

Newsletter, April 2020



Coronavirus

Photography in a time of pandemic

Coronavirus has hit us like a sledgehammer, changing our everyday lives in unimaginable ways. Worldwide, photographers – amateur and professional – have been quick off mark in using their passion and skills to document this monumental time in history.

For example, Reuters' photographer Fabrizio Bensch has documented Berlin before and after the Coronavirus lockdown, contrasting the bustling cityscape with its lockdown equivalent (click [here](#)).

National Geographic asked seven of its home-bound photographers to document their thoughts, feelings and capture some images about their situations. Their responses are



Maria Mazuchova: *Cure*. "By this picture I would like to express my hopes that we as human race will judge harshly, and turn away from all the freaking fake our hearts were confused into. God bless all good people," [500px](#).

tender, quirky, joyful and even funny (click [here](#)).

In the Upper Blue Mountains, the pace of life perhaps isn't too different than normal but the streets are much emptier, the visitors are gone and the general buzz of the place has been reduced to a low hum.

Of huge concern is the number of professional photographers in the Blue Mountains – our family members, friends, judges, guest speakers – whose livelihoods have been crushed by the shutdown caused by the pandemic. This is compounded by coming hot on the heels of a hellish bushfire summer.

Nonetheless, the Covid-19 crisis

does (perversely) offer opportunities for photographers who aren't struggling to make a living in the industry. In response, clubs like ours are being nimble and innovative, for example by moving exhibition nights and competitions online (see the April members' choice results of the still-life challenge on pages 4–7).

Hopefully members will be taking more photographs and the exhibition nights will grow exponentially.

The club held its inaugural virtual pub night on April 22 using the online meeting platform, Zoom. The drinks were cheaper online, too!

Zoom is being used to hold the next exhibition night on May 6. Full details about joining online meetings are on the club's website (click [here](#)).

Many competitions have been moved online, using social media such as Facebook and Flickr and some specific Covid-19 competitions have sprung up already, including one called 2020Isolation, the brainchild of Terrigal landscape photographer

Glenn McKimmin (click [here](#) to enter).

The Federation of Camera Clubs (NSW) has a great checklist of ways to use this lockdown period to good benefit, including:

- Brush up on your macro and still life photography, if you are staying indoors for much of the time.
- Portraiture is another no-brainer, if you can persuade family members, including pets, to pose for you and, better still, get creative with costumes and settings. Self-portraits are another challenge and a good chance to hone your tripod, timer-release and lighting skills.
- Landscape photography is perhaps easier with fewer people around. Autumn is in full throttle and the firegrounds are looking spectacular, with regeneration happening fast.
- Street photography is a real opportunity; the strangeness of so few people around and the social distancing measures they are adhering to. When did you last see your main street almost empty of people and cars?
- Time to sort your files and



Koen Jacobs: Corona Walks 4/... "Instead of worrying, let's enjoy the times we are together." ([Flickr](#)).

folders, and maybe even a proper archiving of all your work.

- Clean your equipment. You always say you'll do it, now's your chance.
- Time to upskill and learn new

Nikon is offering all their courses for free until the end of April (click [here](#))

techniques. All manner of online courses are being offered at no cost, as a quick internet search will show.

- Get better acquainted with the software packages you use – Lightroom, Photoshop, Photos – using some of the excellent online tutorials.
- Share your shots and get feedback on your work. Sites like Flickr, 500px and Instagram are great places to have your work appraised, and to look at others' for tips.

Photography is a great form of therapy, something we all need a good dollop of in this challenging time. Using our cameras, we can view the world a bit more objectively; tap into our creativity and express our thoughts and feelings in a safe environment; pay more attention to the world around



There was no Easter Parade in New York this year, so to mark the event the New York Times published a series of images from previous years taken by street fashion photographer the late Bill Cunningham (click [here](#)).

April Still Life Judges' Choice – "Faithful Spirit"



Sunflowers symbolise adoration, loyalty and longevity and, for some, faith. So given a still life theme and autumn I decided to work up a life, faith/spirituality and longevity/mortality theme.

