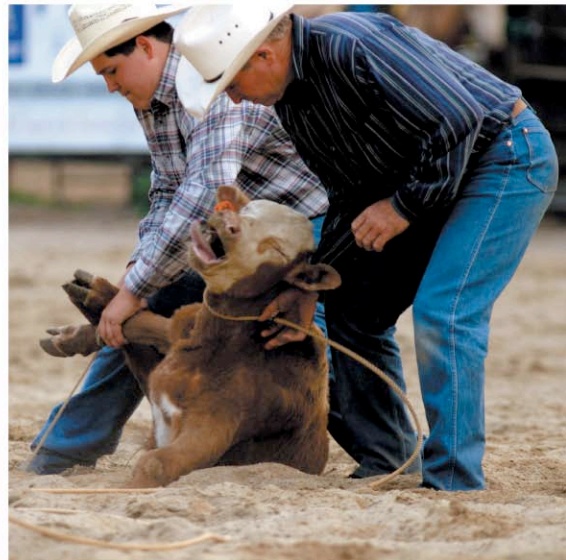
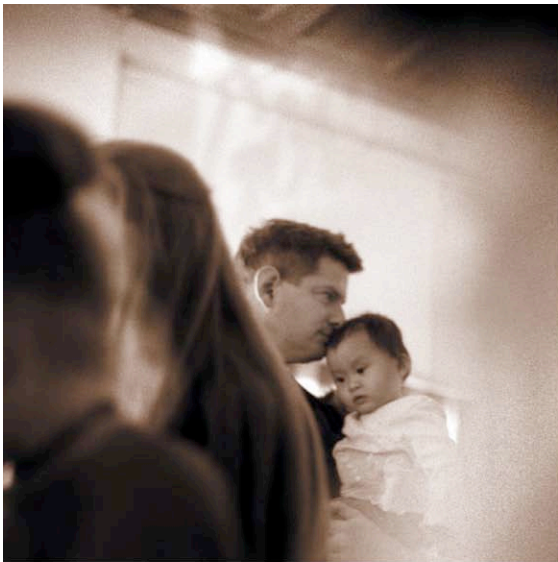


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FIFTH LEICA /CCP DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD EDUCATION KIT



FIFTH LEICA /CCP DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD TOUR EDUCATION KIT

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INTRODUCTION

History of *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*

The first *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Exhibition and Award* was held in 1997, with the goal of supporting documentary photography, and establishing greater discussion around its definition and practice. Since then the exhibition and award has been held biennially, representing a unique initiative supporting current documentary photographic practice, and offering exhibition and touring opportunities to the finalists.

In 2005 entrants were asked to submit work in essay or series format of up to six recent photographs 'demonstrating or developing an original and considered appreciation of the chosen subject'. 255 Entries were submitted as work prints (no larger than A4). Alteration of the content of photographs—digitally or otherwise—was strictly prohibited. 17 Finalists were selected by a panel of three judges; Mathias Heng, photographer, David Lloyd, Leica representative and Naomi Cass, CCP Director.

The finalists' works are exhibited at the Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP), Fitzroy and will travel to metropolitan and regional galleries from 2005. The exhibition is a celebration of documentary photography and provides a fascinating entry point into the variety of approaches and concerns that characterise documentary photography today.

The *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award* is generously sponsored by Leica and supported by Manfrotto. Education kit prepared by Rachael Watts, Leica Education Coordinator, CCP.

Acknowledgements

Rachael Watts (CCP/Leica Education Coordinator), Naomi Cass (CCP Director), Rebecca Chew (CCP Manager), Karra Rees (Assistant Curator), Estelle Ihász (CCP Designer), Maggie Finch (CCP Gallery Assistant), Simon Cuthbert, Melanie Faith Dove, Samantha Everton and Rachel Osborne (Leica artists)

Planning your visit

Before visiting the gallery with a school group it is suggested that you contact gallery staff to determine the following:

- Opening hours and whether admission fees apply
- Suitability of exhibition content and subject matter for the year level you plan to take to the gallery
- Whether gallery staff are available to give an introductory talk

Information for teachers

This Education Kit is intended as a starting point for generating ideas, discussion and further student research before, during and after visiting the *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*.

Using the education kit and student response sheets

The finalists' photographs have been grouped according to themes. Points for student discussion are included after each theme. The student response sheets are suitable for use in the gallery, and offer starting points for student investigation. The Education Kit addresses the following areas:

- What is Documentary Photography: Historical Context
- A Difficult Terminology: Defining Documentary Photography
- Investigating Themes and Ideas including:
 - Photojournalism
 - Rights of Passage
 - Portraiture
 - Domesticity
 - Life in the City
 - Life Outside the City
- Making Connections: Comparing and Contrasting Artists and Themes
- Glossary of Terms
- References, Resources and Further Research
- Student Response Sheets
- Artists Interviews, Biographies and Question Sheets:
 - Simon Cuthbert
 - Melanie Faith Dove
 - Samantha Everton
 - Rachel Osborne

Feedback

We welcome your evaluation of this Education Kit. Your response will help us to gauge the relevance and usefulness of this resource to your classroom teaching. Please complete the feedback form on page 31 and forward by postal mail to:

Leica Feedback Form
Centre for Contemporary Photography
404 George St
Fitzroy, Victoria
3065

PRE-VISIT DISCUSSION

What is documentary photography?

