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**Hutchison, Clive (2007) *A mirror to the mirror: the role of photographic professionals in North Queensland.*
Masters (Research) thesis,
James Cook University.**

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHY PHOTOGRAPH THE PHOTOGRAPHERS?

When photographers create an image they express a point of view, make an aesthetic statement, and/or communicate an emotional perspective. They master the orchestrations; they are the directors and selectors, separated from their subjects by their lenses. Photographers are rarely the subjects of photographs. Might it be that they seek to dodge the intrusive stare of the camera? All of us who have looked *backwards* through a telescope know that the reversed view through a lens catches the world and the viewer unawares. It can amplify or diminish our ocular, intellectual and emotive experiences. What might be the dynamic if the tables were to be turned? To create an image of an image-maker is an entirely separate and unique process.

Photographing the photographer involves dealing with a subject equipped with the technical and creative insights of the craft. Photographers know of the alchemy, the interactive mystical process; they know the process's ability to distort, to clarify, to exaggerate, to demean and to flatter. More than any other subject, they are all too conscious of how exposed, laid bare and open to interpretation they, as subjects, might become. What an exhilarating challenge for a photographer; what an act of faith for the photographed; there is nowhere to hide. The use of the visual language of photography to describe the photographer thus offers amplified potential for their real stories to unfold.

1.2 HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO THE STUDY.

Some of my earliest experiences of photography come from childhood observations of my grandfather, George Hutchison. In his retirement George lived with my family and from his room there always emanated strange and mysterious aromas that my mother dismissively referred to as “old man’s smell”. I was later to discover that, in fact, they were the smells of the photographers’ darkroom. Amongst his then scant belongings my grandfather still possessed a stock of Hypo and other development chemistry, a developing tank, contact printing frames and ancient boxes of Kodak *Velox* photographic printing paper. Over the years this assortment of boxes and bottles had become somewhat of a shambles with skewed, opened packets spilling and mixing their contents in the bottom of the larger box that contained them. Although he no longer had a darkroom, and at his age was not likely to (and never did again), it is interesting that he still held on to these relics of his no longer practised amateur craft.

I remember only one early photographic session with George behind the camera. The entire family was assembled in the back yard of our house dressed in our Sunday best. George immediately took to the stage, as this was his moment. Acting as director, he arranged us all in a very precise order. Yelling muffled instructions from underneath the dark-cloth, we shuffled from side to side and our positions were exchanged and marginally adjusted until he was completely happy with the composition. At the time he was using a view

camera and I had no idea that what he was seeing was visually inverted and reversed making his composition so much more challenging. This became a tedious and time-consuming process: “Clive, go left”, “Clive, not so far” etc. were typical of the brusque orders that we received. This tedium was most acute for my father who, in hushed tones, would jovially share stories of how he and his siblings had from an early age been bullied in front of the camera by my grandfather.

The olfactory and remembered vision of my grandfather’s photographic chemistry, the charm of his quaint, antique, photographic apparatus, and that sole photographic session are some of my clearest earliest memories. Entwined in that memory is the affection I felt for my grandfather, a fascination for the complexity of the photographic process, and an awareness of the social context of picture making. Looking back I cannot be sure to what degree this amalgam of early experience influenced my adolescent study of photography or my subsequent life long involvement with photography. I am, however, certain that it did. My grandfather’s photography has also provided a multi generational perspective of context and linkage to past events and relationships.

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Plate 1.2.1, Hutchison, G. *Hutchison Family* 1930
Collection of the author.



Plate 1.2.2, Hutchison, G. *Bob on Leave* 1942
Collection of the author.

1.3 SHAPING THE MIRROR – DEFINING QUESTIONS.

The concept of the photograph as a mirror has become a matter of debate over an extended period. The expression, *to mirror*, is taken to mean to portray something accurately; in photographic terms, it is to make a true and accurate image of the subject. In reviewing the photography of Bette Mifsud, Best, (1991) suggests that, Mifsud's image *Mute*, which references multiple image

versions through reflection and transparency, provides a strong critique of the mimetic capability of the photograph:

Mute suggests that there are no simple mirror images which objectively reflect the truth of things, not in photography, not in painting, and certainly not in mirrors ...Rather what *Mute* demonstrates is how the interpenetration of texts and subjects, makes a simple mirror image a truly impossible thing to capture. Images that are given mirror status are always dependent upon the complex web of reflections which enable this truth effect to appear. (Best, 1991:9)

As a result the mirrors referred to in the title of this study are not referenced as conveyors of truth and accuracy. Rather they are conceived as media of visual echoes that have been shaped by the *imperfect*, or at least inconsistent, surface qualities of the terrain from which they bounce and their transmission through the turbulent space through which they travel. Yet a *truth effect* (to use Best's (1991) expression) is evident both in the images, as well as in the interaction of image and text. As photographers engage with and inhabit the landscape of their own image making, the mirror(s) provide a clear and useful, even if imperfect, metaphor for such relationships and investigations.

The drafting of the mirror's shape has been driven by a need to address unanswered questions about the involvement of photographers with their

discipline. Such questions may be categorised under three headings: the practice of photography and the photographers' role; individual photographer's experiences and perceptions of themselves and their roles; and the role of context in terms of the circumstances and particularities of practising in North Queensland.

1.3.1 THE LURE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

There is a paramount need to document the profession of which I am a part from the perspective of working photographers:

- What confluence of personal experiences has brought people to the practice of photography?
- What hold does photography exert over its devotees such that they rarely seem to desert its call?
- To what extent are there underlying motivations that transcend practitioners' areas of photographic specialty?
- How do industry players see their status within the wider community?
- To what extent do they also see themselves playing a role as social or political commentators or visual historians?
- To what extent do practitioners see photography as a satisfying career/life pursuit?
- To what extent does being back of camera influence a photographer's self image.

- To what extent has their life in photography met their creative, financial and personal needs?
- To what extent do such perceptions vary between those at the start, middle or ends of their careers?

1.3.2 THE PRACTICE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Within the domain of professional photography it is clear that some sectors have been affected by the continuing democratisation of image making and reproduction processes through the introduction of new technologies. To broaden our understanding of the effect of such changes in the practice of photography, a number of pertinent questions must be posed. :

- To what extent are photographers across a range of genres embracing or rejecting newly emerging technologies?
- What are the implications of their decisions in this regard for themselves, their clients, and their profession?
- To what extent have recent technical developments in photography influenced not only professional photographers but also their audience, be they clients or the people by whom their work is viewed?
- To what extent do professionals feel threatened by technological change?
- How do photographers envisage the future of their own industry?
- How do they perceive the role of the professional photographer in the industry of the future?

- The divide between commercial and artistic applications – if, indeed , one exists.

The importance of research to a profession and its development cannot be understated. Without rigorous inquiry there can be no triangulation of intent, method and outcome. Practitioners of the profession can become isolated, and stagnate, dilemmas exist without debate; future directions and possibilities can continue undetected and hence unexplored.

A key subjective reason to ask and answer these questions resides in a quest to understand my own evolution as a photographer and photography educator. Another has been to rekindle a link to my grandfather and to the now seemingly simpler times of childhood, just as the smell of the photographic fixing agent Sodium Thiosulphate (Hypo) continues to transport me instantly across the decades to precisely that time.

1.3.3 PERSPECTIVES OF DISTANCE AND PLACE

To what extent does geographic isolation add to a sense of place? Many would increasingly deny the role of distance in fashioning our relationship to the work we do. There is no doubt that the Internet, the ease of air travel, modes of personal transport, fax, phone and email have impacted on most aspects of life and work. This is especially the case in remote regional centres where these phenomena have greatly diminished the hardships bequeathed by poor communication and isolation. However while regional centres have developed

within the context of this isolation and hardship, it nevertheless has had a direct bearing on shaping contemporary attitudes and culture. For example, there is long tradition of professional photographic practice existing in often-difficult conditions in North Queensland since pioneering days (Plate 1.3.1).



Plate 1.3.1, Swame, E. *Travelling Photographer* C.1917
Collection of Ms. A Balmer.

Hence it is important to ask questions relating to the extent of the impacts on the photographer's role of distance and place, specifically in North Queensland:

- To what extent are there aspects of photographic practice that uniquely relate to the NQ location?
- To what extent is location in NQ linked to the development of the photographic styles of the participants?
- To what extent does isolation continue to impact on the working context of photographers in NQ?
- To what extent has the natural environment of NQ been an influence in the work of the photographer?

1.4 THE MIRROR'S FACETED SURFACE: RATIONALE AND AIMS

Holding a mirror to the practice of photography offers a cogent challenge to the working photographer, albeit one in an academic context. What might be possible to see in the mirror? Of self? Of the mirror's refraction to others? The previous sections raise questions to which, at this point, we have few answers. That the profession has increasingly diversified is a fact of both technological developments and of the introduction of the discipline into the academy. However systematic research in the area is a virtual *tabula rasa*. The current research thus represents an initial foray into an area which, while ever more democratised, has many unknowns. Its aims are:

- To explore the professional photographer in context.
- To utilize that contextual exploration as a basis for portraying and understanding the professional photographer and their role.

1.5 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

Chapter Two analyses research and literature relating to the establishment of photography as a profession, the various roles that professional photographers perform, the nature of the photographic medium, the impacts of new technologies and the establishment of professional photography in Australia.

Chapter Three analyses research and literature relating to photographic portraiture as a photographic genre. The role of the photographer, subject and viewer are examined. The role of the photographic self-portrait is also explored.

Chapter Four sets out the methodology of the study. An environmental scan of professional photographic practice in North Queensland provides the background and rationale for the selection of study participants, the interview schedule, and examines other data collection methodologies such as those based on observation.

Chapter Five establishes the working stratagems for the capture of the images for this study. The role of photographer, subject and viewer are examined more specifically in light of the study aims as are the role of the compilation image employed in some portraits as well as ethical considerations in image manipulation.

Chapters Six, Seven and Eight profile the photographer subjects of the study grouped according to their experience levels. The person, practice and context of each participant are encapsulated within an individual vignette followed by an analysis of the relationship between the subject and the portrait image taken for this study. Each of these chapters is then synthesised in terms of commonalities /divergences, work practices and perspectives on change and the future.

Chapter Nine presents the exhibition of the images, whilst Chapter Ten synthesises the study by reflecting on the evolving place of the working photographer and portrait photography. Implications for further research are also explored.

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CHAPTER TWO: THE CHANGING FACE OF PHOTOGRAPHY.

2.1 THE GENESIS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Predating the photographer there was a rich history of observation of light and its properties. Observations of images being formed by light in nature thus creating an automatic image are long standing and are the foundation of the concept of the camera. Chinese philosopher Mo Ti (5th Century BC) is widely acknowledged (Hooker, 2002, Hirsch 2000) as the earliest recognised observer and commentator on axiomatic, light based image formation:

[Mo Ti speculated] about the natures of shadows, realising that they were formed by light travelling in straight lines, the first recorded law of optics. He also was able to use this to explain why the images formed when light entered a darkened room through a small aperture were inverted, so can be credited both with recognising the role of an aperture in forming an image and also with an understanding of what later became known as the 'camera obscura'. (Hooker, 2003: 2)

The first awareness of such a phenomenon in the west is attributed to Greek philosopher Aristotle [384-322 B.C.E] who observed a partial eclipse projecting an inverted crescent image. He further noted that any projected image formed by this process was circular. Although he was unable to solve many of the optical principles involved, he did note that decreasing the size of the aperture in viewing the formed image increased the sharpness of the image. Paralleling

these observations was an evolving stream of philosophic thought related to ways of seeing and perception.

For example,

Plato [428-347 BC] speculated about the nature of seeing, thinking of it in terms of a reaching out from the eyes of the viewer to discover the subject. It was a view modelled on the idea of touching, although making use of an invisible agent. (Hooker, 2003:3)

Plato's tactile metaphor of seeing applies even more to the act of photography than to that of sight. When we take a photograph we reach out to the world and acquire a portion of what lies before us. The subjects of photographs also often share this perception of the photographic process. They recognise that a part of them is being captured, abrogated and anchored to the present by another.

The human drive to record images that reflect the workings of our inner and outer worlds existed long before the invention of the camera and even recorded history. Inventors and artists have long sought not only to record but to accelerate and automate this image making process. As the forerunner to the camera, the *camera obscura* was the first formal mechanism by which images could be automatically formed by the action of light. This process of tracing directly from reality infuses the resultant images with an authority and authenticity in addition to the primary motivations of expedition and accuracy.

Fixing those traced images, and anchoring them to the instant of their conception, is the basis of photography. As Hirsch (2000) argues, “The human urge to make pictures that augment the faculty of memory is at the conceptual base of photography.” (Hirsch, 2000: 3) When the tracing is further automated to a mechanical/chemical/electronic process, free from handmade interpretations such as those in paintings and drawings, it would appear at first reading that the pedigree of this authority would be complete. However the photographer remains the helmsman of this automation. The means are still at the photographers’ disposal to warp and circumvent both the optical principles of image formation and to overlay them with a consciousness of intent, selectivity and process.

Joseph Niépce [1765-1833] was the first person to coalesce developments in optics and chemistry to form what we now refer to as a photographic image, thus becoming the first photographer. Interestingly many elements of Niépce’s life and personality coincide with those observed in the lives of generations of photographers to follow. From the outset he was beset with a restlessness to experiment and to follow his own path. His first experiments resulted in the formation of negative images. If we rank these inverted images as the first photographic images (which no doubt they are), the photograph actually dates back to 1816.

