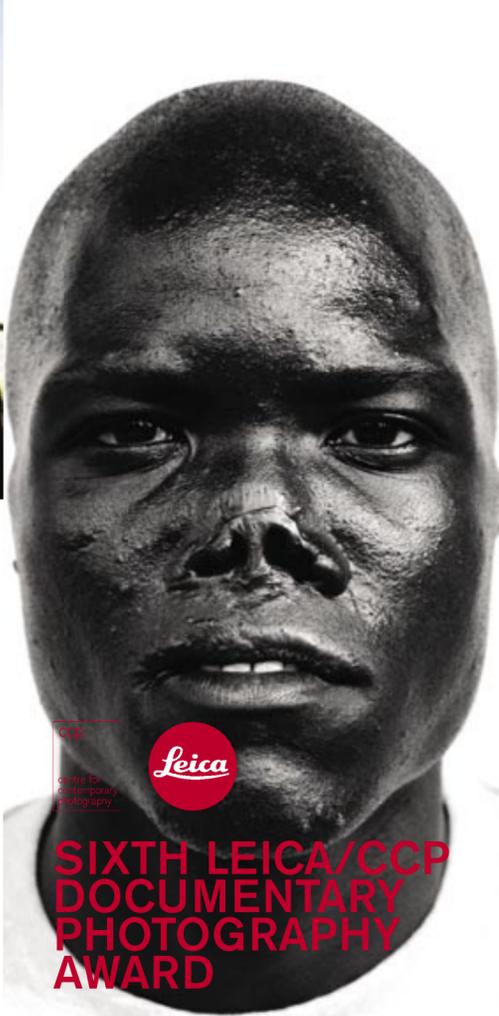


MICHAEL AMENDOLIA  
CARA BOWERMAN  
JAMES BRICKWOOD  
ANTHONY DAWTON  
STEPHEN DUPONT  
SEAN HOBBS  
JESSE MARLOW  
NATALIE McCOMAS  
MATTHEW NEWTON  
LAKI SIDERIS  
STEVEN SIEWERT  
DOUG SPOWART+VICTORIA COOPER  
EMMA THOMSON  
TAMARA VONINSKI  
TOM WILLIAMS  
LISA WILTSE



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COVER IMAGE: Sean Hobbs, from the series *The Honor of War (Guns)*. Published by CCP © August 2007

**EMMA THOMSON**  
THE HOMEMAKERS

These six photographs are a selection from a series made in 2006, titled *The Homemakers*, my latest series documenting the lives of middle-class Sydneysiders living in suburbia. Shot in a documentary style, I selected a particular setting from the subjects' home to capture a scene from their daily life. My aim was to capture an emotion evoked from their relationship as a couple, as they performed routine activities in their environments. I am particularly interested in highlighting certain gestures and mannerisms developed from being in a relationship with the same person over a period of time. I wanted to explore the banality of daily life, with an almost anthropological approach.

Emma Thomson lives and works in Sydney. She has exhibited in a number of national group exhibitions and has held two solo shows in Sydney. She has won several awards and prizes including the *Tim Storrier NAS Paris Studio Residency* and the *Joel Corriegan Memorial Prize for Photography*.

**TAMARA VONINSKI**  
L'HIVER

A winter season in the darkness of the City of Light where each day is like a dream sequence with my eyes wide open. *Paris, J'adore les ombres...*

This series was made possible by the Art Gallery of New South Wales during an artist residency at Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris.

Tamara Voninski lives and works in Sydney. She is a founding member of Oculi, a collective of Australian photographers ([www.oculi.com.au](http://www.oculi.com.au)), and is represented by Agence Vu, Paris and Redux, New York. She has won several prestigious awards and received a number of grants. Her photographs have been exhibited both nationally and internationally.

**TOM WILLIAMS**  
LA SANTA MUERTE (SAINT OF DEATH)

La Santa Muerte cult has existed in Mexico since the late 1960s but only emerged as a visible part of the cultural landscape around five years ago. Believers, most of them from the poorest and most violent areas of Mexico City, worship an effigy of Death in the form of a female skeleton and seek her help and protection. Mainstream Catholics see the cult as a dangerous underground superstition and associate it with crime, drugs and magic, but increasingly the sect is attracting young, struggling working families who have lost faith in major political and religious institutions.