Since the invention of photography, photographs as documents have had a reputation for representing a situation with truth and accuracy. They communicate directly, cross language barriers, and can convincingly describe events. This reputation for accuracy stems from the invention of photography, in the late 1830s, as a mechanical means to record information that had previously been gathered by hand. Thus 'the camera replaced the topographical draughtsman, the botanical illustrator and any number of patiently anonymous image-makers.'¹ The term 'documentary' was first coined in Britain in the 1920s by filmmaker John Grierson. Many of the films produced under this term examined the lives of little-known people in exotic places, or were used as government propaganda.

The term 'documentary photography' was popularised in the 1930s when photography was used as a tool to record rural and urban poverty in the hope of bringing about social change. However, as this year's *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award* finalists demonstrate, the subject matter of documentary photography is unlimited: it can encompass ritual and celebration; living and working environments; disaster and nature; urban and rural environments; and the whole gamut of human emotions and interpersonal relationships. The best documentary photographs can reveal important information about our world and make us think about the human condition in new ways.

A difficult terminology

Sandy Edwards (documentary photographer and Co-Director Stills Gallery, Sydney) writes; 'photography's terminology has changed and the inherently descriptive terms for different styles have become self-limiting. Words such as 'straight' and 'traditional' as opposed to 'art' photography are totally inadequate. The term 'documentary' itself is widely misunderstood, often confused with its brasher cousin, photojournalism.'² Although there is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography, a range of definitions follow to indicate what might be included in this category.

'Documentary work is ostensibly dispassionate with an ability to tell a story in a visually powerful and economic way.'³

Isobel Crombie, Senior Curator of Photography, National Gallery of Victoria

'Documentary photography and photojournalist/reportage are two ends of the same spectrum with an enormous amount of overlap and shared history.'⁴

Peter Milne, photographer and teacher

¹ Carter Ratcliff, 'Cruel and Tender', *Tate Magazine*, Issue 5, <http://www.tate.org.uk>

² Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p.12.

³ Geoffrey Batchen, 'For the record', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p. 34.

⁴ Sandy Edwards and Virginia Baxter, 'The photoshop', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p. 51.

Investigating themes and ideas in the *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*

Several themes emerge from the exhibition which can provide useful starting points for investigating the documentary series on show, and ways of comparing these works with the work of artists from different times and locations who have explored similar themes. These groupings are not definitive and many of the artists' series could easily fit in several of the thematic groupings. The themes just suggest approaches that might be taken. Students should be encouraged to come up with their own themes based on subject matter explored by photographers in the exhibition.

Photojournalism

'Photojournalism is a particular form of journalism (i.e., the collecting, editing, and presenting of news material for publication or broadcast) that creates images in order to tell a news story. It is now usually understood to refer only to still images, and to refer largely to serious news stories...' <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photojournalism>

'In short it can be said to be a type of 'journalism that presents a story primarily through the use of pictures.' <http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=photojournalism>

Rites of passage

'A rite of passage is a ritual that marks a change in a person's social or sexual status. The term was popularised by the French ethnographer Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957), in the early part of the twentieth century. Further theories were developed in the 1960s by Mary Douglas and Victor Turner.' http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rites_of_passage

'A rite of passage can also be seen as a 'ritual that mark a person's transition from one set of socially identified circumstances to another.'
<http://www.anthro.wayne.edu/ant2100/GlossaryCultAnt.htm>

Portraiture

'A portrait is a painting, photograph, or other artistic representation of a person. Portraits are often simple head shots or mug shots and are not usually overly elaborate or creative. The intent is to show the basic appearance of the person, and occasionally some artistic insight into his or her personality.' <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portraiture>

'Portraiture can also be seen as 'the art of depicting specific human individuals as themselves. The goal (is) to capture the personality of the individual as well as to get a realistic physical likeness.' <http://www.indiana.edu/~w505a/dictionary.html>

Domesticity

'Of or involving the home or family. Related to the household or family.'
http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/score_lessons/lake_arrowhead/files/glossary.htm

'The quality or condition of being domestic. Home life or devotion to it. Domesticities, household affairs.' <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=domesticity>

Life in the city

A lifestyle in a large and densely populated urban area. 'A city is an urban area, differentiated from a town or village by size, population density, importance, or legal status.'
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City>

Life outside the city

Usually defined as a lifestyle in a rural area. 'Rural areas are sparsely settled places away from the influence of large cities and towns. Such areas are distinct from more intensively settled urban and suburban areas, and also from unsettled lands such as outback or wilderness...Rural areas can have an agricultural character...'