By 1824 further refinements of technique and materials allowed the first images to be made from the *camera obscura* and recorded in the positive. The earliest

surviving photograph is of rooftops nearby to Niépce's house, an image which is now celebrated as *View from His Window at Le Gras, ca.1826-27*. (Plate 2.1.1)

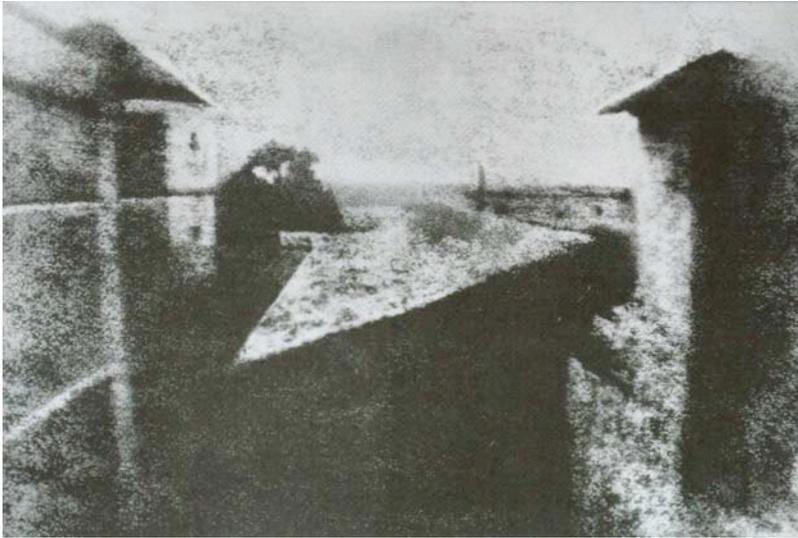


Plate 2.1.1, Niépce, J. *View from His Window at Le Gras*, 1829

This image has an intriguing quality to the extent that knowledge of its historical context and importance only partly satisfies the sense of wonder it conveys even now. There is still a sense of vicarious excitement encoded in this roughly resolved scene. Remnants of that revelatory moment still survive. All photographers from the darkroom age have uniquely experienced a humble facsimile of this watershed; seeing for the first time the action of developer on print in the photographic tray. This is the realization that they are the reapers, the selectors, the harvesters, the distillers of time, the cementers of memory. Niépce wrote of this image to his brother Claude, and Hirsch (2000) quotes Joseph's description of both the image and the experience associated with its creation :

The image of the objects is represented with a clarity, an astonishing fidelity complete with myriad details and with nuances of extreme delicacy...I must say my dear friend, the effect is truly something magical. (Hirsch, 2000:22)

Most photographers never recover from the intensity of that transforming event, the sense of wonder and power experienced on seeing their first print appear. Whether they are aware of Niépce and his work or not, all photographers are a part of the community of light initiated by Niépce, and hence achieve a direct link to the essence of the experience of that original image. They are the custodial inheritors of a compelling tradition. In his *Five Notes for a Phenomenology of the Photographic Image* theoretician Hubert Damish (1978) clearly speaks to the character of Niepce's first work:

...a fragile, threatened image, so close in its organization, its granular texture, and its emergent aspect, to certain Seurats – an incomparable image which makes one dream of a photographic substance distinct from subject matter, and of an art in which light creates its own metaphor. (Damish, 1978: 89).

The level of fascination that the photographic process holds for so many surfaced in manic proportions as soon as Daguerre, after a long association with Niépce, released details of a process to produce a more reliable and durable photographic image. Known in France as *Daguerréotypomanie*, it swept

all before it and few among the wealthy were immune. A new voracious individual and societal appetite for images and imaging had begun.

The cost and specialist facilities required to produce Daguerreotypes decreed that specialists would be required to provide the picture making service. Thus the profession of photographer emerged, the Daguerreotypist its first incarnation. Enterprising individuals attracted to the profession at this early stage were frequently described as adventurers, profiteers, charlatans, and shysters. These often somewhat itinerant individuals were typically self-taught and evidenced no sense of the conventions of painting, or in some cases, the disciplines of craftsmanship. There was also little in the way of standards as there was no guild to establish and ensure that they were met. As photographic historian Szarkowski (1966) reflects, “Those who invented photography were scientists and painters, but its professional practitioners were a very different lot.” (Szarkowski, 1966: 13)

Despite these beginnings, the profession flourished and an awareness developed that an aesthetic sensibility was fundamental to the creation of a successful Daguerreotype:

A good Daguerreotypist is by no means a mere machine following a certain set of fixed rules. Success in this art requires personal skill and artistic taste to a much greater degree than the unthinking public generally imagine; in fact more than is imagined by nine-tenths of the Daguerreotypists themselves. (Snelling, 1849:Unpaginated Introduction).

In America and Australia Daguerreotype portrait studios became increasingly popular. Their images were fresh and original; they utilized the pictorial space with a naturalness and intuitive order not found in painting. Of the photographic work produced during these early days Szarkowski (1966) notes that: “ ...whether produced by art or by luck, each picture was a massive assault on our traditional habits of seeing.” (Szarkowski, 1966:19). Daguerreotypists became known as photographers and increasingly, they either took their businesses on the road or opened studios with a new respectability. Despite the vast number of Daguerreotypes produced over the ensuing thirty years and the encyclopaedic panorama they have given us of so many aspects of Victorian life, nevertheless they remain limited by the constraints of the process in many ways. Long exposures were required to record the image, each image thus becoming a unique and non-reproducible detailed, shadowy icon.

Between them Sir John Herschel [1792-1871] and Henry Fox Talbot [1800-1877] took the photograph through the final frontier of the nineteenth century. Together they made the image infinitely reproducible via the negative / positive process. The Callotype, the wet plate and other improvements in process followed. New more versatile forms of the print emerged, the *carte-de-viste*, or visiting card developed as a standard format for individual or small group portraits. Physically of similar dimensions to playing cards, they were easy to carry and distribute by post. Exposure times decreased allowing enhanced versatility in the type and nature of images that could be made.

The ability of photography to record what the human eye could not normally see contributed to a new awareness of its power as an observer of uncanny ability. During the later part of the nineteenth century, Muybridge [1830-1904], Marey [1830-1904], Eakins [1844-1916], Anschütz [1846-1907] and others (Hirsch 2000) conducted photographic experiments that allowed new visions of established events. Their studies of human and animal motion and the development of the Zoetrope led to further new theories about time and motion across several fields of scientific and philosophical study. In particular these discoveries influenced the philosopher Bergson [1859-1941] and, in turn, this impacted upon the writings of Proust [1871-1922] and Joyce [1882-1941] in the early twentieth century (Hirsch, 2000).

Prior to William Henry Fox-Talbot's [1800-1877] invention in 1839 of the negative-positive process enabling ready production of multiple copies of a single image, every photographic image captured had been a unique object. Daguerreotypes from the former process were exalted to the level of religious icons. Placed in polished brass cases and set against rich velvet backdrops, they were immutable transfixations of moment (even if, as was the case with early photography, the moment were a protracted one).

Subsequent technological advances in the early twentieth century, including the introduction of the folding pocket camera, development of the flexible gelatine film base to replace glass plates, the increasingly widespread availability of

processing facilities, coupled with reduced costs, allowed expanded access to the practice of photography and a proportional democratisation of the process.

2.2 VISUAL DOCUMENTATION: SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

From the outset, assumptions and claims were made as to the veracity of the photograph and its objectivity as a means of recording the reality of the external world. The general public has always believed that the photograph does not lie. The statement *seeing is believing*, transmutes easily into, *seeing in a photograph is sufficient grounds for believing*. This basic trust has proven difficult to disrupt, even in the age of digital manipulation and high profile visual hoaxes. Fact, actuality and veracity remain the key and unique identifiers of the photograph and its role; yet they also remain its frailty and reason for ongoing polemic surrounding its place in the art pantheon.

The image is not the subject. The image/object (photograph) is a trace of the subject, a referent, a two-dimensional selected extract of reality. Even at the post capture phase, the photographer chooses a singular image from among the many. To what extent are the photographer's choices based on a desire for the most accurate rendition or the perception of images that most cogently express and/or reflect the values of the author/selector or, the basis of those which indeed, pander to the needs of the sitter/client instead? In portraiture many images of the sitting subject are made. How many photographers ever choose the most *true to life*, representative exposure? How

many always choose the most flattering instead? It may be that the answers to such questions are axiomatic.

The image also outlives the instance of its capture; it survives the subject, thus becoming the remembered reality of the subject, rather than the subject itself. Despite these difficulties, many photographers use the believability of their image-making medium to attest to the historic reality of events and places and, more importantly, to make judgements and statements about societal ills, calamity and injustice knowing that they will be believed, at least in part by some and totally by others. However the drive for photographers to work in this way has never been universally embraced and attests to the existence of several sub-genres of photographic endeavour. Grouped together these genres are generally referred to as documentary photography. Susan Sontag (1973) argues that this recording relationship of the camera to the subject is participatory rather than simply observational:

Although the camera is an observation station, the act of photographing is more than passive observing. Like sexual voyeurism, it is a way of at least tacitly, often explicitly, encouraging whatever is going on to keep on happening. To take a picture is to have an interest in things as they are, in the status quo remaining unchanged (at least for so long as it takes to get a “good” picture, to be in complicity with whatever it is that makes a subject interesting, worth photographing-including when that is the interest, another person’s pain or misfortune. (Sontag, 1973:12)

The newspaper photographer/photojournalist has an obvious investment in producing interesting images, made all the more arresting to the public appetite by the level of embedded voyeuristic intrigue. Roger Fenton's [1819-1869] images of the Crimean War were perhaps the first such images to emerge and be widely published in England (Clarke, 1996). Although Clarke (1966) asserts that: "These *first* war photos begin to strip away the veneer of romanticism and adventure that had surrounded warfare" (Clarke, 1996:1), the images actually gloss over the horrors of war.



Plate 2.2.2, R.Fenton, The 4th.Dragoons, 1855

Fenton's commission from the British Government to photograph the war had been propelled by critical articles written by William Russell [1821-1907], a journalist working at the *Times*. Casualties were high, mostly from cold and disease. Fenton reported a very cosmetic treatment of the situation, as most photographs were staged. There were no dead bodies, mass graves or other signs of mayhem. As Leggat (2000) concludes, "his portrayals were somewhat

slanted; the charge of the Light Brigade, for example, was a disaster that was depicted as a glorious event". (Leggat, 2000:1).

Yet, despite their superficiality, the English public had never been as close to such scenes before and they were certainly more stark and realistic than the highly romantic fare delivered by court painters in relation to the earlier battles of Waterloo, Trafalgar etc. Hence photography's power to communicate came also from what was not photographed, what could be left uncaptured and ignored. With the invention of the half tone printing process for photographic images, newspapers became filled with an increasing number of photographs, thus rendering their dissemination more widespread and their authority more accepted.

As documentary photographic images proliferated, an important sub genre, later known as the social realism movement, emerged. This emergence was only possible with the advent of the hand held camera and improvements in the photochemical process. Jacob Riis [1848-1914], Lewis Hine [1874-1940], and Dorothea Lange [1895-1965], stand out from the history of American photography as photographers whose intent was to use photography to expose social ills and injustice. Riis worked in the disease-ravaged slums of New York. He brought to the wider community images of child exploitation, homelessness and sub standard housing. The sociologist, Lewis Hine photographed newly arrived immigrants and the challenges they faced on entry to the USA. Dorothea Lange along with Walker Evans [1903-1975] and others captured the

isolation, poverty and character of sharecroppers and others living in the dust bowl of mid-west depression America. Such a photographic tradition, although largely unrecognised, has also existed in Australia.

2.3 THE EMERGENCE OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

Within a year of its invention the process of photography was brought to Australia. Photography's evolution and that of the fledgling colony were closely entwined, each being in an early developmental phase, unaware of their future potential. Melbourne photographer Jack Cato (1889-1971) conducted the first wide-ranging research on the role of photography and the photographer in his *The Story of the Camera in Australia* (1955), which systematically groups photographers under a range of headings, some based on chronology and geography e.g. *Sydney in the 1850's*, others on photographic process, genre, or stylistic movement. In the preface to this work, Cato describes what he perceives to be a close correlation between the development of the photographer's role and the evolution of the young colony:

By the nature of their work these men had a front seat to the moving spectacle of a growing nation...They have left us their records of the rough settlements as they grew into towns...they have shown us how our people lived worked and played...They and their cameras have made the days of our years real and vivid to us beyond those of any other age. (Cato, 1955, preface)

In fact he is referring to the documentation from which one might also map the development of photography. A photographer mentioned by Cato who exemplifies the qualities, and fulfils the role to which Cato refers above, is Richard Daintree (1832-1878). Daintree is of particular interest to this study because he is the first notable North Queensland photographer. Whilst serving as the geologist in charge of the northern division, Daintree made a unique visual photographic record of the colony under the arduous conditions imposed by the wearisome wet plate process of the time. Many others followed: John Henry Mills (1851-1919) for example added greatly to this growing visual record. Images of early mining communities, sugar farms, children at school and people at work, constitute his contribution which would be a first call for researchers seeking a visual reference of the everyday lives of late nineteenth century North Queenslanders. William Boag (d.1878), and Albert Reckitt (1830-1905), were at various times partners and collaborators of Mills with studios in Cooktown and Cairns. Between them the remoteness of the north and its pioneers were brought not just to a wider world but preserved for the generations that followed.