Tom Williams lives and works in Sydney. He is a freelance photographer who has participated in many national group exhibitions and recently held solo shows at Wollongong City Gallery and in Guatemala City. His work is held in the State Library of New South Wales collection.

**LISA WILTSE**  
MAKING UP THE NUMBERS IN WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES

The Aboriginal population of Western New South Wales is growing for the first time since white settlement, despite persisting high mortality rates. For some of these people, issues such as alcoholism, unemployment and access to education are still barriers. As with any new generation, there are often new challenges to overcome.

These images were taken in the small towns of Goodooga, Brewarrina, Walgett, Wilcannia and Bourke. The series aims to capture aspects of daily life in these communities.

Lisa Wiltse lives and works in Sydney. She is a photojournalist for the Sydney Morning Herald specialising in humanitarian issues. She has won several awards including a first prize in the FX3 Prix de la Photographie, Paris and the Oxfam Humanitarian Award. She has exhibited in Sydney, and in Texas, USA.

**FOREWARD**

The *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award* has played a significant role in the history of Leica and documentary photography in Australia over the past ten years. Through the productive partnership between Adeal, Leica's Australian agents, and Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP), documentary photography has been given a regular, professional and national presence over this period.

Open to Australian citizens and residents, the *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award* encourages and fosters Australian photography, and Adeal is proud to be associated with CCP.

Documentary photography has been strongly associated with the Leica tradition since 1913, when the company released the first 35mm camera. This was reinforced in 1954 with release of the famous M series rangefinder camera. This tradition continues almost unchanged today with the MP, M7 and now the digital M8 camera. Current models use the same lens system as originally released in 1954. Leica has been critical to the history of photography with many renowned photographers using Leica, such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Lee Friedlander, Diane Arbus, Nan Goldin and Tim Page to name a few.

Through the exhibition, tour and award, Leica and Adeal place great importance in the support of contemporary photography. Awarding a magnificent Leica M8 camera and 28mm lens to the winning essay, we hope to inspire and encourage documentary photography in Australia now and into the future.

Adeal would like to thank the participating photographers, the public galleries that host the national tour and Centre for Contemporary Photography for their commitment to the project. We would also like to warmly thank this year's judging panel: Kelly Gellatly, Christopher Köller and Kyla McFarlane. And finally, I would like to thank Helen Frajman for her continuing commitment to the Award.

**Carl Jones** Leica Product Manager, Adeal P/L

**RETURN OF THE REPRESSED: DOCUMENTARY AND ART**

The *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award* has provided a regular and unique platform for both the exhibition and debate surrounding documentary photography in Australia. Initiated in 1997 by Stuart Koop, then CCP Director and Mark Cummins from Adeal, Leica's Australian agents, the Award traces lines of argument surrounding documentary, its relationship to the world and contemporary art more generally.

On a biennial basis CCP makes a public call for submissions and receives proposals that are considered by a panel of judges, which changes with each exhibition. Proposals are invited for a series of images and photographers submit a short statement about the work that accompanies its exhibition. Since 2005 it has been stipulated that the work is not digitally altered in ways beyond what is possible in a darkroom context. Proposals are selected blind and the resulting exhibition and national tour represent a broad range of well-known and emerging photographers, nourishing not only those in the field but public engagement with this popular form. A catalogue is published for each Award, providing regular and spirited discussion of the often contested and controversial definitions of documentary.

Now in its tenth year, this exhibition and tour provides opportunity to not only engage with current practice but also to reflect upon its recent past, as the oracle at Delphi decreed from the Temple of

Apollo, *know thyself*.

A consistent observation across the history of the Award is that in spite of predictions as to its demise, documentary photography has weathered various storms such as postmodernism, the advent of colour, digitalisation, the ubiquity of images, diminishing commissions and publishing opportunities, and the recent phenomenon of the citizen photojournalist. Documentary photography is blessed with an adoring and faithful public. Against this constant however, is a remarkable and changing relationship between documentary and art photography.

