

The First PSA Portfolio Assessment

From June 16 to 19, 2016, a team of volunteers conducted the first PSA Portfolio Distinctions Assessment in Costa Mesa, CA. **John M. Davis, Jr., HonPSA, PPSA**, coordinated the Assessment and the Assessor selection, and served as Moderator. **Joanne Stolte, FPSA, MPSA, EFIAP**, coordinated the site and logistics for the Assessment, read the Statements of Intent, and called the scores. The Assessors were **Louis Duncan, APSA, PPSA**; **Gerry Emmerich, HonPSA, GMPSA**; **Jon Fishback, APSA**; **Erik Rosengren, APSA, PPSA**; and **Jill Sneesby, MFIAP, ESFIAP, HonMPSSA**. **Nan Carder, APSA, MPSA**, served as Scribe.

For a five-month period prior to the Assessment, the five Assessors and five standby Assessors completed the nine lessons of the Assessor Training program developed and administered by Jon Fishback. Jill Sneesby directs the new PSA Portfolio Distinctions Program and Chairs the Portfolio Distinctions Committee.

The PSA Portfolio Distinctions are given for a body of work, digital or print, which reflects a photographer's photographic interest and personal style. A portfolio includes three sections.

- **Statement of Intent:** A Portfolio must have a central theme that is evident in the brief, concise (no more than 75 words) Statement of Intent that explains the purpose, objective, or intention of the author in presenting this work. The author's name, camera or lens information, other personal information, or the title of the Portfolio may not appear anywhere in the Statement of Intent. A separate space is provided for the title (up to five words) of the Portfolio.

- **Overview Image:** The Overview Image provides the overall layout to view the Portfolio while listening to the Statement of Intent, and the sequence that the individual images in the Portfolio are to be viewed. The Overview Image needs to be compositionally pleasing, have color and tonal balance, and be cohesive, consistent, balanced,

and have symmetry. The finished overview image should be a beautiful picture, one that might even hang on a wall by itself. The author's name, Portfolio Title, Image Titles, or Image Numbers may not appear anywhere on the Overview Image. See the examples on pages 40 and 41.

- **Images** (digital or print): Each image should demonstrate variety and not be too similar to any other. Ten images are required for the first level (Bronze - BPSA), fifteen are required for the second level (Silver - SPSA), and twenty images are required for the third level (Gold - GPSA). Prints must be prepared by the entrant; commercially prepared prints are not eligible. The author's name may not appear anywhere on the projected image or print.

A BPSA (Bronze) Portfolio of ten images can have an Overview Image layout of five images in the first row and five images in the second row. However, if it provides cohesion, consistency, balance, and symmetry, it could have three images in the top row, three images in the second row, and four images in the bottom row or any combination all based on the balance and consistency of form, size, color, tonality, subject, etc., that the overall layout provides.

A SPSA (Silver) Portfolio of fifteen images could have a layout of five images in each of three rows; however, a layout of four images in the top row, five images in the second row, and six images in the third or bottom row that portray a cohesive, consistent, balanced, and symmetrical set of images is a possibility. Similarly, three images

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Digital Portfolio Assessment. Photo © **Joanne Stolte, FPSA, MPSA, EFIAP**



Print Portfolio Assessment.
Photo © **Nan Carder, APSA, MPSA**

could be in the top row with six images in the second and bottom rows.

For this first Assessment, Portfolios were submitted and assessed for the first two levels (Bronze and Silver). Entrants selected ten or fifteen of their images making sure that they work together as one piece – a portfolio. Portfolios already submitted to another photo organization for similar recognition are not eligible.

Sixty-one (61) Portfolios were received for this first Assessment. Five were Print Portfolios, three for the Level One (Bronze-BPSA) Portfolio Distinction and two for the Level Two (Silver-SPSA), of which one Level Two Print Portfolio was approved. Of the fifty-six (56) digital Portfolios submitted, thirty (30) were for the Level One (Bronze-BPSA) Portfolio Distinction and twenty-six (26) were for the Level Two (Silver-SPSA) Portfolio Distinction. Six (6) of the twenty-six Level One and nine (9) of the thirty Level Two Digital Portfolios were approved. This means that 26.2% of the Portfolios submitted were approved.

