



Penrith RSL
Photographic Club

Camera Angles

The Official Newsletter of The Penrith RSL Photographic Club Incorporated - Established 1995
Member of the Federation of Camera Clubs (NSW) Inc - <https://fccnsw.myphotoclub.com.au>

October, 2025

Polar and Sub-Polar Photography with Joshua Holko

Joshua Holko is a visionary photographer and dedicated explorer who has made a profound impact in the realm of wildlife and landscape photography. Born with an innate curiosity and a deep appreciation for the natural world, Holko's passion for photography began at an early age and has since evolved into a lifelong pursuit of capturing the raw beauty of our planet.

With an adventurous spirit and an unwavering commitment to his craft, Joshua has travelled to some of Earth's most remote and inhospitable regions. From the polar regions of Antarctica and the Arctic to the vast plains of Africa, he has ventured into the farthest reaches of our globe, enduring extreme weather conditions and challenging environments to document the rare and extraordinary.

Holko's photographs are not just snapshots of Nature; they are visual stories that encapsulate the essence of the wild. His ability to capture intimate moments with wildlife and evoke a sense of connection and empathy in viewers is a testament to his mastery of his art form. Through his lens, he reveals the fragility and resilience of the natural world, inspiring others to appreciate and protect the delicate ecosystems surrounding us.

Beyond his remarkable photographic achievements, Joshua Holko is also a renowned educator and mentor. Recognising the power of storytelling and the importance of conservation, he uses his platform to raise awareness about environmental issues and advocate for the preservation of our planet. Through workshops, lectures, and writing, Holko shares his wealth of knowledge and experience, empowering aspiring photographers to hone their skills and create meaningful visual narratives.

With numerous accolades to his name, including prestigious international photography awards and exhibitions, Joshua Holko continues pushing his craft's boundaries. He embraces the challenges that Nature presents and embraces them as opportunities for growth, always seeking new ways to capture the sublime and push the boundaries of his artistic expression.

In a world where the connection between humanity and the natural world is increasingly vital, Joshua Holko's work is a powerful reminder of the beauty surrounding us and the urgent need to protect it. Through his art and advocacy, he has become a beacon of inspiration, reminding us of the Earth's diverse ecosystems' inherent value and profound importance.



Photos courtesy of Joshua Holko
See more of Joshua's work at <https://jholko.com/>

For information about the club or articles of interest you wished published in Camera Angles please contact The Editor and Secretary: Peter Thorpe on 0416 070 512 or any of the club officials – Manesh de Silva, President on 0498 377 455, Allen Cullen, Vice President and Activities Coordinator on 0418 674 598; Belinda Desmond, 2nd Vice-President on 0417 427 057; Ian Aggett, Treasurer on 0412 472 524 or Dave Whiteman, Training Coordinator on 0407 351 358. Visit our web site at <http://penrithrsl.wix.com/photographic-club>

Capturing Incredible Wildlife Portraits

Joshua Holko describes the foundation of his compositions as, “clean lines, negative space, and a strong subject. I like when the frame feels quiet but powerful — like the animal is a small part of a much bigger world: the vastness, the isolation, and the harsh beauty of these places.”

His imagery often embodies the definition of an ‘environmental portrait,’ a photography type that is noted by placing the subject smaller in the frame than usual to show a sense of scale and place equal weight on the importance of the subject’s environment.

With his wildlife photography, Joshua uses the environmental portrait style to highlight the harsh arctic conditions and the animals that survive it, telling their story through his thoughtful uses of compositional space.

Hue, vibrance, and saturation also play a key part in storytelling. This is another area where Joshua works with the environment to portray the polar regions’ naturally muted colour palette. He described how chasing atmosphere is key to his signature use of light in the scene.



It’s not just about beautiful pictures. It’s about creating something meaningful and emotive that helps people feel what it’s like to be out there.

“Colour-wise, I’m usually working with a pretty muted palette. The polar regions aren’t overly colourful — it’s whites, blues, grays in a thousand shades; I love that. It helps focus the viewer on shape, light, and mood. I’ll wait for that soft, diffused light or a bit of warm glow at the horizon to give things a subtle punch. But I’m not chasing bright or bold — I’m chasing atmosphere,” Joshua describes.

Decision-making on how exactly to frame his composition is dictated by the story naturally unfolding before him.

“Framing really comes down to storytelling. Am I showing how small the fox is in the landscape? Or am I going in tight to highlight its detail and emotion? I think about what the image is saying, and then I build the frame around that idea,” he explains.

