

Distinctive Image

featuring...

Dana Vannoy, APSA, PPSA

Williamsburg, Michigan



Aswan view of the Nile, Egypt

The *PSA Journal* continues its *Distinctive Image* series, this time featuring Photographic Society of America (PSA) artist **Dana Vannoy, APSA, PPSA**, formerly a full time resident of Ohio, now dividing her time between Williamsburg, Michigan on Elk Lake and Naples, Florida. While Dana has a keen interest in many forms of photography, this article focuses on images that succeed in portraying a sense of time and place: an image that tells a story.

After joining the Society in 1997, Dana enthusiastically began competing in PSA-recognized exhibitions. In a relatively short period of time she has accumulated credits and awards in the Nature Division (ND): 5 stars and over 300 acceptances; The Color Projected Image Division (CPID): 4 stars and over 530 acceptances; the Travel Division (PTD): 4 stars and over 375 acceptances, and the Electronic Image Division (EID): 4 stars and over 175 acceptances, all testifying to the diversity of her photography and leading up to her Proficiency Distinction (PPSA), which she earned in 2004. In

keeping with her love for telling stories with pictures, Dana has been awarded places for six slide or digital essays in CPID and PTD.

Dana Vannoy's record of service to PSA has been exemplary. At present she serves as a member of the Nominating Committee, the Service Award Selection Committee, and is chairperson of the Greenwood Scholarship & Grants Committee. From 2006 – 2008 she was the chairperson for CPID. This PSAer loves to write and the *PSA Journal* has published thirteen of Dana's feature articles including three cover images. In 2008, she received the *Elmore Chatham Memorial Award* for the best feature article in the *PSA Journal: Michigan's Upper Peninsula*. At various times, she has served as judge for numerous activities for several camera clubs; the PSA Club Web site Competition and the Print Division's Picture of the Month Contest. In addition, Dana has provided programs for three PSA annual conferences. Dana was elected an Associate (APSA) of the Society in 2003.



Selling prayer flags, Tibet

She is a frequent presenter and has done over twenty show presentations in communities and for photographic organizations: including the Southwest Michigan Camera Club Council (SWMCCC) featured program: *Egypt: Land of the Nile and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, (July, 2008); Wilmington Delaware Camera Club program: *Exploring the Dragon: Adventures in China & Tibet* (January, 2009), and a Special Benefit Event for 265 people in Elk Rapids, Michigan: *Exploring the Dragon: Adventures in China & Tibet* (July, 2009)—generating over \$4000 for an orphanage in Tibet.

Dr. Vannoy has participated in a number of local exhibitions—noteworthy are the juried fine arts festival of Elk Rapids called *Art Rapids!* in northern Michigan; and two solo exhibitions to benefit St. Monica’s Episcopal church outreach programs in Naples, Florida, exhibiting over 50 framed pieces each year.

Professionally, Dana is a retired Professor of Sociology and it has only been in the last decade that she has studied and practiced the art of photography. *Seeing the beauty in people, in nature, and in the creations of human beings and bringing the essence of that beauty to others in strong, colorful images is her goal.* Following her B.A. from Northwestern University in 1962 and her M.S. from the University of North Carolina, in 1964, Dana earned her Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Cincinnati, in 1971.

Dana tells us, “I grew up in a small town in Ohio. My father and I developed black and white images together in the 1950s in the coal-bin remodeled to a dark room in our Victorian home.

It seemed like magic to me...photography took a back seat during the years of advanced study, raising three children, and beginning a career. However, my husband and I shared the love of travel and new experience, and we both traveled with cameras in our hands...I joined PSA in 1997, participated in club activities and took more workshops. Since retiring at the end of the 20th century, photography has been my first and foremost love. I spend at least 70% of my time in related activities. The new experiences that travel provides still call me powerfully, and my training as a sociologist has challenged me to create visual images that show the spirit and beauty of different lands, cultures and peoples. I have been in over 40 countries and most of the United States. I have loved it all!”

Photos © Dana Vannoy, APSA, PPSA

A Khan Khalili shoe man, Egypt



The Oia windmill,
Santorini



Technique

About sense of place: I would not say conveying a sense of place is my specialty, as I love to shoot wildlife, macro images, people in action, and scenic images, but perhaps it is my favorite subject. Sense of place is more than wide-angle images of iconic places. *Conveying the feelings* of a time and place with images is an enduring challenge. I think “sense of place” is revealing the uniqueness of an environment and of the people who live in it, their customs, activities, and spirit for life.

I especially like to tell some story with a series of images. I have always loved to write, and more recently I have enjoyed attempting to *write with pictures*. I am convinced that a picture is worth a thousand words, and it is fun to make this come true. I know I have done that successfully when my viewer shares my own feelings about the subject.

I have used Canon equipment since the beginning of my SLR days and a digital camera since 2004 (the first was a 20D). Now I shoot with a Canon 5D full frame camera. When traveling I usually carry Canon IS 17-40, 24-105, and 100-400 L lenses. If possible I take a tripod, but more recently that is becoming more difficult some places. One of my goals at present is learning to use the wide-angle lens more often, photographing people and animals more closely *but in their environment*, ideally *seeing layers* in the image, a background, a middle ground, and a foreground. I think this is probably a more journalistic approach to travel photography.

The pyramids of
Gisa, Egypt





Santorini donkeys going to the ships, Santorini



A pub in Fort William, Scotland



Eilean Donan Castle, Scotland



ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I believe I love photography because making beautiful images is a wonderfully satisfying way to connect with the natural world, to understand diverse cultures, and to get to know and capture the spirit of fellow human beings. The days I enjoy the most are those when I am making images—whether the subject is a grandchild, wildlife, the small part of a beautiful bloom, or someone else's exciting architectural design. I think this is so because at those times I feel closer unity and togetherness with my live subject or with those who have created what I am photographing. On the days I have a plan for a shooting session, I wake up with energy and I have an extra spring in my step. I am looking forward to the day that will unfold, partly because it will often bring unexpected surprises. I always feel as if a great unplanned photo opportunity is a gift.

Most people find ways to be creative in their later decades. I feel fortunate to be able to immerse myself in the challenges of photography. I believe because of being a photographer I appreciate many kinds of beauty. I am a color enthusiast and I love colorful images that brighten our spirits, but I also like to convey more somber moods. I want my images to connect with those who see them. "Seeing the beauty" does not mean that the subject has to be beautiful in the traditional sense of the word. Some subjects may not be beautiful, but if I can capture what they may be revealing from inside or, if the subject is an inanimate object, I can capture what feeling it stirs inside us, that will be beautiful. Consequently, I can say my goal is always to share with others through images the beauty and spirit I see in others, in their activities, and in the world around us in hopes that the viewers will see that beauty too.

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