

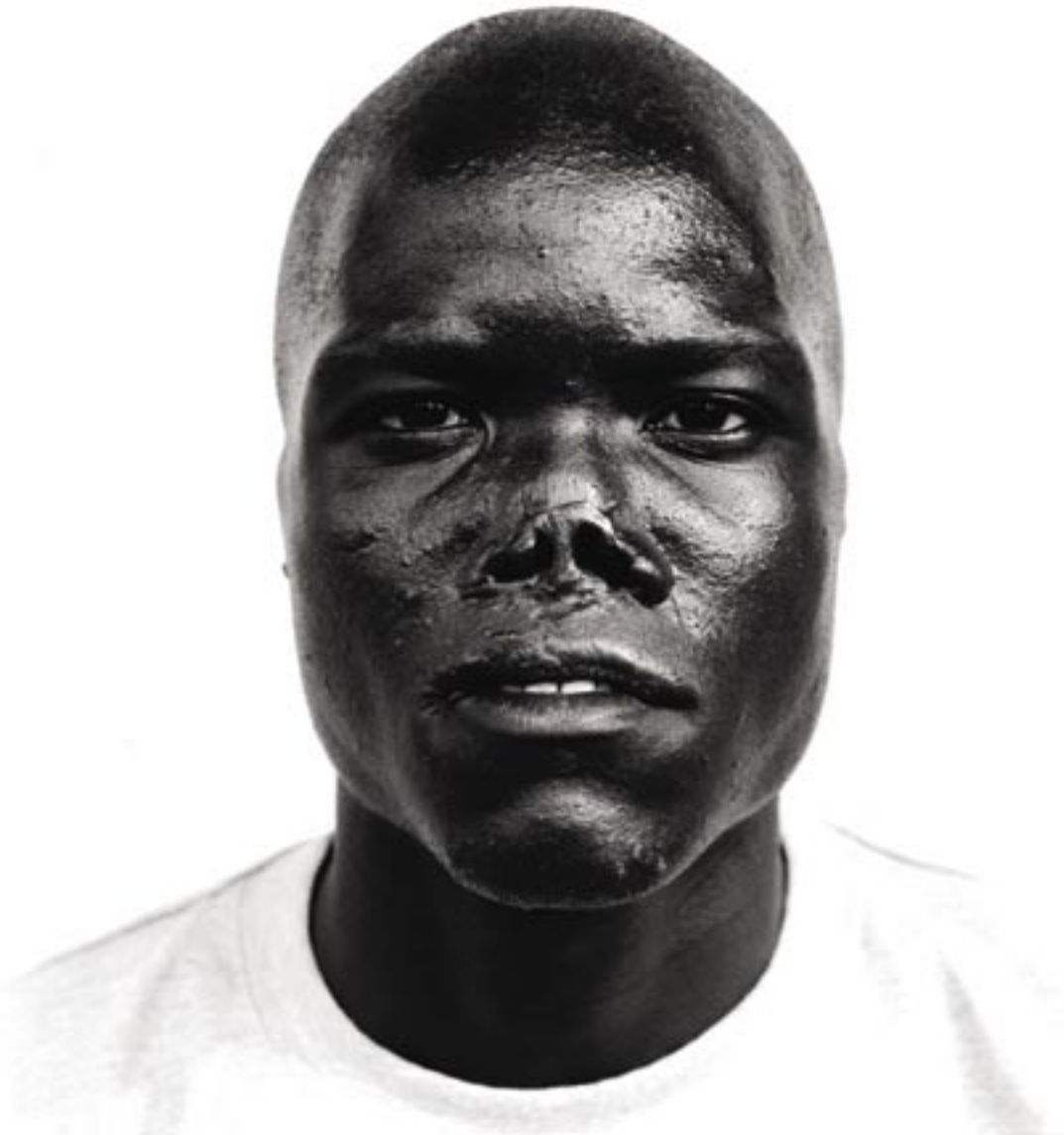
ccp.

centre for
contemporary
photography



SIXTH LEICA/CCP DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

EDUCATION KIT



SEAN HOBBS
from the series THE HORROR OF WAR, 2006

ABOUT THIS EDUCATION RESOURCE

This education resource is intended as a starting point for generating ideas and classroom activities before, during and after a visit to the ***Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*** and is intended to complement and be used in addition to information provided in the accompanying exhibition catalogue, gallery wall texts and on the CCP website. The resource includes an introduction to the exhibition, suggested points for discussion and practical activities for junior and senior students. It is suggested that teachers select relevant sections of this resource to compile their own exhibition response sheet for students prior to their planned visit.