Insights into the working lives, values and aspirations of most of these early photographers are scant at best. Recent publications such as *A Photographic Record of Colonial Queensland* by Lyall Ford (2004), based on the work of John Henry Mills is a valuable contribution to the literature and recognition of the central role of this early photographer. However any study made in retrospect from surviving historical data does not have the richness or cogency of a

contemporary study to which the subject can directly contribute via interview and observation.

2.4 AN INTERPRETIVE MEDIUM: IS CREATIVITY INTEGRAL?

The need to record our inner and external realities and imaginings long predates photography. However developments in the science of photography have made the act of visual recording, readily accessible to most. Each year millions of images are printed in Australia in mini labs alone. With the invention of digital photography this number is expanding exponentially. Not only do we no longer need a laboratory to see the images we capture but, even within the camera, we can crop, resize, edit and reject images. In fact now that the capture device can reside in a pen or mobile phone, the making of images and their almost instantaneous worldwide dissemination via the telephone or internet expands the democratisation of photography exponentially. The photographic image is often viewed as an analogue of the *real*, with its infinite appetite for ready expression being now more capable than ever of producing Clarke's "catalogue of the world" (Clarke 1997: 20).

In the midst of this proliferation, however, it is also important to reflect that every photograph is:

...dependent on a series of historical, cultural, social and technical contexts which establish its meanings as an image and an object. (Clarke 1997:19).

We know when a person's relevance to others has truly expired when photographs relating to them and their lives are finally discarded. In second hand shops few photographs exist that are less than three or four generations old. These personal images are sacred and held in importance above all other objects. The cliché is that, in case of fire, they will always be chosen for survival above all other possessions. To what extent is this passion to hold on to times past a form of protest at our ever increasing fragility and the ever dimming prospect of having such good times and events and states of *being* in the future? If they are so central to our contemporary sense of who we are and offer a map of our relationships with family and friends and the events that we celebrate as shaping our lives, how central then is the role of the photographer entrusted to capture those events? We abdicate our responsibility for such a task in the hope that the exactitude, insight and the experience of the photographer will produce results that more fully reflect the mood, intensity, depth and character of those relationships and events. This melancholy nostalgia for the past and photography's role in its promotion is well recognised by Sontag (1973):

...photographs actively promote nostalgia. Photography is an elegiac art, a twilight art. Most subjects photographed are, just by virtue of being photographed, touched with pathos...all photographs testify to time's relentless melt. (Sontag, 1973: 15)

Whereas Barthes (1982) sees photography as uniquely differing from other forms of representation, given its capacity to authenticate the actuality of the existence of the subject of the photograph:

The photograph does not necessarily say what is no longer, but only and for certain what has been. (Barthes, 1981: 85)

Barthes (1981) strengthens this position by referring to a photograph of Polish soldiers in a field:

...nothing extraordinary, except this, which no realist painting can give me, that *they were there*; what I see is not a memory, an imagination, a reconstitution...but reality in a past state; at once the past and the real. (Barthes, 1981:82)

This differentiation from painting that Barthes identifies in the historical actuality of the referent is a key point of departure in understanding photography's unique place since no painting, realist or otherwise is ever proof of the referent's existence.

Photography is also more than just a recorder or reminder of the actual. Through composition, selection, juxtaposition, context and a range of other revelatory devices, it is able to describe more than the surface of things. It is this interpretive ability to provide meaning beyond description that many believe elevates the medium to the realm of artistic expression. Barrett (2000) introduces several categories to aid in the classification and critique of

photographs. The categories are: descriptive, explanatory, interpretive, ethically evaluative, aesthetically evaluative, and theoretical and are meant to cover all photographs whether art, or non-art:

...it is not based on subject matter or form but rather on how photographs are made to function and how they are used to function (Barrett, 2000:56).

Such a distinction and the use of these categories can be useful in establishing the cultural context and wider relevance of photographic images. Images from the working photographer might fit into any one, some or all of these categories. The capacity to interpret these inner and outer worlds and identify meaning and context where otherwise it may have remained unrecognised is a primary characteristic of the effective photographer. Barrett's last four categories establish a framework to evaluate and extend our understanding of art photographs.

2.5 CREATIVE ASPIRATIONS AND FISCAL IMPERATIVES

How numerous are the full time photographers who can survive without submitting their creative pursuit to a series of commercial dictums? Many expressive artists are required to take one of several paths of subjugation in order to see their work appear in the public domain. One such strategy is to develop a *secret life* whereby commissions from industrialists, miners, advertisers and others is set aside as a financial necessity to allow the production of experimental and personal photographic projects which, although they may be of artistic worth and/or of socio/cultural value, may not see the light of day or meet with financial reward. Integral to the difficulty of photography establishing itself as an art form independent of others is the number of applied, and scientific areas of photographic application, especially in the early days of photography when significant tension existed between realist and expressive aesthetics.

Hirsch (2000) offers a window onto this artistic / commercial divide in the introduction to his essay on the role of advertising and fashion photography:

During the twentieth century, commercial photographers seeking artistic validation led schizophrenic existences. The arts community demanded that they create a body of work distinctively different from their commercial activities, reinforcing the notion that making a living through commercial photography and producing art were incompatible, and perpetuating the myth of the idealistic, suffering artist...By the 1960s

a tidal wave of printed colour images were eroding the boundaries of these areas. (Hirsch, 2000: 321)

For many the practice of photography equates equally with any other business mode. The widget just happens to be management of the action of light on film or digital sensor. The financial imperative in these cases is the primary imperative, the resultant images being client driven. There are also those who challenge the legitimacy of using their image making for anything but entirely self-directed projects of socio/cultural, or, artistic merit. They wait tables, clean floors, or indulge in other menial and poorly remunerated tasks to preserve the *purity* of their photography. Unfortunately this strategy can also lead photographers, as is the case with other types of exhibiting artists, to pander to a different master – the perceived audience. They may still need to modify their outputs to suit the tastes, styles, fashions and whims of gallery directors, publishers and the general public if their creativity is to meet an audience.

2.5 THE DEMOCRATISATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY: DIGITAL DELUGE

Each day still brings new wonders. The so-called digital revolution may be over, as recently claimed in a contemporary photography magazine (Eastway, 2005), but new waves of innovation continue to refine the process. This refinement is manifest in its technical sophistication (capture, processing and output), breadth of imaging options (mobile phones, mp3 players, storage) and plummeting price on a performance basis. For Christmas 2005 digital cameras were only rivalled by mp3 players as the largest volume-selling gift of a particular type over \$100. At the lowest end the cheapest consumer digital

cameras are now around \$20! Images need no longer be printed but can continue to live again and again in the never fading, never degraded, internet distributed, virtual world. Using freely available software on public access internet terminals, even the \$20 digital camera allows participation in the digital imaging revolution: capture, edit, manipulate, distribute, commentate, share. Superficially the democratisation of the image making process would now seem to be complete. How the professional photographer will fare in this deluge is yet to be fully determined as the digital story in all its permutations has yet to fully unfold.

The digital encoding of analogue information from the *real* world into yes/no, on/off, 1 or 0, electronic states has been carried by the new tools, internal and external to the computer. However they have also brought about a ground shift in the way that we think of image formation. The new fluidity of digital imaging components and techniques allows us creation of images that in many ways defy and contradict the fundamental traditional constructs that have been set in place to define and understand photography and its role. As Hirsch (2000) observes:

The seamless ease with which digital technology allows photographs to be combined and manipulated suggests that future photographs might be a hybrid of mixed media based not on an observable reality of actual events, but on the inner workings of imagination. (Hirsch , 2000: 470).

Pictured standing in front of a large, digitally compiled, printed and framed image of himself, (Plate 2.6.1) photographic pop artist David Hockney enters the current debate on the status of photography.



Plate 2.6.1, Sillitoe, D. *David Hockney*, 2004

In the accompanying article and interview (Jones & Seenan, 2004) under the headline *The camera today? You can't trust it*, Hockney is reported as saying that he has; "fallen out of love" with photography, "because of its digital manipulation" and now believes that it is a "dying art form". However such apocalyptic protestations regarding photography's fate are not new. Many contemporary commentators have been doom saying the position and future of photography since the coming of digital media in the late 1980s (Lister, 1995). Many wish to refer to our current position as the post photographic age and lament that they just cannot believe in what they see anymore. A rich polemic discourse has ensued and, regardless of the positions of the protagonists, all agree that the scale of the changes in the post photographic era of representing

the imaginary and the real, are profound (Robins, 1995). Mitchell articulates clearly the issues and creates a framework for an examination of previous and future media.

The technology of digital image production, manipulation and distribution represents a new configuration of intention. It focuses a powerful (though frequently ambivalent and resisted) desire to dismantle the rigidities of photographic seeing and to extend visual discord beyond the descriptive conventions and presumed certitudes of the photographic record. (Mitchell, 1994:28)

The process of digitisation of the visual, analogue world that surrounds us, the breaking down of the continuous flow of information into discrete, mathematically described, blocks of information, or pixels, has led to ease of manipulation of our representations of the analogue world. These manipulations generally fall into one of two types: the combining of extant images into a new hybridised image structure, or the rearrangement of the digitised information within an image. This rearrangement can be seamless (in the hands of a skilled operator) and may involve absolute alteration of the nature and relationship of image elements and information. Such alteration might consist of changes in placement or duplication of image elements, variation of perspective, and infinite reassignment of colours, densities, resolutions and other image attributes.

Paradoxically photography finds, even now, it maintains credence in the wider community and its verisimilitude is still widely relied upon, yet in other sectors its mendacious capacity is widely accepted (Ritchin, 1994). Contributing to this contentious situation is the grouping together of all photographic forms and attempting to apply one set of rules, norms, and descriptors equally to them all. Even in the digital/post photography age we should not expect that the creativity of a photographic artist should be bound to the same level of mimetic certainty as a photojournalist's report from a war zone. Yet, both genres of photography carry the same broad badge of photography. The proposition of *Photographies* each with their own discrete framework of definitions and ethical discourses might serve us better. As Clarke (1997) notes:

An *art* photograph involves an entirely different set of assumptions from a documentary photograph; all part of the complex web of inter-relationships within which any photograph is suspended. (Clarke, 1997:19)

The establishment of less austere divisions between photography and digital / post photography might also assist to form a more meaningful matrix to place and evaluate the evolution of photo based imagery. Lister (1995) argues that:

If what a photograph refers to is at least partly the way that the world is represented in other images, then another kind of distinction between the photographic and the digital becomes less sharp. The frequently made observation that digital images are re-workings of received

images, are built from fragments and layers of other images, is better understood as a meta-form of processes long involving the photographic image; not of a radical difference but as an acceleration of a shared quality. (Lister, 1995:13)

Hockney's (2004) assertion that photography is dead may be premature. If we view the image in question, as does he with a look of mock horror, is there no trace of the original? Cannot we still tell that it is David Hockney? From an artist who forged his reputation from reappropriation of images and their structure through collage this seems like empty rhetoric. Instead of a pronouncement of photography's death, would it not to have been more helpful to offer advice to be wary of everything photographic?

The photographic portrait, like all areas of photographic representation, has the potential to be altered, enhanced, retouched, manipulated; the digital wave of post photography broadens and expedites the potential of the process. Vigilance must be exercised continuously as to the intention and context of the creator, especially as these determinates becomes lost or diminished over time.

As Clarke (1997) points out:

The meaning of a photograph, its efficacy as an image, and its value as an object, are always dependent on the contexts within which we *read* it. (Clarke, 1997:19)

Did Thomas Lenhart (born circa.1855 - unknown) (Plate 2.6.2) have a twin brother in 1894? We only know from the title (inscribed on the back of the print) that he did not and that this image is manipulated. With disclosure, and within the confines of the Rococo inspired superficiality of the Victorian Photographic studio, such an artifice may be acceptable but it is important to remain sceptical of the historical veracity of such images.



Plate 2.6.2 Lenhart, T. *Lenhart Photographing Himself* 1894

The literature demonstrates that, although photography is only in its 170th year the roots of understanding and applications of light based image formation go back much further. Photography's mimetic characteristics imbue it with a unique role in preserving the present and as an evidential caretaker of our heritage. However it is the photographer who remains the arbiter in the practice of this phenomenon.

The photographer stands at the intersection of the optical/chemical/electronic process with subjective, interpretive and expressive licence that forever impacts on the widely held assumption of objective and non-interventionist recording. The photographers' role is multifaceted; it embraces many genres and, as we move forward into the digital era, with its increasing democratisation of image making and pixel-based malleability, it is due for reappraisal and re-evaluation.

CHAPTER THREE: PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITURE

3.1 THE PORTRAIT IN PHOTOGRAPHY: JEROME AND TRUGANINI

Within the opening words of the first paragraph of his landmark book, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, acknowledged French semiotics sage Roland Barthes (1982) alludes to a personal recognition of the power and connectedness of the photographic portrait. He relates his experience thus:

I happened on a portrait of Napoleon's younger brother Jerome, taken in 1852. And I realized then, with an amazement that I have not been able to lessen since: I am looking at the eyes that looked at the Emperor." Sometimes I would mention this amazement, but since no one seemed to share it, not even to understand it (life consists of these little touches of solitude), I forgot about it. (Barthes, 1982:3)

I felt a chill that his observation and realization coincided with a similar experience of my own. Rather than Napoleon as the subject of the portrait, in my case it was an image of the last remaining full-blood Tasmanian aboriginal, Truganinni. The original photograph is located in a Hobart museum. Displayed in a case of notated and catalogued artefacts the image immediately engaged my attention. Initially it was the strangeness and alien inappropriateness of the voluminous clothing of the late Victorian era in which Truganinni was draped. However, as I looked closer at the small *cart-de-vis* and took in her rigid and uncomfortable stance, the story unfolded, and I became transfixed. Beyond the immediate surrounds of the photographer's studio environment, Truganinni's

eyes look off, from behind a blank mask, to stare into a future that few, if any, other humans have ever had the dim prospect of knowingly facing: last survivor of their race. The power of the moment was riveting. I was not just looking at the eyes that had looked at the Emperor, as in Barthes case, but I was looking at the last eyes to witness a passing epoch. Like Barthes, on retelling, few others seem to share the amazement I felt during this photographic encounter.