In 1997, for the inaugural exhibition Helen Ennis reflected upon the faltering of documentary photography in the 1980s, to which she ascribed a number of causes. Firstly a critique of the form from within, "documentary photography stigmatises groups of people, perpetuates a sort of exoticism...and has an eye only for the symptoms and not for the causes".<sup>1</sup> Additionally, she argued that from outside, postmodernism made black and white photography look "distinctly old-fashioned".<sup>2</sup> Postmodernism challenged the notion of a universal, objective truth central to a traditional understanding of documentary, while digital imaging profoundly challenged the form through "undermining the much prized nexus (between documentary) and the real".<sup>3</sup>

In her passionate accompanying essay Helen Frajman also attended to the reasons documentary seemed "pushed to the margins in recent times", and argued that this cannot be fully explained by "the shrinking market opportunities for published work (in magazine or book form)", or impact of the critical onslaught summarised by Helen Ennis.<sup>4</sup> Frajman pointed to a kind of crisis of courage by practitioners, "Ultimately", she writes, "there is no difference between this 'documentary art' and the endless gaudy ribbons of commercially generated images which choke us daily".<sup>5</sup> Frajman calls for engagement with the world for "a visually satisfying, open ended meditation on life...[with] narrative cohesion".<sup>6</sup>

In 1999 Clare Williamson captured the vagaries of the term documentary and its extension, almost in spite of the theoretical misconception that the form "is now ineffectual". Documentary she wrote, "makes its home where it can, in art museums, public libraries, books, journals and newspapers, adapting itself each time to the house rules that apply".<sup>7</sup> Williamson addressed the slippage between documentary and art photography asserting that the success of much of the work in the Award "stems from an ability to operate on dual levels of art and information", that a photograph can inhabit either camp, according to its exhibited, collected or published context.<sup>8</sup>

Ultimately Williamson found that effective or arresting documentary photography is so because it holds our attention within the maelstrom of electronic media, and that it is deliberately biased, "[documentary's] intention is to influence, move or surprise, not just to inform".<sup>9</sup>

In his plea for pluralism and acceptance of documentary photography as art, Peter Milne argued that documentary differs significantly from photojournalism because it is "concerned with universals, with resonant themes and at times with the very contradictions that make a nonsense out of 'objective' reporting of the truth".<sup>10</sup>

Two years later, Tessa Dwyer and Edward Colless addressed documentary as a "fluid and contested genre" in the postmodern era.<sup>11</sup> Against the "clamour of contested theories, multinational advertising campaigns and the ever increasing pace of digital development", Dwyer observed that documentary photographs "speak directly to their audience", that documentary continues to "fascinate, to

stir deep emotions and to act as an instigator for social and political change".<sup>12</sup> For Dwyer, documentary is a broad rubric rather than a tight definition guiding practice.

In his accompanying essay *Bitch*, Colless posed the question, if all photography is documentary, how might documentary be a genre or special mode of photography? While documentary's moral mission is inescapable, for Colless what distinguishes documentary is its heightened relationship with the real, and "since all photography deals with the real, documentary photography will be spectacularly real".<sup>13</sup> Which leads Colless to the conundrum (the *bitch* of his title) that our judgement of a documentary photograph's efficacy involves the image convincing us of everything that spectacle excludes, namely its relationship to the real.

Tessa Dwyer paved the way for a change in approach by arguing that audiences were impressed with documentary because it seems to speak over and above the surrounding critical discourse.<sup>14</sup> Therefore in 2003, Nikos Papastergiadis moved beyond epistemological issues to examine how documentary photography works upon the viewer, in his essay *The Space for Reflection*.<sup>15</sup> For Papastergiadis, looking at documentary photography is a nostalgic often melancholic act, indeed it is an act of narcissism, wherein we find something of ourselves, "photography has offered a powerful mirror to capture the gaze". Focus for this obsession, Papastergiadis observed, is the human face that dominates documentary photography.

"Slippery and testy" is how Kyla McFarlane described definitions of documentary, in her essay *Attending to the Real: Documentary Photography Now*.<sup>16</sup> Commencing with the actual photographs she asks what does documentary look like now. Citing Solomon-Godeau's landmark essay of 1991, where documentary is declared to mean *just about everything and just about nothing*—and considering the work selected for that year's exhibition—McFarlane proposed that documentary is that which "attends to the real and to lived experience".<sup>17</sup> In doing so she argued, documentary is dislodged from its duty to replicate, giving it greater and acknowledged 'artistic licence' to respond as active and malleable, where construct and document can legitimately sit alongside each other in their shared task to 'attend to the real'.

