



The Ultimate Distinction?

mfiap

TWO MORE MFIAP IN THE UK

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Mike Sharples MFIAP MPAGB FBPE ARPS

A great many Club and Exhibition photographers believe that the *Maitre de la Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique* (MFIAP) is indeed the ultimate distinction to achieve. In 1989 Ian Platt was the first UK photographer to be awarded the distinction, with a portfolio of Geology – Design and Pattern and it wasn't until 2003 that he was joined by Hilary Roberts and John Paul Baker. In 2019, Ross McKelvey and Tim Pile took the total to 23, including 4 from Scotland and 1 from Wales, both of whom are separate members of FIAP. Now we have 25!

“MFIAP is awarded to a photographic artist in recognition of her/his entire achievements in the field of artistic photography”. The candidate must have held the EFIAP Distinction for at least three years before they can apply and must submit a complete curriculum vitae and a coherent portfolio of 20 images – until recently these had to be prints but currently only PDI applications are accepted.

“Can you look up, as if you are about to be attacked by an eagle?” Phrases like this have been uttered on very many shoots over the last few years. My interest in mythology has been longstanding and it has been an ambition of mine for many years to make a visual interpretation of The Mabinogion, an ancient text of Welsh legends.

This meant that during these shoots, not only did I have to imagine supernatural creatures interacting with the models, but they themselves also had to do this. My overarching memory is laughter – the fun of the shoots, the shared creativity where the models were active participants in creating the vision, and the many hours of friendship and mischief as we tried out different ideas. Some worked, some didn't but the friendships remain.

I only picked up a camera about 8 years ago and I feel both humbled and fortunate to have discovered such an absorbing hobby. I have met so many lovely people over the last 8 years and I wouldn't swap a minute of it.



Believable reality is not just a photographic concept, it is also the bedrock of mythology. I feel privileged to have received this distinction and I want to thank everyone who has encouraged and supported me through my photographic life. A particular shout out to Dave Coates, who throughout my FIAP distinctions journey, has been a steady and calming influence.

And to my husband Rob, whose creative mind is almost as weird as my own, and whose **“Why not try this?”** attitude to photography perfectly matches my own.

Sharon





Sharon Prenton Jones - Statement of Intent

Welsh Mythology is contained in an ancient text called the Mabinogion. Here the past emerges from its pages as a landscape of the imagination.

These ancient tales feature images of strong independent women and heroic men appearing through the mists of legend. Dominated by the colours of earth, sea and forest, my images chart the development of these myths. From Merlin's predictions about the coming of a warrior queen, to the final burial of the last of this ancient race.

The supernatural world fills these tales with spirits taking the form of wolves and birds of prey. Sirens emerge from backgrounds which are timeless, to lure mortals to the shores of an endless sea.

My challenge was to capture images of mythological characters rather than photographic models.

The willing suspension of disbelief needed to see a banshee keening outside a quiet mountain homestead, or riders galloping through the night, required me to work hard with my models crafting their facial expressions and body posture.

Attempting to capture a sense of timelessness and myth was a difficult yet enormously satisfying challenge. Here history meets mythology in a visual celebration of the past.



Maitre de la Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique

List of authors

<https://www.fiap.net/en/mfiap>





The **Mabinogion** (pronunciation: mabɪˈnɔɡjɔn) are the earliest prose stories of all the literature of Britain.

These stories were compiled in Middle Welsh in the 12th–13th centuries from earlier oral traditions. There are two main source manuscripts, created circa. 1350–1410, as well as a few earlier fragments.



My photographic journey started some 55 years ago when, at 16 years of age, I acquired my first camera. I began by taking many photos of family and friends both at home and on holidays, this sparking a passion, which is still with me today. I enjoy the complete spectrum of photographic subjects including Landscape, Environmental Portraits, Sport, and Nature.

I have always been motivated to produce the best quality images, making the picture as appealing to the viewer as possible. I try to develop images with creativity and a sensitive use of form and light. I like to evoke emotion, to create a story within the image and to capture decisive moments.

