

Salons, Exhibitions and Moving Goalposts ! A Project by Geof Longstaff

This is a tale of a salon acceptance 'project' but one where the goalposts keep getting moved - but you'll need to read on to discover by whom !

Let's start in the distant past. At the start of the 1990s, having been in Falkirk Camera Club a few years by then, I had won a couple of internal competitions, including the Colour print of the Year in 1988, and decided to see how my work rated against the outside world. So I decided to enter a few Scottish photographic competitions – usually given titles such as Salon or International Exhibition. My early successes were acceptances (and 1 Honourable Mention for an image titled 'Two Chairs') in the now defunct Paisley International. In 1995, I gained my first Scottish Salon acceptance, followed in 1996, by my only acceptance to date in the Edinburgh International. Both these acceptances were also for Two Chairs. I had one final acceptance in 1997 in the Paisley and thereafter, for the next 15 years or so, I stopped entering competitions. 2014 saw me successfully re-enter the Scottish Salon but, generally speaking, my enthusiasm for Salons had gone.



Two Chairs

As an aside, and despite its three international acceptances, this image received a score of 12/20 from a renowned Scottish judge in a Club competition. His comment was that this "was better suited to a garden catalogue than a photographic competition".

You just can't please everyone!

However, in 2015, Nancy MacArthur and Eileen Sutherland started to enter the Scottish Salon and both were successful. Then, in 2016, they entered the Holland International 'Circuit' – this being a set of 5 separate salons where the entrant submits a set of PDI's which each salon forwards to the next. Nancy and Eileen both had some 14 acceptances in these salons and, such was their enthusiasm, they cajoled and convinced me to join the adventure again. So, in 2017, I successfully, in a limited way, dipped my toe into exhibition waters again, including acceptances in the Northern Counties Salon, my first outside of Scotland. Then along came 2018 and the return of the Holland biennial circuit. Encouraged by Nancy (Eileen having emigrated 'up north' to Forres), we both entered and gained some 26 acceptances between us. The bug was starting to bite.

Successful entries followed in Australia and India, as well as a couple more English exhibitions. Then, once again the motivation started to drop. I then tried to re-motivate myself by wondering if success could be had on all 7 continents of the globe – but I couldn't find any salons in Antarctica ! However I noticed that both the Indian and Australian Salons were endorsed by the Photographic Society of America (PSA). Investigating their web site revealed that they had 7 geographic regions (see Figure1) and that I had had acceptances in 4 of them – Indian subcontinent (India), British isles (England, Scotland), Europe (Holland) and Africa & Antipodes (Australia). My goal now was to gain acceptances in the remaining 3 and then to 'retire' from this 'bagging' game (think of Munro baggers ticking off peaks !).

PSA Regions pre-2019

Region #	Region Area	Constituent Countries
1	Balkans	Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia
2	Indian subcontinent	India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka
3	Europe	Europe (including Turkey & Cyprus) except Balkans and British Isles
4	Asia	All countries except Indian subcontinent
5	Americas	North and South America, associated territories, Caribbean
6	Africa & Antipodes	Africa, Australia, New Zealand
7	British Isles	England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey

Figure 1

All went well during 2019 with acceptances in the Americas (California) and Asia (China and also Singapore). This left only the Balkans to achieve my mission. So where was the final mission to be found ? Off to the PSA website and there it was - the Balkan Circuit 2019, closing in November. But what was this I see ? The PSA have suddenly changed their regions. There were now 16 ! (see Figure 2). The Americas had divided into 3 - USA East, USA West and USA NE with South America; Canada and the Caribbean staying as the Americas.; Serbia separated from the Balkans; China separated from Asia; and the Antipodes and Africa now separate entities. What's more there's an empty #11 and one, #15, is for 3D photography – not even a geographical region ! Talk about moving the goalposts !