Traditional documentary is currently challenged by the advent of the 'citizen photographer', who with a hand held mobile phone is often the first at the scene to make the decisive, if not well-crafted record. If the advent of citizen photojournalist and the parallel reduction of space for documentary photography in specialist magazines and newspapers has meant the thrust of documentary into the domain of the art gallery; if documentary photography is now *late photography*, not that which *got there first*, then documentary moves closer to art photography, if not in intention, then certainly in its exhibition, craft and consumption.

Conversely art photography, which also emerged from postmodernism a little lost, now moves closer to documentary photography. As TJ Demos wrote in his essay *The Ends of Photography*, "Far from being obsolete, photography has returned with a vengeance as a distinct medium, with practitioners reinventing one of its traditional forms, the documentary image".<sup>18</sup> Leaving aside problems associated with the term, its free use within Demos' discussion assures us that 'attending to the real' works well within a wide range of photographic contexts, aesthetics and technologies.

Demos argued further that despite more recent forecasts of the demise of photographic truth in the face of digitalisation, current documentary practitioners refuse to give up the belief that

photography is capable of penetrating deeply into reality's web, as Walter Benjamin claimed long ago.<sup>19</sup> A more acknowledged and functioning relationship between documentary and unashamedly subjective devices brings to contemporary art photography an ethical engagement with the world, courtesy of documentary, along with creative strategies, once banished from the term documentary.

Indeed, some of the most arresting work presented in this year's Venice Biennale, Documenta and Sculpture Projects Münster demonstrated a strong documentary focus. For example in her installation as part of the Australian contingent of the Venice Biennale, Susan Norrie made profound use of documentary and fiction in her screen based installation *HAVOC*. For Norrie digital imaging enabled her to blur fact and fiction, to explore and expand upon the impact of compelling documentary images. Mercifully, deceiving the audience never seemed to be her intent; she has too much respect for her subject to manipulate the audience.

While in the past documentary and art photography have distinguished themselves as *a priori* unrelated, in 2007 it is possible to see how in practice these forms nourish rather than repel each other.

Simple in conception but profound in its effect, **Laki Sideris'** photo essay concerns the "continuous and inexhaustible parade, a continually evolving face of China".<sup>20</sup> This study of private contemplation within public space arises from Sideris' documentation of cyclists on the streets of Beijing. Carefully framing only the upper body, the bike is not visible. Weight is focused down through the shoulders, supporting heads deep in thought. Most striking is the stillness Sideris finds in movement. Engaged in ordinary activity, there is beauty in these figures with natural and artificial light softly articulating their faces, unaware of the photographer. Daytime riders are framed by painterly unfocused foliage in the background and night time riders are framed with artificial light that gently reveals form, texture and human expression.

**Jesse Marlow** also finds plenty of action on suburban streets. But it's not the decisive action worthy of world or even local news. In this essay Marlow transforms small utilitarian acts into intriguing formal and at times poetic compositions. Suburban architecture is the silent partner in amusing tableaux—where the picture plane is shallow, the scale is human, and primary colours perform like spirited characters across the series. Drawn to the "banality of modern day existence", Marlow skillfully crafts what you and I might easily miss during our sojourn through the streets.<sup>21</sup>

*Birthday Wishes* documents the fraught expectations surrounding the commercialisation of the child's birthday party. **Natalie McComas'** photographic essay is conceived of to be read with the accompanying text, making an important distinction between art and documentary photography, whereby her research is evident and part of the meaning of the series. Indeed the synthetic intensity of the colours and textures—fried food, plastic, artificial cream sponge and swim costume fabric—is heightened by the controlled experiment undertaken by McComas, her authorial voice is barely hidden in her choice of text and image.

