TPS ON FLICKR IN 2018
Our 3 2018 Flickr groups are up and running; but, if your quick, it's not too late to sign-up for the TPS12-2018 group so long as you have an image taken in January 2018 that you can post!

FEBRUARY COMPETITIONS
There are two competition in February – on Thursday 8th it's the second round of the Monochrome Print Competitions. Entry details to be submitted by Tuesday 6th using the new PhotoEntry procedure.

Then on Thursday 22nd we have the Alec Braid Panel Competitions. For these competition members may submit up to 3 panels of 3 images in each section. Note: We have a change of judge to the printed programme. Our judge will now be Chris Hutchinson.

See: http://tinyurl.com/ycx7nbhy for full details of the entry requirements.

EPSOM CC'S CLUB CLASS PDI COMPETITION
On Monday 22nd January 5 TPS members visited Epsom CC for their friendly competition for 'Club Class members who have not represented their club in an external competition'. The third club participating was Cheam CC. The judge was Don Morley.

The final scores were: Epsom CC – 130, Cheam CC & Tandridge PS – 125½.

Congratulations to Anthea Hearne-Dudman whose PDI 'The Kiss' was awarded 10 marks and Seb Springbett whose PDI 'Tulip' was awarded 9½ marks.

PAGB NEWSLETTERS
The latest PAGB e-news newsletter can be found here:

- PAGB e-news 197: http://tinyurl.com/y9a7dpzl
- PAGB e-news 198: http://tinyurl.com/y9lyhw3k
- PAGB e-news 198 Extra: http://tinyurl.com/y7xgkflo
- PAGB e-news 198 Extra 2: http://tinyurl.com/yd3xsuch
- PAGB e-news 199: http://tinyurl.com/ydy9r948

PAGB e-news keeps you bang up to date with all PAGB events, competitions and results and is usually published every 2 or 3 weeks. PAGB are very happy to add all club members! Just use the Sign Up When you sign up your address will be retained confidentially and securely and you will be sent a personal notification for each issue of e-news. Your address will never be made available to any commercial organisation, nor will it ever be used for any other purpose than sending e-news and related supplementary information.

PHOTOGRAPHY NEWS
The latest issues of Photography News (50 & 51) are available online at:

https://issuu.com/brightpublishing/docs/pn50
https://issuu.com/brightpublishing/docs/pn51
ART BERMONDSEY PROJECT SPACE
Address: 183 - 185 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3UW
Dates: 6th to 24th February
Open: Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 6pm
Cost: Admission free
Web: http://project-space.london

UAL OLYMPUS UK PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD 2018 – SECOND EDITION
OLYMPUS and Bermondsey Project Space support for the second year the next generation of photographers and creative from UAL.

University of the Arts London is in the top 5 universities in the world for art and design. They offer an extensive range of courses in art, design, fashion, communication and performing arts. Their graduates go on to work in and shape creative industries worldwide. For 2018 the theme of the competition was Photo Evidence: Between (Media) Representation and Reality.

BEETLES+HUXLEY GALLERY
Address: 3-5 Swallow Street, London, W1B 4DE.
Dates: until 17th February
Open: Monday - Saturday, 10am - 5.30pm
Cost: Admission free
Web: www.beetlesandhuxley.com

ELLIOTT ERWITT
A new exhibition to celebrate the 90th birthday year of photographer, Elliott Erwitt, will open at Beetles+Huxley in January 2018. The exhibition includes over 50 photographs surveying Erwitt's career, ranging from photographs of New York in the late 1940s, to portraits of well-known figures and rare vintage prints from across Erwitt's career.

Erwitt moved to New York aged just eighteen, where he became involved in the New York photography scene, meeting influential photographers, Edward Steichen, Robert Capa and Roy Stryker. The exhibition will include two early photographs taken in New York in this formative period, in which Erwitt's eye for composition is already evident. His first major project quickly followed in Pittsburgh in 1950, commissioned by the legendary Roy Stryker. Three recently rediscovered works from this project, further demonstrating Erwitt's developing eye, will also be on display.