PRE-VIEWING PLANNING

Before visiting the ***Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*** it is recommended that you contact gallery staff at the venue you plan to visit to determine the following:

- Suitability of exhibition content and subject matter for the year level you plan to bring.
- Staff availability to give introductory talks.
- Opening hours, transport options, parking and cloakroom facilities.

Please note: some of the series of photographs on display, for example the work of Stephen Dupont, are extremely powerful and at times confronting and disturbing. Parts of the exhibition may not be suitable for students under the age of 13. It is suggested that you visit the exhibition yourself prior to a school visit to determine suitability. During your visit students should be supervised at all times.

CURRICULUM LINKS AND CONNECTIONS

This exhibition will tour nationally, so teachers are encouraged to adapt the curriculum links given in the list below to suit their school's state curriculum. Use this list to generate points for discussion, ideas, activities and where suitable contact education staff at your local gallery for further suggestions.

Visual/Creative/Studio Arts

- Photographic practice: ideas and inspiration, techniques and working in series form.
- Relationships between photographer, subject, gallery and audience.
- The way that documentary photography can respond to and represent current social and/or political issues and events.
- Image saturation and 'desensitisation'.

English

- Responding verbally to visual images.
- Creative writing and responding.
- Critical essays and reviews.

Studies of Society and the Environment

- Social issues including war, genocide, poverty, health, indigenous issues and environment.
- Documentary photography as a reflection of contemporary culture and society.
- Photographs as documents that record the interconnectedness between humans, society and the environment.



DOUG SPOWART+VICTORIA COOPER
from the series DOCUMENTATION BY A CARCAMERA OBSCURA, 2006

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

The inaugural **Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Exhibition** was held in 1997, now titled **Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award** 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 award finalists.

Every two years CCP makes a public call for submissions to the **Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award** and receives proposals that are considered by a panel of judges. Entrants can submit multiple entries in 'essay' format of up to six recent photographs demonstrating or developing an original and considered appreciation of the chosen subject. Entries are submitted as work prints (no larger than 200 x 260mm). A short written statement about the work is submitted with the photographs and accompanies those chosen for exhibition.

A panel of judges, made up of artists and arts industry professionals, judge the entries 'blind' (without knowledge of the finalists' names), selecting a shortlist, which through a process of discussion, results in the selected finalists. A catalogue is produced to accompany each Award, contextualising the works and offering a discussion of the often contested and controversial definitions of documentary. Since 2005 the terms and conditions of entry were extended: allowing the submission of works in either analogue or digital formats, reflecting the diversity of current documentary photographic practice. Whilst photographers can still employ the use of darkroom manipulation (for example dodging and burning), digital manipulation of the content of images is not permissible.

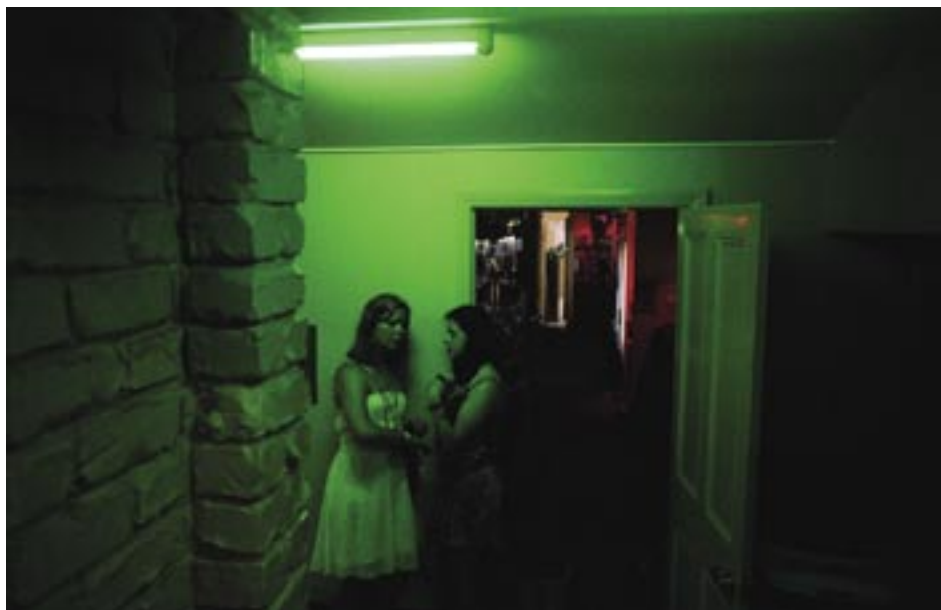
The finalists' works are exhibited at the Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP), Melbourne and then tour nationally to metropolitan and regional galleries throughout the following two years. The exhibition is a celebration of documentary practice and provides a fascinating entry point into the variety of approaches and concerns that characterise contemporary documentary photography.