We grow Giant Russian (*Helianthus annuus*) in our garden. They grow 2-3m in height with large flower heads up to 45cm in diameter - a perfect still life subject.

Using two old artefacts at home and a slurp of alcohol I wanted to represent and play on the notion of spirit, faith and longevity/life cycle (corny some would say!). But not being a natural to still life photography the best I could do.

I was also keen to use natural light from outside. It was much tougher than I thought and this is one of dozens of attempts.

Black card backdrop, a dilapidated and very old bible and an old port glass. Tripod of course, and a Sony Alpha 6000 with 55-210 zoom and a remote control.

Andy Horsfall

Highly Commended – “Beer O’clock”

In the light of the current situation, photographing at home is becoming one of the most popular home activities. It is also one of the most rewarding types of photography.

This photograph was taken in a semi-dark room to create depth in the black background. This contrasts so well with the warm ambient light.

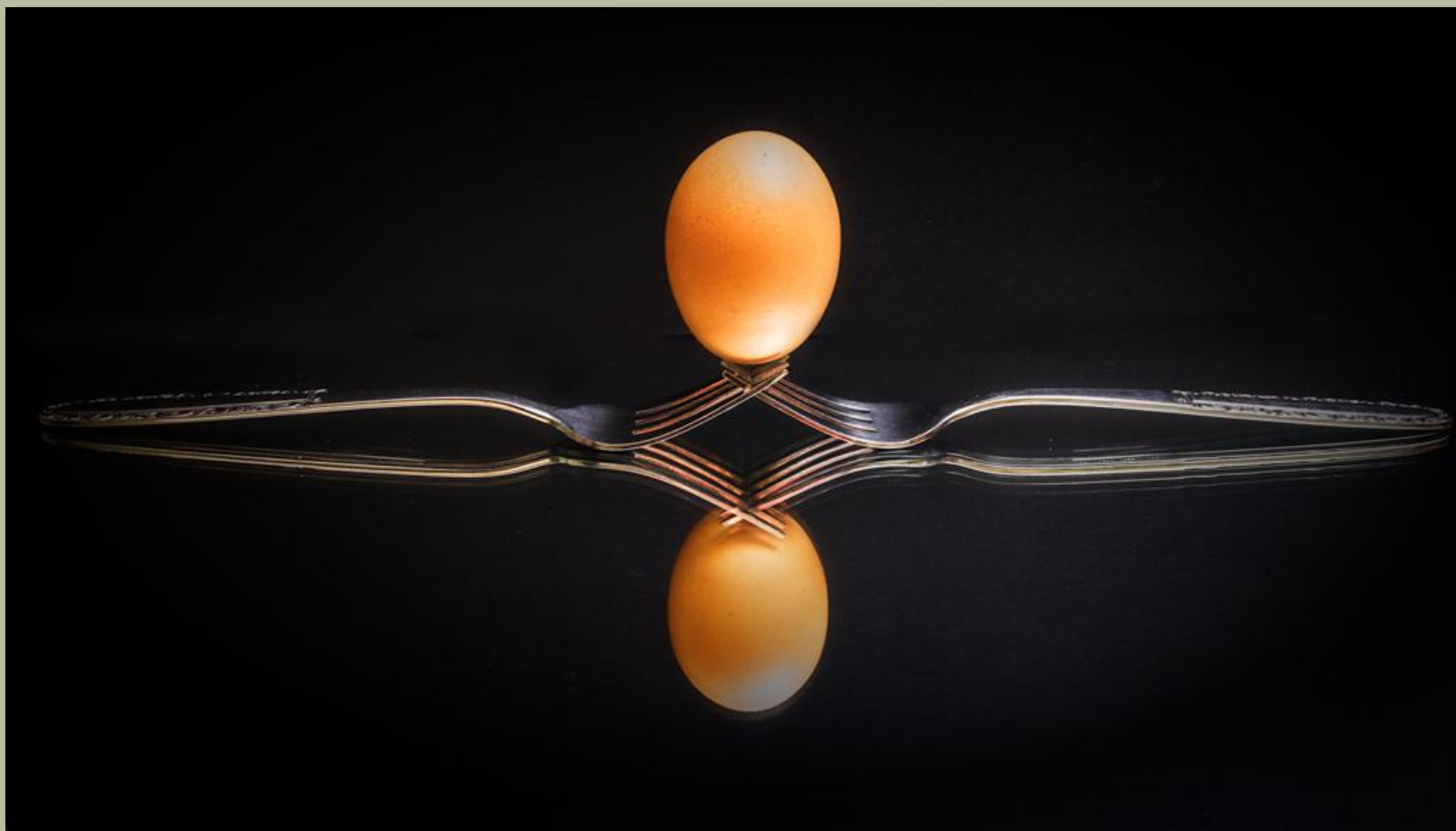
Once the composition was set up, an off-camera flash was positioned on the right side of the table with the golden reflector on the left side to bounce the light into the scene.