Lifestyles in rural areas are different than those in urban areas, mainly because limited services are available. Governmental services like law enforcement, schools, fire departments, and libraries may be distant, limited in scope, or unavailable. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rural>

Making connections

THEMES	Leica/CCP Artist	Title of Series In Exhibition	Contemporary (post 1970) Artist Comparison	Pre-1970 Artist Comparison
Photojournalism	Ashley Gilbertson Andrew Chapman	The American Fighting-Man The Campaign	Trent Parke	David Moore
Rites of Passage	Frances Mocnik Nigel Brennan Jo Grant Paul Blackmore	An Australian Experience of Death Crossroads The Funeral Bra Boys	Carol Jerrems Sally Mann Larry Clark	E.J. Bellocq
Portraiture	Melanie Faith Dove Rachael Cassells	Dogs In The Victorian Community Rocky Brooklyn	Rineke Dijkstra Sue Ford Wolfgang Tillmans Thomas Ruff	Athol Shmith
Domesticity	Phillip Gostelow Tamara Dean Samantha Everton	Visible, Now The Fragility of Childhood Friends-Genna Intercountry Adoption	Martin Parr Martin Healy Aneta Greszy-kowska Jan Smaga	Julia Margaret Cameron Ruth Orkin
Life In the City	David Van Royen Tamara Voninski Nuno Da Costa Simon Cuthbert	Cinema (An Enduring Love) Metropolis Tramming Tokyo: Rhythm & Blues	Nan Goldin Andreas Gursky	Eugene Atget Henri Cartier- Bresson Weegee Wolfgang Sievers Gary Winogrand
Life Outside the City	Narelle Autio Rachel Osborne	Watercolours Infliction	Jitka Hanzlova Stephen Shore	Walker Evans Dorothea Lange Arthur Rothstein

SELECTED ARTISTS

SIMON CUTHBERT INTERVIEW



Simon Cuthbert *Two Blondes Observing Polar Bears* 2003

Can you explain to me how the title for these works came about?

For every series I look for one image that encapsulates the concerns of the body of work. In *Tokyo: Rhythm and Blues* it is the two women; Russians whom I observed in the Tama Zoo. They are captured observing the animals whose institutionalised pacing and *faux* wilderness enclosure is so sad it would make you weep. I spent several days observing these animals with the view of making a large format image while also making several further studies like this one. Zoos contain all the contradictions and paradoxes I seek in my work while also establishing a powerful metaphor for human/nature relationships. I like this photo because of its broader reference to vision. The interaction between the observed and the observer is an exchange of power.

Have you spent much time in Tokyo?

I have only visited Tokyo and Japan the once for a period of six weeks in July and August 2003. My time was spent in central Tokyo where all of these images were made. I didn't travel far outside the JR line (Government rail above ground) except to the airport. My intention was to make a body of large format photographs of nature simulations in public space. I just hit the trains and the sights, making images and having a holiday of sorts for a few weeks.

What are your thoughts about societal trends in Japan at the moment?

The Japanese simultaneously challenge and reinforce most perceptions we have of them. They occupy a unique position in Asia regarding tradition, technology, ideology and Western culture and are complex individuals that value loyalty, honour and trust. To me Japan is not Asia at all, not at least the South-East Asia I am most familiar with. They have isolated themselves through their exploitative practices of natural resources and demonstrate little regard for the natural assets of countries like ours that rely heavily on trade with them. I encountered numerous contradictions when considering the Japanese and notions of heritage and tradition. I think there is a great fear that without tradition they may lose identity because tradition is the only definable Japanese quality. Everything else is a never ending meringue of the soft, cute, and cuddly masking the enormous social problems that exist there.

You say your works in *Tokyo: Rhythm & Blues* explore 'dystopic human relationships' can you elaborate on this?

Nowhere is this more evident than in large cities where large populations contain a percentage of people who fall through the safety nets and find themselves marginalised and without. I was so unprepared for this in Tokyo but it is the lasting impression I have of a place of extremes where around every well cared for, manicured corner there are tangible signs of decay, dispossession and collapse. Much of the imagery examines these sites where human relationships with one another and the natural world are oppositional and contradictory. My work always relies on this tension between these opposed positions. The dynamic that I wanted to establish to create this tension in *Tokyo: Rhythm and Blues* is between the refined, unpeopled, austere built environment and the blatant sense of entropy and despair that is a constant. So rhythm is the order that defines space and blues is the human reality of life in a society like this.

Tokyo: Rhythm & Blues has been described as melancholic and sad depicting a city of sorrow, how would you respond to such a comment? Do you agree?

No, not really. My intention if anything is quite the opposite. The balance of the images, a series of 19 in artists book form, gives a different reading. While an emphasis on the melancholic in this selection may exist it's still the viewer generating the sorrow. I am certainly seeking to engage the viewer's responses with provocative images but they only acknowledge what we know to be there. Photographs are powerful conductors of nostalgia. They bring the past forward to the ever present and remind us of the intractable consequences of time.

My work has always sought a social agenda by recording the indifference of our society through studies of the marginalised in an activist voice. My current art practice continues this through an examination of the loss of local character that marks our global age. Sorrow is unavoidable in this regard and operates alongside a celebration of the reminders of something that is passing.

What do you enjoy most about documentary photography?

I enjoy photography in all its forms and have never been concerned about adhering to any fixed notions regarding the medium and its relationship to reality. I am an artist and utilise whatever means most effective to transmit my ideas. While I enlist tropes of "documentary" production in this work it is done with the view of exploiting the perceived authority and narrative focus of the documentary. The non-subject, the non-event and the totally unremarkable (regardless of how confronting) do not belong within the "documentary" canon because they do not constitute a tangible subject. Despite renewed interest in documentary (analogue) work in the digital age I remain undecided about the practice because of the conflicts that exist when we consider the essential need for its vision to be objective.

