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**CHAPTER EIGHT: MEETING THE PHOTOGRAPHERS:
EMERGING PRACTITIONERS: VIGNETTES OF PERSON,
PRACTICE, AND CONTEXT.**

8.1 IAN HITCHCOCK: MEDICAL PHOTOGRAPHER, TOWNSVILLE.



Plate 8.1.1, Ian, 2005

“It’s all digital now mate!” intones a confident Ian Hitchcock as he indicates a desk of computer monitors with a broad sweep of his hand. Somewhere in the more remote corners of my senses it subtly registers that the familiar *potpourri* of hospital smells is devoid of the sickly sweetness of hypo · “The system has now been completely overhauled, we can pull up clinical images instantly and adapt them to suit whatever the medical team here requires. The eye camera upstairs is pretty amazing too. Do you want to go up and have a look?”

Although relatively new to his position at Townsville Hospital, Ian Hitchcock (Plate 8.1.1) has been a nurse for many years and is completely at home within a medical environment. On our way to the Eye Clinic we encounter the usual hospital traffic of trolleys, wheelchairs and white coats. I become aware of how

well recognised Ian has become and how the job that he does must touch so many of the hospital's functions. Various hospital staff greet him enthusiastically by name as we continue to negotiate the usual hospice labyrinth of corridors, stairs and lifts.

Ian's first experience as a photographer began at home as a child in Rockhampton with his parents' camera.

They would get me to take photos at family events, at Christmas time or birthdays. When I got the photos back I was always keen and astonished to look at them. I always managed to get people's heads in frame and not knock people's heads off. My fascination and love of photography grew from there. (Hitchcock, I. 2004)

Years passed before he took his photography to a new level to transcend that of episodic, family visual historian.

I had always been interested in documentary shows or books on photography or photographers.....but it wasn't until I went to England to work as a nurse that I bought my first camera to record my own journey through pictures. (Hitchcock, I. 2004)

We arrive at the Eye Clinic to find the benches bulging with often aged and eye bandaged patients waiting for their appointments. Ian breezes past the nurse-

in-charge, in the process, exchanging jocular pleasantries with her and other staff. At the far end of the clinic is the Fundus eye camera so special that it is housed in its own small room. Ian unlocks the door and slides it open with a measured degree of proprietorial pride. "There she is. I'll show how it works", he adds as we easily slip into the roles of medical photographer and patient. "Now put your chin on the rest and just look at the light", he instructs as I admire the technical precision of this high tech wonder. Within an instant a vibrantly coloured image of the blood vessels of my retina appear on the computer monitor at Ian's right. "There you are, that's what your retina looks like", he proclaims, "from an image like this it is very easy to diagnose eye diseases, being a digital file I could easily file it, print it or email it". "How does mine look?" I ask pathetically. "Not too bad" Ian jibes back, condemning me to speculate on what a photographer with "not too bad" retinas has to look forward to for the remainder of the day.

One of the attractions of this job for Ian is the variety of work, and the degree of responsibility that he is asked to accept. He also enjoys the challenges and rewards of working with patients in a clinical setting:

The Eye Clinic is only one aspect of my job. The job is very varied and different, you have to be a jack-of-all-trades, you have to be good at photography, you have to act as a manager and run the department. You have to know how to talk to people, because sometimes you are photographing people who are at their sickest, at their most

uncomfortable and you have to put them at ease. In clinical photography I might be required to ask a patient to lift up their shirt, or lift up their skirt to photograph a certain part of their body. For patients it can be quite embarrassing and quite daunting for a stranger to walk into the room with a camera. I need to explain what I am trying to do. You need to be a good communicator; it is essential. (Hitchcock, I. 2004)

The clinical photographer's position is not, however, for the squeamish. It is the more gruesome and often confronting aspects of his job with which, Ian feels, many photographers would have difficulty coming to terms. Major surgery must be recorded for teaching purposes, and much of his photography is related to documenting trauma. This could involve serious burns or road trauma victims, abused children, body parts and cadavers. "No, there's no doubt, I'm sure most people just couldn't handle it", Ian surmises.

Although many people, including patients and medical staff within the hospital, see Ian's job as important and vitally interesting, Ian insists that many aspects of his job are just like that of other employed people and involve a degree of repetition:

I come to work in the morning, it's a Monday to Friday job, I log on and check my email, see if there are any messages, and attend to any outstanding work that I've got. All the jobs I am given are from people, wards or departments ringing up requesting work. Such as 'we've got

such-and-such a patient that needs photographs taken', or PR people making a booking saying 'we have this event happening at the hospital can you do it'. Doctors will come up with photographs that they want copied or downloaded from certain systems. Otherwise I'm in the Eye Clinic, sometimes all day, taking pictures of the backs of peoples' eyes. It's just a process, there's nothing creative about it. (Hitchcock, I. 2004)

It is on the benefits of digital imaging that Ian is the most forthcoming. Not only has it radically changed the way he works and the equipment he uses, but it has also given him advantages in terms of the increased speed of the photographic process, the instant feedback of evaluating his images, financial savings and the freedom to experiment and take risks with his photography:

I've been completely seduced by digital, it's totally revolutionised photography [he enthuses]. The transition to digital was easy for me to make because of my experiences at university.....my training with digital equipment at University helped me to get the medical photographer's job. (Hitchcock, I. 2004)

The effects of the digital revolution have spilled over into other areas of Ian's photography and life outside the hospital.