In 2007 'attending to the real' might involve a great deal of artifice and direction on the part of the photographer. As **Emma Thomson** comments, her series is 'shot in the documentary style', in recognition of the constructed as opposed to the moral 'throughly documentary'.<sup>22</sup> Her quest is to locate particular, shared emotions and gestures within the domicile of suburbia. Gardens and homes are equal protagonists in

these vignettes or small narratives about the banality of everyday life, which curiously are shot from below with a worm's eye view.

Black and white tones collude with **Steven Siewert** to unify constituent parts of his poetic essay, *The Flight of Fanciers*. Painterly, deep or flat space vies with stillness, the grid and hyper movement to capture what for the participants and photographer is the demise of not just a sport, but a way of life. Nostalgic, even mournful, Siewert is a master in locating waning human activities with pathos and respect.<sup>23</sup> While he tells it as it is, Siewert employs a range of pictorial devices in constructing his document.

Documentary photography can be characterised by the polar opposites of mundane and catastrophic, both of which are equally valid interpretations. However, it is war photography that is perhaps most burdened by the *spectacularly* real. While it is forbidden under the Geneva Convention to photograph prisoners of war, all bets are off under such conditions and in the face of unspeakable misery and danger the war photographer has the last say on ethical engagement.

Both **Stephen Dupont** and **Sean Hobbs** employ a direct address in their black and white portrait series<sup>24</sup> of those who, in varying degrees of dignity, survive conflict zones. Bending to the incessant cries to be photographed, Dupont rigs an outdoor studio that forms a framing device for heartbreakingly dignified portraits of Kabul citizens. But cleverly he twice subverts the frame: once through his inclusion of the charming throng of onlookers and again by nostalgically including the edge of the film in his exhibition prints.

For official war artist Sean Hobbs, the horror of war brings a severe reduction of pictorial and narrative means, as if to say—here all language stops. The subject fully determines the minimal style, forcing our attention to the citizen alone.

**Naomi Cass** Director, Centre for Contemporary Photography

1. Bae Voegts, cited in Helen Ennis 'The rise and rise of documentary photography?' in *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Exhibition and Award*, exhibition catalogue, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, 1997, p. 3.  
2. *ibid*.  
3. *ibid*.  
4. Helen Frajman 'The baby and the bathwater' in *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Exhibition and Award*, exhibition catalogue, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, 1997, p. 6.  
5. *ibid*.  
6. *ibid*.  
7. Clare Williamson 'Difficult Child' in *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Exhibition and Award*, exhibition catalogue, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, 1999, p. 7.  
8. *ibid* p. 8.  
9. *ibid* p. 7.  
10. Peter Milne 'NEK IS BETTER or why I still call myself a documentary photographer' in *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Exhibition and Award*, exhibition catalogue, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, 1999, p. 12.  
11. *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Exhibition and Award*, exhibition catalogue, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, 2001.  
12. Tessa Dwyer 'No Alternative' in *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Exhibition and Award*, exhibition catalogue, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, 2001, pp. 12 - 14.  
13. Edward Colless 'Bitch' in *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Exhibition and Award*, exhibition catalogue, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, 2001, pp. 7 - 9.  
14. *ibid*, p. 14.  
15. Nikos Papastergiadis 'The Space for Reflection' in *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*, exhibition catalogue, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, 2003, pp. 7 - 10.  
16. Kyla McFarlane 'Attending to the Real: Documentary Photography Now' in 2005 *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*, exhibition catalogue, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, 2005.  
17. TJ Demos 'Introduction: The Ends of Photography' *Vitamin Ph: New Perspectives in Photography 2006* Phaidon Press, London, p. 6.  
18. *ibid*.  
19. *ibid*.  
20. Laki Sideris, unpublished statement, *Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*.  
21. Jesse Marlow, unpublished statement, *Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*.  
22. Emma Thomson, unpublished statement, *Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*.  
23. Steven Siewert, unpublished statement, *Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*. Siewert was winner of the first *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award* in 1997 and finalist in the 2001 and 2003 exhibition and tours.