The 16 artists selected for exhibition in the **Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award** are: **Michael Amendolia, Cara Bowerman, James Brickwood, Anthony Dawton, Stephen Dupont (2 series)*, Sean Hobbs, Jesse Marlow, Natalie McComas, Matthew Newton, Laki Sideris, Steven Siewert, Doug Spowart+Victoria Cooper, Emma Thomson, Tamara Voninski, Tom Williams** and **Lisa Wiltse**.

* A condition of entry is that multiple series can be submitted. Two of Stephen Dupont's series were selected for inclusion in the Award by the judges.

Unless otherwise stated all text in quotation marks is taken from the artists' statements.

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JAMES BRICKWOOD
from the series **SCHOOLIES**, 2005/06

USING THE EDUCATION RESOURCE AND STUDENT RESPONSE SHEET

Several themes emerge from the exhibition providing useful starting points for investigating the series exhibited in the **Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award**. These thematic groupings are not definitive and many of the photographers' series could fit across several of the 'themes'. Students are encouraged to come up with their own themes based on the subject matter explored by photographers in the exhibition and use these to generate discussion. Age-appropriate (junior and senior level) questions and activities are included at the end of the four thematic discussions. The student response sheet is suitable for use in the gallery by senior students, and offers starting points for student investigation. This education resource addresses the following areas:

Photography and truth

Investigating themes and ideas: questions and practical activities

- Celebrations and rites of passage
- War and conflict
- Street photography
- Social issues, poverty, health and environmental issues

Technical information

Student response sheet

Photography and truth

Since the invention of photography in the late 1830s, photographs as documents have had a reputation for presenting a situation with truth and accuracy, hence the oft-used expression: 'the camera never lies'. This reputation for accuracy stems from the invention of photography as a mechanical means to record information that had previously been gathered by hand: the camera replaced the topographical draughtsman, the botanical illustrator and any number of patiently anonymous image-makers. Photographs can cross language barriers, communicate directly and convincingly describe events. The term 'documentary photography' was popularised in the 1930s when Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange and Ben Shahn used photography as a tool to record rural and urban poverty in the hope of bringing about social change.¹

Documentary photography has usually been associated with objective truth, but as photographic practice has developed the notion of 'truth' in photography has been intensely debated. The term 'documentary photography' is a slippery and contested one: with much contemporary documentary photography traversing the spectrum from reportage and photojournalism at one end to art photography and highly constructed images at the other. In the digital age (when photographers can seamlessly manipulate images via applications accessible on most home-computers) can the photograph as document continue to hold relevance, and can we still expect truth and accuracy from a photograph?

As the **Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award** finalists demonstrate, while the term may remain contested, the subject matter and style of documentary photography is endlessly captivating: it can encompass images of war and its aftermath; environmental issues; health and poverty; portraits of people in their social spaces; urban and rural environments; ritual and celebration and the whole gamut of human emotions and interpersonal relationships. Perhaps the best documentary photographs can reveal important information about our world and make us think about the human condition in new ways.



JAMES BRICKWOOD
from the series SCHOOLIES, 2005/06

INVESTIGATING THEMES AND IDEAS: ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION AND PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Celebrations and rites of passage

Both Natalie McComas' series *Birthday Wishes* (2005) and James Brickwood's *Schoolies* (2005/06) document the excesses that can accompany the rituals and celebrations marking the milestones towards adulthood. McComas' series of digital prints, *Birthday Wishes*, documents the commodification and excess that often accompanies children's birthday parties today: increasingly commercialised events that can leave some parents and carers feeling pressured to provide a celebration that lives up to expectation. The use of saturated colours heightens our awareness of the garish 'theme' packaging including the artificial food colouring and synthetic fabrics of the children's costumes.

The text accompanying the series outlines the theme, duration and cost of each of the celebrations, together with quotes from the children's parents in which they express their 'wishes' for their children and reminisce about their own childhood parties. This text is an integral part of McComas' comprehensive research for the project. During the eight months she spent on the 'party-circuit', the photographer gained the trust of parents, attending and documenting thirty-five birthday parties held for under 12-year-olds.

Schoolies, James Brickwood's series of digital prints, documents the excessive behaviour of a modern teenage rite of passage: school-leaving week celebrations on the Gold Coast in Queensland. After fourteen years of schooling many Australian teenagers flock to Surfers Paradise on the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast's proliferation of apartments, nightclubs, beaches and pubs, makes it a popular destination for students celebrating their final exams and graduation from high school. The teenagers, many of whom find themselves for the first time without the moderating presence and influence of parents and teachers, succumb to a non-stop schedule of partying and recovery. Sex and alcohol seem to be an inevitable part of this teenage rite of passage.