Now that I'm digital I take my camera to more places and photograph more things. If I take a walk in the park I will photograph the birds. The

initial cost of going digital is expensive but in the long run there are huge savings involved. (Hitchcock, I. 2004)

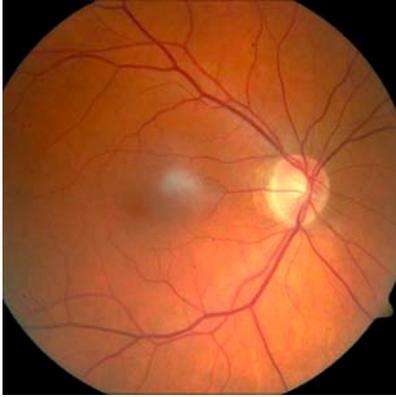


Plate 8.1.2, Hitchcock, I. *Retina - Joe Citizen* 2005

8.1.1 IAN HITCHCOCK: “JUST LOOK AT THE LIGHT”

For photographers the primacy of vision to their engagement with the world is absolutely fundamental. Therefore a photographer employing a camera to scan for eye disease has a special attraction.

- The key image making aims became:
- To portray Ian as an intent professional reaching out to his subjects.
- To evoke a sense of enquiry by the clinical photographer.
- To portray the camera as an objective instrument of investigation.
-

To capture a consciousness of the eye photographed, thereby giving further insights into both capture process and the photographer/subject relationship.

In giving expression to these aims Ian is depicted on location in the eye clinic, his regular schedule of appointments at the clinic is a key aspect of his

professional practise encompassing patient interaction and clinical skills. The depiction of a specialized imaging instrument, the Fundus camera, also broadens viewers' perceptions of the photographer and their often specialised and diverse roles. By depicting Ian in the act of directing the camera's diagnostic stare the viewer is invited to participate in the role of patient involving them in the dynamics of the event.

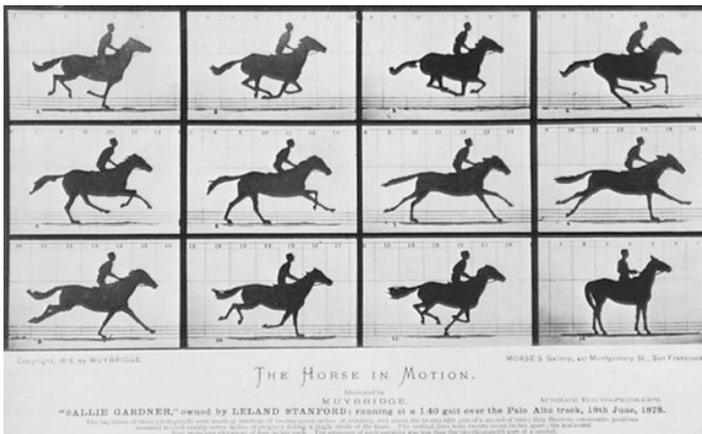


Plate 8.1.3, Muybridge, E. *The Horse in Motion*, 1878

Again the camera, as in the case of Muybridge's pioneering studies of movement (Plate 8.1.3) gives us access to planes of experience normally hidden from us; those that the naked eye, diseased or otherwise, is unable to render. In this case the camera's digital interface *instantly* renders a reading; the computer monitor can be seen displaying the resultant images. It sits facing the patient to the patient's left of camera; a new and more useful mirror. A cycle is completed: Ian (with his operator's expertise, empathy and *vision*) can facilitate (with this technological apparatus and process) this outcome (an otherwise unseen and unrecorded version of the world) for the betterment of all involved.

The image compilation of Ian at the Fundus camera (Plate 8.1.1), and a sample image of a retina produced by the camera (Plate 8.1.2), has effectively drawn together the ideas underpinning the photographer and subject in this clinical setting. The *spherising* digital treatment of the image of Ian transforms it to the spherical dimensions of the retinal image. The monitor at the left of frame well balances both the composition and the cycle of the images intention. Although we utilise the retina constantly when functioning correctly (like all internal bodily workings), we rarely consider its existence or appreciate its role in bringing the universe to a personal visual stage. To see its vagaries displayed on the monitor, mirrors its role, and that of photography. To look *through* the retina to its reflection, and encompass the scene of its recording, places us not just in the patient's position but brings a new awareness of the nature and fragility of the biological aspects of human vision. One reservation in relation to the final image is that Ian is pushed too far into the background and that his fundamental role as the conductor of this interaction is not sufficiently emphasised.