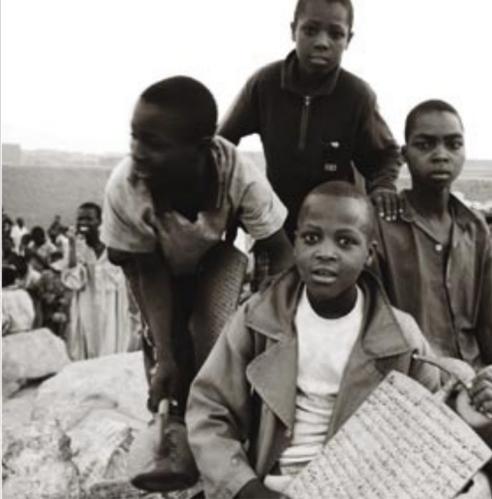
**DOUG SPOWART+VICTORIA COOPER**  
DOCUMENTATION BY A CARCAMERA OBSCURA

For over fifteen years we have been working with pinhole and camera obscura imaging devices. As part of ongoing work on the theme of tourist space within the landscape, we transformed our Toyota Tarago into a carcamera obscura and aimed it at our tourist activities.

These photographs were selected from a larger body of work captured within our carcamera obscura of our tourist rituals during a journey along the Stuart Highway from Adelaide to Darwin. The camera obscura projects outside scenes onto a screen within the darkened car—this filmic view of our performance in the landscape is then documented by a conventional camera.

This series deals with the documentation of personal travel and the power of the photograph to evoke memory of place and experience. The narrative in this larger work engages with the contemporary romance of the *Road Trip* and the *Australian Outback*.

Doug Spowart+Victoria Cooper live and work in regional Queensland. They are photographers and artists' book makers who are both currently working towards a PhD at James Cook University. They have exhibited widely nationally and internationally, and their work is included in private, major state and national collections.



**MICHAEL AMENDOLIA**  
NORTH KOREAN BLINDNESS

In 2005, I travelled with Nepalese ophthalmologist Dr Sanduk Ruit to North Korea. He is working with the North Korean Health Ministry to improve their primary eye care systems and train their eye doctors in the latest cataract surgery. Dr Ruit estimates there are up to 350,000 people from a population of 23 million suffering curable cataract blindness in North Korea today.

When I travelled in Pyongyang and through the countryside I got the feeling that I was going back in time. The images of Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung seem to follow you where ever you go.

Within the context of my restricted visit, my aim was to represent the life and experience of these average North Koreans. This series documents the range of emotions expressed by patients following their surgery. Demonstrations of patriotism accompanied most patient's postoperative examination. I wondered if their reactions were relief, fear or the drama of life.

Michael Amendolia lives and works in Sydney. He is an independent documentary photographer who has exhibited both nationally and internationally, and has received several prizes in World Press Photo Awards. Amendolia was the principal photographer for the book *Seeing is Believing* on the work of humanitarian ophthalmologist Professor Fred Hollows.

**CARA BOWERMAN**  
CHEWTON: FROM A WINDOW

This series, forming part of a larger body of work, illustrates my introduction to the rural community of Chewton in central Victoria.

Home to approximately 400 people, Chewton gives the initial impression of the quintessential small town. But seeking to become more familiar with a place means seeing beyond the obvious. The window recognises my external perspective, and by piquing the viewer's curiosity, invites them to observe more closely the people, places and intricacies of the town.

Cara Bowerman lives and studies in Melbourne. She is currently completing a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Photography at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. She has received several photographic awards and has recently been commissioned to work on two commercial documentary projects.

**JAMES BRICKWOOD**  
SCHOOLIES

At the end of each year, graduating Australian Year 12 students, who have just finished 14 years of schooling, embark on a celebration free from parents, teachers, timetables and institutions.

The month long period in which school-leavers from each state in Australia engage in this week of festivity, is now known as *Schoolies*.

Surfers Paradise, on the coast of Queensland has long been regarded as the Mecca for this activity. With its concentration of high-rise hotels and apartments, night clubs and pubs it is well known for its colourful nightlife. For most, it's their first taste of freedom. Without anyone to tell them when to stop the partying often goes all night and into the next day, when they take a few hours to recover before waking up and starting all over again.

James Brickwood lives and works in Sydney. He is a member of Oculi ([www.oculi.com.au](http://www.oculi.com.au)) and contributes to the Sydney Morning Herald as well as working freelance for international publications. His work has been showcased in Reportage and he was recently short listed for the 2007 Moran Contemporary Photographic Prize.