To document *Schoolies* week, James Brickwood had to keep up with the teenager's cycle of hectic partying and recovery: many of the photographs are taken at night, saturated with garish artificial colours.

Junior questions

Look at Natalie McComas' series - *Birthday Wishes*.

- In what way do these photographs remind you of your own birthday parties or parties that you have been to?
- Some of the photographs show what is left when the party is over, including the remains of food. What do these photographs tell you about the party and the partygoers?
- How do the colours in the photographs make you feel?
- Why do birthday parties often have a theme?



NATALIE McCOMAS
from the series BIRTHDAY WISHES, 2005

Junior activities

- Discuss how people like to celebrate. How can you tell what country a celebration is from? What events do your family celebrate?
- Research the cultural backgrounds of students in your class. Do they celebrate the same occasions as you? If so, do they celebrate these occasions in the same way?
- What images, symbols, decorative elements, foods and colours etc would you use in a drawing or painting of a celebration?
- Write and illustrate a short story about a family celebration that you have been to.
- Using the theme of 'celebration' as your inspiration dress up and pose in front of the camera using various props and costumes. Have someone else photograph your 'celebration.'

Senior questions

After looking at Natalie McComas' series *Birthday Wishes* and James Brickwood's series *Schoolies* consider the following:

- How has each of the photographers depicted the different celebrations taking place?
- In your opinion were the texts necessary to your understanding of each of the series?
- Compare how each of the photographers has used colour in their series. Would these series have the same effect if the photographers had shot them in black and white? Why/why not?
- Consider how the camera affects the behaviour of the subject being photographed. For example, how do you react when a camera is pointed at you? When being photographed we are often told to smile; what directions do you think James Brickwood might have given the teenagers in his photographic series *Schoolies*?
- Do the photographs in *Schoolies* appear natural to you? Do any of the images appear arranged, or posed? Why/why not?
- Would you like a photographer to document your school-leaving week celebrations? Why/why not?
- Referring to one of the series discuss how the photographer has depicted excess.
- Placing images of young people into the public domain involves negotiating a myriad of ethical, moral and emotional boundaries. What issues might a photographer need to consider when photographing children or young people? What ethical and/or legal considerations might each of the photographers have faced when taking their respective series?

Senior activities

Children as subject matter in photography

Research the work of Rineke Dijkstra (Netherlands), Larry Clark (USA), Bill Henson (Aust) and Bettina Rheims (France) all of whom have photographed adolescents and young people. Their images often present the awkward transition from adolescence to adulthood and focus on their subject's beauty and sexuality. You might also like to research the work of Sally Mann (USA), Donna Bailey (Aust) and Polixeni Papapetrou (Aust), who all have used their children as subjects in their photographs. In the United States of America Sally Mann has been publicly criticised for what has been perceived as the overt sexualisation of her children in her photographs.

- Choose one of these artists and compare the way they represent young people with the way that Natalie McComas and James Brickwood represent children and young people in the ***Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award***.
- A series of photographs can express a broad view on the subject matter concerned, where one image might represent a potentially banal scene; a series of images can show us the broader themes and can also generate a narrative. Create a series of photographs that document a family celebration or social event. Consider whether you need to ask people's permission before you photograph them. Does your series of photographs contain a narrative or story? Write an accompanying text to provide a background to the event that you have photographed and that explains your reasons for photographing it.
- Since 1975, American photographer Nicholas Nixon has photographed his wife and her three sisters producing a single photograph each year that features the sisters in the same order at various locations in America. Nixon's *The Brown Sisters* series records the changes that have happened to his wife and her siblings from year to year and function as an ever-evolving portrait of their relationship to one another over time. Using Nicholas Nixon's idea of photographing his wife and her sisters in the same order every year as a starting point, photograph members of your family or your friends over a period of time. Discuss issues of audience with your family and friends before commencing the project; whether they will have a say in which photographs are used; who will see the photographs, where they will be shown; who can have copies etc. What do you think might be some of the problems associated with photographing family and friends? What might be the positive outcomes?

SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY

Since Jacob Riis (a newspaper reporter of the late 19th century) picked up his camera to record the squalor of New York's slums—wanting Americans to see for themselves what he had been writing about, photography has been used to hold a mirror up to society. Riis hoped that by revealing human suffering and misery through his photographs people would be forced to act against these conditions.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s photography was used to document and reveal the living conditions of the underprivileged and campaign for social change. Photographs taken by the *Farm Security Administration* (FSA) photographers (including Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange and Ben Shahn) of the devastating effects of the Depression on rural America were the first documentary photographs to be known as such, and the term documentary photography came into use to denote a picture with a social purpose.