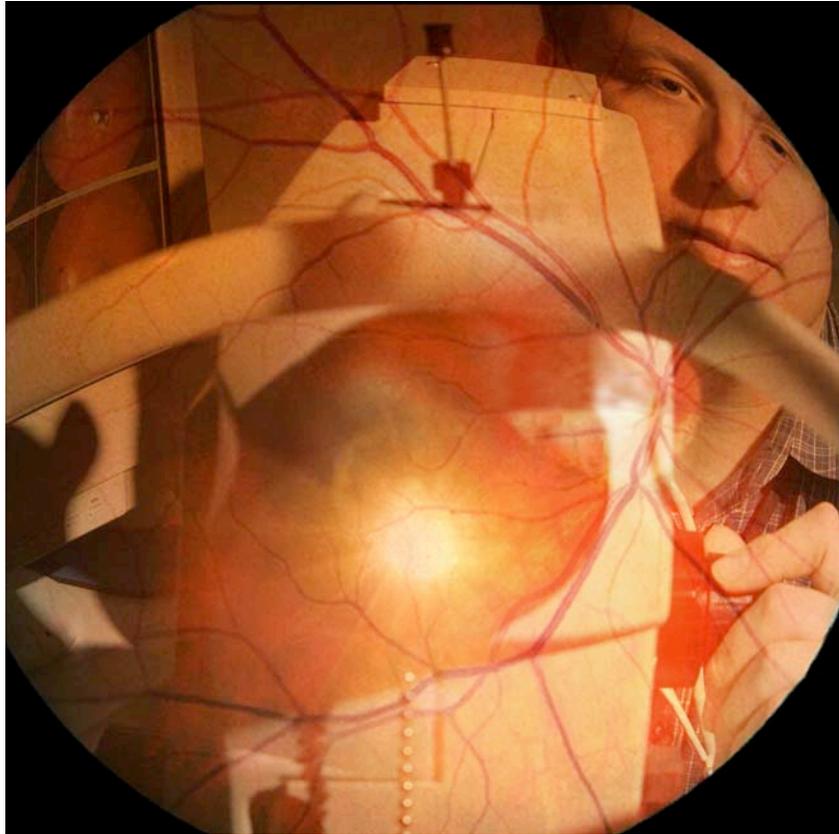


Plate 8.1.4, Ian Hitchcock 2005

8.2 NATALIE MARTIN - RODEO PHOTOGRAPHER, TOWNSVILLE.

As Natalie Martin makes her way between the dusty semi-trailers she is immediately recognised and warmly greeted by an eclectic range of hobbling cowboys. In turn these often shy and gentle, but always tough and wiry men, stoop quickly to embrace her and nervously place a peck on her cheek. Clad in their *ad hoc* cowboy uniforms of dirty jeans and checked western shirts, usually topped off with black cowboy hats of immense proportions, they have travelled, often at their own expense, from around Australia and beyond to take part in bull riding at Atherton. In the final weeks of a three-year photography degree, Natalie is an emerging photographer whose immediate ambition is to be regarded as the best rodeo photographer in Australia (Plate 8.2.1).



Plate 8.2.1, Nat, 2004

When professional bull riding comes to the Atherton show grounds it is, in local terms, a big event. A mixture of almost three thousand locals and outback

dwellers will gather to watch the very best of Australia's competitors battle it out in one of the world's toughest and most physically punishing sports. For the most successful riders the sport can lead to lucrative contracts in the USA but, for most, it will hold little financially. On a weekly merry-go-round of arduous practice and performance, they pay an entry fee to participate, and compete for prize money paid only for successful rides.

"I just love the atmosphere of these events," quips Natalie as she assembles her photographic equipment. She points out a cowboy friend from Guatemala who has travelled around the world to compete and shouts a greeting in broken Spanish. He waves back and trudges over to where the other competitors are making ready to ride. There is a palpable, growing tension as the cowboys perform their pre ride rituals. Many smoke heavily as they rub resin strenuously into the ropes they will soon be grasping desperately in order to stay aboard their wildly thrashing bovine mounts.

Photography played almost no part in Natalie's early life:

My parents didn't even have a camera to snap my ages between seven or eight and fifteen; there are only a couple of snaps of me here and there.
(Martin, N. 2005)

Her parents and grandparents always lived in the same North Queensland town, travelled little and maintained few creative pursuits and, indeed, "they

still can't understand where I get my creativity and photography from". Her initial interest in photography began at the age of seventeen when she purchased her first camera to record her overseas travel experiences. She describes her first experiments with this camera as follows:

I didn't know what I was doing but I was pulling off these compositions and these feelings within these photos that explained the whole thing and I didn't pay much attention as it seemed to come so easily to me.
(Martin, N. 2005)

The responses of others to her images were her first indication that she possessed a talent for photography: "other people would look at these shots and say *wow* even though I couldn't really see anything special ". It was only when Natalie had spent some time learning, thinking about, and studying photography that she could return to these early works and discover what others had seen:

I realised that I had captured the personality and strength of the subject...in some of them you could actually feel the emotion of the person or the place. (Martin, N. 2005)

Although recording her travels had been enjoyable, photography was not accorded any particular significance until much later: "...it was not until the age of twenty six that I thought photography would play a major part in my

life". Whilst travelling Natalie was restless and looking for a new direction: "I had quit my trade as I knew that it wasn't what I wanted to do with my life". It was then that she experienced an epiphany:

I was sitting down looking at my photos and started really looking... and I saw my camera and.... MY GOD... I really enjoy doing this. What's actually stopping me from doing this"? (Martin, N. 2005)

