

# REFLECTIONS ON AN MPAGB PANEL

ROSS MCKELVEY MPAGB

**On 21 April in Birmingham, I was successful in achieving the MPAGB award at the latest Awards for Photographic Merit, organised by the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain. Rod Wheelans MPAGB MFIAP FRPS was the extremely witty and personable compère for the day (Editor – blushes), and the Midland Counties Federation hosted the event very efficiently.**

To apply for the coveted MPAGB award, you have to already hold the DPAGB. The DPAGB is judged to 'Open Exhibition' Standard over 15 prints, and I 'only just' achieved the award in Llanberris in November 2011 – beating the pass mark by a solitary point! The problem I faced, was that I only had experience of entering the NIPA Annual Exhibition (which is not an Open Exhibition) and I actually had little or no idea whether many of my prints would be accepted into Open Exhibitions or not.

Largely as a result of applying for the DPAGB, I became aware of the National and International Photographic Salons, and started entering – to see how I would get on. To my surprise and delight, success in Open Exhibitions came virtually straight away. In the space of 15 months I found myself with 35 Medals, including 5 FIAP Gold Medals, 2 FIAP Silver, and a host of PAGB and Salon Medals. On the British Photographic Exhibitions circuit, I have managed a total of 118 acceptances and 38 awards - which equates to an award for every 3.1 acceptances. All well and good, but what was next on the agenda?

A fellow photographer from the UK, Tim Pile, informed me that he was applying for the MPAGB this time around and suggested that I should do likewise. We both got our DPAGB award on the same day, and both of us had gone on to achieve some success in National and International Exhibitions.

The PAGB guidelines for an MPAGB Award include the following:-

*“The Adjudicators are looking for a very high standard of photography - images which in their opinion, would enjoy a considerable level of success in International Exhibitions, including consistent and frequent acceptances. Pictures do not require to have been entered or accepted previously in any International but must be of an exceptional standard. A large number of Exhibition acceptances indicates the probability of a high Adjudication score but does not guarantee it.”*

Unlike my earlier DPAGB application, at least I knew that my prints fulfilled the criteria. Virtually all of my prints had achieved 'consistent and frequent' acceptances into International Exhibitions, and several had achieved a handful of medals and awards. But it was now up to the 6 Judges to score them on the day. Household names like Gwen Charnock, Bob Moore, Roger Parry and Anne Greiner were amongst the Judges....

My most successful print 'Stephen' scored 28 points, and most of the Judges would probably have been aware of its success although, as the guidelines suggest, *“a large number of Exhibition acceptances indicates the probability of a high score, but does not guarantee it.”* Likewise the prints 'Subway Muscle' and 'Seana' – which scored 24 and 26 respectively. Both have numerous Gold and Silver medals.

What pleased me most was the consistency of my scores throughout the 20 prints. 3 prints scored 20, and 3 scored 21. The rest all scored 22 or above, and my final score was 457, the pass mark being 450. Tears were rolling down my face when it sunk in! I would like to thank everyone who has inspired and encouraged me along the way. All the camera clubs who have invited me to present or Judge at their Club meetings or exhibitions, personal friends and fellow photographers – you know who you all are!

**Ross has featured previously and you may have seen a selection of his pictures in e-news 88 (page4).**