In this exhibition Michael Amendolia, Anthony Dawton and Matthew Newton work most closely to the genre of social documentary photography. In 2005 Michael Amendolia travelled with Dr Sanduk Ruit, a Nepalese ophthalmologist and his assistants, to document their work with government authorities on primary eye care and modern cataract surgery. His series *North Korean Blindness* (2005), documents the issue of blindness in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by focusing on the emotions of patients with cataract blindness before and after their sight-restoring surgery.

Anthony Dawton's photographic series of type C photographs *Niger* (2007) documents poor living conditions in Niger. His photographs focus on the innocent victims of poverty, in many cases young children, and the extreme conditions in which they find themselves.

Matthew Newton's series of digital prints *What does it mean to be an Activist?* (2006) is part of his ongoing project documenting the struggle to preserve Tasmanian forests from logging. At the frontline of this struggle are a number of environmental activists who regularly put their lives at risk through 'direct' actions including chaining themselves to logging equipment, sitting up trees and blockading roads into the forests. When these 'direct' actions are reported in the media they are usually accompanied by reportage-style images or footage of the activists in confrontations with police or logging company employees. Newton, however, aims to present a side of activism that we rarely glimpse—quiet and reflective portraits of environmental activists that reveal their commitment and dedication to the cause of environmental preservation.



MATTHEW NEWTON
from the series *WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ACTIVIST?* 2006

Junior questions

Look at Matthew Newton's series of photographs *What does it mean to be an Activist?* (2006)

- Do you think the people in these photographs have been given a say in how they are represented?
- In a photograph we only see what the photographer wants us to see. Can you imagine what might be happening just outside the frame of these photographs?
- Can a photograph tell us something about its subject? Do Matthew Newton's photographs tell you what it might mean to be an activist involved in actions to try and preserve the environment?
- By allowing themselves to be photographed might there be any consequences for the activists?

Junior activities

- Are there issues that you feel strongly about? In a classroom discussion reflect on what it might mean to be an activist, devoting oneself to a cause.
- Many artists use their artwork to raise awareness of environmental, political and/or social issues. Water is a major issue for us all to consider. Discuss the vital issue of water conservation and sustainability. Using 'Wise up to water' as your theme, work collaboratively with your class to design an artwork, mural, poster, video or performance that informs teachers and students at your school about this issue.

Senior questions

- In what way do you think the people in these photographs have been given a say in how they are represented?
- Look at how the artists have represented their subjects. Choose a series and discuss it in terms of style; use of light to create atmosphere; the use of cropping and framing devices; and the use of narrative. What does this series tell you about the subjects' lives? How does it make you feel about your circumstances and where you live?
- Anthony Dawton said that the most difficult problem when photographing his series in Niger was: "photographing mothers and children when it is clear that the child is soon going to die. It's hard to do, it is even hard to decide if it ought to be done." Do you think it ought to be done? Who benefits from this sort of photography?
- Senior Curator of Photography at the National Gallery of Victoria, Isobel Crombie writes: "Documentary photography will always have a place and it will, in all probability, be considered a major tool for social change and commentary for many years to come."² Can documentary photography still be an effective form of social commentary? Given the images of human suffering that we see on our television screens and in the daily press do images still have the ability to affect us? Choose a series of images from the exhibition, and in a short essay use them to support your argument for or against Isobel Crombie's statement.

Senior activities

- Is there a social, political or environmental issue that you feel strongly about? Research the issue and either write a short piece of prose or make an artwork that expresses your thoughts and ideas about this issue. Is there information that you can include in your response that can help to inform people about why this issue is important?
- Many artists use their practice to raise awareness about environmental, political and or social issues. Melbourne-based visual artist Ash Keating integrates his interest in political activism and environmental concerns with his art strategies. His practice includes process-based projects, public art, performance, interventions and installations. In a recent public project Keating explored the current water crisis; creating a mural on the Mockbridge Fountain (corner Swanston and Collins Streets, Melbourne) that depicted a full dam of water gradually depleting until only the parched earth remained. You can view images of his recent work at: http://www.diannetanzergallery.net.au/artist/ash_keating/
- Research the work of Brazilian photographer Sebastião Salgado who has inspired a number of the photographers in this exhibition. His photographs engage with the tradition of social documentary photography: exploring social and political themes including the displacement of people; inhumane working conditions for manual labourers and Third World poverty. Compare the work of Sebastião Salgado with photographers in this exhibition whose works engage with social and or political themes.