This moment of revelation led to an introductory course in photography in Canada and a more critical examination of photographic values within her work. On returning to Australia she enrolled in a photography degree course at James Cook University in Townsville. Now nearing the completion of her degree, Natalie is inspired by a range of Australian photographers including Sydney based Trent Park, "Park's work is truly amazing, his use of light...he just sees light". In her own work Natalie thrives on meeting the specialized technical challenges that her genre presents:

... very difficult... very difficult, you have extreme circumstances that you photograph under. Even at ISO 1600 unless you're in the big arenas, that are well lit in terms of bull riding arenas, you have to work with flash, high ISOs ², you have to work in restricted places. You also have to work at distances, plus you have to have perfect timing, and you've got to watch and you've got to breathe. I find the best times that I take a bull riding shot is when I'm breathing with the bull. It's like a yoga pose where you have to get yourself comfortable in a position which is

difficult because most of the time I shoot through the railing, so I can't get my flash and my camera through the bar, I've actually got to sit half up, I've got to have my body in alignment and breathing to watch that bull come out of the chute and do it. To get the perfect shot you've also got to do your research, you have to have knowledge of the bull and knowledge of the bull rider, you've got to know if they are prodding them out into the arena, you've got to know if the arena's ground is too soft, too wet or too dry, to know how the bull is going to buck. But the real satisfaction is being a woman and doing it. (Martin, N. 2005)

Natalie sees the road ahead as an ongoing challenge:



Plate 8.2.2, Nat #2, 2004

Even in the field of bull riding photography it has been so hard for me to break ground or to be noticed or taken seriously around the bull-riding arena. I'm single and I'm female and those two can play havoc when

trying to come across as a professional photographer. I've had to work really hard to get that status up. (Martin, N. 2005)

From all that I have observed it is obvious that Natalie has made significant headway in this profession since her first hesitant efforts. She is now widely published in leading magazines such as *Bull Riding Australia*. She has built a sense of trust and developed a close affinity with the bull riding fraternity, "they are really hard people but they are good people and you know exactly where you stand and they pull no punches, I like that".

Although in Australia bull riding is a rapidly growing sport, for Natalie the future extends well beyond her current Townsville base:

Townsville is not where I want to achieve my bull riding photography status, this is only a stepping point to making a career in America,...there's just no money here . (Martin, N. 2005)



Plate 8.2.3, Martin, N. *First Buck*, 2005

8.2.1 NATALIE MARTIN: “BREATHING WITH THE BULL”

So much of what we hear about various people, places and events is often surrounded by hype and insincerity. When we pare back the veneer we find a far less impressive experience that has been packaged for, and paraded to us, in advance. By way of contrast, rodeo offers the reverse. The commercial management and promotion of bull riding through the mass media by its agencies certainly provides a great deal of hype but, underneath the hype, exist a group of tough and sincere people who, without any hyperbole, risk their lives for the ten second thrill of conquering a cranky two tonne animal. These bulls are remorseless and ruthless opponents, capable of snuffing out the riders’ grip on life, and delighting in the process.

Why bull riders engage in such a physically damaging sport eludes me. The riders are certainly aware of the dangers they face, although they would be reluctant to admit it, yet there is no hiding the legitimate terror etched on their faces as the chute opens. In the middle of this patriarchal, testosterone enriched mayhem is Natalie Martin. As a petite female it is initially difficult to see where she fits within the scheme of things. However although Natalie might be petite, she is also tough, her toughness taking more the form of determination. She has earned her right to exist amongst the riders; she has paid her dues by directly confronting and staring down the opposition that she originally encountered. Just as these riders, despite broken ribs, twisted ankles and a raft of other injuries, continue to face the challenge and get back on the bull, she has

continued to get back behind the camera and demand her place among them as a legitimate professional and committed contributor.

Therefore the image making aims to establish the following:

- Natalie's openness and determination.
- An awareness of unknown challenges that her future holds.
- A sense of the outback and its harshness.
- An unadorned authenticity.

To give expression to these aims the rodeo location is chosen as this is the prime environment for all of Natalie's work. On arrival at the location, the photographic possibilities were unknown, especially as there was only an hour of usable daylight remaining at the time of Natalie's arrival. In an attempt to make the most of the light, some exploratory images were made of Natalie loosely posed against a broad rail fence, although this picture-taking episode came to an abrupt halt when a corralled bull butted Natalie from behind. Although Natalie is not uncomfortable in front of the camera these images were characterised by a stilted and unnatural quality, the antithesis of what was required. It was then suggested that Natalie should walk to the preparation area, to interact with her rodeo acquaintances in the hope that more meaningful and evocative image making will ensue. More images are made of Natalie with the rodeo clown, various cowboys and aspiring young riders. I move in for a close up. There, deep etched against a blue, Russell Drysdale, outback sky Natalie returns the camera's stare. Her face, like her future, is split by the rich harshness of the Australian sun. The hat, its brim turned up in the manner of the bull's horns, threatens darkly above. Natalie continues to peer out

determinedly, her hair tucked up beneath the hat's brim suggesting a no nonsense countenance.

Her openness paradoxically reveals her vulnerability, yet simultaneously reflects her sincerity and steadfastness. Is that a tear in her left eye that washes away the caked-on dust of the rodeo ring? A suggestion that she too, like the riders, must suffer to attain her goals? Or is it a token of the blinked back determination to endure the challenges set before her?