SIMON CUTHBERT • QUESTION SHEET

Theme: In The City

Sub-Themes: The everyday, absurdity, globalisation

Do you like Cuthbert's images? Yes/No Why?

What evidence is there in Cuthbert's images of '*nature simulation in public space*'?

Cuthbert states that his work relies on the tension of '*human relationships with one another and the natural world*' in an oppositional and contradictory context. In relation to Japanese culture can you explain what he may mean by this?

What does the title *Tokyo: Rhythm & Blues* relate to?



Using your own knowledge of what you think documentary photography to be, do you agree with Cuthbert's statement that documentary photography needs to have a tangible subject?

What emotion/s do you draw from these images?

MELANIE FAITH DOVE • INTERVIEW



Melanie Faith Dove *Judy & Bille-Bette Royal Melbourne Show 2004*

What made you interested in the relationship between humans and animals, specifically dogs?

I think it's fascinating in our society that dogs are very much part of the home and the family. The reason I liked doing it is that when you approach someone on the street, you can immediately break down the barriers that will often stand between you and a stranger. You can create a conversation about the dog and people don't feel that you are harassing them and tend to open up.

Initially what made me interested in the whole relationship between humans and animals is that I grew up on a farm down near Colac. I've had a close relationship with animals and being in the open space from my earliest memories. When I moved to Melbourne I was really shocked. I started to see how different life is in the city, and how disjointed people in the city are in terms of being connected to primary resources like where does your meat or eggs come from, so I started to focus on that in my work.

I also worked at the Melbourne zoo while I was studying in 1994 and 1995. This gave me a warped perspective on how we view animals in our society especially exotic animals and how they are exhibited giving me a whole different perspective.

Are you an animal lover yourself? Do you have any dogs of your own?

Yes I'm a definite animal lover, a lot of the time I'd rather spend time being around animals than with people ...

I have two dogs of my own and they are part of the family ... I've got pet cows, I go back to my parents house and I'm forever out in the paddock patting the cows, that's my relaxation, that's my meditation ... getting out of the city ... I am a bit of an animal lover.

What did you want your audience to take away from these images?

I wanted people to take away the idea that the dogs are very much part of our whole landscape as a society. Often they are the closest companion that people can have like in the case of Patricia and Comes and Steve and Jemma. And I also wanted to present the quirky nature of dogs and what makes the whole relationship between people and dogs actually work.

I sort of wanted to bring in a sort of cross section of how they come together but also just how passionate people are about their dogs...whether it be the show dog or the kelpie, people invest so much time and effort into their dogs

Is it true that you ask permission and maintain contact with individuals that you photograph? Why do you think this is important? Can you tell me how you approach people?

In approaching all of the people, the approach is always different. I try and ascertain the situation and how someone might feel about being photographed, so it is always on an individual basis. In the case of Steve and Jemma, I actually saw them on the street a few days prior to photographing that image. I stopped and went and spoke to Steve about what I was doing and asked him if he minded being photographed. A few days later I just went and set up in the middle of the street. He was aware I was there because the dog was so focused in on me, it took ages for that dog to relax and there's only a few images where that dog is actually going to sleep.

In all cases I get their permission to use the photographs. One, because you never know if you're going to see them again or be able to find them again, and two, I also get their permission so I can exhibit or publish the images; it's like a consent form in a way.

I get everyone's' addresses and contact details also so that I can send them a copy of the best photos and either deliver it to them or in most cases send it and then just keep in contact that way.

Your photographs seem very honest and at times comical was this your intention?

Yes, definitely, in a lot of my work. If you ask anyone what type of photographic work I do, they would say it definitely has a focus on the absurd and the humorous nature.

Do you have a favourite image in this suite of photographs? If yes, why?

My favourite is Patricia and Comes in that house. I was just driving along and saw her walking looking a million dollars, with the make-up and everything. When I saw her in the street I had a vision of what her home would look like and when I actually saw it, it was exactly how I pictured it, even to the point of the cushion of the dog, it was so quirky.

Do you align your work with photojournalism?

Whilst I don't consider myself a "hard photojournalist" the thing I appreciate and admire about photojournalism is it's ability to inform the viewer. As we know it has the power to move us emotionally and bring about social and political change. So as much as I enjoy the act of partaking in documenting the world around me, it is the way it is used in the wider context that inspires me.

What do you like about the genre of documentary photography?

The main thing I love about it is the sheer buzz you get out of it, it's almost like an addiction. When you go out to shoot you don't know what you're going to come back with, if at all anything. When you see something that you just know is the photograph, there is an intense excitement of seeing that scenario unfold and it's over within seconds.

It is a great sense of achievement but it's like a found image going to a bric-a-brac store; you are out hunting for something but you don't really know what you're hunting for. There's always something more out there, it's never-ending.

It is also an experience, you've met people, you've got a story to tell not just with an image but with a story. You have taken yourself outside of your whole comfort zone, and gone to a place you never would have probably gone, if you hadn't had the motivation of taking your camera. Melbourne becomes a smaller place for me day-by-day, wherever I go it's pretty much certain I will see someone I know.