What other medium is empowered to reach out so directly through time and circumstance? What is this unique quality, this essence of photography, that enables it to carry this power? In Plate 3.1.1 we can see an older Truganinni in an image of similar ilk.



Plate 3.1.1 Author Unknown, *John Woodcock Graves the younger [with] Truganinni*, Circa. 1865

The circumstances of the image making are unknown but the semiotics appear straightforward. In the introduction to an exhibition of colonial photographs of indigenous Australians, Brenda Croft (1997) describes this genre of photographs in the following context:

Cultural genocide was condoned by the prejudicial opinion of the period that aboriginal nations were on the verge of extinction. Such beliefs...were the impetus behind photographing indigenous people to ensure that an 'historical' record remained. (Croft, 1997:unpaginated introduction)

For Barthes (1982) the quest to understand photography grew:

I was overcome by an *ontological* desire: I wanted to learn what photography was *in itself*... and by what essential feature it was to be distinguished from the community of images. (Barthes, 1982:3)

American critic and commentator Susan Sontag (1977) observes that, in most uses of the camera, "the photograph's naïve or descriptive function is paramount." (Sontag, 1977:44) . However, in relation to the photographs of Jerome and Truganini we must be careful about the degree to which we overlay our current cultural/societal values, our twenty-first century sensibilities, over what seems so self evident at first viewing. Although the broad circumstances

of Truganini's life are well known, there is no record of the circumstances in which the Truganini photograph(s) were taken.

Viewings of photographs can be deceptive and easily pre-judged. Is the distant stare in Truganini's eyes, that so first transfixed me, due to the depth of her melancholy or is it a result of the length of time of the photographer's exposure? How many exposures were made before the photographer decided that this was the one worthy of representing his/her ideas of Truganini's place and significance? As art theorist Richard Brilliant (2000) notes,

...only the audience is ill defined at the time of the portraits making, and it [the portrait] has unlimited potential for new appraisals of the person portrayed or for the generation of misunderstanding based on ignorance. (Brilliant, 2000:8)

How many audiences/viewers have the time, resources or even motivation to undertake their own research into the circumstances of each image's creation? How many are able to weigh and assess the veracity and context of each event? How many learn of the photographer's intentions, which might be to shock, sensationalise, or even misrepresent the subject? Even if audiences/viewers had the time/inclination to undertake such investigations, the means and possibility of doing so are typically completely out of range.

Defences and descriptions of the role the portrait in the classical art tradition have placed great emphasis on the interpretative dimensions of the sculpted, painted, drawn etc. work. As Gombrich (1972) argues,

The correct portrait, like the useful image, is an end product on a long road through schema and correction. It is not a faithful record of a visual experience, but the faithful construction of a relational model.

(Gombrich, 1972: 8)

Portraiture and photographic portraiture have at times both been derided or devalued as mimetic and derivative yet both potentially are vehicles for creative artistic expression. Photography did not, as was first feared, spell the demise of painting but rather became a valuable adjunct to the creation of portrait paintings as well as a tool to assist self-portraiture. As West (2004) surmises,

The idea that the camera could be objective implied that the person operating it was a mere technician - a label that had also been associated with the mimetic nature of painted portraiture (West, 2004:22)

3.2 THE INTERPLAY OF SELF AND OTHERS

Portraiture in the arts pre-dates the advent of photography by thousands of years. Brilliant (2000) partially defines the portrait as follows:

Simply put, portraits are art works, intentionally made of living or once living people by artists, in a variety of media, and for an audience.

Portraits may survive as physical objects for a very long time and their images may be transferred to other media or even replicated in vast numbers (e.g. postage stamps) with significant consequences in reception. (Brilliant, 2000:8)

The portrait is central to photography. The endurance of an image of a human subject beyond the present is a pivotal platform amongst a multiplicity of potential imaging outcomes. Jones (2003) suggests that at least in part, the portrait in post-Renaissance Western Art emerged from the tradition of the death mask as a direct indexical imprint of the dead face of a lost subject. The function of the portrait since the advent of photography has been expanded and redefined. It is the actuality of photography that gives it its unique status. The ability to reproduce an eidetic image by mechanical means based on objectively recorded light, to define objects in the physical world and further record an instant in the life of the subject has implications for the identity of the subject that sets it apart. West (2004) identifies *likeness* as distinguishing portraiture from other art categories such as landscape and still life. West observes that “...portraiture as a genre is historically tied to the idea of mimesis, or likeness”(West, 2004: 12).

Photographic portraiture, especially due to its *mechanical* nature, has further taken up the mantle of this indexation. Within the fine arts this mimetic association of portraiture has often led to it being accorded a low status (West, 2000). However, given the modernist imperatives of the nineteenth century,

photographic portraiture's apparently literal and scientific methodology of reproduction elevated the portrait to a new plane.

The level of verisimilitude of the Daguerreotype over other contemporary photographic processes led to its almost universal adoption by portraitists from 1839-1857 (London & Upton, 2002). Sitters saw themselves for the first time *right way round*, all previous views of themselves being via direct reflection. Now they, like Lewis Carroll's [1832-1898] *Alice*, could see themselves as others saw them: from the other side of the looking glass. There were also many perceived advantages offered by a photographic portrait over a painted portrait including the cost and the speed of production; no longer were multiple sittings required.

The making of a portrait firstly implies that there exists a person of whom it is worthwhile to make a portrait. It might be expected that the potential subject will have some salient feature of character, life lived, or deeds to warrant the preservation of their image within the current context. Making a portrait further implies that there will be a purpose to be served by such preservation of the image of the person. In this process the values of the portraitist may not necessarily dictate which individuals will be worthy as subjects but will influence the manner of their portrayal. Brilliant (2000) argues that: "Portraiture challenges the transience or irrelevancy of human existence". He further identifies three questions to be asked by the portrait artist in deciding on a response to "...the demands formulated by the individual's wish to endure." These questions can be summarised as:

What does the subject look like?

What is the subject like?

Who is the subject? Brilliant (2000: 23)

These questions create a useful framework for thinking about the specifics of the portrait and what it might embody. To the external world, especially to those who might only know the subject from a distance, what the subject looks like represents the essence of who they are; it is the basis of their identity. Without recognisable reference to the individual subject any portrait can only be a pointer to type or serve to achieve some other amorphous outcome such as *the aged, the poor, the young, etc.*

Consequently, as Brilliant (2,000) notes,

Some degree of resemblance is then the willed connection between the portrait image and the person or persons to whom it refers. In this way, the portrait makes visual recognition by the viewer more or less likely and thereby asserts the existence of the person portrayed and the viewer in the same psychological space. (Brilliant, 2000: 25)

Keeley (2004) asserts that, in its own right, photographic portraiture is more than unvarnished exactitude and that to label any image as a portrait implies that someone is creating it: "A [photographic] portrait isn't simply mapping of the face...an I.D card is not a portrait" Keeley (2004) continues by introducing the term *emotional likeness* in describing the portrait beyond the threshold of mere literal reproduction. He explains that:

...[the creator of the portrait] is leading their subject in an intentional direction, with a goal in mind of how they see the portrait emotionally resolved...Emotional likeness is a much more valuable result than mechanical representation. A portrait can possess this quality of human expression, which isn't only exhibited by a subject, but invited by the photographer. It isn't simply given to you by your subject, but recognised and interpreted by you [the photographer]. (Keeley, 2004:54)

This relationship between subject and portraitist is seen by many as a triangular accord (Barthes, 1982; Sontag, 1973); the third party being the audience. The audience will forever be the ultimate arbiter and interpreter of the meaning and significance of any portrait image, their alignment with the intentions of the originators always increasingly corrupted by the passage of time, changed socio-cultural conditions and their individual tastes, and worldview. This re-interpretation of photographic images over time is thus encapsulated by Burnett (1991) :

They [images] are the *site* of a continuous process of reinterpretation produced out of the historical context of presentation and performance. This *instability* which is at the heart of postmodernist reflections of the variability of meaning of all texts, foregrounds as processual – there is no fixed moment of projection or apprehension. (Burnett, 1991:1)

3.3 STUDIUM AND PUNCTUM REVISITED

When writing his final book *Camera Lucida* Roland Barthes (1982) brought to bear a number of linguistic terms to characterise the nature of his responses to photographs. Many of these terms have since been widely, almost universally, cited or adopted by photography commentators and critics (e.g. Burnett, 1991; Lister, 1995, West, 2000, Hirsch, 2000). Barthes (1982) sets out by attempting to analyse his own attraction to particular photographs in a very personal sense. “I have determined to be guided by the consciousness of my feelings”. Barthes (1982) admits that some photographs have for him “the very opposite of hebetude; something more like an internal agitation”, whilst others leave him “so indifferent that I do not even bother to see it [them] as an image[s]”. Barthes (1982) employs news photographs by Dutch news photographer, Koen Wessing, to assist in making this distinction. On the one hand, he attributes to Wessing’s photographs of war and rebellion a certain “banality” indicating that what he feels about these photographs is: “an *average* effect”. They are images that inform and the Latin term which Barthes draws on to cover this is *studium*; “a kind of general, enthusiastic commitment...but without special acuity”. However Barthes (1982) identifies some of Wessing’s images as having an added dimension; a tension, a duality: “it is the element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me”. This special quality he termed *punctum*, from the Latin, meaning; “a mark made by a pointed instrument... a prick...A photograph’s *punctum* is that accident which pricks me.” The *punctum* is therefore that which punctuates, excites; it is an adventure

within the image; it relates to *love*, as opposed to *like*; it relates to passion as opposed to *ennui*. And at greater length:

Many photographs are, alas, inert under my gaze. But even those that have some existence in my eyes, most provoke only a general and, so to speak, polite interest: they have no *punctum* in them: they please or displease me without pricking me; they are invested with no more than *studium*. The *studium* is that very wide field of unconcerned desire, of various interest, of inconsequential taste: *I like / I don't like*. The *studium* is of the order of *liking*, not of *loving*; it mobilizes a half desire; a demi-volition; it is the same sort of vague, slippery, irresponsible interest one takes in the people, the entertainments, the books, the clothes one finds *all right*. (Barthes, 1982: 27)

Barthes (1982) insists that perception of the *punctum* is a purely subjective response that takes place spontaneously, free from any intellectual analysis of the *studium* or any intention on the part of the photographer. "In order to receive the *punctum*, no analysis would be of any use to me". As Freid (2005:541) points out in an appraisal of *Camera Lucida*, "for Barthes, to recognise the *studium* is to encounter the photographers intentions".

3.4 REFLECTIONS ON THE PHOTOGRAPHIC SELF-PORTRAIT

In the self-portrait the artist is the central character, and, through a process of *self-fashioning*, is able to make constructions representing aspects of self and self-perceptions of character for others.

The self-portrait can be justified as an attempt to care for the self, a kind of self-exercise and self-examination, a duty to the exploration and advancement of the self. (Avgitidou, 2003:15).

Extending on the concept of caring for self, both protecting and promoting aspects of self, the self-portrait can be seen as an attempt to exert some level of control over how we are perceived by others.



Plate 3.4.1 Vogel, N. *Your Old Friend H. Vogel* 1875

The self-portrait in photography is by no means new and a rich record exists of photographers generating self-fashioned images of themselves before their lenses. (Plate 3.4.1). The semiotic devices employed by the photographer to encode meaning about self are diverse and the extent to which others, especially others of different socio-cultural backgrounds, will accurately

translate signifiers and existing in a different time is open to question. (Jones, 2002) points out that the self-portrait photograph *restates* the subject, but that the original symbolic connections may be lost and that future viewers will make new meanings of their own:

[the self-portrait photograph] reiterates the subject (restates her or him such that she/he can be engaged by future interpreters) in some sense beyond the moment of the picture's taking and, potentially, after the subject's literal death. This reiteration can never establish the "truth" of the subject but merely suggests at aspects of the subject that can be encountered by future viewers. Obviously, many of the original signifieds attached to the codes in the image will be lost to these future readers, who will establish new meanings based on their own contexts of understanding. (Jones, 2002: 25).

The quest to create an allegorical likeness that transcends mere simulacrum is the fundamental progenitor for meaningful photographic self-portraiture. Revelation and communication of self perceived values and attitudes to another through the self-portrait remains its dominant role. Often it is the subtle details of an image that act as the vehicle for this communication. Jones (2002) argues that it is:

...via a site of reciprocal exchange where the 'past' subject (the artist) comes alive through the 'present' memories of the viewer, who responds in particular ways to the artist's self-performance as captured in the

image via a face conveyed through a conglomeration of telling details.
(Jones, 2002: 948).