While other images of Natalie plying her craft; photographing bulls bucking and riders falling were taken after sunset under the lights of the rodeo arena, none achieved the distillation of the earlier close up. This is the least adorned of all the images in the study. In its simplicity, static composition, and directness, it immediately engages the viewer and speaks volumes of the subject, the context of her image making, and her resolve to succeed. I am unsure whether it is because I know the subject and her story so well that the image resonates so clearly to me and hence satisfies the image making aims (Plate 8.2.4).



Plate 8.2.4, Natalie Martin 2005

8.3 MARK TESSMANN : MOTORSPORT PHOTOGRAPHER, TOWNSVILLE

“C’mon, c’mon”, urges Mark Tessmann as he anticipates the sweep of the leading riders into the fifth corner at the new Mareeba raceway. A tight left-hand hairpin, this corner requires riders to brake frantically from the preceding straight if they are to negotiate its narrow radius successfully. Without shade, in the blistering heat, he ignores a trickle of perspiration creeping from under his cap and making its way towards his right eye. It is essential he maintain concentration as he continues to track and follow focus with the lead rider.

Within a moment, the leather-clad gladiators have entered the frame. Bunched tightly, they jostle to find and execute the perfect racing line, the interface of scorching bitumen, and sticky racing slick tyres, narrowly maintaining adhesion under extreme duress. Braced in a much-practised whirling dervish rotating pose, Mark swivels and pans, the upper third of his torso, head and arms locked with the camera into a single, rigid, tracking apparatus. The shutter of his specialised high-speed digital camera fires a rapid-fire sequence of exposures; isolating instantaneous alignments from the frenzy.

There was little photography in Mark’s early life at home, and little of his early personal history exists in photographs. His earliest recollection of taking a photograph was from his high school years:

My mum got me for my birthday a little 110 format, slide the bottom type camera, to take on a school trip to the Snowy Mountains. I remember that I got into trouble because I didn't take any photos of the snow. I was too busy having fun. (Tessmann, M. 2004)

It was not until much later that he sought out photography to make a record of his passion of motorcycle racing. His first steps in this direction were also fraught with difficulty:

I saw this old Praktika in a *Cash Converters* shop, only \$120, I thought this will be great, I was organized to attend the first Phillip Island 500cc Grand Prix. I packed it on my bike and took off but the vibration and the old camera, well all the screws fell out, I finished up with only five images from the trip. (Tessmann, M. 2004)

Despite this disaster, an awareness of the photographer's role in motor sport was slowly emerging. Mark began to entertain fantasies of belonging to the crowd of élite photographers that gather at such high profile events:

I'd looked in magazines and had seen the bank of photographers up on the hill with all the Canon L series gear, with all those big white lenses, ...and I thought that if you were one of them at an event you would be right there... I just wanted to be one of them. (Tessmann, M. 2004)

This reality is still yet to be fully realized but, during the intervening years, a range of experiences has strengthened Marks' resolve and broadened his photographic perspective. Completing an apprenticeship and working as a pastry chef, Mark produced many competition pieces and again turned to photography to record his own culinary efforts as well as those of others:

I bought a Pentax FX7 to shoot some of my competition work going to Cairns, Brisbane and ultimately Singapore... I also wanted to be able to take some shots in Singapore and come back and say that this is what we saw over there. (Tessmann, M. 2004)

Mark still did not seriously contemplate photography as other than a personal means of recording the events in which he was interested. However the 500cc Motorcycle Grand Prix of 1998 was to be a turning point. Using his girlfriend's newly purchased camera gear he took a range of shots of the action. Generally disappointed with his results because he was unable to get close enough to the action, he was surprised when the manager of the photo-processing lab enthused that, "these are great... you should give photography a go". These few simple words of praise had a galvanizing effect:

From then on I got more serious about what I was shooting and how I was shooting it... I shot some landscapes, got into the TAFE course, got involved with the photography club... I eventually enrolled in photography at university. (Tessmann, M. 2004)

We climb over the trackside safety barriers and walk back towards the pits after the race concludes. “I just love being part of the action” Mark laughs, “ I get to be right up close anywhere on the track whilst everyone else has to watch from behind the barrier. It’s a real buzz”. Even more important to Mark is the sense of acceptance and belonging that has emerged as he has become more involved with motor sport.

Once you go to a motor sport event and people have seen your images, especially if they have been printed in the paper you are made to feel like you belong... that hasn’t happened to me much before. (Tessmann, M. 2004)

Getting started in motor sport photography in Townsville has presented some real advantages to Mark. He hasn’t had to pay, or to lose time travelling, to attend the wide variety of events elsewhere. In Townsville there are: dragway bikes and cars, motorcross, go-karts, motorcycle road racing and others.

I have also had the advantage that in Melbourne or Sydney there are lots of hopefuls whereas here in Townsville you’ve only got one or two that are seriously involved. (Tessmann, M. 2004)

Mark has been able to have work published in the *Townsville Bulletin* on a weekly basis (Plate 8.3.1). Gaining publication in the foremost regional

newspaper will also assist him to attain accreditation as an official motor sport photographer with CAMS (Confederation of Australian Motor Sport).