In 1953, Robert Capa, founding member of Magnum Photos, invited Erwitt to join the agency, and his career continued to go from strength to strength. Sensitively observed portraits of well-known figures such as Jack Kerouac, Arthur Miller, Grace Kelly, Marilyn Monroe, John F Kennedy, Salvador Dalí and Che Guevera amongst others, demonstrate Erwitt's versatility when displayed alongside landscapes encompassing cityscapes and the wide-open spaces of the American west. Known for his satirical humour and sharp wit, perhaps Erwitt's most-loved photographs are those featuring dogs and a selection of these, taken in London, Paris and New York will also be on display.

Elliott Erwitt was born in 1928 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, Paris to Russian parents. Soon after he was born the family moved to Milan where he spent his childhood. In 1939, the family took the last ship out of peacetime Europe, arriving in New York five days after the outbreak of war. He studied photography at Los Angeles City College, but returned to New York aged just eighteen. Drafted into the US Army 1951, Erwitt continued to photograph during his service, carrying a Leica with a collapsible lens in the pocket of his uniform. Since joining Magnum in 1953, he has since become one of the world’s most successful and influential photographers and served three terms as the president of the agency.

Erwitt's photograph of his wife, his six-day-old daughter, Ellen, and their cat, Brutus, was included in Edward Steichen's significant photography exhibition The Family of Man in 1955 at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. His reputation grew as he undertook important assignments including "the kitchen cabinet debate" between President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev in 1959 and the funeral of John F. Kennedy at which he captured the president's widow, Jackie Kennedy, in tears behind a billowing black veil. Over twenty retrospective photography books of his work have been published and he has been honoured by numerous solo shows at establishments such as the Smithsonian, the Museum of Modern Art and the Chicago Art Institute. In 2015 he was awarded the Outstanding Contribution to Photography Award by the World Photography Organisation. He lives and works in New York.
POST-SOVET VISIONS: IMAGE AND IDENTITY IN THE NEW EASTERN EUROPE
A group show of photography from the New East - Post-Soviet Visions: image and identity in the new Eastern Europe is a group show of photography exploring new visual representations of lifestyle and landscape in Eastern Europe. The exhibition gathers the work of a young generation of artists rising to prominence a quarter century after the end of Communism.

The photographers in Post-Soviet Visions come from Georgia, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Although the personal circumstances of the photographers born in Eastern Europe differ, they share a common past with either they, or their parents, growing up in countries that once existed under Communist rule. Today, they live within the globally connected modern world where borders of East and West are erased by new technologies. But the physical traces of the past can be seen in work such as Jedrzej Franek’s dizzying shots of Polish tower blocks and Michal Korta’s striking black and white images of Brutalist buildings in Skopje, Macedonia.

Following the Soviet Union’s collapse in 1991 and the end of its influence over its satellite states, the countries of the former Eastern Bloc have each forged their own paths. In artworks such as Hassan Kurbanbaev’s portraits of teenagers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and David Meskhi’s photos of skater kids in Georgia, Post-Soviet Visions captures the new identities emerging across the region. Instead of old binaries of East vs West, socialist vs capitalist, their images capture a generation shaped by issues that are personal rather than the political; by questions of sexuality, gender and style.

RPS VISUAL ART GROUP 2018 MEMBERS’ PRINT EXHIBITION
The 2018 exhibition of the RPS’s VA Group.

DENBIES GALLERY
Address: Denbies Wine Estate Ltd, London Road, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6AA
Dates: Monday 12th to Sunday 18th February
Open: Monday – Sunday 9.30am - 5pm
Cost: Admission free
Web: www.denbies.co.uk/events/art-gallery

ALAN E THOMPSON FRPS DAPGB SUPPORTED BY CHRISTINE PADMORE
Alan is a very well known local photographer who produces work in both colour & monochrome. His atmospheric pictures have won acclaim in many competitions, magazine articles and exhibitions. He is a member of the MIRAGE Group of Photographers, Bookham & Dorking Camera Clubs. Alan has been a keen photographer for over 35 years and specialises in landscapes. His fellowship which was gained in 2002 was in the era when each picture had to be processed and printed in the darkroom.

Christine is an up and coming Still Life & Portrait photographer whose exquisite individual style is gaining her a large following of admirers. A keen member of Bookham & Dorking Camera Clubs.
FLOWERS GALLERY
Address: 82 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DP
Dates: until Saturday 10th March
Open: Tuesday – Saturday 10am - 6pm
Cost: Admission free
Web: www.flowersgallery.com

SIMON ROBERTS - MERRIE ALBION - LANDSCAPE STUDIES OF A SMALL ISLAND
For over a decade, Simon Roberts has photographed events and places across Britain that have drawn people together in public, reflecting on the nature of our shared histories and communal experiences.