For Barthes (1981) observes that it is these details that often carried the *punctum*, or prick of the image, that transports it beyond the descriptive, a detail that pricks our memory, that brings about heightened acuity in the image viewing experience,

...a detail attracts me. I feel that its mere presence changes my reading, that I am looking at a new photograph, marked in my eyes with a higher value. This detail is the punctum. (Barthes, 1981:42)

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY & DATA COLLECTION

4.1 SCAN OF PHOTOGRAPHIC PRACTICE IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

A matrix for the profiling of any individual practitioner is necessarily multi layered. In Figure 4.1.1 potential contributing attributes / qualifiers are sequentially grouped according to their related nature. It should however be recognised that each individual will be an idiosyncratic amalgam of some of these. This matrix provided the framework for the interview questions.

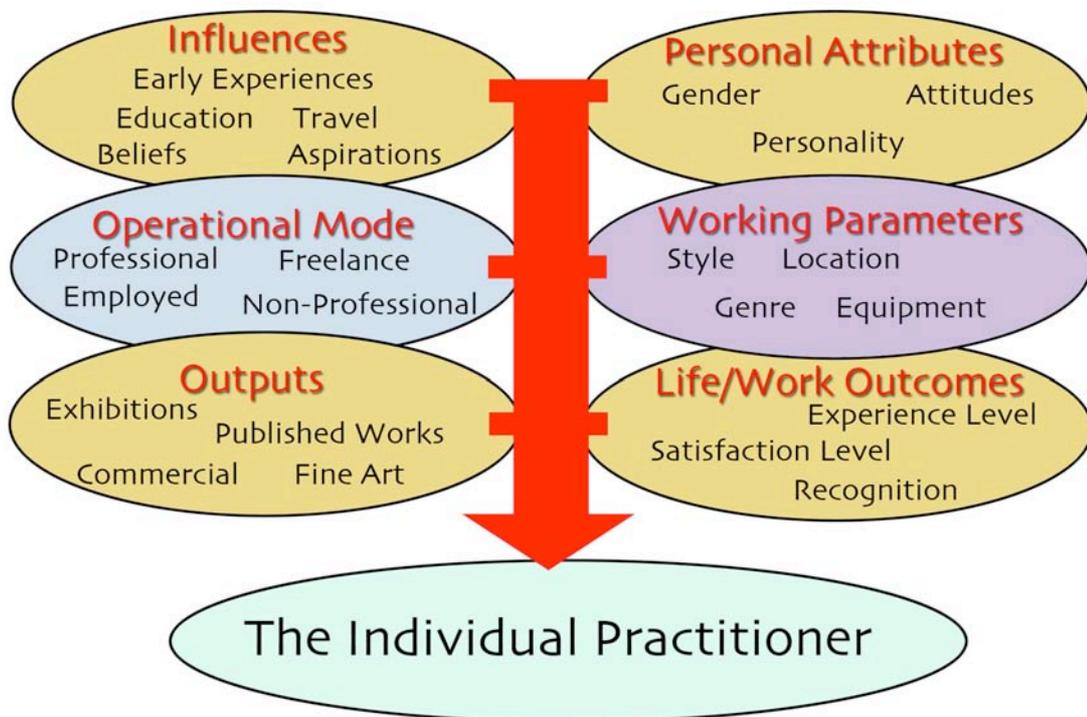


Figure 4.1.1 NQ Photographer Profile

4.2 SELECTING THE PARTICIPANTS

Warren establishes that qualitative research methods may choose respondents to the research based on “priority research design, theoretical sampling, or *snowball* or convenience design...or [subjects] may be [seen as] key informants” (Warren, 2000:83). The selection of the participants was intended to represent both the range of photographic practice in NQ as well as encompassing other criteria such as length of experience, gender, nature of employment, specializations and degree of involvement in professional activity. Those represented are thus not necessarily *high-flyers* in terms of recognition at national or international level; nor may they necessarily represent best practice in photography; rather they are the practitioners that record and interpret the daily lives of North Queenslanders and the experience of working and living in NQ. To achieve this end a degree of both theoretical sampling, that is choosing respondents according to a pre determined theoretical model including practitioners already known to the researcher, and *snowballing*. Snowballing can be described as: “One respondent is located who fulfills the theoretical criteria, then that person helps to locate others through his or her social networks” (Warren, 2000:85). The majority of the participants have come from Townsville; within the city of Townsville there exists a sufficiently wide cross section of photographers to satisfy the aims of this research. Practitioners were also included from other locations in North Queensland when their unique or valuable professional profile was not one found in Townsville.

Within NQ there exists a wide range of photographic practice. For the purposes of this study this practice was primarily divided into three groupings. These groupings are identified under the heading of *Class*. They are:

- Secure practitioners employed or self-employed in photographic image making as their principal income source - professionals.
- Emerging practitioners employed or self-employed in photographic image making but have less than five years experience as a professional.
- Those who may have belonged to either of the above groups but who are now retired from photography but who can provide insights from long-term involvement and perspectives on the development of photography in NQ.

This study primarily dealt with the first category. However the study also includes members of the second category as a counterpoint in terms of personal styles of image making and lifestyle.

Gathering stories, in some cases life stories, was the key focus of the research. Further the identification of underlying commonalities in motivation, content and directions has also been essential to establishing directions for creative practice. As a group, regional photographers are typically diverse. Given their isolation and smaller population/client base, they are often less specialised than their city counterparts and, of necessity, take on a wider range of photographic assignments per practitioner. The genres of photography practiced includes wedding, portrait, sports, news, fine art, photojournalism, commercial, industrial and aerial with any given practitioner often operating across several

of these domains. In the case of this study, each individual was depicted practising within their principal area of photographic engagement. Over time the work of many regional photographers has formed an intrinsic part of the historic and cultural record of the area. Not only through recognised formal channels such as newspapers but also through the regular commercial recording of family and community events.

It should be stressed that it has never been the intention of this study to completely exhaust every possible type of practice and practitioner in North Queensland. Indeed some genres, such as the myriad of scientific applications including forensic, astrological, metallurgical, marine and many others, have been completely ignored. Also some very well known photographers have been excluded on the basis of duplication of genre or because of the demands of their employment exclude their participation. However the twenty final respondents make for a representative example sufficient to shed light on the central research theme. Of the original prospective participants, all that could be contacted agreed to take part.**Error! Reference source not found.**

Table 4.1.1 The Participants

Name		Class	Gender	Speciality	Location	Genre	Gp.
John	de Rooy	1	M	Aerial	Townsville	Y	2
Paul	Dymond	2	M	Travel	Cairns	Y	2
Arch	Fraley	3	M	Ret. Military /	Townsville	NA	1
Ian	Hitchcock	4	M	Medical	Townsville	Y	3
Clive	Hutchison	5	M	Lecturer	Townsville	Y	1
Greg	Keating	6	M	Environmental	Townsville	Y	3
Fiona	Lake	7	F	Inland	Townsville	N	2
Karen	Landt	8	F	Fine Art	Townsville	N	2
Bryan	Lynch	9	M	Social pages	Townsville	Y	2
Megan	Marano	10	F	Child portraits	Townsville	N	2
Natalie	Martin	11	F	Rodeo	Townsville	N	3
Glen	O'Malley	12	M	Fine Art	Innisfail	N	2
Rob	Parsons	13	M	Commercial	Townsville	Y	2
Davey	Rintala	14	M	News/Music	Townsville	Y	2
Mark	Tessmann	15	M	Motor Sport	Townsville	Y	3
Kerry	Trapnell	16	M	Documentary	Cairns	N	2
Peter	Treasure	17	M	Portraiture	Townsville	Y	2
Leigh	Turner	18	F	Landscape	Townsville	Y	3
Susan	Turner	19	F	Remote places	Cairns	Y	2
Ziggy	Zeigler	20	F	Weddings	Airlie Beach	Y	2

4.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This research combines approaches, principally focusing on an interview with the subjects of the study. However during the course of the study, other informal opportunities arose which supplemented the information and insights available to the researcher gained via the interview. These supplementary opportunities are explained in sub chapter 4.4. Interviews took place within a qualitative framework. Qualitative interviewing has an emphasis on researchers asking questions and listening, and respondents answering (Rubin and Rubin 1995). Unlike survey interviews, participants are more likely to see themselves as meaning makers, rather than passive conduits for retrieving information from an existing vessel of answers (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). The purpose of the qualitative interview is to derive opinions and interpretations, not facts or laws. Some researchers see it as aiming to understand the meaning of respondents' experiences and life worlds (Warren, 2000).

The interviews were scheduled at times and places of convenience to respondents. Initial questions were asked from a prepared list, however as the flow of the *conversation* of the interviews proceeded, it was important to follow and guide respondents along paths of their own revelation that advanced the direction of the knowledge and insights required. Interviews were conducted after the signing of the approved informed consent form. All interviews were tape-recorded. All tapes were stored according to the stipulations of the JCU Human Ethics Committee.

The lengths of the interviews varied according to the character of the interviewee and the amount of time that each had available to set aside for this activity. Subjects were informed well in advance that at least two hours would be needed to be set aside to conduct their interview. Without divulging possible interview questions in advance this notification at least established in the subjects mind an expectation that we would be dealing with issues that reached beyond the most superficial level. The conduct of the interview was sympathetic to the methods and definitions provided and/or articulated by Kvale (Kvale, 1996). He identifies conversations as being the method for the conduct of qualitative interviews and uses the word *conversations* as being from the original Latin form: “wandering together with”. Kvale’s method is open ended and more attuned to who is being travelled with, rather than setting out a precise route to follow.

However where the interviews departed from the conventional conversation was the framework in which each was conducted, both formal and informal. Formally all participants were briefed in writing as to the nature of the project and its possible outcomes. They were also informed of the identity of the interviewer and his background and the ethical guidelines for the research. Further the interviews were conducted by way of formal appointment. Informally all participants know that you are seeking information, views, and values from them, for the researcher’s purposes and that the *conversations* shall be led from that perspective.

In designing the questions note was taken of the three standard classes of questions identified by Rubin and Rubin, as constituting the qualitative interview:

...main questions that begin and guide the conversation, probes to clarify answers or request further examples, and follow up questions that pursue the implications of main questions. (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:22)

Therefore only main questions can be structured and articulated in advance and not all main questions might be asked due the answers given to previous questions, probes or follow up questions. Throughout, probes and follow up questions were employed to expand on initial answers to main questions and follow paths and directions opened up by the subject.

Johnson (Johnson, 2000) stresses the importance of making tape recordings of in-depth interviews to create verbatim records of what was said. He further stresses that although field notes are a valuable adjunct to any interview, they are inferior to tape recording. With this in mind all interviews were recorded and after some experimentation in technique a complete analogue record of the interviews was made. This record now extends to 24, ninety minute, tapes. These tapes are housed and stored according to the dictates of the JCU ethics agreement.

4.4 INTERVIEW CONTEXT: OBSERVATIONS OF OTHER DISCOURSES AND BEHAVIOURS.

Additional to a partly structured interview with a degree of set territory to cover, there existed other opportunities to collect data, stories, impressions, background information etc. My intention has been to optimise as many of these situations as possible. Walking and chatting on the way to photography shoots, observation of relationships and conversations with clients and/or subjects and reviewing a photo session, have all added to the candid revelation of valuable additional material. James Spradley (Spradley, 1979) makes clear that qualitative researchers make cultural inferences from three sources: what people say, the way that they act, and the artefacts they use. From the outset the broadest possible range of inputs to the research was sought from subjects. Indeed Spradley's list could well be divided into a subset of more specific inputs, each resulting in enriched data. Such a research methodology has its roots in ethnographic research, it is now commonplace amongst social researchers and widely supported for its validity (Warren, 1990, Kvale 1996). Participants were made aware that, in the preparation of this research a vignette would be written to provide insights into each subject and his/her practice. They were also made aware that it was my intention to draw on our experiences together and observations in writing that vignette.

Within the photographic works of this study, as they are conceived, captured and produced they will be encoded, on one level or another, with the intentions of the photographer bringing about, to use Barthes's terminology, their

individual and collective *studium*. Each will have embedded, according to its subjects and circumstance with detailed information of place, time, persona, dress, field and ground. Interactions and exchanges that have taken place between photographer and subject against the background of the subject's image making will tell a story which may in various degree entail, involvements and descriptions on the one hand, and are of pathos, emotions, aspirations, regrets and other human longings and passions on the other. Whether these imaging events trigger *punctum* in the viewer, whether idiosyncratically they will reach out and strike a subjective *prick* beyond their descriptive capacity, will be, of necessity, for others to judge.

The execution of this research is modernist; it conforms to the framework of the establishment, products will be available through galleries, it will not be interactive, it will seek to make sense of the world etc. As Klages (Klages, 2003:1) points out: "Modernity is about order: about rationality and rationalization, creating order out of chaos". Modernism creates the grand narrative to strike out the individual story with its inherent inconsistencies and contradictions, whereas my intention throughout is to not just grapple with such instabilities but, to let them surface and to applaud them. There is a risk that this path of variability might be deemed by others (viewers/critics) to be too eclectic, too lacking in focus and direction. However the implementation of idiosyncratic image treatments based on interactions, with not just the individual subjects, but their practice and life experiences shall remain central

to this endeavour, regardless of the risk of any stylistic instability in the final exhibition.