Camera exposure was at 1/13s, and the flash fired at approximately 1/2000s. This type of “double exposure” generates some of the most beautiful ambient lights. There was not a lot of post processing needed for this shot.

Andrzej Krawzyck



Highly Commended – “Balancing Act”



Using a fresh egg and our ‘good’ cutlery I set up this shot with a large mirror and black cardboard background. I chose the egg because of its shape and how the light would show on its curved

surface. The challenge was then to add lighting.

As I don’t have studio lights I decided to bounce my off-camera flash off our white ceiling - giving a fairly wide spread of light from

above the subject. I balanced this light with an LED video light set on ‘warm’ white and at low angle and 45° to the subject.

Getting the balance of lighting took a number of trials, adjusting

exposure time to allow the ‘side light’ to be the key light.

Another aspect I was trying to avoid was having distracting bright spots on the subject. To achieve this I further diffused the video light using a couple of paper towels.

To process I used Photoshop (CS6) along with Luminar 4 plugin to slightly reduce exposure and enhance colour. A dark vignette was added to further highlight the centre.

Nikon D7100, Sigma 17-70mm *f*2.8 @46mm, Yongnuo Speedlight mounted on a basic light stand at

1.5m (bounce flash), Viltrox L116T - LED adjustable video light with paper towel diffuser.

Greg Wood

Highly Commended – “Books and Roses”



There is just something about the inherent beauty of roses. Each colour offers a distinct meaning; each colour and object represent something unique.

Red: the lover's rose; white: humility and innocence; yellow: an expression of friendship and joy; pink: gratitude, appreciation and admiration; orange: enthusiasm and desire; light lilac and purple: enchantment, and love at first sight.

We like to grow roses in our garden and we like to photograph them wherever we can.

In this very beautiful flower composition, the wide variety of colours, shapes and patterns provide elegance, beauty and drama all at the same time.

Andrzej Krawzyck

Diary

2020Isolation

Central Coast professional landscape photographer Glenn McKimmin has created a photographic competition in response to the challenges the photography industry confronts with Covid-19.

All the big-ticket and bread-and-butter events have been cancelled, and for how long no one knows: weddings, sport, tourism, real estate sales, to name but a few.

Most club members probably don't derive much of their income from photography but a substantial number of our guest judges and speakers do, and they must be doing it very tough.

"Industries, business and all of humanity are struggling through the Covid-19 Pandemic," McKimmin told Australian Photography. "My hope is that through photography we can all unite and document this era of humanity. For anyone that loves to take photos this is an opportunity for us to collectively unite and use the power of photography to

document this part of our collective history."

For details on entering the competition click [here](#). There's a short video there, too. If you're an Instagrammer, you can see some early works [here](#).

Entries close on 30 May.

Liz Morgan

Keep on clicking and Zooming in!