Merrie Albion - Landscape Studies of a Small Island brings together iconic images and many previously unpublished photographs, recording social practices and customs linked to the British landscape, as well as some of the economic and political theatre that has helped define recent history.

The work in the exhibition ranges across various projects, both commissioned and independently produced over the last ten years, from single photographs made around the time of Roberts's major photographic project We English, to his subsequent work as the official artist of the General Election of 2010, and his series National Property: The Picturesque Imperfect.

While Roberts's interests have often gravitated towards evolving patterns of leisure, and the complex relationship between history, place and culture, he has also photographed events that have a more immediate, topical significance in Britain's recent past, and which collectively form a detached visual chronicle of the times in which we live.

In works such as Broadstairs Dickens Festival, Isle of Thanet, the landscape resembles a stage set for the costumed characters performing on the beach. Other examples of collective gatherings range from religious festivals, such as Eid al-Fitr Celebrations, Jamia Mosque, Bristol; or social and political events represented in After the Riots, London Road, Croydon, and the recent photograph Grenfell Tower, North Kensington, London.

Creating a view of contemporary society that is far from straightforward, Roberts critically conflates the traditional genre of landscape with social documentary, layering ideas of national character through relationships to both place and particular moments in time.

Of his work David Chandler, Professor of Photography at University of Plymouth, has said: "Roberts's work presents the viewer with complex relationships between people and places and incongruous juxtapositions of history and contemporary culture that create gentle ironies and underlying tensions across the images. Played out through particular local and regional contexts, it is these tensions that ultimately deny any consistency of mood and resist the coherent, and possibly seductive sense of binding national characteristics."

HAYWARD GALLERY
Address: Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1
Dates: until 22nd April
Open: Monday 12-6pm, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday 11am-7pm, Thursday & Friday 11am-8pm
Cost: See online Booking – Up to £16
Web: www.southbankcentre.co.uk/venues/hayward-gallery

ANDREAS GURSKY RETROSPECTIVE
Featuring about 60 works from the Düsseldorf School master, the exhibition headlines the Hayward's 50th anniversary in its comprehensively refurbished Brutalist home.

London's Hayward Gallery is reopening with a huge Andreas Gursky retrospective on 25 January, celebrating its 50th anniversary and its return after a comprehensive two-year refurbishment. The first major retrospective of the acclaimed German photographer in the UK, Andreas Gursky will include around 60 of images from the 1980s to the present day, including five new works.

Focusing on man-made structures and large gatherings of people, Gursky's images draw attention to our changing relationship with the natural world, and chronicle the effects of globalisation on daily life; his subjects range from a crowded techno music festival in Germany (May Day IV, 2000/2014), to an underground water tank in the Kamioka Nucleon Decay Experiment in Japan (Kamiokande, 2007), in which a boat glides amid a gold-studded interior. “I only pursue one goal,” he has said, “the encyclopedia of life.”
In recent years Gursky’s work has become increasingly abstract, emphasising pattern, symmetry and repetition, and frequently using a birds-eye perspective, whether depicting row upon row of packed warehouse shelves (Amazon, 2016), or barcode-like fields of Dutch tulips (Untitled XIX, 2015). Printing his work at very large scale, Gursky uses post-production to create “fictional photography”, and has stated that “reality can only be shown by reconstructing it”.

Born in 1955 in Leipzig, Gursky moved to Essen while still a child with his parents, where they established a commercial photography studio. The family then moved to Düsseldorf, where the studio flourished, and Gursky has said that he spent much of his childhood in the studio plundering “the treasure-trove of equipment” for “anything that looked like it might be fun to play with”. His first images were made with his father’s “cumbersome old Linhof”.

**NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - WATERHOUSE GALLERY**

Address: Cromwell Road, London, SW7 5BD.

Dates: until 28th May 2018

Open: 7 days 10am - 5.50pm.