4.5 THE SELF-PORTRAIT

Included in this research into working photographers is also a self-portrait. Although my involvement with photography is now primarily as an educator I still undertake self-commissioned, and other, creative photographic projects including this one. Like the photographers of this research I am also constantly challenged to reflect on the direction of photography and digital imaging, in my case as a part of my teaching practice. The self-portrait is a vehicle for visual externalization of those concerns, the debates that surround them and my placement within those debates. As both a literal and allegorical statement, its inclusion in the research acts as both a point of departure for this study and a referential connection.

CHAPTER FIVE: EMBRACING THE PERSON AND THE PRACTICE.

5.1 IN SEARCH OF THE ESSENCE

In this implementation of the methodology it is the dynamic relationship of the practitioner to the process of photographic image making, and the relevance and implications of that process and outputs that is central to the approach adopted in this research. In meeting the stated aims of this research a series of photographic images of each subject are be taken that record, imply or articulate insights into the nature of their photography, the personality of the subject, the subject's approach to their work and the relationship of the subject within the geo-socio-cultural context in which they exist.

All subjects are photographed in a context embodying some touchstones of commonality. The artist at work is a common theme in all cases even if its expression is particularized. The portrayal of the artist in their studio (in their workspace) is a recurrent theme in painting, that concept is adopted here; accept that the workspace of most of the photographers is widely varying in nature and generally out of doors.

What are the strategies for capture which allow the coalescence of the individual at work in a single image? In approaching this central question, an immediate sub set of questions evolves: To what extent do I intervene? In my search to evoke and communicate where should I interpret, direct or even contrive? A study of the classic works by iconic practitioners and investigation

of the published photographic knowledge base gives a starting point to consideration of a range of approaches.

5.1.1. COOPERATION AND COLLUSION

The photography of August Sander (1890-1961) to his photographic subjects is unique. His most memorable images are of a whole generation of Germans prior to the Second World War. They include people from all walks of life and economic backgrounds. In the foreword to a book celebrating the photography of August Sander, philosopher Golo Mann refers to the posing of the subjects of these works as follows: "...if the subject approaches the camera with the intention of showing himself off, then he has become something more than himself: he is revealing a secret self-image"(Mann:1971:7). Sander's images so often seem to capture this secret self-image in the countenance he solicits from his sitters. In each individual he also aims to create what he referred to as the archetype of the particular group to which that individual belongs. Looking back at his images of youthful soldiers, workers and professions, we see a powerful collection of often-serious Germanic personas from a generation yet to experience the devastation of WWII. Sander's approach is somewhat interventionist and contrasts markedly with many of the other recognised photographic portraitists. Sander does not pretend to be the impartial observer but rather a catalyst for an action of self-expression or self-fashioning. In the image High Court Tipstaff (Plate 5.1.1) the viewer palpably can experience the subject planting his feet and puffing out his chest in modest, internally

constructed and driven, but externally facilitated affirmations of self-importance.



Plate 5.1.1, Sander, A. *High Court Tipstaff*, 1931

Brilliant (1991) suggests that in social encounters between one person and another a certain amount of self-fashioning always occurs to make sense of the exchange. He refers to this mutual self-fashioning as involving: “cooperation and collusion”. Although he also cautions that when this cooperation and collusion is conducted with a portraitist, it results in “the fabrication of an identity that may, or may not, correspond to the subject’s own representation of self, even at time of portrayal.” (Brilliant, 1991:45).

However the manner and degree of this mutual self-fashioning can vary greatly even within the body of works of a single practitioner and within the dictates of that individual’s style. The approach of capturing the defining moment is often exemplified in the works of Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2000). Distilling from

seemingly ordinary vignettes of daily life he looks to “capture the decisive moment when the subject and the photographer are in perfect balance” (McDarrah & McDarrah 1999). Cartier-Bresson acknowledges the influence of both Surrealism and Zen in the capture of his images. He aimed to “...preserve life in the act of living”. This approach is exemplified in *Alicante* (Plate 5.1.2), this image is from a series based on the lives of Spanish prostitutes and outsiders. In each of the images the subjects, aware of the camera and the photographer are involved in a narrative pantomime and the viewer can sense engagement and this mutual self-fashioning taking place. Other of Cartier-Bresson’s works, although still adhering to his dictum of capturing the defining moment did so more at a distance; preferring to add broader context for the subject and involved no direct subject/photographer interaction. Indeed in many instances the subject is completely unaware of the presence of the photographer.



Plate 5.1.2, Cartier Bresson, H. *Alicante* 1931

The manner in which these icons of photography and their works have influenced my approach to image making is difficult to say, except that it is

profound. My exposure to their images has regularly taken place over thirty years and is intertwined with readings and images from many other photographers such as Diane Arbus (1923-1971), Mary Ellen Mark (b.1940-), and also includes the Australians Phillip Quirk (b.1948-), Max Dupain (1911-1992), and Dacre Stubbs(1910-2001), (Plate 5.1.3).



Plate 5.1.3, Dupain, M. *Cane Farmer* 1931

There are some photographers that have attempted to chronicle the lives of iconic photographers. Their images and text create a valuable record of the person behind the camera and assist in putting a face to a name but often appear to offer little visually beyond surface recognition. This appears evident in the work of F. McDarragh (1919-2007), (Plate 5.1.4) and Arnold Crane (b. 1932). These images of photographer subjects holding cameras in a crowd (albeit famous photographers) present as Paparazzi images; the subjects being reluctant victims of a prying second lens. These anonymous faces and their awkward countenance speak little of the enormous contribution that these photographers have made, via their work, to our understanding of ourselves, and our world. Eddie Adams was responsible for some of the most powerful

images to emerge for the Vietnam War and risked his own life to chronicle critical events that had a powerful sway on public opinion in the USA.



Plate 5.1.4, McDarrah, F. *Eddie Adams*, 1967

At the moment of composing each image I am not aware of the influence or presence of the generations of photographers that have preceded me (my grandfather included). In attempting to chronicle a cross section of the working photographers of NQ my intention has been that each image embody something of the spirit and calling of each subject, that they exude some of Sander's and Dupain's conscious self-expression yet still convey elements of the balance spoken of by McDarrah and McDarrah (1999). Further, my intention is to enact a collusion of players in the photographic interchange, to capture the identity that Brilliant (2000) expounds, resulting in a representation that coincides with the self-fabrication envisioned and enacted by the sitter.

5.1.2 CONCENTRATION VS. DISTILLATION

A tension that was identified in the approach to the subjects early in the study revolved around what initially may appear to be a fine distinction. The first is a process of concentration and centres on bringing together all of the qualities or characteristics of the subject into a totemic and representative mix of the totality of the individual. Alternately distillation involves a process of elimination or driving off of extraneous elements to more clearly reveal the salient attributes that might result from the portrait's collusive invention. Vacillation between these approaches emerges throughout the works. In the image of Susan Turner the process of concentration is in evidence through the rich symbolism and encoded knowledge of the image. Brought together and concentrated in this scene, beyond its surface representative index, is a life of communion and familiarity with the other subjects and their environment. The shared moment of the effects of the smoking fire, the intrinsic but incidental inclusion of the camera, the intense and knowing stare of the mute, the activities and positioning of the foreground fire stoker combine to concentrate within the field a grouping of disparate but related constituents each grafting to the central theme and enhancing its meaning. The distillation process is more evident in the image of rodeo photographer, Natalie Martin. Although the image is captured at a rodeo event the image's construction is removed from the decorous and intensively diverting environs on the rodeo grounds. Critical relationships with others and Natalie's direct application of her craft are also passed over and ostensibly ignored. Instead Natalie's direct stare engages the viewer, it reaches out from under the shade of the emblematic, out-sized hat.

Her face is at least life size, not just inviting close examination, but also giving her equal authority to the viewer. A patina of red dust, a side effect of her outback, photographic engagement, covers her face. Near one eye a small patch is washed clean. Is it a tear? Is it a reaction to the dust? Her future ambitions, her quest for recognition, her tough gender skirmishes with a patriarchal branch of outback life all are distilled to an essence (Plate 8.2.4).

5.2 ENCODING AND SIGNIFYING THE VISUAL AND NON-VISUAL

So many aspects of human expression and experience reside beyond the realm of the visual and the world of the still. Animated human activity, the lilt of an accent in speech, the tactile qualities of surfaces, perception of all types: variations in temperature, emotions, olfactory encounters, abstract constructs of the mind, all reside essentially either in the non-visual or beyond the still moment and require signifiers if they are to be reinterpreted back to the visual still moment or photograph. The extent to which implications of these values and variants can be translated into the visual arena, especially through the still photograph is worthy of debate and investigation. As Chandler (1971) points out: “human experience is inherently multi-sensory, and every representation of experience is subject to the constraints and affordances of the medium involved.” Semiotics, or the study of signs, is universal and extends to cover this translation. Barthes maintained that:

Semiology aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex

associations of all of these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not languages, at least systems of signification'. (Barthes, 1967:8)

However although semiotics is all embracing there are different modes or systems of signification that exist with its scope. In terms of the captured still image Victor Burgin insists that "There is no language of photography, no single signifying system upon which all photographs depend" (Burgin, 1982). This refers to a lack of a dictionary or encyclopaedia of visual grammar that is universally acknowledged or even widely accepted for the photograph. For example; whereas one viewer may interpret in a photograph the presence of a cigar as a symbol of masculine intent or some such, to another it might be a symbol of Colonial enslavement and the history of Cuba or, in fact, it may (according to Freud the grand master of psychological symbols) be "just a cigar". Thus as symbols are encoded (or not) in a photograph, and whether those symbols are recognised for what they may (or may not) represent, makes for a dynamic interplay between the creator (encoder) of the symbols (or not) and the consumer or decoder.

Integral to the narrative core of the images of this research is a rich symbolic encoding. The study of semiotics tells us that the significance of many of these signifiers will be overlooked or misinterpreted by the audience. However, regardless of the code, (allegorical or descriptive etc.), the content of the code (object, gesture, facial expression etc.), or the intent of the code (to proposition,

to subvert etc.) its existence is its importance, regardless of the validity of any decoding strategy on the part of the viewer. The role of the encoding relates to enhanced expression for the encoder, and the engagement of the decoder. Of the encoded symbols mentioned above it should be noted that not all of the signs and symbols existing in the images are contrived or deliberately placed by the photographer. The majority of these are naturally encoded symbols. That is, they occur in the image at the time of exposure determined by a raft of socio-cultural and happenstance factors brought about by the practice and personage of the subject of the photography. The clothing, equipment, location, weather, and many other symbolically encoded, determinates of meaning act to form a stage of the subject's creation. It is the role of the encoding photographer to make meaning through the juxtaposition and triangulation of these existent and additional introduced signifiers upon that stage.

5.3 OBSERVER, PARTICIPANT, INTERPRETER

The stage is set. The human subject of the research is engaged in the activity that determines their inclusion in this undertaking; they engage as the photographer. At this point the participant had been chosen, the interview had been held although with few exceptions I had little if any impact on the time, date, place or nature of the shoot. To this point the participant was in control; choosing all parameters of our encounter up to the time of my arrival. The terms of my engagement were then dependent on the opportunities that presented themselves and my willingness to impose on the process. To what extent I was able act as an interested observer, the fly on the wall concept,

which initially had been my preferred strategy was driven by the pace and nature of the activity and the attitude of the participant. At what point I ceased to remain the observer in many cases became lost in the interaction between all parties. In all cases it remained a goal to act as interpreter of the action / interaction rather than a mimetic recorder of the scene; natural, contrived or otherwise.

5.3.1 SEIZING THE MOMENT: MANAGING SPONTANEITY

In some instances I came to the shoot with an idea of the conceptual / visual outcome already stirring as a result of my existing exposure to the participant. In the case of Leigh Turner I was aware of the architectural scale of her image making and the formality of the segmented panels within which a schema of visual interaction dynamically evolved (Plate 8.4.1). My intention on arrival at the shoot was to draw on this structure as a stylistic driver for my completed image. Just as in her panels each layer peels back like the stratum of a geological formation, here images of Leigh involved at the site of her image making were to take precedence over her original content. The relaxed contemplative pace of the shoot and the easy access to the participant allowed unbridled opportunity to manage moments of candid un-posed spontaneity. On viewing the images now I can still feel the intensity of the emotional serenity of that early morning encounter. However seizing the moment of opportunity, selecting and extracting moments from the continuum without direct intervention was not applicable or effective with all participants. Other more interventionist strategies came into play.

5.3.2 INVITING EVOCATION

Directing or at least managing a solicited outcome became the other strategy for capture. Several manifestations of this approach were implemented. In the case of Ian Hitchcock I had little prior knowledge of the role and duties, creative, scientific or otherwise, of a medical photographer. Observing Ian operate the Fundus retinal eye camera gave little sense of his engagement with the patient a process of vital importance if he is to achieve ophthalmic images of a quality suitable for clinical diagnosis. The human interaction became at least as important as the photographic action. I played the role of the patient; I leant towards the headpiece of the camera following Ian's instructions. The technological interface coincides with the human interface. I invite Ian to direct me as he would a patient. Ian's evocations to look at the light bring me closer again. The collusion referred to by Brilliant (1991) played out in a compelling way. Whether arranging Glen O'Malley in a surrealist tryst at the completion of his shoot (Plate 7.8.5) or structuring the romantic gaze of Arch Fraley at Garbutt Airbase (Plate 6.3.3) an invitation was issued or an instruction given to many of the participants for evocation of their inner self-image and it was forthcoming.

