



Photographic Alliance of America (PAA)

By Joanne Stolte, HonPSA, MPSA, EFIAP

President, Photographic Alliance of America • FIAP Liaison Officer for the United States of America

MFIAP: Master Photographer of FIAP

The highest award that FIAP can bestow for photographic merit and, with conditions, is open to those who have held the EFIAP distinction for a minimum of three years, is the Master Photographer of FIAP (MFIAP). An MFIAP application requires a themed portfolio of twenty (20) prints to the most exacting standards, numbered 1 to 20 and measuring 30 X 40cm, which are assessed by the FIAP Board.

Only two photographers in the USA have received the MFIAP Distinction. Bela Kalman was awarded the MFIAP in 1983 and has since passed away. **Mohammad Ali Salim, GMPSA, GPSA**, of East Elmhurst, NY, earned the MFIAP in 2013 with a portfolio titled *New York City's Graffiti*. Mohammad Ali Salim serves on the PAA Executive Committee and is the person who consults with PAA members to help them create an appropriate portfolio and learn the procedure to apply for a MFIAP.

In addition to the portfolio prints, candidates for the MFIAP must submit: MFIAP Dossier Page A signed by Liaison Officer; applicant signed MFIAP Dossier "Declaration of Consent and Responsibility" Page B; MFIAP Dossier Page C with an introductory text that describes the portfolio subject and the creative concept of the photographic artist, and a curriculum vitae; a CD-ROM with the digital version of the collection for FIAP to reproduce the prints if needed; and the application fee.

MFIAP Dossier Page A

MFIAP Dossier Page C

MFIAP Submission Introductory Text by Mohammad Ali Salim

"New York City's Graffiti" *In this body of work, I chose to examine the interaction of the people in New York City's community with public graffiti art installations. Graffiti has evolved into a widely accepted art form that is deeply woven into the threads of New York City's community. Unlike traditional exhibits, graffiti installations are displayed in public areas where members of the community can choose to either briefly glance or pause and observe and even connect with the artwork as they proceed throughout their daily tasks.*

Characteristic of many urban metropolises, early works of graffiti were seen as a sign of competitive vandalism. Artists would often "tag" buildings and landmarks to show their presence in some communities, while others were competing to see who can mark more frequently and harder to reach or even dangerous parts of some buildings as a symbol of personal accomplishment.

This feeling of competition and accomplishment has been sublimated to a widely recognized art form that is well received by the local community. With enthusiastic permission from either the local government or private property owners, artists are allotted wall space on the exterior of public buildings, or even entire public spaces, to create and openly share their works.

The people of the community have incorporated these ephemeral installations as a part of their daily lives as they chose to either just briefly look, or to linger and take in the artwork while passing by and then continuing onto

their destination and daily routine. Some people even choose to take a short break and pass time in these areas to read, reflect, and have a cigarette or a cup of coffee. The vivid colors and unique style bring delight to the viewers, creating a sense of community bonding.

The graffiti artists themselves all come from different backgrounds, reflecting the community within New York City. They work on equal terms, of mutual respect for their fellow artists and neighbors. Artists strive to achieve their personal best when they create fantastic murals along public sidewalks for everyone to appreciate and enjoy.



For information regarding the Photographic Alliance of America (PAA): <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?paa>, and follow PAA on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Photographic-Alliance-of-America-1986883941590941/>.