MELANIE FAITH DOVE • QUESTION SHEET

Theme: Portraiture

Sub-Themes: Animals, relationships, absurdity, humour, photojournalism

I grew up on a farm down near Colac. I've had a close relationship with animals and being in the open space from my earliest memories.

Do you think Dove's upbringing in a rural area has encouraged her to pursue the subject matter of the relationship between humans and animals, specifically dogs? Why?

Do you think Dove's love of animals is displayed in her work? How? (Provide an example)

Do you relate to any of these images? How/Why?

Do you think Dove is trying to find her own connectedness and community through her practice? Explain?

Why do you think it is important for Dove to ask permission in approaching her subjects?
(Keeping in mind issues of ethics)

Dove has been able to find and experience fascinating images and stories by investigating her surrounding environment. Does this encourage you to observe everyday things differently? Explain using one of her images as an example.

SAMANTHA EVERTON • INTERVIEW



Samantha Everton *Intercountry Adoption* 2003

Can you tell me a little about your personal interest in the issue of intercountry adoption?

For me it's very topical. There are around 13 million abandoned children in all conditions around the world and only one per cent of these usually end up in a home with a family. I wanted to show from the other side of it what it's like for an adopted child to be in a family in Australia and I particularly wanted to show the mix of cultures in this family.

I actually also come from an intercountry adopted family. I have three brothers and sisters from Thailand, Vietnam and part Indonesian, part Vietnamese. This is quite a personal essay/documentary, having grown up with the questions of 'is she really your sister?' I just wanted to show that it doesn't matter where family comes from, it's a feeling not a birth right.

How did you approach the Reeds? (The family depicted in the series)

I contacted the department of human services in Victoria who deal with intercountry adoption and went through the official ranks, left them my details and asked them if they could think of any families that might be interested. They came up with three or four families and they passed on my details. At the end of the day, it came down to two families who were willing to let me into their home and I met with both and the Reeds were more than happy for me to photograph them.

Can you explain what the situation here in Australia is in relation to intercountry adoption?

In Australia there is something called the Hague Convention which was set up by the United Nations in 1993, and with that Australia only deals with countries that have signed the ratification of the Hague Convention for the protection of children. This means that in Australia, you can only adopt a child from overseas if you go through the right channels, being government; there's no such thing as private intercountry adoptions.

Intercountry adoption is by no means the best option for the children and all other avenues are tried beforehand. People say you're taking them out of their culture but I don't feel a street life or life in an orphanage is a culture or healthy lifestyle. If that's their only option for the sake of being in their own country, then intercountry adoption is, I think, a better option.

What was your intention when taking these photos?

To show that Min (the adopted child) is well adjusted, to show that it doesn't really matter where you come from or your skin colour, once you're in a family you grow up together. For instance my sister who's Vietnamese, we have the same mannerisms, people get us confused on the phone. You become part of the family by growing up with them.

I just wanted to show that there is no question once this has taken place that the adopted children have a good life. I do however, believe that it's individual and some adopted children do have issues when they get older or could be raised in a family to which something bad happens. So it's not always happily ever after for everybody. However, the chances of a good or bad experience are just as likely as if you're born into the family.

Is there anything specific you wanted your audience to take away from these works?

I guess probably the intimacy of the family and naturalness. I didn't want the images to appear staged, rather to appear candid, that I was just a fly on the wall. The images seem to be looking into the family; you look at the photos and you feel like you are in the family, rather than being a spectator.

It was very important for me to get to know the family for a number of months before I took the photos so I could express this intimacy in the photos. This series took six months to produce from beginning to end. To be a documentary photographer you have to dedicate a lot of time. With photojournalism you turn up and take the shot; with documentary you become involved. A documentary can take anywhere from three months to six months to a year in completing it, plus the preparation time. You really need to research and know your subject beforehand to make them feel comfortable and to show your respect for them.

What do you think sets your photography apart from the others in the award?

I guess it's probably a bit more emotional than some of them. Sentimental is another word that comes to mind. One thing that I had in my series that I didn't see elsewhere was that mine was a bit more of a story, there was a beginning and an end and this even came across physically in the way that it was exhibited as well.

I noticed that most of the entries were in colour as opposed to black and white.

If I used colour it would have been distracting to view the images. I guess it made everyone uniform in the photos, everyone equal. If I used colour the differences would be more prominent. Instead, there are just shades and tones rather than blonde hair and dark hair.

What do you think is the most important aspect about your practice?

I think in this instance, relating to the family, that is probably the toughest barrier. It comes down to time and respect. The more research that you do and the greater the understanding you have of their situation and what you are documenting, the more comfortable they are with you. At the end of the day those actual shots will take a couple of minutes to do. It's not about the action of doing the shots or the instant that you take it, it's about the lead up to it and the research and the time you put into getting that image. You need to get to know the subjects before you can capture their intimate moments.

Also, I always follow-up by giving my subjects a copy of the photo and keep up with them afterwards, I send them copies and keep them informed of exhibitions and sometimes ongoing friendships develop out of it. For Min in particular, knowing her situation and how she came to Australia, I actually got some Chinese material and made a box and hand printed these images and wrapped them with a red ribbon in a box and gave them to her Mum to give to her when she turns 18. I think it's really important for the photographer to give back because I guess you're taking something in a way.