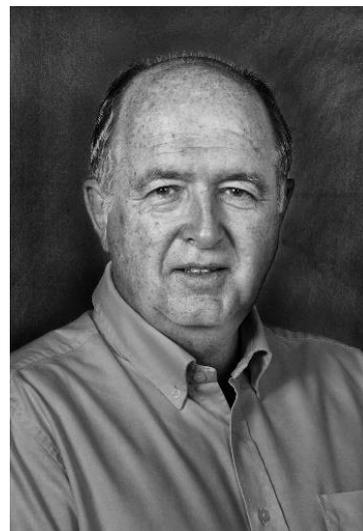
To improve my knowledge, I completed several educational photographic courses, which have given me a detailed knowledge of both photographic processes and an appreciation of the history of photography and some of the world's iconic photographers.

I have been a member of Smethwick Photographic Society for 35 years, many of them spent on the club's committee and I have served as its President. I am also a member of the Executive of the Midland Counties Photographic Federation. Over the years I have been involved in organising and taking part in the Club's and wider Federation activities.

I have enjoyed membership of the Royal Photographic Society for 20 years and I have served them as a Regional Organiser. I enjoy Judging and Lecturing. I am listed on the official lists of both the Midland Counties Federation and the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain and have judged competitions at local, regional, national and international levels as well as presenting lectures to clubs across the UK.

I participate in many UK BPE and International Photographic competitions and exhibitions and have recent gained my FBPE. I have also been lucky enough to have been gained 7 FIAP Blue Badges but being awarded this MFIAP is the pinnacle of my photographic journey.

Mike





Mike Sharples - Statement of Intent

I am passionate about my photography and about photographing people, which is a subject that has long fascinated and captivated me.

I am inspired by people's creative art in the form of dress and face make-up.

My portfolio is based on this theme of the art of painted faces and how people express themselves in their chosen hobbies and pastimes. I have tried to sympathetically enhance the subject's dress and face make-up, by the use of selecting backgrounds and tasteful lighting to evoke emotion and a sense of fantasy.

I feel that eye contact is essential to create a connection between the person being photographed and the person viewing the portrait. This relationship between the two is brought about by facial expressions and drawing the viewer into this by evoking a private shared moment or emotion with the subject.





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This is the complete list of MFIAP holders in the UK as shown on the FIAP website. Applications from the PAGB are recorded by FIAP as UK but Scotland and Wales joined FIAP before the PAGB and the SPF and WPF retain their independent membership.

Author	Country	Promotion year	Title
Mike Sharples	 United Kingdom	2021	Face To Face
Sharon Prenton Jones	 United Kingdom	2021	Welsh Mythology
Ross McKelvey	 United Kingdom	2019	The Art of Nude
Tim Pile	 United Kingdom	2019	Travels with a Muse
Robert Millin	 United Kingdom	2017	Villagers of Turkey
John Whitby	 United Kingdom	2016	Autosaurs
Chris Forster	 United Kingdom	2014	Aspects of Burma
Paul Keene	 United Kingdom	2014	People of China
Margery Janet Maskell	 United Kingdom	2012	East African Wildlife
Colin Peter Harrison	 United Kingdom	2010	Roadside america
John Hooton	 United Kingdom	2010	Gathering light
Gwen Charnock	 United Kingdom	2009	The people of Marrakech (Morocco)
Phil Charnock	 United Kingdom	2009	Special operations at Lancashire police
Margaret Salisbury	 United Kingdom	2009	Village Life Ghana
David Cantrille	 United Kingdom	2007	Birds in action
John Chamberlin	 United Kingdom	2007	Kolmanskop
David Wheeler	 United Kingdom	2007	Village men of Rajasthan
Jon Paul Baker	 United Kingdom	2003	The Quarries of Rhosydd and Cwmorthin
Hilary Roberts	 United Kingdom	2003	Cuba in my heart
Platt Ian Walton	 United Kingdom	1989	Geology - Design and pattern
Peter Paterson	 Scotland	2015	Iceland land of contrasts
Robert Fulton	 Scotland	2015	Trees in the landscape
Rod Wheelans	 Scotland	2008	Inside Georgia
John Simpson	 Scotland	2006	Monks
Mervyn Richard Pugh	 Wales	2013	The Men of Tower Colliery