5.4 IMAGE COMPILATION AS A PORTRAIT STRATEGY

Combining one portrait image with another was referred to in Chapter Three where Fredrick Firth's clever double self-portrait (Plate 2.6.2) of 1866 removes any doubt about the novelty of the process. Such arrangements were common and many were on a grand scale in the tradition of the great painting masters. Indeed the ability to produce sophisticated photographic compilations was amply established much earlier. In 1857 Oscar Rejlander (1813-1875) produced a large and complex photographic montage called the *Two Ways of Life* (Plate 5.4.1).



Plate 5.4.1, Rejlander, O. *Two Ways of Life*, 1857

The final compelling image was comprised of thirty separate negatives. The key differences in the post photography era is that the process of achieving complex and convincing image compilations is easier and faster and the outcome seamless. The malleability of the digital process enables the disparate to be readily realigned. One of the first acts of those new to digital imaging is to swap body parts from one person to another; a head from Person A here, onto

the body of Person B there. It serves as a novel playful exercise in the process of learning the tools of the digital manipulation process. However many photographic purists bemoan even the most noble and creative possibilities and extrapolations of this process and tie it to the corruption of the intrinsic nature of the photograph. It is my hope that the debate will not become fixated on the loss of the real but rather that new technologies will make available previously unrealised interpretations and enhanced perceptions.

5.4.1 RATIONALE

Originally, in order to give directedness and cohesion to this work, a range of self-imposed strictures were established for the image making. I had decided that monochrome single image treatments, in the tradition of so many of the great photographers, would be an appropriate stylistic approach for the photography of photographers. In over half of the cases in this research this is what has transpired. However on interviewing some of the photographers but not yet having photographed them, these well-intentioned limitations appeared in many cases to be artificially self-limiting. I made a conscious decision to put at risk elements of cohesion in favour of a more meaningful and eclectic response. In some cases this response involved smaller changes such as the utilisation of colour with Mark Tessmann (Plate 8.3.2), and in other cases the response was more far reaching and involved digital manipulation and compilation as in the case of Ian Hitchcock (Plate 8.1.4). In some cases the treatment was aligned with stylistic elements of the subject's work such as Leigh Turner's (Plate 8.4.2) and in others it enabled elements of the subjects

image making to be directly included in the final work as is the case with Karen Landt.

Despite taking on this new compilation regime other aspects of the image making were to remain consistent across all subjects:

- The primary image within the construct would remain of the photographer on location.
- The individual would be recognisable from their facial features and expression.
- The resulting images were to fit the pattern of physical sizes and framing treatments.

The approach to the images which thus evolved influenced, in turn, aspects of the presentation of the works at exhibition: choice of venue (size and configuration), framing and matt style, and distribution and grouping of the works within the exhibition space (see 9.1 for further discussion of this).

5.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE MANIPULATION.

I recall an ethicist once being interviewed on a popular radio program. The interviewer inquired: “ How do you know if something that I have done, or am planning to do, is ethical?” After prefacing his answer with some qualifications he responded: “If you are worried about someone finding out about it, it probably isn’t ethical”. This outwardly simple response represents a number of profound aspects of the ethical debate surrounding images and their

manipulation. One is *intent*; is the altered image intended to deceive and secretly portray a falsehood as truth? A second aspect is the recognition of the relationship of the image to the viewer and their rightful expectations of the *truthfulness* of the image given its context. Thirdly, *to what extent* has there been a shift in the undertakings of the creator to the treatment of the subjects of the image and the implications of their portrayal?

In each case of image compilation or manipulation within this research the nature of the manipulation is transparent. In each case it is in keeping with a gallery based artistic image presentation (as opposed to journalistic, news or other context). In each case the nature and extent of the compilation-manipulation has been notified to the subject in advance of the exhibition.

The most famous of the spirit photographers of the eighteenth century, William Mumler (1834-1882) and Edouard Buguet (1840-1892), insisted that their images were genuine but were later found guilty of fraud. If however these images had of been presented as a fiction no crime would have been evident. All manner of incriminating props were found in their studios confirming their subterfuge and unethical behaviour as in Mummler's, *Man With Spirits* (Plate 5.5.1).



Plate 5.5.1, Mummler, W. *Man With Spirits*, 1872.

The humorous use of image compilations, common in the form of giant animals, vegetables and insects, was popular in the early twentieth century (Plate 5.5.2). Although not intended to be taken seriously, they make a mockery of claims that the integrity of photography is only being newly threatened by the arrival of digital methods.



Plate 5.5.2, Martin, W. *How we take 'O Geese to Market* 1909.

CHAPTER SIX: LIFETIMES IN PHOTOGRAPHY.

6.1 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

Each photographer subject has been grouped within the research according to the length of time that they have been professionally involved with photography. The first grouping, *Lifetimes in Photography*, comprises the author and Arch Fraley. The author is unique amongst the participants as this image is a self-portrait and, as the researcher, he has not been interviewed in the same way as other subjects. While one option was to respond to the questions posed to other photographers in the sample, this option was not optimal as there could be none of the to and fro challenge integral to an interview. Instead a different agenda was developed – that of a reflective encapsulation of a career in photography encoding attitudes and practices through the embedded symbolism of the self-portrait image and the vignette in 6.2.

6.2 CLIVE HUTCHISON ~ PHOTOGRAPHY LECTURER, TOWNSVILLE

The dark cloth drapes casually from the back of the wicker chair. From the earliest days a constant companion of Niepce (1785-1833), Fox-Talbot (1800-1877), Nadar (1820-1910) and the generations who travelled in their referential footsteps it has all the invested power and mythical intensity of a magician's wand, as in the image *The Photographer* (Plate 6.2.1). It is synonymous with the professional photographer of my youth, that occasional travelling visitor whose arrival brought on associations of *Sunday Best* and brilliantine. As it is thrown over the head, person and machine meld together in the act of recording, the impenetrable featureless mask concealing both identity and purpose.



Plate 6.2.1, Unknown Author, *The Photographer* C.1870

The sitter is rendered inert, as powerless as a microbe under the botanist's microscope, alienated from the secret society, set apart from an inscrutable and mysterious brotherhood. Beneath the cloth lies a realm of inverted shadows. Dim tracings of a flesh and blood external existence. The formality of the contraption suggests a stationary monochromatic view but the shadow of one coloured moment passes into the faint coloured shadow of another. The ruled frame of the groundglass stamps a mosaic on the continuously rendered universe, a conceptual forerunner of the pixel of the future.



Plate 6.2.2, Van Gogh, V. *Chair*, 1888

Now cast aside, the darkcloth takes its place with the relics of another epoch. However relegation to the domain of the gramophone and spats is a heavy price. Its authority has drained, its dominion conquered by more frivolous devices. The chair that supports the darkcloth salutes Van Gogh's humble yellow chair (Plate 6.2.2), that self-referential masterpiece fashioned in his emotional likeness. The vibrancy of its persona is encoded in the bright but unadorned wicker. There is no facade here, no superficial richness. It sits optimistically at a jaunty angle. It is at one with its surroundings, sharing the flow of the world's natural rhythms that extend well beyond the room's interior to the universe outside. His needs are simple and straight forward, the pipe, the tobacco and the box with a single name "Vincent". Or maybe Marjorie Woodbury had the gist of it when she surmised:

Maybe he simply saw how light and shadow made it almost human, worthy of a portrait...and began to sketch. (Woodbury, 1982:3)

Light and shadow made it almost human... how wonderful, how photographic, the resonance of light's disciple, its free wheeling minstrel, whose poetry in the stars and the wheat fields have lifted the hearts and spirits of others even though his own consciousness was blighted with demons and self doubt. As in the lyrics of Don McLean in his popular song *Vincent*: "morning fields of amber grain, weathered faces lined in pain, are soothed beneath the artist's loving hand" (McLean, 1971). No longer was the searing mirror's image a prerequisite....Painting was not dead... the oft' heard cry uttered on the magic box's arrival. Photography's power had set painting free to investigate aspirations of the mind and soul in new and untested ways.

An inheritor of the mantle for almost thirty years, unofficially I was inducted into the society of light by co-conspirators, alchemists all, we sought the visual philosopher's stone, we sought relentlessly to turn the world into pictures. Objects chiselled from another moment, not an equal reality, but a valid reality outside the present. These images were not the trinkets and fancies so valued by many, these were the rubbings and fingerprints of reality: *This has been. This has happened. I bear witness.* The cold steel of authenticity sends shivers as it runs across the surface of our goose-bumped, otherwise complacent existences. The Vietnam war rages; as a young teenager I feel remote from the horror of its flames...

A sense of shock, feelings that I can not channel give way to hollow sounding, cardboard cut-out questions. What is their relationship? Did he have a last

thought in this instant of oblivion? Is it hate that drives the scene that comes from so far beyond my personal realities? How to make sense of such a scene?



Plate 6.2.3, Adams, E. *Saigon* 1968

How did Eddie Adams (1933-2004) feel when he captured for us this now famous instant of horror? (Plate 6.2.3). Its conviction and immediacy haunt me still. After all the rhetoric is spoken, after all the apologists and doubters are put to bed, who cannot be moved by the strength of such an image? Who would have the temerity to question photography's power to communicate or to doubt its place at the forefront of the cavalcade of modern miracles?

The background stretches out behind me, a rudimentary landscape with little human modification, a natural environment. Barely visible is a meandering path through the grasses, a path hinting of the possibilities of other places, other experiences. Photography's winged heel resides in its ability to transport us and, as photographers, to bring to others, not just the essence of other places

and experiences but evidence of beliefs and values beyond the limitations of our earth bound normalcy.

A facsimile of Vincent's chair recedes into the background, it supports with it our now devalued dark cloth. The tripod stands empty, symbol of stability, supporter of all our traditional approaches. It sits in judgement, awaiting an outcome, its impartial nakedness overseeing the middle ground. As the digerati increasingly populate the rarefied atmosphere in the photographer's domain with such offerings as post, new media, imaging and manipulation, in what ways will the infinitely malleable digital matrix extend our reach to know and to understand? Is the digital revolution a *Daguerre redivivus*, to be uncritically embraced in its entirety? As I stand before a class of digitally savvy young seekers what ought they to know of the mantle they inherit?

My attention is diverted to the press of the moment. I stand before my activated tripod and camera, attired in that epitome of practicality and durability the denim shirt. As I ponder the rush of the new to the beating light of the self-timer mechanism, what countenance should I exhibit? What pose struck to achieve a balance between my love of the heritage and the irresistible siren's call? Let us not resist for resistance's sake, but also not yield without reason. Standing to the right of centre, (viewers' perspective) backed by the chair, I acknowledge the depth of endeavour that supports us, as opposed to the less developed new *status quo*. Straining against the light from the direction of the new *enlightenment* I make my stand. Are folded arms a symbol of recalcitrant

pig-headedness or a conviction not to be swept away...to be steadfast in accepting only what advances better practice and outcomes? The exposure complete, I return to the camera and retrieve from the archive of the digital palimpsest a newly carved mathematical reflection. The ones and zero render a personage I usually only encounter close up in the presence of shaving cream. Am I sneering? Am I challenging, in the currently popular vernacular, to: *Bring it on!* ? (Plate 6.2.5). Am I creating a worthy recollection of Van Gogh's noble chair? After all, who would seek the chair that Vincent painted for Gauguin?

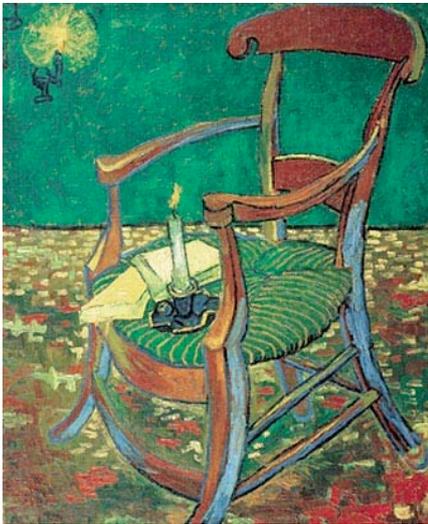


Plate 6.2.4, Van Gogh, V. *Gauguin's Chair* 1890

Showy and cheap like a pink patent stiletto heel, or an overweight Elvis impersonator; its gaudier colour scheme and ornate design flaunt a comparatively lesser set of values.



Plate 6.2.5, Seize the Light, 2005

6.3 ARCH FRALEY: RETIRED AIR FORCE PHOTOGRAPHER, TOWNSVILLE.

The well-worn Speed Graphic is grasped firmly by strong but aging fingers as Arch gently shakes and waves it in my direction. “Where did you get this from?” he inquires, enthusing incredulously. He returns to admiring the vintage camera with the same wonder normally reserved for friends returning from beyond the grave. “Does it still work?” he enquires, gently caressing its chrome and leatherette finish with his free hand as he re-acquaints himself with the camera’s controls (Plate 6.3.1). I reluctantly confess, “I have no idea”. In organizing this photographic shoot of Arch Fraley at the Garbutt Air Base (in which the borrowed Speed Graphic camera also plays a part), it became immediately obvious that Arch’s reputation in Townsville is formidable. Whenever Arch’s name is mentioned in photographic, RAAF and other circles, it is universally greeted with a slight lifting of the chin and a gentle gasp of warm recognition.



Plate 6.3.1, *Fraley at Garbutt Base 2004*

Arch's images, some over sixty years old, remain on display all over Townsville. Whether on the walls of the Picnic Bay Hotel on Magnetic Island, at the RAAF museum, in the archives of the James Cook University library or at the newly refurbished Townsville airport, they are an enduring testament to the history of Townsville, the role it played in WWII (Plate 6.3.2), and to the astute and gentle man who created them.