MICHAEL AMENDOLIA
NORTH KOREAN BLINDNESS, 2005

WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

There has been a long tradition of photographers recording violence, wars and conflict. Amongst the earliest war photographers were Roger Fenton, who documented battlefield landscapes in the Crimea in 1855 and Matthew Brady who documented the American Civil War, from 1861-1865. War photography has sometimes been used as propaganda by governments. However, the photographer W. Eugene Smith hoped to persuade those who viewed his World War II photographs that wars and conflict must end. As an official war correspondent for Vogue magazine American photographer Lee Miller's unflinching photographic documentation of World War II shocked and informed the world of the horrors and futility of war. A photograph that made the front pages of most newspapers in 1972—that of a naked South Vietnamese child sprayed by American napalm running down a road towards the camera, was instrumental in turning the tide of public feeling against the Vietnam War.³

Both Stephen Dupont and Sean Hobbs continue this tradition, exploring themes of violence, propaganda, war and its aftermath. Dupont's series of silver gelatin photographs *Psych War in Afghanistan—On Operations with US Forces* (2005) was made over the several months he spent living and travelling with American forces in the east and south of Afghanistan. During this time he had unlimited access to photograph US military operations. These operations included the burning of the dead bodies of two Taliban fighters: an act used by the US forces as a form of psychological warfare designed to enrage the enemy.

In his second series "*Axe Me Biggie*" or *Mr Take My Picture* (2006) Dupont succumbs to repeated requests from the citizens of Kabul to have their photo taken: "Axe me Biggie" is a phonetic rendering of the Dari for "Mr, take my picture." "Axe" being simply a harsh version of the expression "to shoot" (with a camera), and because Stephen Dupont is a big guy, he was nick-named "Biggie". A backdrop and seating arrangement is fashioned from makeshift materials. With this series of portraits Dupont depicts the resilience of people living in the aftermath of the 'war on terror'.

In 2006 Sean Hobbs was commissioned as an Official War Artist (photographer) to the Australian War Memorial, a tradition dating back to the First World War. He travelled throughout Iraq and Afghanistan to document the current conflicts. He has produced several bodies of work from Africa, Afghanistan and Australia. His series *The Horror of War* (2006) records the aftermath of the genocidal war waged by the Lord's Resistance Army against the ethnic populations of Northern Uganda. In Hobbs' experience it was uncommon to meet someone in Northern Uganda who hadn't been the victim of this war: raped, mutilated, terrorised or forced to kill—his titles reflecting the shocking and brutal realities of war.

Documentary photography often has to operate between two extremes; balancing concern for clarity of presentation with the way the photographer feels about the situation they are recording. Photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson advocated that the photographer maintain a sense of detachment, and be a dispassionate observer. And yet the more strongly the photographer feels about a particular situation the more tempting it surely becomes to present it in a powerful way.

In the catalogue essay for the 2005 *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award* Dr Kyla McFarlane wrote: "Of all documentary photography, photo-journalism seems to best embody the tussle we have with truth, playing to both our desire to witness the truth of the significant event and our knowledge that there are any given number of truths surrounding the event."⁴



STEPHEN DUPONT
from the series "AXE ME BIGGIE" OR MR TAKE MY PICTURE, 2006

Is it possible to capture a particular moment in time that represents the event as it actually was, or do other questions also come into play? For example how does the framing of the scene photographed affect our perception of what we are looking at? We might wonder what is just outside the frame and how that extra knowledge of what we cannot see might affect our perception of what is inside the frame.

Junior questions

- What is your first impression of these photographs?
- How do they make you feel?
- What war do you think these photographs are associated with and who was involved?
- We are in daily contact with images of those affected by wars, natural disasters and poverty. Do confronting images desensitise us to these extreme conditions?
- Is it necessary to show graphic and violent images to illustrate the horrors of war?
- What does war mean to you? How would you illustrate or represent war and its affect on people without using confronting or violent imagery?

Junior activities

In 1937 German bombers attacked the town of Guernica in northern Spain. This was the first large-scale aerial attack against a civilian population centre. The village was left in ruins with hundreds of civilians killed or wounded. Pablo Picasso painted *Guernica* (1937) in response to this event, intending it as a protest against the horrors of war.