The Print Portfolios were assessed first, beginning with the Bronze and continuing with the Silver Portfolios. The digital Portfolios were then assessed, beginning with the Bronze and continuing with the Silver Portfolios.

Initially, the Assessors stood on a platform to view the prints presented as the maker specified in their Overview Image while the maker's Statement of Intent was read. If the Assessors wished, the Statement of Intent was read again. The Assessors then viewed each print as it was passed through a Light Box. At this time, without discussion, the five Assessors scored the Overview of that Portfolio's Prints and the Statement of Intent, one for "In" and zero for "Out," using a new

scoring system purchased for the PSA Portfolio Assessments. The score was called and, based on the score, a discussion was conducted among the Assessors and any Assessor could request to change their score. Each print was then placed in the Light Box, scored, the score called, a discussion among the Assessors was conducted, and Assessors could change their score.

This process was then followed for the projected image Portfolios. The Assessors had laser pointers available and used them to call attention to concerns they had with an image during the discussion phase.

If a final score for the Overview Image or any individual image was three, four, or five; the image was successful and the maker received a "Credit" for this image in this Portfolio. If the score was a zero, one, or two; the image was not successful, the maker did not receive "Credit," and Assessors made constructive comments that were summarized by the Moderator and typed into the maker's feedback sheet by the Scribe.

Once all scores were confirmed and any comments completed, those Portfolios with the Overview Image and Statement of Intent and all images having Credit (a score of three or higher), were approved and received the Portfolio Distinction. Those Portfolios with the Overview Image and Statement of Intent and all images except one or two had Credit (a score of three or higher), were given "re-submit" status which means that the maker can replace those low scoring images (print or digital), re-submit this Portfolio in the next Portfolio Assessment at a reduced fee, and potentially receive the Distinction.

The Portfolio Assessment process is an educational one, not a "competition." Following the Assessment an email was sent to all applicants,

continued on page 41

Statement of Intent: Cowboys in Wyoming; Greg Duncan, EPSA, BPSA, ARPS

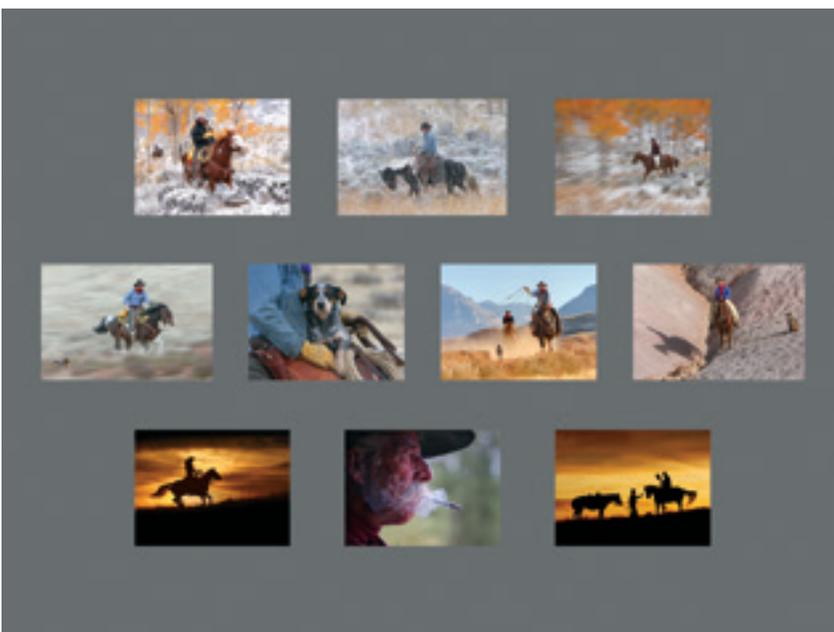
When photographing cowboys in Wyoming, I had an appreciation and understanding of the poem *With the Sun on My Back—A Cowboy's Tale*. I have included three stanzas as I feel they describe the theme and experience I want my pictures to portray.