New Regional Definitions and Changes Sept 2019

Region #	Region Area	Constituent Countries
1	Balkans	Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Slovenia (Serbia removed)
2	Indian subcontinent	India, Sri Lanka (Bangladesh moved to Asia)
3	Europe	Europe (including Turkey & Cyprus) except Balkans and British Isles
4	Asia	All countries except Indian subcontinent and China but includes Bangladesh (Bangladesh added)
5	USA West	USA West of Mississippi River (separate Region from Americas now)
6	Antipodes	Australia & New Zealand (separate Region from Africa now)
7	British Isles	England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey
8	Serbia	Serbia (now its own Region)
9	USA East	USA East of Mississippi except North East (separate Region from Americas now)
10	Americas	South America, Canada, Caribbean (no longer has North America included)
11		Unassigned (n/a to project)
12	Africa	Africa (now its own Region)
13	North Macedonia	North Macedonia (new Region)
14	USA NE	New England, New York, New Jersey (separate Region from Americas now)
15		3D Worldwide (n/a to project)
16	China	China (now its own Region)

No Change in this Region

Figure 2

Anyway, the Balkan Circuit gained me acceptances in Montenegro (tick retained for #1, the Balkans) and in Serbia (tick for #8). Looking into the detail of earlier acceptances revealed that China (#16) was achieved already and the Singapore salon had kept my qualification for Asia (#4) plus the Californian success gave me USA West (#5).

Do you ever wish that you'd not started something ? But I am a 'completer-finisher' (at least that's what I was regular assessed as during my working days) and the stubbornness kicked in here. So, before the end of 2019, I'd gained acceptances in New York (USA NE) and the PRILEP (North Macedonia) Salon.

Hence, as we entered 2020, I had still had USA East and the Americas to crack and these have now been achieved. The latter with acceptances in Argentina. Now just one 'real' territory was left to gain and that was Africa (3D will be ignored, as will the empty area 11). Unfortunately there didn't appear to be any competitions in Africa. So, patience was required – I just needed to keep checking the exhibitions website (more on this below).

Then, in March, the PSA did it AGAIN ! Another re-organisation ! This time filling the vacant #11 area with Bosnia and Herzegovina and creating area 17 by separating Sri Lanka from India (See Figure 3).

For those who know the novel Catch 22, this is akin to Yossarian achieving the number of missions flown to leave the war only to find that “ the powers that be ” have increased the missions target. And they repeat the move, time and again. Then, in April 2020, I was informed by the PSA UK representative that a competition was being held in Tanzania. So, a rare chance of a salon in the Africa Region.

New Regional Definitions and Changes March 2020

1	Balkans	Albania, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Slovenia (B&H removed)
2	India	India (Sri Lanka removed)
11	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina (previously in Balkans – Region1)
17	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka (Now a separate Region)

All other Regions are unchanged

Figure 3

However it was only 3 days till closing but a rapid collation of images and I made my entry on time. In May I received notice that I'd gained 3 acceptances.

So that leaves me only with Sri Lanka still to complete. Will I make it ? Who knows, but I'll keep trying and any success will be reported back. I do know that it will be a while because the only scheduled Sri Lankan salon has been postponed because of the coronavirus situation.

However this tale has, in this coronavirus situation, perhaps given you an idea for something to occupy your time. It is quite exciting to go through the process of finding a salon you fancy; collecting and submitting your images (always check the rules for image dimensions, file size etc); and then waiting for the judging and score cards. In some cases colour catalogues – either printed or online – are produced. Now one thing I know for certain, is that if I can get acceptances many of you can too. I'd go further and say that some of the images produced in this Club in recent seasons would be medal contenders – the best I've had is a few Honourable Mentions out of my 100+ acceptances..

Finally, if you want to find out where the PSA endorsed competitions are listed then go to <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?exhibitions-current-exhibition-list> .

Alternatively you may also want to consider competitions under the patronage of FIAP (Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique). FIAP is a worldwide equivalent to America's PSA. Their competitions can be found at <https://www.myfiap.net/patronages>.

Collect enough acceptance points, pay the fees and you could gain 'distinctions' like EFIAP or EPSA to add after your name – although not something that I am aiming for.

Above all it's another photographic challenge – and what else are you going to do under lock-down?

Now, where's that salon exhibition list

Footnote : If you want to see the history of salon successes (and much more) in FCC then visit the website and follow [Information](#) → [Records](#) → [Achievements](#) → [Individual Member Successes](#). Here you'll find information on where, when and what our Club members have achieved away from the meeting hall. This is regularly updated but needs you, the members, to feed me the information (including corrections and omissions !) on known achievement by yourself or other members. Hope to hear from you soon.

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