- Find out more about Pablo Picasso's painting *Guernica*. Had Picasso ever been to Guernica? How did he find out about this horrific event? Why do you think the artist used black and white to represent the horrors of war?
- Compare Pablo Picasso's representation of war, *Guernica* with the series that depict war and conflict in the **Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award**.
- Has the nature of war and our emotional response to it changed over the last century? Research and compare reports of war in the media from the early 20th century with those of today.
- Collect images and headlines from newspaper reports about war. Make a collage of these and explore what war means to you by incorporating your own written or drawn responses to the theme of war and conflict.



SEAN HOBBS
from the series THE HORROR OF WAR, 2006

Senior questions

- Is strictly objective photography of war and its aftermath possible? Compare Stephen Dupont's series "Axe Me Biggie" or Mr Take My Picture and Sean Hobb's series *The Horror of War*. How has each of the photographers chosen to depict the effect of war? Consider from whose perspective each of the series is being told.
- Which series do *you* think deals most effectively with themes of war and its aftermath? Give reasons for your answer.
- Might the presence of a photographer at a potentially volatile event influence how the subjects respond?
- What we see in a photograph is always the result of choices the photographer has made as he or she takes the photograph and later edits their work. Look at how the photographers place their subject in the picture frame, and from where they are positioned when taking the photograph. Can this influence the mood or intensity of the photograph? Discuss this in relation to Stephen Dupont's series *Psych War in Afghanistan—On Operations with US Forces*.
- Do you think news photographers negotiate how they will represent people before photographing them? Are people's rights to be represented as they want important, or is it more important for those distanced from events such as wars and natural disasters to be exposed to such images to enable them to gain an understanding of world events?
- In an image saturated environment can the depiction of suffering still affect us? Discuss in relation to one of the series in this exhibition.
- At what point does photographing and/or publishing or exhibiting images that are confronting (for example those depicting death and violence) become inappropriate and/or voyeuristic? Are there some images that should never be taken?



STEPHEN DUPONT
from the series *PSYCH WAR IN AFGHANISTAN –*
ON OPERATIONS WITH US FORCES, 2005

Senior activities

- Research past representations of war by artists including Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), Edouard Manet (1832-1883), Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828), Lee Miller (1907-1977) and compare these with more contemporary representations of war by British artists Jake and Dinos Chapman. Goya's series of etchings *The Disasters of War* (1810-1820) represent the horrors of the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1808: the cruelty, torture and atrocities committed by both sides and the effect of war on the individual. Goya's *Disasters of War* inspired Jake and Dinos Chapman's 1993 work of art by the same title; a collection of intricately painted miniature battle scenes displayed in a Perspex case, in the manner of a hobbyist's collection of model soldiers. Write a short essay comparing the way in which war and conflict has been represented by different artists through the ages.
- Write a short exhibition review of the **Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award** discussing whether the documentary photographers' use of confronting and harrowing images can be justified.
- Nick Ut's single still-image, taken from newsreel footage of *Children fleeing a napalm strike, Vietnam, 8 June 1972* was believed to have been printed in every newspaper in America, the day after the bombing occurred. Sean Hobbs has said that when he was a child, "images such as Nick Ut's photograph from the Vietnam War of Kim Phuc, the 'Napalm Girl', made me question the world I lived in." Can a photograph change how you think about something? Research the use of this image and the effect it had on America's involvement in the Vietnam War.
- Many artists consciously use imagery in their work that they know will provoke a response in their audience. For example British artists Gilbert and George believe that art must create a shock if it wants to be new, commenting: "We have to be provocative, otherwise they wouldn't look at it. They wouldn't. We believe in "de-shocking" as well. Being able to de-shock. To be able to put the shitty naked human world in the gallery and the old ladies totter in and they don't run out. It's called 'de-shocking.'"⁵ Can a photograph shock us? Or are we shocked by what that photograph records and represents? Might we respond more to a photograph of a shocking event than the actual event itself? Does exposure to images that shock us desensitise us to graphic imagery? Organise a classroom discussion to consider what ethical and moral questions arise in relation to the use of confronting and 'shocking' imagery in the media, art and documentary photography.



JESSE MARLOW
from the series DON'T JUST TELL THEM, SHOW THEM, 2006/07

STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

With their ability to recognise fleeting moments of social interaction and the understated beauty of the city photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Andre Kertesz and Robert Doisneau established a tradition of street photography. Jesse Marlow, Laki Sideris and Tamara Voninski continue this tradition of capturing 'the decisive moment', using the urban environment: architecture, the street and its occupants as their subject matter.

Jesse Marlow's series *Don't just tell them, show them* (2006/07) is a collection of candid images of the street taken in his daily travels. Marlow comments that the series: "celebrates the banality of modern day existence through themes of isolation and abandonment, set in the urban environment of 'everyday.'" Using the street as the stage, people enter and exit the frame often becoming momentary performers for 250th of a second.

