

## Going for a Distinction

Well - are you?

For some time, the PAGB Distinctions have been perceived as being “easy”. People applied for either a C (10 prints “at good club standard”) a D (15 prints at a National standard) - and then the M (20 prints.)

My personal opinion is that the latter is of a “degree standard”, and only a very small number of people have been successful.

The PAGB eNews consistently publishes articles explaining how their Distinctions work. The purpose of this article is not to guide you through the process. Instead - I strongly recommend you subscribe to the eNews in your own right. It will arrive in your email box - and you will be able to keep abreast of all things PAGB. In the meantime, take a look at this -

<http://www.pagbnews.co.uk/sites/default/files/newsletters/en220%202014%20Dec%202018.pdf>

Again, in my personal opinion, there is a need for both the PAGB Distinctions, and the RPS ones. They are quite different - and neither one is ‘easy’. However, whichever discipline you choose, it is guaranteed that your standard of photography will improve. If you fail - take time, (when you’ve calmed down!) to ask for feedback - and then consider the points made, and assess why your work failed to reach the desired standard.

The path to whichever Distinction you choose is a steep and rocky one - and is expensive!

Here, in her own words, is Frances Underwood, (LRPS DPAGB AFIAP BPE2\*) of Dorchester Camera Club, recounting her journey to successfully gaining her ‘D’PAGB at the recent Pontefract Adjudications.

*FU: Following a talk at my camera club on Distinctions, I decided to try for an LRPS first of all. I'd thought about it for while, mainly to establish my credibility as a photographer. Difficulty with putting together a set of work was made a little easier by being mentored, and in 2013 I was successful.*

*As my images had done well at club level I had been encouraged to go for the CPAGB., and was delighted to achieve it at Maidstone in April 2014; my first application!*

*Now I had a problem! If I was to progress to the next level - how was I to improve on what was my best work?*

*I listened to speakers at my camera club, sourced online tutorials, experimented with different styles and signed up for workshops.*

*As my work improved, I entered Salons. Encouraged by two acceptances at my first attempt, I continued and by summer 2017 I had achieved both BPE2\* (British Photographic Exhibitions) and an AFIAP (Fédération Internationale de l'Art*

*Photographique).*

AO: (To learn more - check out the eNews for FIAP details. Also, see links for both at the end of this article on websites with details of Salons and their closing dates.)

FU: *With these successes, I felt ready to consider a PAGB 'D'.*

*Here, I was so fortunate. At my camera club, Dorchester, there's a strong ethos of members helping other members and with their help my portfolio eventually came together.*

*I started with the 18 images, which had all had National and International acceptances. As a belt-and-braces, I attended a PAGB Workshop in the Chilterns in May and took 19 images for the advisers to assess. I came away with just 11!*

*I needed to find four more in the following four months!*

*I decided to submit prints so that I could be in full control of how the images looked. However, it meant I had to buy a new printer - the Epson SureColor.*

*Following advice from Chris Palmer and Vince Cater of Fotospeed, I chose their Platinum Gloss for the majority of my submissions. I really admired the textured, lustre finish of this paper.*

*I submitted a mixture of 'straight' and 'composite' work and the software I used, after initially processing and cataloguing in Lightroom, was Photoshop and the Nik Software plugin suite - which I use regularly.*

*The Adjudications were in Pontefract - a long way from Somerset! I travelled by train via London, and Jane and Stephen Lee, members of Dorchester Camera Club, kindly offered to take my prints for me, as they were also going.*

*This was my first attempt - so I was delighted to pass! It was tough and very hard to achieve. Medal winning images, which had been proven in many salons, failed to gain that all-important mark of 20 points per image - but this is never a guarantee of success. Of the total of 37 print entries, only 15 applicants were successful that day. Feedback comments on unsuccessful work were mainly on print quality - and wrong choice of paper.*

AO: What advice can you offer to anyone thinking about trying for a Distinction?

FU: *Prepare well! Seek advice, attend workshops - and perhaps even consider booking a place on a Fotospeed Print Workshop - maybe even with some of the images you hope to submit?*

*Good luck. Above all else, win or fail - your work WILL improve.*

AO: Thank you so much Frances for this insight. It really demonstrates how much hard work and determination has to go into an application. Some very sound advice is given in the article.



Above, is a composite of Frances' submissions. Remember, your work will not be presented as a group, nor as a panel - but will be shown sequentially with others work entered on the day. Thus, all Number 1 submissions are seen first, followed by Number 2 and so on.

As promised, here are some links which you might find useful?

British Photographic Exhibitions - list of Salons -

<http://www.britishphotographicexhibitions.org.uk/index.php/list-of-exhibitions>

PAGB link to more info on going for a FIAP Distinction

<http://www.thepagb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/fiap-working-towards-distinctions.pdf>

FIAP - for information about Salons ` <https://www.myfiap.net/patronages>

Frances Underwood : LRPS DPAGB AFIAP BPE3\* (pending)