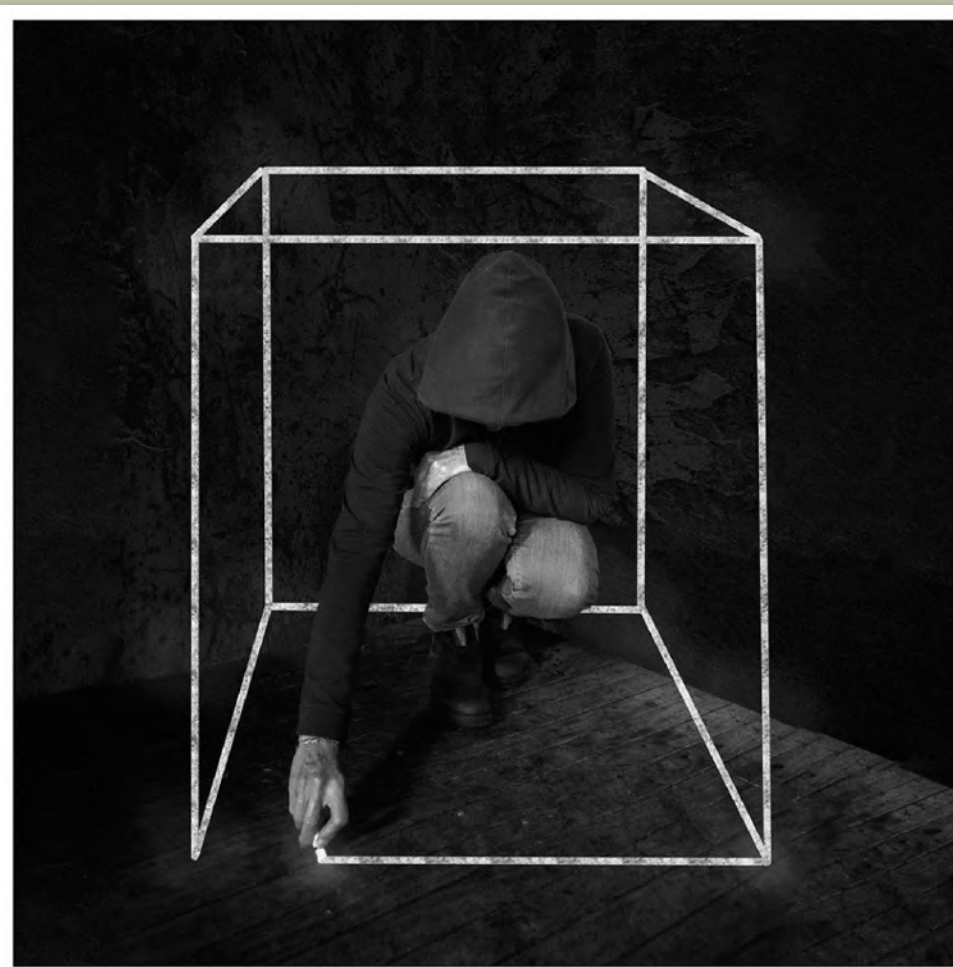
The club will meet online while Covid-19 restrictions are in place, and until it is safe to hold our meetings in person.

At this stage, the **Exhibition Night on 6 May** will be held using Zoom.

You will have received some emails already about Zoom, from Alan Daniel and Greg Wood, so the best thing is to keep your eyes peeled for more updates and how-tos.

Like coronavirus, this is a rapidly changing situation but we've already shown we can handle it!

April's online exhibition on the Still Life theme was a roaring success, with a high calibre of contributions.



Dani Watson: *Confinement*. One of the entries for 2020Isolation, on [Instagram](#).

If you haven't seen the images, they're available through the club's website (click [here](#)) and on Flickr (click [here](#)).

Liz Morgan

Pentaxians Yearbook

The PDF version of the latest yearbook (2019) is now available to download free from [here](#).

WWW

No family is an island A helping hand

A South Australian photographer whose bread-and-butter work has collapsed because of coronavirus – she makes a living photographing weddings, newborns and doing family portraits – is using her professional skills to keep people connected, the ABC reports.

Whyalla local Amy Quist came up with the idea of *The Front Door Project*, in which she photographs families outside their houses (from a safe distance, of course). One couple in their 80s hadn't stepped outside the front door for weeks and were glad to see another human face, and get a free portrait into the bargain.