Eugène Atget (1857-1927) spent almost thirty years meticulously documenting the rapidly changing streets of Paris, taking over 10,000 photographs that provide us today with a vivid and comprehensive record of the city at that time. He photographed the architecture, parks and public sculptures of Paris: often recording inconspicuous details that would be easily missed by most passers by. Tamara Voninski also makes Paris the subject of her atmospheric black and white series *L'hiver* (Winter) (2005/06), made during an artist residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. While the majority of tourists visiting Paris swarm around sites such as the Eiffel Tower, Montmartre or Sacre Coeur; Voninski, like Atget, wanders the streets of Paris documenting understated moments rather than the more obvious tourist haunts.

Beijing Bicycle (2005/06), Laki Sideris' series of close-up portraits of people riding through the streets of Beijing, examines the paradox of private space in a public environment. By cropping the bicycles out of the frame the portraits that remain reveal moments of silent contemplation, exploring the idea that; "these cyclists carry their personal, private space with them".

Junior questions

- In the series *Beijing Bicycle* what different expressions can you see on the faces of the people?
- Do you think the people in the photographs know they are being photographed?
- What other images of the city are included in the exhibition and what do these images tell you?
- How has colour been used in these photographs to describe a feeling or mood?
- Why do you think photographers choose to photograph scenes from everyday life?

Junior activities

- Imagine that you have been asked to create a record of where you live, go to school, shop and play for people in the future. Your 'record' might be sealed in a time capsule to be opened in fifty years time or placed in the school library. Are there any particular streets, buildings or monuments in your town that you would document? Why? In a classroom discussion plan different methods you could use, for example interviews with local people, taking rubbings of doors, plaques, signs etc using wax crayon on paper, photographing street signs, buildings and shops. Work collaboratively to design and make a wall frieze for the classroom that incorporates photographs, collage, drawing, text and found objects to present a comprehensive record of your town and surroundings for future generations.



LAKI SIDERIS
from the series BEIJING BICYCLE, 2005/06

Senior questions

- An unspoken rule of street photography is that you do not interact with your subject. Do the subjects of these photographic series seem aware of the photographer's presence?
- Compare and contrast Tamara Voninski's series *L'hiver* with Jesse Marlow's series *Don't just tell them, show them*. In a short written response discuss how they have each used colour and composition to create mood and atmosphere.
- In cities around the world the tradition of street photography is coming under threat as concerns with personal privacy and public security escalate. As Tamara Voninski comments: "Although France is the traditional home of street photography, the current privacy laws have almost eradicated the art and practice of photographing spontaneous moments on the street." What might street photographers have to consider when photographing people without their permission?
- Henri Cartier-Bresson displayed an intuitive knack for choosing 'the decisive moment,' as it came to be called, that instant when a shutter click can record and suspend a spontaneous moment in time. Discuss how Tamara Voninski uses 'the decisive moment' to create her dramatic and moody images of Paris.

Senior activities

Recently in Australia there have been cases where photographers have been stopped and questioned by police for taking photographs in public. In the UK many street photographers now carry letters from their Editors or information on their legal rights to refer to in the instance that they are stopped and searched or questioned by the police. Can a street photographer photograph you without your permission and sell or exhibit your photograph? Does it make a difference if you are a celebrity or on your own property? Do privacy laws exist in Australia? If you decide to photograph people on the street or in public places you should understand your rights and responsibilities.

Find out more at the following websites:

- Visit the Arts Law website and research the legal rights of a street photographer.
<http://www.artslaw.com.au/LegalInformation/StreetPhotographersRights.asp>
- Visit the Australian Photo Review website and read their 'Guide to Street Photography'.
<http://www.photoreview.com.au/tips/shooting/guide-to-street-photography.aspx>
- Read the technical information provided by the photographers in the **Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award** for tips and advice on the technical requirements needed to shoot unobserved in public places and still capture the moment.



TAMARA VONINSKI
from the series L'HIVER, 2005/06

ENDNOTES

1. The *Farm Security Administration* photographic project of the 1930s commissioned photographers (among them Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange and Ben Shahn) to document rural poverty and urban decay.
2. Geoffrey Batchen, 'For the record', *Photofile* 59, December 1999, p.36.
3. Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, Penguin Books, USA, 1977, p.18.
4. Dr Kyla McFarlane, 'Attending to the Real: Documentary Photography Now', in 2005 *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award* (exhib. cat.)
5. Robert Ayers, 'Gilbert and George', *Artinfo*, published 22 June 2007, http://www.artinfo.com/articles/story/25273/gilbert_george?page=3 [accessed 7 September 2007]

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