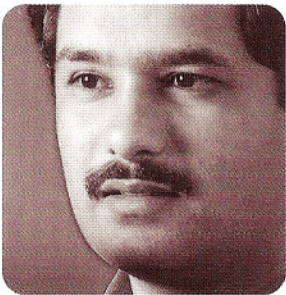


VIEW FROM THE GALLERY

Mohammed Arfan Asif on the case for photographic distinctions

"ITS THE INDIVIDUALITY AND CONTROL OVER THE MEDIUM THAT THE JURY SEEKS"



Do you think you have what it takes to achieve photography distinctions? We're talking here about consistency in quality, pictures that are thematic and meaningful. At the higher levels it's the individuality and control over the medium that the jury seeks to reward.

Photographic distinctions gauge the talent and creativity of a serious photographer. Distinctions awarded by the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP), Royal Photographic Society (RPS) and Photographic Society of America (PSA) are among the most respected in the business.

The FIAP awards three levels for photographic merit. For 'Artiste' (AFIAP) you should have participated in FIAP-recognised salons for at least five years; a minimum of ten acceptances (works exhibited) from at least five different pictures is the requirement. These acceptances should be from at least five salons and from at least three different countries.

Second, there's the 'Excellence' (EFIAP) award. To gain this distinction, you have to be an AFIAP for a minimum three years with a minimum of 50 acceptances in at least ten salons with twenty different pictures, and these salons should be from at least five different countries. There are bronze, silver, gold and platinum EFIAP distinctions based on acceptances and awards. The salons should have FIAP patronage and circuits are considered as one salon. The AFIAP and EFIAP panel should be ten prints or slides.

Finally, the 'Maitre' (Master) is the highest FIAP distinction. For the MFIAP you should be an EFIAP for at least two years. The panel should have twenty thematic, portfolio-style, high-quality prints.

Also, for rendering meritorious service over a period of time for the promotion of photography as an art, FIAP awards the Excellence for Services (ESFIAP) and Hon.EFIAP. All applications for FIAP distinctions must be made through the national federations.

The RPS is quite similar, also with three levels: the Licentiate (LRPS), Associateship (ARPS) and Fellowship (FRPS) with Honorary FRPS awarded for services rendered. Along with RPS membership, five images for ARPS and twenty for FRPS is the requirement. There are categories to choose from. The ARPS and FRPS are described as Degrees of Membership. If you stop paying annual membership you have to return the certificate and desist from using the distinction after your name.

The PSA awards the Associateship (APSA), Fellowship (FPSA), Hon. PSA and Hon.FPSA for life. All of them are for service rendered for the promotion of photography as an art. You have to be nominated by a long-standing member for these distinctions and it may not reflect photographic merit principally. But there are many other organizations which award distinctions to members and overseas salon participants. So why wait... go for it if you think you have what it takes. ■ **Resources:** www.fiap.net ; www.rps.org ; www.psa-photo.org

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