**ANTHONY DAWTON**  
NIGER

Niger is a peaceful, relatively incorrupt and democratic country, full of kind, hospitable, intelligent and articulate people. That it ranks last on the UN's list of poor countries, and has the highest infant mortality rate in the world is a crime and a disgrace that is only compounded by the terrible knowledge that most of the disease and malnutrition is preventable.

Anthony Dawton is based in London. His exhibition *The Children of the Kashmir Earthquake* is currently touring the UK and will travel to the USA and Islamabad and was published as a book. He has a diverse commercial portfolio and has received several awards including the Fuji Industrial Photographer of the Year in 1998. Dawton is represented by the John Martin Gallery, London.

This series was made with the support of the Al Madad Foundation.

**STEPHEN DUPONT**  
'AXE ME BIGGIE' OR MR TAKE MY PICTURE

"Axe Me Biggie"—a crude Anglo phonetic rendering of the Dari for "Mister, take my picture!"—the plea I heard all over Kabul during my stay there in March 2006. It seems to mean something in English, "axe" being just a more visceral and violent version of the camera verb "to shoot," returning all its original aura of surrender. And because I am a big guy, "Axe Me Biggie" also seems a request addressed to me personally. I am Biggie. And on this day Biggie finally answers them all, en masse, saying, "Yes, alright. I will axe you, shoot you, take your bloody picture. Have a seat!"

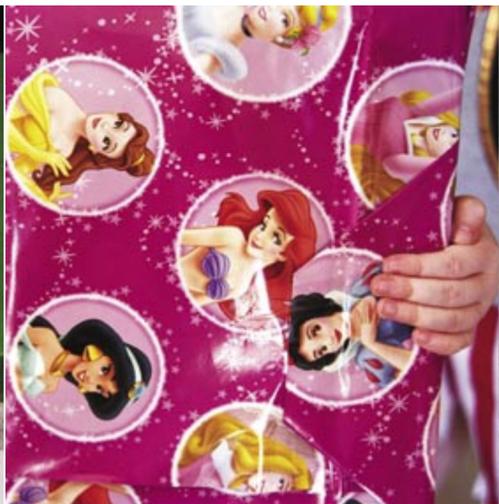
Stephen Dupont is based in Sydney. His work has been exhibited extensively both nationally and internationally and he is represented by Contact Press Images, New York and Byron McMahon Gallery, Sydney. Dupont has won numerous international awards including World Press Photo and a prestigious Robert Capa Gold Medal Citation. His photographs are held in many collections nationally and internationally.

**STEPHEN DUPONT**  
PSYCH WAR IN AFGHANISTAN – ON OPERATIONS WITH US FORCES

During the months of August through to October 2005 I was embedded with American Forces in the east and south of Afghanistan. For six weeks I lived and travelled with the troops through some of the most dangerous parts of the country. By earning their trust and friendship I was given unlimited access to their operations. Shooting alone and at great personal risk, I witnessed and documented American soldiers burn the bodies of two dead Taliban fighters and use the incident in psychological warfare announcements to enrage the enemy.

This selection from my original body of work shows US military operations inside Afghanistan.

Stephen Dupont is based in Sydney. His work has been exhibited extensively both nationally and internationally and he is represented by Contact Press Images, New York and Byron McMahon Gallery, Sydney. Dupont has won numerous international awards including World Press Photo and a prestigious Robert Capa Gold Medal Citation. His photographs are held in many collections nationally and internationally.



**SEAN HOBBS**  
THE HORROR OF WAR

I didn't sleep for two nights when I left Northern Uganda. I tried, but every time I closed my eyes their stories would revisit me. I didn't realise it had affected me at the time, but after I left, I couldn't escape the horror. For two decades, the Lord's Resistance Army has waged a brutal war in Northern Uganda, forcing thousands of abducted children to become sex slaves and soldiers. Here, meeting someone who hasn't been raped, mutilated, terrorised or forced to kill is sadly an uncommon experience.

What remains is a shattered population living in fear of both the rebels and government forces. Forcibly confined to internally displaced persons (IDP) camps the ethnic Acholi are dying of starvation, AIDS, alcoholism and cholera. Just another dirty little genocidal war in the middle of nowhere—not often spoken about, and barely understood.

