

Third Place – Color Scenic – Winter   *"Overlooking Reine" – By DremaSwader*

Third Place – Color - Waterscapes, seascapes, waterfalls, etc. *"Hamnoy" – By DremaSwader*

This and That
By Clark Winsor

August is here, and now we're on the downhill side of 2016. If you haven't seen the "*Best of Nature*" images at the Museum of Natural History, I strongly recommend that you do. If you attend on the first Tuesday in August you can enter for free. The winning images are displayed on the fourth floor. Jo and I took the elevator to the fourth floor. It's a beautiful location for displaying. The pictures are framed and well-presented; and the lighting (daylight) is great.

I can't say that about our county fair. There were about 1200 images stuffed in a large room on the second floor of the east grandstand building, backing up to the racetrack stadium sitting areas. The lighting is absolutely awful. There is a glare from the overhead lights that almost stops one from getting any sort of appreciation of some of the work displayed.

There are images on every available inch of wall space. The center sections have portable display walls. These run down the center of the room. To get from the front wall to the back wall, you have to walk between the portable displays. There will be times when the displayed images will be to your left side, your right side and directly behind you.

The portable displays have (16x20 mounted) pictures hung from about from knee high to almost eight feet high. There are so many images and so many categories that it just wears you out trying to see them all. Also, I personally have yet to understand how 5x7 sized images displayed on 16x20 mounts could win anything, but they do.

All this is not to say that there are not good pictures in the exhibition. There are some truly excellent ones, as you can see in this issue. It's just a shame that their presentation and display at the fair doesn't live up to the quality of the images themselves.

Talk to you next month,
Clark

**Perils of Being a
Nature Photographer**
(Part 3)

The Photoshop Insider
By Jeff Booher

Transforming a Selection

The Transform Selection command can be used to reshape a selection methodically on a pixel level to get a more accurate selection. Some selections can be tough to make accurately--especially around something that does not have a high-contrast edge or enough detail to use one of the smart edge detection tools like Quick Select or Magic Wand. This is especially true for the elliptical marquee tool--that thing is just persnickety as all get-out.
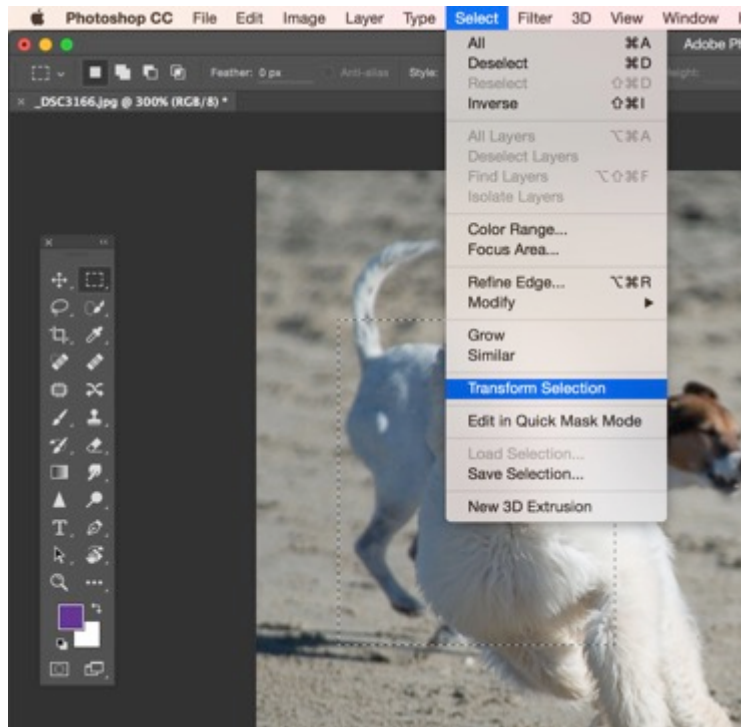
In this basic example I started with a rectangular marquee tool and drew a selection around my subject. Then I chose "Transform Selection" from the "Select" menu.

Now, I get drag handles around the selection that I can use to change the shape of the selection.

This is great because, if my selection is off by a few pixels, I don't have to clear the selection and grab the missed pixels the next time I make the selection which is error prone.

