

VIEW FROM THE GALLERY



MOHAMMED ARFAN ASIF
reveals the mysteries of the FIAP

“THE YEAR 1950 WILL REMAIN ENGRAVED as a famous year in the chronicles of photography.” Those were the words of Dr M Wan de Wiger, the founding president of the International Federation of Photographic Art — or the *Federation Internationale D’ La Art Photographique*, to give it’s proper name.

Just like in football, FIAP membership constitutes a single representative body: the National Federation. It represents more than one million photographers.

Affiliated to UNESCO, the FIAP plays a more universal role than any other photographic body. This is reflected in its charter voted unanimously at the Barcelona Congress in 1954: “... developing the photographic spirit through all countries, in the triple intention to increase the culture of citizens, to contribute to the technical, documentary and artistic environment of nations, and to contribute in the measure of its resources, to the strengthening of the peace in the world.”

The FIAP distinctions are: AFIAP, EFIAP, MFIAP, ESFIAP, and Hon EFIAP. Members of the National Federation may submit works to be considered for these distinctions. The work is first assessed by the National Federation who, in turn, send their shortlisted recommendations to the FIAP jury. Standardization of assessment procedures was achieved by the efforts of C. Rajagopal, renowned Indian photographer and Continental Representative for Asia (see my interview in the last issue of *Photography Middle East*).

World Cup Expositions are held biennially. Member nations are represented by groups of photographers in the photographic equivalent to the football World Cup, as envisioned by the event’s founder. India — associated with the FIAP since 1954 — won the overall Gold Medal in the most recent World Cup Exposition and has a record three consecutive wins in the nature photography category. But, of course!

The FIAP also sponsors international salons, one-man shows, book publications, historical collections, and portfolio services. Recognition of a photography salon by the FIAP always ensures a good turnout! Indeed, to achieve any FIAP distinction you need to have a few FIAP-recognised salons under your belt.

The FIAP is managed by a ‘directory board’ elected by a ‘congress’ every two years (each time in a different country). The board’s official languages are English and French while its official texts are also translated into German and Spanish.

In the first congress, held June 1950 in Berne, the FIAP had seventeen affiliated nations with only two from outside Europe. Today it has 85 nations in its membership. Mr Esa Engawi in Saudi Arabia has made great contributions, but the UAE is still not represented. The liaison officers for the FIAP in the GCC are:

Mr Esa Saleh Engawi, Association for Culture and Arts (engawi@yahoo.com); Mr Ally M Hussain, the Bahrain Ar Society (ally@greenmail.net); Mr Saif Al Hinai, the Omani Society for Fine Arts (PO Box 8795, Mutrah); Shk Faisal Bin Fahad Al Thani, Qatar Photographic Society (qps@qpsimages.com); Mr Mahmoud Salem, Syrian Photo Club (PO Box 34719, Damascus); and Mr Mojtaba Eghdami from the Iranian Young Cinema Society (PO Box 15175/163, Ghandi Av. 19 Street NE 20, Tehran).

■ Send your comments to Mohammed: maa@itp.net