SAMANTHA EVERTON • QUESTION SHEET

Theme: Domesticity

Sub-Themes: Intercountry adoption, love, emotion, family, nostalgia

Do you think Everton's personal investment in the issue of intercountry adoption is evident in her works?

I guess it's probably a bit more emotional than some of them (the other series'). Sentimental is another word that comes to mind

Do you agree with the above statement? Yes/No Why?

Has Everton's work helped you to understand/form or alter your opinion of the issue of intercountry adoption? Explain.

List five words from the interview that describe this suite of works.



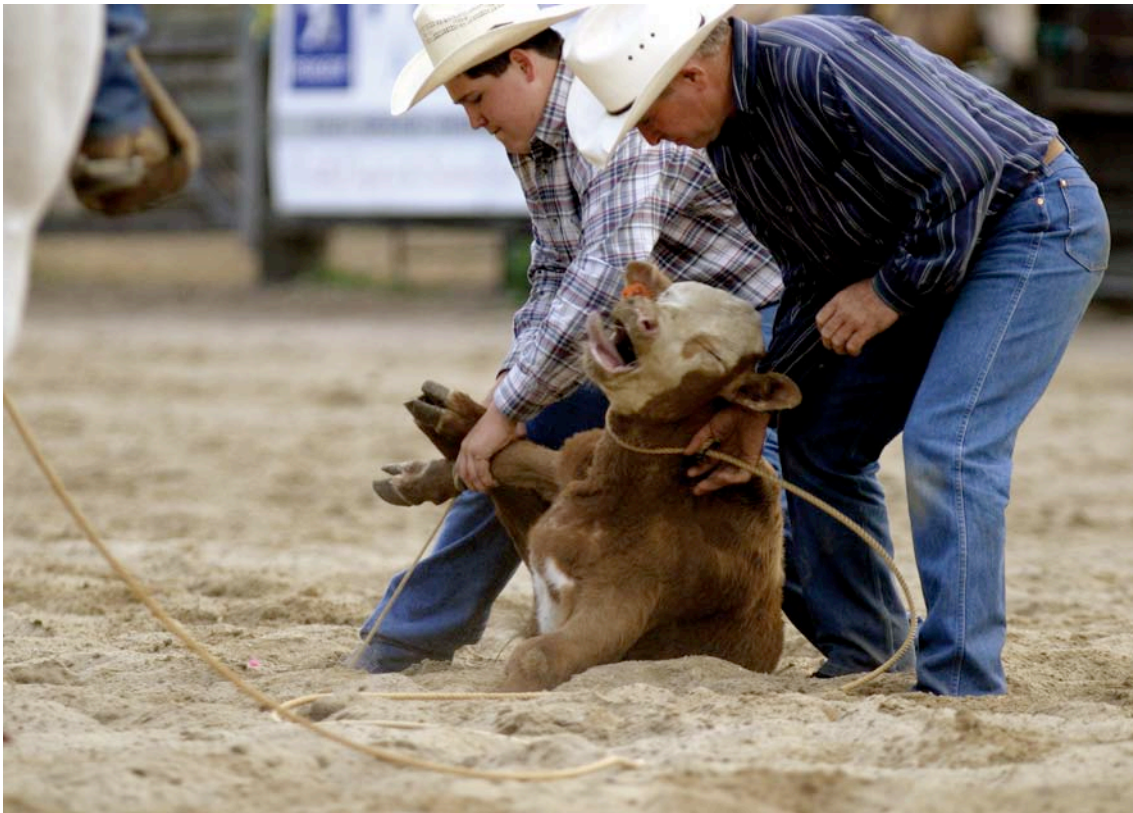
Why was it important for Everton to get to know the Reed family before she photographed them?



Why did Everton select to use black and white as opposed to colour in her works?



RACHEL OSBORNE • INTERVIEW



Rachael Osborne *Infliction* 2004

Can you tell us a little about your artistic background?

I have wanted to be a photographer for as long as I can remember. I have recently completed my Bachelor of Photography at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University and I majored in Photo Journalism. My dream (like everyone else) is to work for *National Geographic*.

What attracted you to document rodeos initially?

My approach to photography has often involved capturing the moment in sporting events. For this particular body of work I chose to photograph rodeos around Queensland because of the high action involved in the sport. Along the way I found myself concerned for the animals involved in the rodeos.

Can you explain why you chose the title *Infliction* for your suite of works?

I think *Infliction* really sums up what is happening to the animals in my work, they look as though they are inflicted with pain.

Do you enjoy going to the rodeo? What do you think people get out of going to such an event?

The rodeo is an action-packed adrenaline pumping sport. As much as I can see how people enjoy watching, I just can't get past the fact that some of the events harm the animals.

Do you think the rodeo has a valid place in society?

I do think it has a valid place in society however, I just think they should maybe look at changing some of the events to safeguard the animals against damage.

Can you explain the rodeo culture in Queensland?

Rodeos in Queensland attract the fans, stock contractors, and competitors from around the state to come together. These people are often from the country, however people from the city also attend for something different to see.

Do you think those involved in rodeos feel defensive towards your images? Or do they like them?