I *could* add and remove marquees to my selection to match my subject, but just transforming the selection is much faster. It is also the only I can get a elliptical marquee exactly where I want it without pulling the rest of my hair out.

Before we jump into the elliptical marquee example, though, let's look at the command bar for the transform tool because there are quite a few options there and some of them are not so obvious.

When we invoke these commands in conjunction with the Transform Selection command, the result is applied to the selection marquee.

|	
	Centerpoint selection. This is only useful if you plan to rotate the selection because this will determine where the centerpoint is when rotating the selection marquee. You use this in conjunction with the Rotate Selection tool.
△	Delta toggle. This toggles between toggling a pixel offset and a pixel actual. This is useful if you just want to nudge the marquee a few pixels to the left or right, up or down or want to specify the actual marquee coordinates. A negative value will nudge the opposite direction. Before nudging, though, you need to switch the Height/Width units to pixels by right clicking on the "%" symbol and selecting "pixels". You need to compensate the height and width when you nudge the marquee's position. Changing the units to pixels instead of percentages will allow you to do this predictably. It will also let you nudge the height/width.
∞	Lock aspect ratio. If this option is checked then nudging the height will also nudge the width so you should uncheck this option.
∡	Rotate selection. I would much rather just warp the selection into place. There isn't much use for rotating a selection.
	Warp Selection. I'll show this later–it can be very useful.

You can do anything to transform a selection that you can do to transform an image. You are in "Free Transform" by default but right clicking on the selection marquee will show the standard transform menu.

Perspective, Skew and Distort can be used here if you have a marquee on an image that is askew or out of perspective.

You can use warp to shape a selection around odd shapes. We will see this later on.

The other items on this menu are not that useful.

Use the checkmark button or the enter key to commit your transform changes and return back to normal selection mode. The Escape key will cancel the changes.
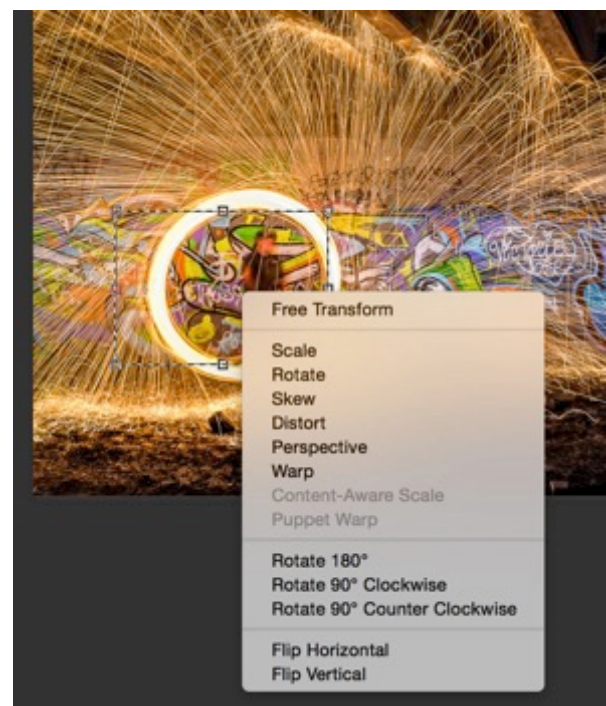
Just as when cropping or transforming an image, certain commands are nonfunctional such as opening another image.

With the elliptical marquee, it is impossible to get the selection exactly where you want it so you have to transform the selection after the fact and move it around to get it just right.

Here's a practical example of using the warp tool. I wanted to get a selection inside of the steel wool loop.

I started with an elliptical marquee as close to where I needed it then used the transform tool to refine the selection; nudging it and sizing it to get it closer to where I wanted.

Finally, I used the warp tool to refine the shape of the selection so the marquee just touches the inner edge of the loop.

The resulting selection after warping and transforming with a 10px feather.

I think this is a little cleaner than some other methods and it's a new tool in the toolshed. Is it toolshed or toolbox? Anyway, give it a whirl and play around with it.

As the great Stephen Burns always says--the secret to Photoshop is mastering selections...

This month's ProTip: use the up/down arrow keys with the input focus in an numeric input text box to increase/decrease the numeric value.