Arch joined the United States Air Force in 1940 as an aircraft mechanic, but in eighteen months "had not touched a wrench". In frustration he applied for a transfer to a new Air force base at Savannah, Georgia where there was an opening to be trained as an aerial photographer. In January 1942 Arch was shipped out to the Philippines but the islands had fallen to the Japanese before he arrived. When this news reached his convoy, they turned south for Australia:

After landing in Brisbane we were put on the train, and about six days later were sent up to Charters Towers, as that was one of the most forward bases at the time. (Fraley, A. 2004)

It was during his time as a USAF photographer that he captured the images for which he is best known, and for which he would most like to be remembered. Townsville at that time was a strategically important city. American warplanes massed in the city for final training and exercises, for maintenance and in readiness for strikes against the rapidly approaching Japanese. "We thought the

Japanese were going to take New Guinea... and they did... almost," asserts Arch (Fraleley, A. 2004). Combat missions into the New Guinea area, by the 3rd. Bombardment Group, originating in Townsville were often fruitful but nearly always costly, "...seven to ten aircraft would leave... seldom would more than two to five return". Arch later flew on similar missions with the 5th. USAF to photograph the action. Many of the powerful and confronting photographs from these missions still exist in Arch's archives and with the USAF and RAAF.

Looking at these WWII images now, as a twenty first century audience, we have a rare and genuine window into a time and range of experiences that can only be truly known to those who lived them. The stark monochromatic realism confronts us; it is reinforced by the now slightly yellowing, fibre-based paper. The power of the images is in their gripping authenticity. How trivial and superficial are our current concerns compared to those of people caught up in times of war and the threat of possible imminent invasion and suffering. Romantic speculations are easy to conjure as my eyes slip freely from Arch's framed icons of wartime Townsville to what is now the tarmac of the current commercial airport. I transpose one over the other; squinting I can almost imagine the thundering polished war machines lined up to take off and deliver their deadly payloads against a clever and insistent enemy. Standing by the runway, unprotected from the relentless tropical sun, and seemingly immune to the bone shaking noise of these furious monsters is a young, uniformed and enthusiastic Arch Fraley. His standard issue, large-format folding camera, is

pressed to his forehead. His tightly cropped hair is pushed fully back to his scalp by a scorching, propeller-generated sirocco.

The photography shoot with Arch at Garbutt Base is progressing well. Arch is accorded high status by the base commander who generously takes hours from his normal busy schedule to escort us personally from location to location. He makes a special point of indicating to Arch those things that have changed and those aspects of the base still intact from his WWII days. We visit the totally digital world of the RAAF photography section, are introduced to the current RAAF photographer, and Arch reminisces about the changes that have taken place over the years.

After the war, Arch returned to the States, obtained a job with a large wedding portrait studio and studied photography at the only professional photography school in America at Winona Indiana.

I thought I might pick up something, but I picked up a lot... I thought I knew a bit about photography but suddenly I realized I didn't know anything compared to what they could teach me at that school... it was a commercial course with all the portrait work and weddings and things I had never experienced... it really put me on top. (Fraley, A. 2004)

When a photographer friend committed suicide, the man's wife approached Arch to see if he was interested in taking over his successful wedding/portrait

studio. Arch took on the studio and a partner; however, after a successful start, differences resulted in Arch selling his share: “After selling I thought well, what will I do now? Anyhow we decided to come back to Australia”. On his return Arch discovered that the training he had received, and the new techniques he had learnt in the States, put him well ahead of most Australian practitioners.

Success came quickly and, at one stage, the photography business employed twelve people: “We bought an offset printing machine and our business expanded to take on photography, offset printing and advertising.” (Fraley, A. 2004)

Innovation and possession of the latest and best equipment helped to maintain the competitive edge of Arch’s Townsville based operation. In the years to follow, 16mm film shooting and processing, plan printing and, later again, video production were added to the business’s capabilities. News photography, stills, film and video remained a regular feature of its photographic activities.

Working with people was a recurrent theme for Arch and an aspect of photography from which he derived great satisfaction:

I always enjoyed talking to the people I was taking pictures of... in portrait work I always tried to show that person I saw when I first met them... it’s a business that’s very personalised and it’s the way that you come across [to your customers]... is what you get back from them.

(Fraley, A. 2004)

When asked whether there would be any advice that he would give an emerging photographer on the basis of his lifetime of experiences in photography, Arch responded with emphatic emphasis:

Yes, keep your eyes open, and realize that you can always learn something from another fellow... everyone has their own ways of doing something and sometimes they might have a bit better idea than you have. So listen to him and watch him because there is such a variety of ways of doing photography. (Fraley, A. 2004)

Unconsciously the base commander starts to inspect his watch with increased regularity and I take this as a cue to conclude our morning at Garbutt Base. What an experience to come to feel the gulf of time and of change so tangibly; all present that morning felt honoured to have done so in the company of Arch Fraley.



Plate 6.3.2, Fraley, A. *Liberators*, 1944

6.3.1 ARCH FRALEY: “KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN”.

Arch Fraley’s life, including his career in photography, has been long and fruitful. In contemplating the essence of this distinguished practitioner, the central hallmarks were:

- Recognition of the wartime photographs for which Arch Fraley is most widely known.
- An awareness of the passage of time.
- Insight born of experience.
- Strength and resolution.
- A capacity to transcend past challenges.
- A sense of respect for the subject.

- Intimations of a romantic age

The ways in which these elements evolved into the final image unique amongst all of the portraits of this study and were driven by a number of factors. In order to put Arch in touch with those heady and romantic days of WWII the initial portrait photographs were taken at the Townsville air force base, as this is the same location where many of Arch's original black and white images were captured with many still on display at the base sixty years on. As this was the first time that Arch had been to the base for many years, a sense of nostalgia for past events and people was pervasive. The provision of photographic equipment of the era and Arch's dress also reinforced this experience, enhancing the sense of time and romance, even if this equipment and dress are only marginally represented in the final image compilation.

Incorporation of a detail from an original image of Fraley's to create the background to the image places this portrait image in the historical context of his most important image making and stands as a mark of respect for his achievements. Running counter directional to the eye line, it further reinforces the reference to the past.

The image composition is central, anchoring the image with a gravity reminiscent of a Roman bust meeting the desire to display strength and resolution. The low point of view offers respect and empowerment. Eyes reach beyond the perimeter of the image and thus the present. The sepia colouration supports an inference to the passage of time and points to the momentous

events of another age. Included on the photographic negative is military classification data added by Arch soon after processing. These figures, their meaning now lost to intervening years, further emphasises the concerns of the era and the context of the original operation.

The final compilation image exceeds the visual pull and meaning of the individual contributory images; the critical factors identified at the outset have translated effectively into the final image (Plate 6.3.3).

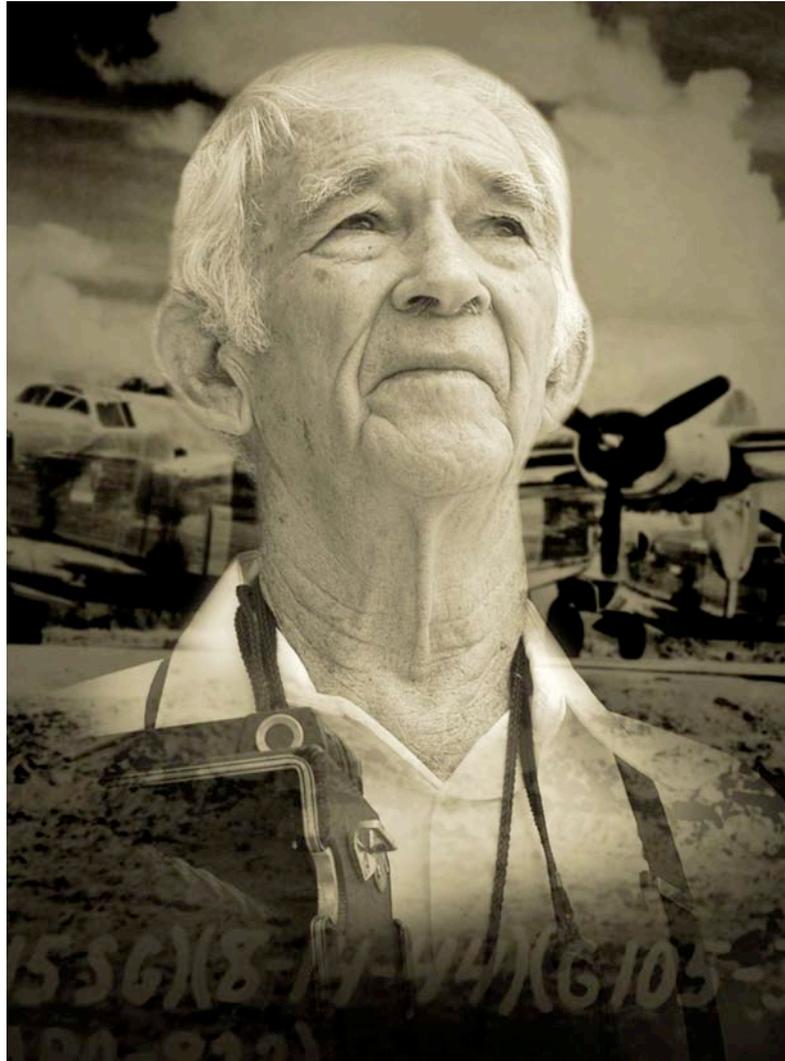


Plate 6.3.3, Arch Fraley, 2004

6.4 COMMONALITIES AND DIVERGENCES.

The two photographers in this category of *Lifetimes in Photography*, the author and Arch Fraley, distinguish themselves from others in the study because they no longer practise photography on a full time basis. Rather they have the perspective of being at one with but outside the profession, in addition they have the benefit of many years as practitioners together with a keen interest and involvement from the periphery. As a university photography educator and researcher, the current researcher is in the privileged position of being able to engage with current North Queensland photographers across all areas without vested interests or being a competitor. Following fifty years of professional commercial practice, since retirement Arch Fraley has watched the new generation of younger photographers emerge and establish themselves in the region without the need to grapple with recent technological changes in photography himself. Arch has also witnessed the impact of all of these changes, having the longest perspective on the photographic profession of anyone in North Queensland.

There are several areas of commonality in their attitudes to professional photography. Both agree that the unpredictability and variation of each day, together with a degree of the individual freedom and direction integral to self-employment, have been key contributing ingredients to what Fraley refers to as "...enjoying practically every minute of photography work". They also share a belief in the value of formal photographic education. Arch received formal training in the USAF and later returned to the USA to study photography after

the war. He maintains that this experience gave him a distinctive edge over his competitors in the North Queensland market. Arch's photographic education allowed him to develop a distinctive and signature style of lighting for portraiture, especially the lighting of children; and he subsequently developed a quality reputation based on his ability to produce uniquely satisfying results. This enhanced what Fraley refers to as gaining "respect as a professional". The current writer agrees that his career has also benefited from his tertiary photographic education. Not only did it provide immediate entry into employment as a photographer, but it also held currency when many years later taking up an academic position teaching photography. Enhanced opportunities for graduate students with formal photographic qualifications are both potent and exhilarating.

Due to the difference in their genres of operation, the two have divergent experiences of professional photographic practice on other levels. Fraley perceives the value in his work to be in the preservation of personal and family visual histories. Knowing and photographing Townsville families, in some cases over generations, recording children growing to adulthood and family events such as weddings and birthdays, gives his photography enduring worth. Alternatively the researcher's professional experiences are primarily centred on working in the studio interpreting advertising layouts and the visual aspirations of advertising art directors. Hutchison believes that this commercial work carries with it on the one hand, a high level of photographic craft, but on the other, probably little of enduring value beyond the current campaign.

On being photographed for this study Fraley admits to being “...very nervous at being on the other side of the camera. Will some side of me be exposed that I don’t want known?” Clearly he is aware of the power of the camera to pry and expose, of its ability to draw an instant from the continuum, and of the capacity of that captured instant to be either compassionately representative or otherwise. Likewise the current researcher is also always camera wary although, in this case, is not so exposed, as the self-portrait affords the taker the privilege of rejecting self-judged apocryphal visions.

6.5 PERSPECTIVES ON CHANGE AND THE FUTURE

Yet, despite the commonality of their long experience in commercial practice, the two have quite different perceptions on change and the future. These differences arise partly because of a thirty year age/experience gap but also as a result of regional as opposed capital city practice backgrounds and a generalist, broadly based photographic involvement by Fraley as opposed to a more specialist advertising background in the author’s case.

Fraley regards the future of professional photography as bleak. He believes that technological advances in photography, especially the option of the automatic control of exposure and focus, the demise of the traditional darkroom, and the proliferation of affordable quality cameras are taking from professionals a large share of their market.

Cameras do all the thinking for you now, all you have to do is recognise a scene and make sure that you get what you recognise. It used to be that you'd have to guess things real quick based on your experience.
(Fraley, A. 2004)

The current researcher has a more positive view and believes that new and divergent technologies are changing the way people visually communicate. There can be no doubt that the proliferation of inexpensive digital cameras are delivering a quality image suited for email and internet blogs and that this has caused an explosion in non professional photography. However this process has also raised awareness of image making and an appreciation of the differences between what a professional can offer in terms of an evolved artistic vision beyond the instant gratifications of a point and shoot automated result. New careers are opening up and professionals are finding new markets through the internet and in other areas.