Plate 8.3.1, Tessmann, M. *MX procession*, 2004

I do think about the Spanish [Motorcycle] Grand Prix, I mean it is the ultimate, but the reality is that there are hundreds of photographers who already have their foot in the door and they don't need to send someone from here [to Spain]. (Tessmann, M. 2004)

Mark's latest motor-cross images are spread over a double page spread in the *Townsville Bulletin* and stare up from the coffee table. Their technical precision and visual finesse stand out readily from the other non-commissioned, point and shoot contributions of adjacent pages. An individual style has evolved in

Mark's work; his earlier experiments with motion and focus plane now culminate in uncluttered, layered expressions of speed, rider acumen, and racetrack ambience. He brings to his profession a complete package of technique, and *vision*. Yet, Mark's recent application to CAMS for national racetrack accreditation has been denied. It seems that, in the highly competitive and exclusive world élite motor-sport photography, it will be other factors such as networking and persistence that will finally secure his acceptance at the highest level.

8.3.1 MARK TESSMANN: "... ALL THOSE BIG WHITE LENSES..."

A debutante gun fighter steps onto the dusty streetscape of ramshackle timber buildings to face his foe. He feels the sweat of heat and anxiety as he walks into the unknown to be tested. There will be no quarter given; under the harsh glare of peers and other stakeholders, his efforts must be self-sustaining. He steels himself, weapon drawn, the background painted with stark acuity. As the tension builds what does he rely on in this initial test? Is it the speed of hand and eye with which he was genetically endowed? Maybe the long-standing and repetitive practice of shooting tin cans? Or even the quality of his never truly tested new weapon? Beyond the comfort of his protected past, how will these factors coalesce as he enters his greatest battle to date?

As I interviewed Mark Tessmann and he spoke to me of his future as a motor sport photographer it became obvious that he believed he was standing on the threshold of a new path in his life. To this point he had laid the framework for

his future success through study, practice and dedication. He had now equipped himself with the correct professional tools but had not as yet been truly tested at the élite level in this specialised arena. Despite his skills and the high quality of his images Mark still expresses self-doubt over the likelihood of future professional success.

In making the image of Mark my aims are to portray:

- His sense of personal doubt and anticipation at entering his profession.
- His determination to engage head on with the challenges that lay ahead.
- A sense of the motorsport world.
- That he is well equipped and prepared.
-

To act on and give expression to these aims several image making engagements were contemplated each based on a North Queensland motor-sport event. It was eventually decided to choose the road races at Mareeba and a *Supercars* expo in Townsville and to explore the possibilities at each. Mareeba was chosen over other racing venues because it is the only one where trackside access could be gained for an additional non-accredited photographer (the author). The Mareeba images depicted Mark at work plying his trade both trackside and in the pits adequately. Although providing an effective record of the proceedings, on reflection, they offered little to synthesise the aims, and failed to address matters of personal ambition or symbolic encoding of other levels of meaning. It was therefore decided to concentrate on the other event which promised a richer range of possibilities.

On meeting Mark at the Townsville Showgrounds to conduct a second round of photography the hyped-up promotional nature of the event was obvious. The star drivers of the *V8 Supercar* series were in attendance. They have just been flown in to rendezvous with a fleet of flamboyantly sign written Semi Trailers full of cars, support staff and promotional materials. I photograph Mark involved in a range of *his* picture making: grouping fans together into mini human pyramids of enthusiasm and shooting individual cars and driver combinations. As crowds of adoring fans of all ages mob the drivers for autographed memorabilia I turn to Mark. He is standing dwarfed before a road going colossus with his camera drawn. The text on the trailer trumpets of the drivers' *about to face their greatest battle*, but this is also Mark's position in his chosen field. Mark's face is shaded, yet one is able to see the light and rewards of professional recognition and success. Armed with the appurtenances of his trade: camera, cables, phone, and other accessories all at the ready he stands as the gunfighter, tense and focused, prepared for the battle to come.

The image is structured with a powerful dynamism induced through the low raking camera angle and heavy perspective. The camera and Mark's head are placed adjacent to the diagonally opposite compositional means giving them primacy of emphasis. These attributes, coupled with the image's encoded symbolism, hinted gunfighter narrative, and even Mark's uneasy expression directly address the aims of the image. However, on reflection some doubts have surfaced, related both to the image and to its reception by others. To what degree will the sign-writing on the truck be connected to the purpose of the image by viewers, and, even if they do make that connection, might it be seen

as heavy handed? To what extent might the awkwardness of the image's structure be seen as furthering and reflecting the narrative (i.e., Mark's unease at the start of his career)? As an effective photograph is a summative instant, I believe that this distilled alignment of ideas will be recognised as transcending the boundaries of the moment captured (Plate 8.3.2).



Plate 8.3.2, Mark Tessmann 2005

8.4 LEIGH TURNER – FINE ART LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHER,
TOWNSVILLE

Some early morning mists and hazy clouds still cling desperately to the shadowed side of the range of hills backing Aligator Creek. Hiding from the light, their mauve and orange fringing differentiate them clearly from their backdrop of pale azure and deep bottle green. Fingers of warmth and steely brightness penetrate their transitory beauty and they vanish with all the esoteric lightness of a biblical vision.