Use the Command or Ctrl modifier key to increase the rate.

Programs and Coming Events
Sue Cerise & Barbara Fletcher

August 6 - Competition
August's Project Theme is "Street Life"

Our judge for this month will be **Debbie Beals.**

Debbie has had her greatest successes in photographing nature subjects, and has told us a little about herself.

"Photography is another challenging art form for me, and a chance to get away from the hectic world, get out, and explore.

My Dad was the photographer of the family, along with my Grandfather, who was completely into his camera clubs in Indiana. When he came to town, he made movies and stills like crazy. He could do anything. Somehow I wanted to try this, and worked really hard to sell the most peanuts in third grade to win a tiny camera. I took a black and white class in college, and read a ton of books just like many of us have.

A little over 5 years ago, I bought my first digital as a "back-up." (*smile*) I learned about Photography clubs and joined both Darkroomers and PhotoNaturalists in the same week, wanting to learn as much as possible and shoot with others. My first time, I was really intimidated to walk in the door; and then was awed by the amazing photos on the wall. I thought, "Wow I wonder if I could do that?" I did not know if I could, but I was going to have fun trying. My neighbors used to laugh at me laying on the driveway shooting an apple on a nail, crystal and all sorts of weird things. I think they still do when I am laying on the grass to shoot a dandelion.

Clubs have been the best things for me, and the worst things for my bank account (giggle). I have had the pleasure of meeting the most intelligent, well rounded, nice people in the world.

Capturing details and color are my passion. To see things I did not catch with the naked eye is completely fascinating! I have learned a ton, and have only scratched the surface. My personal challenge is to get it right in camera. Thinking constantly of the best background, angle, settings, etc. Also, I have little time to edit, let alone mess a lot with Photoshop. I can't wait to make the time to experiment with a l-o-n-g list of waiting subjects, which will take me more than a lifetime.

All we do as photographers may help keep our brains young. (*smile*) I love to shoot everything and anything, but especially anything that flies or moves, because the challenge is on.

It is a great honor to be asked to judge, I am not worthy, but will give you my best in this continued learning process. Not one good picture is easy, and to make it great takes that little extra something that may take years to get. Your club has wonderful photos and it is always a pleasure to see them in Interclub.

Looking forward to seeing you. Thanks for your time."

August 20 – Travel Photo Book Workshop – PAB
With Nick Agelidis

Nick has been an avid traveler from an early age and has lived in Australia, England, US, Holland and France. His extensive travels have given him many opportunities to indulge his photographic interests, but his retirement a few years ago has really allowed him to focus more seriously on his photography.

Nick's book, *La Jolla: A Photographic Journey,* has been published recently by Sunbelt Publications.

Nick will discuss his photography, and how he goes about planning his photo trips and creating his books, using examples from his La Jolla book and other self-published books of Italy, China and India. He will cover some of the technical and aesthetic choices involved in turning a collection of images into an interesting and coherent book.

Programs and Coming Events
(continued)

Paul and Leslie Shilling are participating with their Photographic and Jewelry Art in "*Art Walk*" this this year. As many of you know this is one of the best all media shows in town. It's a great place to see many different kinds of artistic works to get fresh inspiration for your Photography. It's at Liberty Station – the details are below.

ArtWalk @ Liberty Station, 2016
11th Annual Fine Art Festival: August 13 & 14, 2016
Saturday Hours: 10am to 6pm
Sunday Hours: 10am to 5pm

In 2016, ArtWalk @ Liberty Station celebrates 11 years of bringing visual arts, music, and interactive art-making for families to San Diego in beautiful Ingram Plaza at the Arts District at LIberty Station. The Arts District at LIberty Station t has blossomed into San Diego's premier venue for the arts, museums, dining and entertainment. The beautiful outdoor setting, surrounding a picturesque rose garden, is flat, grassy, and easily accessible for both artists and attendees. ArtWalk @ Liberty Station also features a shaded wine and beer pavilion and a street food area.

Location: Arts District at Liberty Station in Ingram Plaza:
2645 Historic Decatur, San Diego, CA 92106 (corner of Historic Decatur and Roosevelt Road)