*When the wind starts to blow and there's blizzard
and snow*

*And the cattle all need to be found
In spite of the cold we do what we're told
Though the snow is thick on the ground*

*With a dog and a horse I follow the course
That leads to the mountains and streams
For to be on my own yet not be alone
Is enough to fill up my dreams*

*At the end of the day when the sun's going away
And I'm warming my hands by the fire
I haven't a care, for I'll go anywhere
As a cowboy looking for hire.*



Overview Image: *Cowboys in Wyoming* © Greg Duncan, EPSA, BPSA, ARPS

with a link to the Portfolio website where suggestions for improvement were available for all those images that were not successful. Successful applicants have been able to use the PSA Portfolio acronyms after their name since they received the email notifying them that their application was approved.

At the conclusion of this first Portfolio Assessment the team enjoyed dinner together and the Assessors and Scribe were presented with certificates thanking them for their service.

At the PSA Conference in San Antonio, TX, from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 14th, *Portfolio Distinctions—A New Way Forward*, an overview of the PSA Portfolio program will be presented including: **“Creating a Portfolio Overview Image,”** by Joanne Stolte; **“Preparing a Portfolio Statement of Intent,”** by John Davis; and **“How a PSA Portfolio Assessment is Conducted,”** by Jill Sneesby.

From 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 15th, the sixteen successful PSA Portfolios will be presented by the Portfolio Distinctions Director, Jill Sneesby, and first **Portfolio Distinction Certificates will be presented** to the recipients in attendance.

A Portfolio Workshop will be held on Saturday, September 17th, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., with a question and answer session; and individual guidance and consultation by Jill Sneesby, John Davis, and Joanne Stolte for PSA members who bring Overview Images, Statements of Intent, and/or Portfolios that they are developing on a Travel Drive. A Sign-up Sheet for the Consultations will be available in the Conference Registration area.



Assessors Received Certificates.
Photo © Nan Carder, APSA, MPSA

Jon Fishback has prepared a new online course **“Creating Portfolios for Assessment”** that is accessible via log-in to MyPSA on the PSA website. The course includes: crafting the Portfolio theme, fashioning the Overview Image, and forming the Statement of Intent. The course is designed to be completed in two months, at a speed that is comfortable for the member.

For more information: <http://psa-photo.org/index.php?portfolios>. The next PSA Portfolio Assessment is planned for January 2017 in Florida.



Overview Image: *Hafen City Impressions* © Heiko Roemisch, MPSA, SPSA

Statement of Intent: HafenCity Impressions; Heiko Roemisch, MPSA, SPSA

For my project I photographed impressions of architectural details during the process of the development of HafenCity in Hamburg.

Through extensive image processing, these images are being contrasted and put in a rather abstract context, with photos I took of different historical buildings or exceptional details of constructional structures in different parts of Hamburg.

During the image processing, I used different modes of false color photography and techniques of overlapping. The goal was to keep the reference to the original, individual photos as apparent as possible, in such a way, that the architecture or view of the original building is still recognizable.



Overview Image: *Winter in Door County, Wisconsin* © Maria Rakoczy, BPSA

Statement of Intent: Winter in Door County, Wisconsin; Marie Rakoczy, BPSA

Door County, Wisconsin is a peninsula that juts out into Lake Michigan. My favorite time to photograph here is winter, and monochrome images best capture of the detail of ice and snow.

Nature shows winter's power and beauty with mighty shoves of ice and delicate arrangements of icicles. The lakeside marinas wear coats of ice, and the fishing boats are sidelined for the season. In the countryside, the quaint buildings are enhanced by a covering of snow.