Closer at hand wallabies, with joeys peeping from the security of their pouches, fossick on dew moistened grass for early morning tit-bits of nourishment. Leigh Turner arrives and gingerly alights from her car. As she is seven months pregnant her usual agility is on hold. She makes ready her equipment and, directing events, heads off along the formal paths and boardwalks leading to the less tamed areas of the creek. Walking slowly with her below a canopy of arching she-oaks, and other native vegetation, I become aware that she is entering a quietly meditative and somewhat introspective state. Intuitively I understand that she seeks to enter a personal creative mental space, a place where she can more readily recognise and interpret the subtle visual nuances of the natural domain we are entering. I feel that her aim is to set herself apart from the clutter, mayhem and complexity of our usual existence, enabling what is visually at hand to come into sharper relief. The tripod and camera bags, weighted with traditional photographic gear, are unpacked and reassembled

with practised efficiency. All activities are conducted under the umbrella of a respectful library-like hush.

Leigh grew up in rural New South Wales and started photographing at the age of twelve when she received her first camera. She enjoyed experimenting and would often choose to shoot what to others appeared as “weird” subjects. “I never really thought it was something that could become a major part of your life”. It was only much later in life in 1998 that, when travelling and studying in China, she decided to be a photographer.

I never really looked at books on photography or knew any photographers. I was travelling often and taking lots of shots. My partner at the time encouraged me and made me actually think that some of my images were worthwhile whereas I had never thought about them that seriously. (Turner, L. 2004)

On returning to Australia at the start of 1999 Leigh returned initially to a position with the Immigration Department, to work with refugees from Kosova.

I became very frustrated at how little I could actually do to help these people. I decided that I could help people more by taking photographs than by working for Immigration. (Turner, L. 2004)

A three year photography degree and honours year at James Cook University followed.

The light at Alligator Creek has now strengthened. Shafts of golden light are now making their way to some areas of the creek bed; casting shadows and selectively illuminating details of the environment.

Although I like landscape photography it's not conventional landscape photography but rather interpreting different aspects of the landscape... trying to show landscape in ways that are more in the mind, than in reality. (Turner, L. 2004)

The tripod is packed up and reassembled in several different locations. Close focusing on details of water flowing over rocks, a lyrical leaf is caught and wedged between two rocks and kept regularly oscillating by the water flow, the water deforms to rush around the contours of a water weary boulder, algae and lichen cling tenuously to a fallen limb, threatened by the endless gurgling, such are the visual selections. Once harvested these instances shimmer ambiguously, open to interpretation, inviting reverie, ever challenging, ever suggesting paths for exploration and roads to enlightenment. Like a sonata ever shifting and regrouping around a central theme, visual elements dance, rushing in and receding to an ever evolving harmony of point and counterpoint.

Leigh enjoys the relaxed atmosphere of working in North Queensland and the lack of distractions that one can find in a major city.

I have plenty of time to do things and think about things... and although you don't get to see as many exhibitions or as much work..., the lifestyle up here is much better for me as a photographer. (Turner, L. 2004)

Leigh also believes that the North Queensland climate stimulates her to go out and explore the landscape: "The climate helps to create an attitude... I hate being in cold places and when I am I find it really difficult to take photographs". However her overriding ambition is to bring about a new awareness of the world and ourselves through her imagery: " I want to take pictures that people haven't seen before...whether that be through portraiture or in landscape... that's what makes me want to take photographs".

On the question of a style she describes hers as natural and yet unusual, but confesses: "probably I haven't done enough [photography] in any particular genre to really have a style". While moving towards evolving a definite style she has taken stylistic cues from photographers William Yang (1943-) and Olive Cotton (1924-1984). Of Cotton she says:

The way she approached landscapes was to not replicate what had been done before but just to take the photographs that she likes, creating

images that were unique. She helped me to come and look at landscape differently. (Turner, L. 2004)

Several times Leigh refers in some way to the importance of making and following one's own unique path, in art, in life, in photography. In terms of a personal journey, it is the life of artist Rosalie Gascoigne (1917-1999) that inspires Leigh the most:

She was so excluded from the whole art world and just did what she did when she could. She felt this overwhelming compulsion to collect things from paddocks, put them in various configurations, and trusted herself to do that even though other people thought she was crazy. (Turner, L. 2004)

Morning song evaporates at Alligator Creek, the harder light and shorter shadows of mid morning now flood the gully. The photographic session concludes and, just as the currawongs and bush turkeys go off to attend to their more mundane daily routine, we go off to attend to ours. On our way back to the cars I ask Leigh about the imagery for this current landscape project which is to be hung in the new Townsville Nursing Home.

At this stage my earlier *Synopsis* series of works are always with me when I photograph the landscape (Plate 8.4.1). There are resonances of them in this work and yet they are different because there are restrictions

A MIRROR TO THE MIRROR – CLIVE HUTCHISON

in this commission. These images can't be too abstract, part of the brief is to assist the link between memory and landscape in the elderly residents.

(Turner, L. 2004)

On reaching the carpark we climb into our respective vehicles and depart, both hoping that our remnant spiritual memories of the rocks, of the water, of the light, will endure.



