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Professionals help to develop young talent

IT'S A SNAP: Award-winning National Geographic Channel photographers dispense tips and advice in workshop

FAIRUZ MOHD SHAHAR

IT does not take a sophisticated camera to snap a good picture. It takes a good photographer with the ability to capture the moment from a creative perspective to do that.

This was among the valuable lessons aspiring photographers learnt at the National Geographic Channel Photography Workshop at Forest Reserve Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) in Kepong here, recently.

More than 50 participants from Taylor's University and Monash University Malaysia signed up to be guided by award-winning National Geographic Channel photographers Joe Riis and Gabby Salazar.

The interactive workshop was to help inspire Malaysian youth to pursue their passion in the creative arts

as well as to promote the inaugural EOS Young Photographer Awards competition, which runs until June 3. The competition with the theme "A Celebration of Colour" is organised by National Geographic Channel and Canon Singapore Pte Ltd. It is open to youth from Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia.

Riis, who is from South Dakota, US, has worked as a wildlife photojournalist for four years. He graduated from University of Wyoming with a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Biology.

"I grew up in a small town and spent much of my entire childhood exploring the outdoors. My father was a fishery biologist, which has had an influence on me deciding to

study wildlife.

"It was while in college that I realised I could try to photograph for a living rather than work as a biologist. I use photography to portray science and biology in wildlife," he said.

The day he graduated in 2008, Joe started his first project — to live with a herd of 300 pronghorns on the Grand Teton National Park Pronghorn Migration Project in western Wyoming, for which he had received the National Geographic Young Explorers Grant.

His job has since taken him to far reaches of the globe, including countries such as Argentina, Venezuela, Mongolia, Thailand and Uganda.

When he is on the field, he would photograph the animals the wildlife

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biologists are researching.

Salazar, who was named BBC's 2002 Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year, is from the US. She is here to help promote the region-wide competition. She specialises in landscape and close-up photography.

Salazar said she had had a passion for photography since she was 11 years old.

"When I was a child, my father gave me a camera and I captured an image of a blue jay in my neighbour's backyard bird garden. From that moment, I developed an interest in photography.

"Everyone starts as an amateur. To become a professional, one needs to experiment with the subjects. A good picture doesn't necessarily require a rare subject. The subject can be anything that we encounter in our daily lives, but the person must know how to take the picture in a unique way," she said.

In the first session, the two shared their experience and tips with the participants.

Salazar and Riis also showed their

wildlife and landscape photographs, which awed the participants.

The participants were taught how to use dramatic lighting, look for strong colours, create different lights, and apply the silhouette technique, in photographs.

Salazar also advised the participants to try different perspectives, experiment with motion and pay attention to the weather.

The aspiring shutterbugs applied what they had learnt in the second session.

Armed with cameras and lenses, they were assigned to capture what was around FRIM.

Taylor's University College student Mitzi Liew, 20, felt she was lucky to participate in the workshop and learn from professional wildlife photographers.

"I only knew the basics of photography. But after attending the workshop, I learnt that the ISO settings can be adjusted and different lighting can be created. I am so excited to be guided by the National Geographic photographers," she said.

Monash University student Nur

Mikhaella Ismail said: "Taking great photos is not only about going to beautiful places or capturing a rare subject.

"It can be something ordinary, it all depends on how creative the photographer is. I learnt that besides passion, a photographer also needs patience."

Meanwhile, aspiring photographers aged 13 to 25 are invited to submit their best photographs fitting the theme "A Celebration of Colour" for the EOS Young Photographer Awards contest.

The grand prize for the competition includes a Canon EOS 60D DSLR camera with an 18-55mm lens and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to join a weekend photography expedition with National Geographic photographers in the United States.

The second and third prize winners will receive a Canon EOS 650D DSLR camera with an 18-55mm lens and EOS 1100D with an 18-55mm lens, respectively.

Upload the entries at www.celebrationofcolour.com.

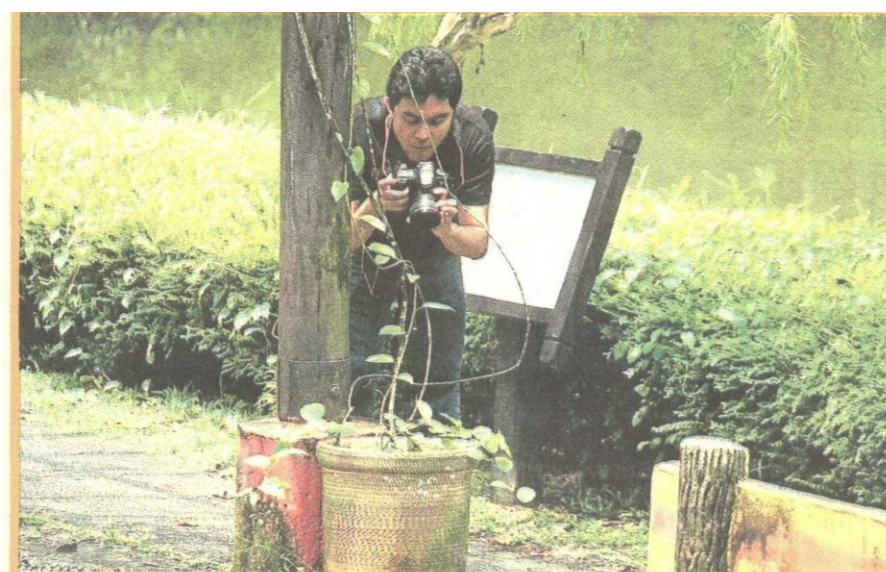


The photographer has to be **limber** as well as creative.

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Workshop participants hope to take **a leaf from their teachers' book.**



An aspiring photographer learns **patience.**

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The participants are *all ears*.



An aspiring photographer trying to find a creative subject for his photos

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Gabby Salazar gets hands-on with the camera.



Gabby Salazar (front row, fifth from left) and Joe Riis (front row, sixth from left) and Taylor's College participants **get in front of the camera**. Pix by Fairuz Mohd Shahar and courtesy of National Geographic Channels

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Joe Riis takes the lesson to another level.



Salazar and a workshop participant click.