Sean Hobbs lives and works in Sydney. He has exhibited in numerous group shows including *Chobi Mela IV – International Festival of Photography* at the National Art Gallery, Bangladesh. Hobbs was an official Australian war photographer in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf, and his work is held in the Australian War Memorial collection.

**JESSE MARLOW**  
DONT JUST TELL THEM, SHOW THEM

*Don't just tell them, show them* is a collection of candid street images taken in my daily travels.

Using the street as the stage, people enter and exit the frame, becoming momentary performers for a 250th of a second.

The series celebrates the banality of modern day existence through themes of isolation and abandonment, set in the urban environment of 'everyday'.

Jesse Marlow is currently completing a Fabrica photography scholarship in Italy. He is a member of Oculi and is represented by Crossley & Scott, Melbourne. In 2006, Marlow was selected for the Joop Swart Masterclass in Amsterdam and he has self-published two books. His works are held in public and private collections across Australia.

**NATALIE MCCOMAS**  
BIRTHDAY WISHES

*Birthday Wishes* celebrates the vibrant chaos of children's birthday rituals, particularly the luxuries and little delicacies that we learn to expect on such occasions. The series investigates the waste culture evident in today's society and questions the existence of an underlying competitiveness. Parents experience pressure for their child's party to be bigger and better; targeted by advertising, and overwhelmed by the increasing number of birthday packages available.

Natalie McComas lives and works in Brisbane. She holds a Bachelor of Photography with First Class Honours. McComas is a staff photographer for *Affair Magazine*, and has held solo and group exhibitions nationally. Her work was highly commended by Noise and Qantas in the *Spirit of Youth Awards* (SOYA), 2006.

**MATTHEW NEWTON**  
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ACTIVIST?

The great Tasmanian story, right now, is the story of the forests. In the contest for the island's soul, the forests are sites of drama, passion and, yes, pain. Will this wild and special island retain the waste culture evident in today's society and questions the existence of an underlying competitiveness. Parents experience pressure for their child's party to be bigger and better; targeted by advertising, and overwhelmed by the increasing number of birthday packages available.

These images of forest activists are from my ongoing series that looks at the struggle for Tasmania's forests. Among questions this project asks is—what does it mean to be an activist?

Matthew Newton lives and works in Hobart. He is a freelance photographer and cinematographer. His photographs have featured in numerous publications including *National Geographic* and *The New York Times*, and he has filmed documentaries for ABC and SBS television. In 2007 he will undertake an Arts Tasmania residency on Mattsuyker Island.

**LAKI SIDERIS**  
BEIJING BICYCLE

This work examines the paradox of private space in a public environment. The photographs are close up portraits of people riding bicycles through the streets of Beijing. The bicycles have all been cropped out of the frame. In Beijing, cyclists ride at a steady, though determined slow pace. It is a time to be alone, to have thoughts, to be silent. The portraits are linked by common expressions of concentration, fatigue—even melancholia. These cyclists carry their personal, private space with them. Anyone sitting on a corner is free to peer into this continuous and inexhaustible parade; a continually evolving face of China.

Laki Sideris lives and works in Melbourne. In the nineties he made several experimental films screened at various film festivals, and is currently a photo artist and freelance photographer. He has exhibited widely across Australia and recently won the *Nikon Imagebank Award* at the Centre for Contemporary Photography.

**STEVEN SIEWERT**  
THE FLIGHT OF THE FANCIERS

No one really understands the homing instinct of a pigeon, but it has been utilised by governments during war times to courier sensitive materials, studied by scientists, and is the basis of a little known and dying sport in Australia: pigeon racing. In Sydney's winter, small federations of enthusiasts truck their racing-bred pigeons thousands of kilometres to see which is the first to make it home. The pigeons battle winds, storms and winged predators; not all make it home. There is no real money in pigeon racing in Australia and for the most part, it is pride that motivates most local pigeon racers.

Steven Siewert lives and works in Sydney. He is a member of Oculi ([www.oculi.com.au](http://www.oculi.com.au)), and a staff photographer for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He has received several awards and grants and his work is held in the Albury Regional Art Gallery and New South Wales State Library collections.