“In the end, it’s less about hard rules and more about instinct, emotion, and respect for the scene. If it feels honest, I know I’m on the right track.”

You kind of develop a visual instinct — how to read light, how to anticipate behaviour, how to frame a shot before it even fully forms. It’s like muscle memory, but creative.”

“That said, there’s definitely a calculated side too. I’m always aware of technical

things like exposure, shutter speed, depth of field — especially when I’m shooting fast-moving wildlife in low light or brutal conditions.”

“But when it comes to creative choices like composition or colour, it’s mostly guided by feel. I’ll see a scene and just know how I want to shoot it. That kind of instinct has been built over years of being out there, failing, learning, and figuring out what actually works, not just technically, but emotionally. So it’s intuitive... but there’s a solid foundation under it.”

Joshua describes his work as quiet by nature. It’s less about action and more about emotion. I want people to feel the stillness, the silence, and the space between things. That’s why I often work in wide, open landscapes with a lot of negative space. For me, it reflects how those places actually feel when you’re standing in them.

To create these compositions of vast habitats, magical light, and strong emotion, his process starts by analysing the environment. Joshua describes himself as an observer, who carefully calculates the weather, light, and animals who together dictate what is possible.

By watching and waiting, he is present and ready to document nature as it is natural. He spends significant time in the field, often with little reward. However, when the patience pays off, the images he captures are well worth the effort.

For Joshua, the goal is not just in the images he creates but also in his experiences with those animals, and being able to share that moment and connection with viewers.

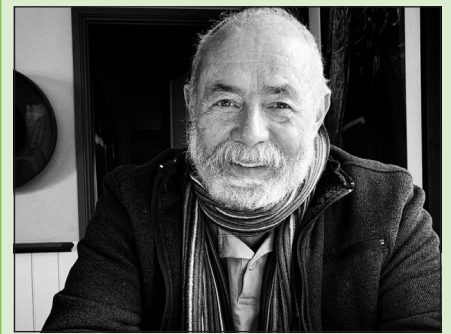
“It’s those moments of connection that mean the most — like locking eyes with an Arctic fox as it pauses in the snow, or watching an emperor penguin silhouetted against the soft glow of polar twilight. You’re sharing space with a wild animal, on its terms, in its world. That’s a powerful, humbling experience, and when I manage to translate that feeling into an image, it’s incredibly fulfilling.”

“There’s also a deeper satisfaction in knowing that the photograph might help people feel something for a place or species they may never see in person. If one image can spark curiosity, empathy, or a sense of wonder — that’s everything. That’s when photography goes beyond just being a picture and becomes a way to connect people with the wild. And that, to me, is the real reward.”



Joshua’s photography goes beyond just being a picture and becomes a way to connect people with the wild.

Keeping you posted



VALE WAYNE BERNARD DESMOND
1952-2025

Wayne joined our club back in 2018 and was one of the most genuine guys you would ever meet and a handy photographer to boot. He was a friend to many and a true gentleman who will be greatly missed by all.

FCC INTERCLUB

Thank you to all who supplied images for this club competition. We have entered four sections: Scapes, Flora, Animals and Urban. Exhibition and announcement of winners is 26 October at Manly Leagues Club.

PRINTING SERVICE

We have 2 members printing images to a profession standard, suitable for competition or Show & Tell usage.

Brian Corlis

(02) 4733 4357 or briajen2@bigpond.com

Chris Carter

0416 150 000 or chris@carterfamily.biz

Please speak to either for costs and an understanding of what they require.

UPCOMING THEMED COMPETITIONS

THEMED COMPETITIONS

You can enter up to 2 images, at any size, with a \$2 per entry fee. The purpose of these themed competitions is to get you to think creatively about a subject and then take a new photo rather than picking something you have previously shot, that happens to fit the theme.

CHRIS TODD MEMORIAL COMPETITION

Our third themed competition will be titled LANDSCAPES and will be held on Monday, 13 October. PRINTS ONLY.

AND NEXT MONTH - NOVEMBER

2nd Sunday Outing – Sculptures by the Sea

Bondi to Tamarama Walk is transformed with over 100 striking artworks spread along 2km of clifftop walks.

10th PRINT & DIGITAL Show & Tell

Up to 4 images, either prints or on a USB stick.

Last chance to show your work before the End of Year Competition.

25th Print of the Year Competition

Trophies/Certificates to be won. Guest Judge – Samuel Markham.

NOTE: No new work. Entries must have been shown during the year at either competitions or Show & Tell.

Download the full syllabus and newsletters at: <http://penrithrsl.wix.com/photographic-club>

Meetings start at 7.30pm