In general, I found that only particular events in the rodeo seemed harmful, so I guess the people involved in the events portrayed in my photos may feel defensive because they might not agree that the animals suffer. The expression on the animals' faces makes it very clear that they are in pain, so hopefully this may reveal to those involved that something needs to be done.

Are there welfare standards in place for the animals at all?

There are welfare standards in place that rodeos must abide by and it is often ensured that the contenders follow these standards by undercover officers from the animal liberation. In my experience, some rodeos were more brutal to the animals than others. I found that as soon as my camera came out, the contenders would tone down the way they were treating the animals.

There is a strong sentiment of empathy towards the animals in your works, would you call yourself a pacifist?

Not a pacifist as such, but I do think animals need to be treated fairly and given a voice where required.

As an artist working in the genre of social documentary, how impartial do you feel you are in relation to this suite of works and the compassion towards animals in general?

I feel very strongly about animals and cruelty against them, it definitely played a key factor in choosing this theme.

Are you an animal lover yourself? Do you have animals at home?

I have a dog, three cats and two fish so I guess you could say I am an animal lover.

What do you want your audience to take away from your images?

I would like the audience to see what I saw at these rodeos and that was animal cruelty. If I can get at least one person that has seen my work to get up and leave a rodeo that is harmful towards an animal, then I guess I have started to make a difference.

RACHEL OSBORNE • QUESTION SHEET

Theme: Outside the City

Sub-Themes: Agriculture, outdoor activities, the outback

The rodeo is an action packed-adrenaline pumping sport. As much as I can see how people enjoy watching I just can't get past the fact that some of the events harm the animals.

In regards to the above statement do you think Osborne's images reflect this description?

What do you think was Osborne's main reason for creating this series?

Do you think Osborne has made an overt statement through her images or do you think as the artist, she has remained passive? Explain.

Infliction literally means:

1. *The act or process of imposing or meting out something unpleasant.*
2. *Something, such as punishment, that is inflicted.*

Taking the above definition into account, how does the title relate to this body of work?

What do you like or dislike about these images? Explain.

Osborne has said that:

If I can get at least one person that has seen my work to get up and leave a rodeo that is harmful towards an animal, then I guess I have started to make a difference

Do you think these images have made this type of impact on you? Yes/No Why?

POST-VISIT DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

General discussion and reflection

Was the exhibition similar or different to what you expected?

What were the most interesting and least interesting aspects of the exhibition?

What new ideas did you discover about photography?

What questions would you like to ask the judges who selected these artists?

What do you think you will remember most about your visit to the *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*?

Written activities

Ask students to write a review of the *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award* for the school newsletter including an overview of the exhibition and their personal response to at least three photographers' work.

- Ask students to select a body of work that they are interested in as the basis for a mini presentation to the class. Here they can highlight formal aspects of the images in terms of composition, line, shading and so forth. They can also conduct some research on that particular artist that may assist in understanding more about the works such as: why that particular subject matter was chosen, why certain elements were focused on and others weren't and so on.

Practical activities

- Following the *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award* visit and a discussion about what students have learnt about art and documentary photography, ask students to select a theme from the exhibition as a basis for making an artwork. Ask them to write something about the ideas they have explored in their work.
- After discussing the genre of documentary photography explore and suggest to students other major documentary photographers (the grid may help on page six) as a basis for each student in creating a documentary style artwork. Ask them to write something about the influences affecting the creation of their work.

Photography project 'Between four and seven pm'

- Ask students to purchase a disposable camera. Assign a week whereby students can select a weeknight *between four and seven pm* to take photos of their surrounding environment, establishing a documentary of their own lives and routines.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Analogue

Analogue media store information through some kind of transcription which transfers the configuration of one physical material into an analogous arrangement in another. Traditional photochemical photography is an example of an analogue media.

Canon

A rule or especially body of rules or principles generally established as valid and fundamental in a field or art or philosophy

Cibachrome

A process by which a photographic print is made directly from a colour transparency. Noted for rich colour, brilliant clarity and unprecedented archival quality for colour prints.

Cropping

Where sections of the subject are cut off by the edge of the image. This can be done via the camera viewfinder when taking the photograph or during the printing process by discarding unwanted sections of the image. When photographs are reproduced they can also be changed by cropping sections of them to fit the publication's needs.

Digital imaging

Image forming by a digital, electronic device; in photography as opposed to a chemical based system.

Digital

Digital refers to the binary code that is readable by computers. Computers convert representations of analogue media into this numerical code via the process of 'digitalisation'.

Digital inkjet print

Digital printing that produces images directly to the material (can be canvas or special paper surfaces) from a digital file through a stream of very fine dye drops controlled by the computer system. For example a 35mm transparency is scanned into a computer and then printed from digital files onto the canvas using an inkjet printer.

Entropy

The negative decay and degeneration of matter.

Fibere based paper

Photographic paper without a resin coating. Processing times are longer than for other papers, but the paper is more archivally permanent.

Ideology

A relatively coherent system of values, beliefs, or ideas shared by some social group and often taken for granted as natural or inherently true.

Inkjet printing

A broad term for four colour (CMYK) printing in which liquid inks are sprayed onto the receiving material in very fine droplets not visible to the naked eye. Inkjet printers can print onto a variety of materials, although not as broad a range as is possible through iris printers.

