



To: All Media

Att: News Editor

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Seeing science through photography with the South African Science Lens® Competition 2019

The 11th round of the South African Science Lens® competition, a photographic competition celebrating the splendour and wonder of science, opens for entries today.

This year, for the first time, the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA), a business unit of the National Research Foundation (NRF), and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) have teamed up to mount the photographic competition, celebrating all natural and social sciences in the 20-year anniversary of the NRF and the 50-year anniversary of the HSRC.

As part of commemorating its 50th anniversary and the 90th anniversary of its predecessor, the National Bureau for Educational and Social Research, the HSRC has arranged a series of critical engagements around the social and human sciences in the period April 2018 to May 2020.

“Our participation in the South African Science Lens® Competition is part of these engagements, which seek to enable documentation, reflection, learning, appreciation and promotion of the human and social sciences in the public domain, and to critically debate the relationship between social and human science research, the state, and society at large. In a society grappling with complex social problems, photography is an excellent communication medium. When words fail us, a camera captures moments, scenes and expressions that provide nuanced perspectives of people’s thoughts and emotions, or of their environment,” says Prof Crain Soudien, CEO of the HSRC.

“Photography is a wonderful way of capturing the beauty of science. This year, SAASTA is pleased to be partnering with the HSRC in the SA Science Lens competition to highlight the importance of social sciences within the scientific endeavour,” says Michael Ellis, manager of the Science Communication division at SAASTA.

As we reflect on the past in celebration of the anniversaries of the two organisations, we also look to the future. Under the overarching theme of innovation, the focus of this year’s competition looks forward to and imagines our world in 2030. What scientific developments will take us to 2030 and how will our world look?

To stand a chance to win cash prizes and DSLR cameras, submit photos of scientific research that will

shape our world in 2030 or capture images that explain something about our natural and social worlds. SAASTA and the HSRC are inviting anyone with an enthusiasm for science, professional and amateur photographers and scientists, and science communicators to participate. The closing date for submission is **8 December 2019**.

The categories of the competition for 2019 are: **Science as Art**, whose images illustrate the beauty of science or show subjects in abstract ways; **Science in Action**, which focuses on capturing science as it happens either in the natural or social world or in the workplaces of scientists, doctors, and researchers; **Science Close-up**, whose images reveal aspects of science that cannot be seen with the naked eye; and lastly, **The Dignity of All South Africans**, showing how science and society contribute to upholding human dignity.

Through the competition, SAASTA and the HSRC aim to encourage researchers and scientists to invite the public into their world through inspiring curiosity in beautiful, dramatic or interesting photographs of their research. The competition also aims to encourage the public to appreciate and find science in their everyday lives, seeing how they view the world around them from a scientific perspective.

To enter, simply:

- Send us your original images of all aspects of science.
- Submit a separate entry form for each image.
- Download an entry form from the web site and send it with your photos via email to sciencelens@saasta.ac.za, or upload your photos and enter online at www.saasta.ac.za/competitions/sa-science-lens

For more information, as well as terms and conditions, visit: www.saasta.ac.za/competitions/sa-science-lens

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Notes to the Editor

About the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA)

SAASTA is a business unit of the National Research Foundation (NRF) with the mandate to advance public awareness, appreciation and engagement of science, engineering and technology in South Africa.

SAASTA's contribution to the NRF's vision is to grow the pool of quality learners today who will become the scientists and innovators of tomorrow.

It aims to be the leading science advancement agency in the country by promoting and communicating the value and impact of science, technology and innovation in a dynamic knowledge economy. It also intends to contribute significantly towards building a science, engineering and

technology (SET) human resource base. For more information on the operations and programmes within the NRF please visit www.saasta.ac.za

About the National Research Foundation

The National Research Foundation (NRF) was established on 1 April 1999 as an independent statutory body in accordance with the National Research Foundation Act. The NRF is a key public entity responsible for supporting the development of human resources for research and innovation in all fields of science and technology. The organisation is one of the major players in educating and training a new generation of scientists able to deal with South African and African needs. The organisation encourages public awareness and appreciation of science, engineering and technology, and facilitates dialogue between science and society. Its vision is to contribute to a prosperous South Africa based on a knowledge economy. For more information on the operations and programmes within the NRF please visit www.nrf.ac.za

About the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

The HSRC was established in 1968 as South Africa's statutory research agency and has grown to become the largest dedicated research institute in the social sciences and humanities on the African continent, doing cutting-edge public research in areas that are crucial to development.

Our mandate is to inform the effective formulation and monitoring of government policy; to evaluate policy implementation; to stimulate public debate through the effective dissemination of research-based data and fact-based research results; to foster research collaboration; and to help build research capacity and infrastructure for the human sciences.

The Council conducts large-scale, policy-relevant, social-scientific research for public sector users, non-governmental organisations and international development agencies. Research activities and structures are closely aligned with South Africa's national development priorities. For more information on the operations and programmes within the HSRC please visit www.hsrc.ac.za