Cost: Adults £13.50, Concessions £8 (online £12.50, £7)

Web: [www.nhm.ac.uk](http://www.nhm.ac.uk)

**WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2017**

This year’s exhibition, showcasing the fifty-third year of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition. The exhibition of 100 images records the beauty and drama of the natural world, from tiny insects to massive mammals. This year’s competition attracted almost 50,000 entries from professionals and amateurs across 92 countries. See winning images selected by a panel of judges for their creativity, originality and technical excellence.

**PHOTOGRAPHERS GALLERY**

Address: 16-18 Ramillies Street, London W1F 7LW.

Dates: 23rd February to 3rd June

Open: Mon - Sat 10am - 6pm, Thurs 10am - 8pm, Sun 11am - 6pm.

Cost: Exhibition Day Pass £4 (£2.50 Concession), Advance Online Booking £2.50 - Free admission before 12.00 every day

Web: [www.photonet.org.uk](http://www.photonet.org.uk)

**MIHO KAJIOKA: UNFINISHED SPACES**

Miho Kajioka (b.1973, Okayama, Japan) is a fine art photographer based in Kyoto. Her ethereal, minimalist work draws on the Japanese tradition of “wabi-sabi” – the appreciation of beauty in imperfection and transience, and the Zen/Taoist belief that the essence (true nature) of an object exists rather in the empty space inside and around it.

Kajioka originally studied art in Canada and the US, before retuning to Japan in the late 90s where she worked as a journalist for over a decade. It was whilst reporting from the coastal city of Kamaishi, devastated by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, Kajioka was struck by the unexpected sight of roses blooming besides a blasted building. The contrast of such beauty and grace in the face of mass destruction was something she recognised would be impossible, even futile, to try and convey through mainstream journalism and this recognition led her back to art as a way of expressing a different kind of truth.

“What I want to introduce to people to is not what we can see or even put into words, but rather something invisible and in-between.”

Her photographic work grew out of a drawing practice, echoing photography’s literal etymology as a way of drawing with light. She still finds the process of watching images appear from the developing bath magical, in tune with her philosophy of honouring the imperfection as well as the innate essence of things. The empty spaces in her carefully exposed, toned and hand-finished silver gelatin prints are as important as the subjects that emerge from the delicate surfaces. Her aesthetic reveals the prevailing paradoxes between the factual and the unknown, the visible and the invisible, evoking a particular style of melancholic beauty and inviting the viewer to complete the picture through their own mind’s eye view.

**Also on at the Photographers Gallery:** Dates: 23rd February to 3rd June

**DEUTSCHE BÖRSE PHOTOGRAPHY FOUNDATION PRIZE 2018**

The four artists shortlisted for the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize 2018 are Mathieu Asselin, Rafal Milach, Batia Suter and Luke Willis Thompson.
Although wide-ranging in style and approach, all of the shortlisted projects reflect a shared concern with the production and manipulation of knowledge and systems of representation through visual formats. The works encompass a searing photographic interrogation of global biotech giant, Monsanto (Asselin); an expansive portrayal of the ubiquitous tactics of government control and propaganda (Milach); an encyclopaedic collection of visual taxonomies that expose the shifting and relative meanings of printed images depending on their context (Suter); and a deeply affecting filmic study of grief that reflects the personal stakes of visual representation (Thompson). Collectively and individually, the four projects drive forward an artistic enquiry into the mechanics of visibility and concealment, and interrogate the status and position of the image in contemporary culture.

**The Artists:**

**Mathieu Asselin** (b. 1973, France) has been nominated for his publication *Monsanto A Photographic Investigation* (Actes Sud, 2017).

Mathieu Asselin’s meticulous investigation into the long history of the global biotechnology corporation Monsanto brings together hundreds of documents and photographs depicting the devastating human, ecological and economical impact of the company’s long and reckless story of growth, and their cynical efforts to change their negative public image.

Over five years Asselin conducted extensive research and travelled through Vietnam and the United States of America to find the people and places dramatically affected by Monsanto’s past and current practices. His determined approach resulted in an overwhelming depiction that also aims to portray what Monsanto’s near future might look like.

**Rafal Milach** (b. 1978, Poland) is nominated for his exhibition *Refusal* (12 May – 18 June 2017, Atlas Sztuki Gallery, Lodz, Poland).

Rafal Milach’s ongoing artistic practice focuses on applied sociotechnical systems of governmental control and ideological manipulations of belief and consciousness. Focusing on post-Soviet countries such as Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Poland, Milach traces the mechanisms of propaganda and their visual representation in architecture, urban projects and objects.