Iris printer

A large-format color printer from the Iris Graphics division of CreoScitex that is used for digital proofing. Iris printers use a patented continuous ink jet technology to produce consistent, continuous-tone, photorealistic output on several varieties of paper, canvas, silk, linen and other low-fiber textiles.

Iris prints

Made from an IRIS 3047 printer, achieves a perceived (to the eye) resolution of 1800 dpi. It has the largest color gamut of any inkjet printer. It is the recognized standard for fine art digital printing. Iris prints are widely noted for their color accuracy and ability to match printing and proofing standards. They are also known for their low-cost consumables compared to other technologies.

Lambda prints

Lambda colour prints are made on a Durst Lambda printer which uses three colored lasers to expose traditional photographic media. These prints have the advantage of using the same rich RGB color space employed by computer monitors. In addition, these prints are free of dots since unlike inkjet printers, the laser outputs are continuously modulated rather than switched on and off. Their resolution is comparable to 1200 dpi screened output.

Lightjet print

The CSI LightJet 5000 printer exposes a digital image directly to photographic paper or film using red, green and blue laser beams. The resulting images are processed through traditional photographic chemistry. The RES16 resolution printing results in what is arguably the sharpest, highest fidelity printing available today.

Nostalgia

Longing for something past.

Photography

'Drawing' and 'writing' by means of light (from the Greek photos meaning light and graphos meaning writing) term suggested by Sir John Herschel to William Fox Talbot in 1839.

Photojournalism

Differs from straight documentary photography in that events are more openly interpreted by the photographer, or newspaper and are often accompanied by a story.

Selenium

Light-sensitive substance which, when used in a barrier-layer construction, generates electrical current when exposed to light. Used in exposure meters.

Silver gelatin prints

All prints made on true black and white paper are silver gelatin prints. The term originally came from B&W film, which is made with tiny platelets of silver called silver-halide gelatin. The same silver-halide gelatin is used in making all true black and white papers.

Type C print

Type C printing involves printing colour paper enlargements from small, colour negatives. This is the most common type of colour printing found in the high street and mini labs.

REFERENCES, RESOURCES AND FURTHER RESEARCH

- Cartier-Bresson, Henri, *The Mind's Eye/Writings on Photography and Photographers*, Aperture (New York, 1999)
- *Documentary Photography* (USA: Time Life International Inc, 1973)
- Langford, Michael, *Story of Photography, from its beginnings to the present day* (Oxford: Focal Press, 1997)
- Simpson, Colin and Williams, Don, *Art Now, Contemporary Art Post 1970* (Roseville: McGraw Hill, 1994)
- Soloman-Godeau, Abigail, "Who is Speaking Thus? Some Questions About Documentary Photography", *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, Practices* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1991)
- Sontag, Susan, *On Photography* (USA: Penguin Books, 1977)

PERIODICALS

- *Modern Painters*, v16 no3 (Autumn 2003)
- *Photofile*, issue 55 (November 1998), issue 58 (December 1999), issue 62 (April 2001) and issue 76 (Summer 2006) p. 69.

CATALOGUES

- *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Exhibition and Award* (Melbourne: CCP/Leica, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005)
- *Photographica Australis* (Sydney: Australian Centre for Photography, 2002)

WEBSITES

- CCP (Centre for Contemporary Photography) <http://www.ccp.org.au>
- Eyestorm <http://www.eyestorm.com> (Electronic journal concerning photography includes an excellent glossary of photographic terms)
- Magnum www.magnumphotos.com (Magnum Photos is an online photographic co-operative owned by its photographer-members, providing photographs to the press, publishers, advertising, television, galleries and museums across the world)
- Stills Gallery <http://www.stillsgallery.com.au> (a wide variety of photographers' works can be viewed on line)
- The Art and Science of Photography <http://www.photography.about.com> (includes a wide range of subjects such as darkroom techniques, documentary photography, photojournalism, photomontage, terms and links to related sites)
- VCEART.COM <http://www.vceart.com> (A site focusing on VCE Art and Studio Art student learning outcomes. The site provides background into thirteen contemporary artists' ideas and inspiration, use of materials and techniques, and professional practice issues)



FEEDBACK FORM

We are keen to hear your thoughts on our Education Kit, and are grateful for your time in assisting us in improving our education services by completing and returning this form to CCP.

Please print this form and forward by post to:

Leica Education Kit
Centre for Contemporary Photography
404 George Street
Fitzroy 3065 Victoria

Please tick boxes and add comments

1. How would you best describe yourself?

- Tertiary art teacher, teaching level
- I am a practicing artist/photographer
- Tertiary art student, studying year level
- I am a studying studio arts in the following art form.....

2. Overall, I found the FIFTH LEICA/CCP DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD EDUCATION KIT has been **useful** in enhancing my understanding of the exhibition

- Agree
- Disagree
- Comment.....

3. Overall, I found the EDUCATION KIT **easy** x understand

- Agree
- Disagree
- Comment.....

4. Overall, I found the EDUCATION KIT **effective** for teaching or studying purposes

- Agree
- Disagree
- Comment.....

5. I found the following sections particularly effective for teaching or studying purposes

.....

6. General comments

.....

7. My postcode is:

Thank you for your comments!