"I've had mums come out with a crying child and a glass of wine in hand ... and a family who were celebrating their dad's 60th from a distance, holding a sign with some balloons," Quist told the ABC. The Middleback Arts Centre is offering to hold an exhibition of Quist's portraits when physical distancing orders are relaxed. More [here](#).

Professional Photographers of America has a big heart. It is offering all kinds of support and information to photographers in the US, and worldwide, during the Covid-19 pandemic under the banner "We're In This Together".

Until the end of May, PPA is unlocking all its online education to anyone, anywhere – a not-to-be-sneezed-at collection of more than 1,000 classes. All you need to do is register online (click [here](#)).

You'll need to rummage around to find material that might be of use to you but, as the saying goes, never look a gift horse in the mouth.

Kids and cameras

It's hard educating and entertaining children during the coronavirus lockdown but it's also an opportunity for youngsters to learn a new skill.

A momtographer (yes, it's a bit cheesy; it's an American site) blog



Dino Steiner: *Little photographer*, on [Instagram](#).

called *Click It Up A Notch* has some great information for getting young ones thinking about, and practising photography – and it can all be done indoors, or in restricted outdoor settings. Parents and grandparents

can give it a shot and the newsletter would love to see some of the results. Perhaps we can even run an online competition? Click [here](#) for some ideas.

Liz Morgan

Tell Auntie

The BBC in the UK (affectionately known as Auntie) wants to see your photographs of Covid lockdown, too.

The theme for the next deadline (**5 May**) is “View from my window”.

Now, some of us in the Upper Blue Mountains have quite spectacular views from our windows, so what are we waiting for?

Details of how to enter [here](#).

Liz Morgan

Fine Art Photographer of the Year

Launched in 2014 and now one of the largest photographic award giving bodies, Fine Art Photography Awards aims ambitiously to be “a melting pot for people where passion, interest, sense of beauty and openness to diversity in photography collide in intergalactic proportions” (click [here](#)).

The awards cover 20 categories – from Abstract to Animals/Wildlife – in both professional and amateur divisions and for single images as

well as series, and there are overall grand prize winners, also in professional and amateur divisions.

This year Ewa Cwikla (below) was awarded Professional Fine Art Photographer of the Year for her portrait *Candy smoke* (right).



Based in the Netherlands Ewa has been a portrait photographer since 1986, starting her own company Ewa Foto's in 1996. She has collected many prestigious awards for her work which frequently involves models dressed, lit and staged in a manner suggestive of the Old Masters.

More of her exquisite work can be viewed on her website [here](#), and also on [Flickr](#) and [500px](#).

Michael Peck



Ewa Cwikla: *Candy smoke*.

Be careful out there!



Frank Quax: *The bait*, on [500px](#).

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Submitting images



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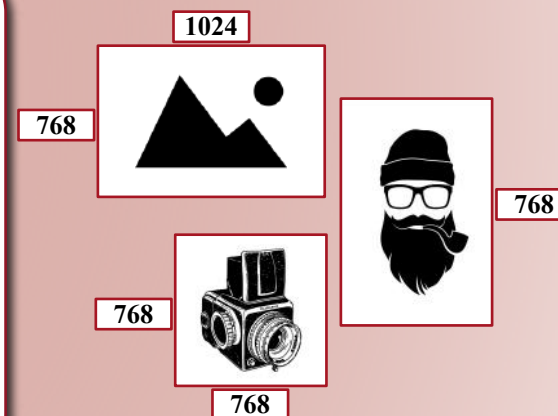
Image Size: Actual Size 

Whether submitting a DPI or digital images of your prints the required format to match the projector is a **maxium width** of 1024 and a **maximum height** of 768 pixels.

For a **landscape** image, set the longest side to 1024 ensuring shortest is no more than 768; for **portrait**, set the longest side to 768, and for a **square** image, all sides are 768.

Please name your image file in the following format: **[type] title_initials.jpg** e.g. [DPI] Womblings_JX.jpg.

The three image types are [DPI], [CP] and [MP]. Use an underscore, not a dash



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