Refusal brings together different material and visual layers that ultimately represent these systems of control. Among other things, Refusal showcases photographs of handmade objects found in governmental centres and chess schools that produce optical illusions and whose innocent disposition is fundamentally changed here as they exemplify how the human mind can be influenced and controlled. Furthermore Soviet television programmes about social experiments or various state-run competitions exemplify the process of formatting and shifting meanings to serve a concrete vision of government.

**Batia Suter** (1967, Switzerland) is nominated for *Parallel Encyclopedia #2* (Roma, 2016).

Batia Suter’s substantial compendium is an image-led sequence of subjective associations offering visual dialogues and new categorisations that demonstrate how our understanding of the physical world and its history, as well as different cultures and places are affected by their context of representation. The found images are sourced and reproduced from roughly 1000 diverse publications collected by the artist. They form various themes and narratives that collectively investigate the nature of images and the process of their consumption.

Following on from the first Parallel Encyclopedia, published in 2007, this new volume further exercises the iconification of images by placing images in new and varying contexts exposing the possibilities of visual editing. Suter’s artistic approach is personal and intuitive, selecting a large number of images, which ultimately present how images affect and manipulate meaning, depending on where and how they are placed.


Luke Willis Thompson’s 35mm film autoportrait is a silent portrait of Diamond Reynolds. In July 2016, Reynolds used Facebook Live to broadcast the moments immediately after the fatal shooting of her partner Philando Castile by a police officer during a traffic-stop in Minnesota, United States. Reynolds’ video circulated widely online and amassed over six million views.

In November 2016, Thompson established a conversation with Reynolds, and her lawyer, and invited her to work with him on the production of an artwork. Thompson wanted to make an aesthetic response that could act as a ‘sister-image’ to Reynolds’ video broadcast, which would break with the well-known image of Reynolds, caught in a moment of violence and distributed within a constant flow of news. In June 2017, Reynolds’ original video was played to a jury as evidence. Despite the abundance of visual information, the officer who killed Castile was acquitted of all charges. autoportrait continues to reopen a question of the agency of Reynolds’ recording within, outside of, and beyond the conditions of predetermined racial power structures.

**And also on at the Photographers Gallery:** Dates: 23rd February to 3rd June

**UNDER COVER: A SECRET HISTORY OF CROSS – DRESSERS**

Drawn from the extensive personal archives of filmmaker and photography collector Sébastien Lifshitz,
this exhibition of amateur photographs from Europe and the US explores the surprisingly widespread practice of cross-dressing, through a century of private images. Dating from 1880 onwards, the photos are mostly of unnamed and unknown figures – the majority having been collected from flea markets, garage sales, junk shops and ebay, amongst other non-specialist spaces - and offer a candid view into the hidden worlds of individuals and groups that chose to defy gender conventions.

Lifshitz’s initial collecting impulse was a fascination with the vernacular documentation of cross-dressing; his criteria to accumulate photographs, which showed men dressing as women and vice versa. As the collection grew, he began to trace both commonalities and differences between the images, which proposed a much more nuanced exploration of cross-dressing culture. The exhibition also includes unique images of Marie-Pierre Pruvot (born Jean-Pierre Pruvot, 11 November 1935) the renowned Algerian-born French transsexual woman who performed under the stage name Bambi, and who was the subject of an award-winning documentary by Lifshitz in 2013.

Brought together, the photographs reflect a range of styles and attitudes from theatrical, defiant, shy, proud, subversive and understated; showing individuals and groups from different classes, professions, genders and nationalities, whose commonality is that they dared to play with dress codes in front of a camera, even if unable to do so in public.

Under Cover: A Secret History of Cross-Dressers celebrates the collective inventiveness and freedom that the seemingly simple act of dressing differently provides. The exhibition offers a fascinating precedent to today's diverse Queer and trans spectrum and pre-empts a world where such self-expression is celebrated.

Sébastien Lifshitz was born 1968 in Paris, France. An avid collector of photographs and an award-winning film director, his films have included Wild Side (2004), featuring a transsexual heroine and Bambi (2013), a documentary about France’s most celebrated transsexual woman.

ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDEN KEW
Address: Nash Conservatory, RBG, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TN9 3AE
Dates: 10th February to 11th March
Open: 7 days
Cost: RBG Entry Fee
Web: https://igpoty.com/exhibition/igpoty-annual-launch-ceremony/

INTERNATIONAL GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR EXHIBITION – YEAR 11
The flagship exhibition of International Garden Photographer of the Year at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Be the first to see an exhibition of the winners of Competition 11 in the historic Nash Conservatory.

ROYAL OBSERVATORY
Address: Small Exhibitions Gallery, Royal Observatory, Blackheath Avenue, London SE10 8XJ
Dates: Until 22nd July 2018
Open: Daily 10am – 5pm (Check Christmas & New Year Opening Times)
Cost: Free
Web: www.rmg.co.uk/see-do/insight-astronomy-photographer-year

INSIGHT ASTRONOMY PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR
The winning images of this annual competition.

SCIENCE MUSEUM
Address: Level 2, Exhibition Road, South Kensington, London SW7 2DD
Dates: until 31st March 2018
Open: 10am – 6pm daily
Cost: Admission free – but booking required
Web: http://tinyurl.com/l57d4tw

ILLUMINATING INDIA: PHOTOGRAPHY 1857–2017
An ambitious survey of the technological and artistic development of photography in India. See November Newsletter for more details.
SISSINGHURST CASTLE GARDEN
Address: NT Biddenden Road, Sissinghurst, Nr Cranbrook, Kent TN17 2AB
Dates: 17th February to 13th April
Open: 7 days, 11am - 4pm last admission 3:15pm.
Cost: Winter admission prices apply, free for National Trust members
Web: https://igpoty.com/exhibition/sissinghurst-castle-gardens/
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst-castle-garden

INTERNATIONAL GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR EXHIBITION – YEAR 10
The very best amateur and professional garden photography from across the world, brought to life by the Sissinghurst Gardeners using plants from the garden – Housed in the Oast House.

'While the garden is closed for rest and important conservation, we will be hosting some of the best garden, plant and landscape photography from amateur and professional photographers across the globe. From portrait to panorama, from the quirky and amusing, to the outright wondrous, these photographs reflect the everlasting appeal of the garden and vividly showcase images of a green planet. Categories include the Beauty of Plants, Wildlife in the Garden and Wildflower Landscapes among others.

We are really excited to be hosting the exhibition again this year, there's a great set of images to see, our garden team will be creating an upside down dried flower garden as well as bringing a little of the outdoors inside with fresh flowers and plants too. They've been busy drying flowers and growing hundreds of plants as well as designing handcrafted pots and structures to make it a truly unmissable exhibition.'

FOR SALE
A lady from Oxted has the following two tripods she would like to sell:
A Benbo Trekker Tripod: it's 34" or 87cm when folded up. It has a carrying case with shoulder strap as photo. The top extension with the camera attachment can be angled over 180 degrees. This tripod is as new. Reasonable offers acceptable.

And a Kenlock 200 GL tripod: it's 22" or 95cm when folded up. Condition as new Reasonable offers acceptable.

Offers to: Sue Cox @ jampot@metronet.co.uk
FAREWELL JUDGES . . .
Google's research team are working with AI and images again but this time, they've taught the AI to rate images for their aesthetic and technical qualities, as a person would, rather than just looking at images a 'high' or 'low' quality.

The new AI is based on Google's previous research that focuses on convolutional neural networks (CNNs) which you can learn more about over on Wikipedia but in a nutshell, when presented with an image previously, the AI could classify them based on what objects are present or by its quality (noise, artifacts etc.) but it was unable to assess the image based on beauty and other ways a person would judge an image's quality.

For the new 'Neural Image Assessment' (NIMA) method, Google has taught a CNN to predict which images a typical user would rate as looking good (technically) or attractive (aesthetically) by using state-of-the-art deep object recognition networks to further expand the AI's knowledge of object categories.

So far, the AI has scored images reliably and with high correlation to the mean scores given by human raters. NIMA scores can also be used to compare the quality of images of the same subject which may have been distorted in various ways.

Going forward, the Google research team believe the AI could be used to help with image editing automation, enable improved picture-taking with real-time feedback to the user and the most obvious of uses: allow people to easily find the best image in a collection which could be useful for stock sites as well as the everyday user searching personal collections.