Plate 8.4.1, Turner, L. *Synopsis I-IV*, 2002

8.4.1 LEIGHT TURNER: "I WANT TO MAKE PICTURES THAT PEOPLE HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE."

Appropriation of landscape elements to a bi-cubic lattice of squares, within a panel of architectural dimensions, is the aspect of Leigh Turner's photography that resonates most clearly in my recollections. In each of the four panels in the Synapsis series (Plate 8.4.1) tensions, and points of departure and return, are plotted: between versions of a single element in each row and between different rows. The scale of the works invites a closer examination of the minutiae of the botanical and environmental snippets. The panels evoke reflection on the ways in which we engage and experience the natural world. The same scene or elements at different angles and croppings, juxtaposed to other views in adjacent locations, vibrate one against the other. Our sense of order has us hunting both for the disparate and the common, the particular and the universal, re-examining and re-evaluating. Variations of the same subject range from subtle to grand.

The panels each pose several questions for the viewer: To what extent is our understanding of what we see (or allegorically see) dependent on our viewpoint to, our distance from, and the juxtaposition of, what we see amongst the other visual matters that crowd our perceptions? Reducing the analogue to the stricture and mathematical regularity of the scientist creates the stage for our perceptual, emotional and intellectual engagement. Spaced along a wall each panel brings new questions into play instigating a narrative driven by the viewer's sensitivities.

My aims in making the images of Leigh Turner are:

- To portray Leigh as an intent inquirer and focused observer.
- To give the viewer an insight into Leigh's working environment/context.
- To give the viewer an insight into Leigh's photographic style.
- To offer interpretation of her landscape photography.

To give expression to these aims I agreed to join Leigh on an environmental shoot at Alligator Creek. This was deemed to create the greatest range of opportunities to reflect the values of the *Synopsis 1-1V* environmental work (Plate 8.4.1). In keeping with the character of a Leigh Turner shoot I photographed many close-up, and broader images that resonated with the concepts of her earlier work: branches against water, clouds against rock, leaves against stone. Leigh is photographed exploring, observing and in the act of photographing. The concept of placing Leigh within the visual device of her own creation was advancing well. Each square, as in her works, employs nuances of variation in angle, expression and time; each affecting our connection with her and leading us to variously configured triangulated conclusions. As we now enter the diverse but connected iterations of her cubically triangulated realm, we discover: the observer (Leigh as the subject), reflections of the observer (Leigh's reflection in the surface of the rippled water), and the subjects of her study (the natural elements); each gives rise to active tensions between the adjacent image frames and contributes to the overall image (Plate 8.4.2).



Plate 8.4.2, Leigh Turner, 2005

8.4 COMMONALITIES AND DIVERGENCES

The four photographers in the *Emerging Photographers* category: Ian Hitchcock, Natalie Martin, Mark Tessmann, and Leigh Turner constitute a cohort which has been practising photography for less than five years. This period was chosen as a cut off level, somewhat arbitrarily, based on general advice from the secure photographers. It was their rule of thumb estimation that it takes *about five years* to establish yourself to the point that you can generate sufficient income to live reasonably solely from photographic sources.

With such a small sample it is, of course, impossible to draw any firm conclusions that might be extrapolated to a wider group; the interest primarily lies in the uniqueness of their individual stories. However, some aspects of their experiences are common to all members of the group. Every member has readily embraced digital imaging. Only Leigh Turner still captures some of her images on film, yet Leigh then digitises the resultant negatives and transparencies to work on them within her computer. This is where her images are constructed, manipulated and rearranged. She expresses her ideas about the incorporation of new technology as follows:

I see it as part of image making... it opens up possibilities for different ways of making images and thinking about what photographs are ...I like combining both.

Ian Hitchcock is the most outspoken in his endorsement of the digital technologies:

It has revolutionised photography ...absolutely for the better ...I haven't shot film for a year ...I have been completely seduced.

All four emerging photographers have degrees in photography and, as in the case of the secure practitioners, endorse the value of completing a tertiary level study of photography. In addition, they all operate across a number of other areas of photography as an adjunct to their primary genre as covered earlier in this chapter. Ian Hitchcock also undertakes freelance sports and photojournalism assignments, Natalie Martin travel and photojournalism, Leigh Turner fine art, portraiture and general commercial, and Mark Tessmann portraiture and glamour. Each emerging photographer views this range of professional involvement as a positive, again confirming the attraction of the variety and unpredictable nature of professional practice.

8.5 WORK STRUCTURES

At this stage of their professional development their work structures have not, in their eyes, settled into even the broad pattern of unpredictability of the secure practitioners. Each photographer is seeking to consolidate their viability within the profession in differing ways. Leigh Turner and Ian Hitchcock are members of a professional association (AIPP) and see this as creating new opportunities for professional development and networking. Both attend regular workshops and seminars run by industry leaders, to maintain currency and evolve a sense of collegiate belonging in what for some, due to its freelance nature, can otherwise become an isolated professional existence. At the time of writing, neither Natalie Martin nor Mark Tessmann saw membership of such a professional association as serving their immediate needs. However, both

acknowledged that in the future they would consider joining, not necessarily the AIPP, but a relevant industry body.

8.6 PERSPECTIVES ON CHANGE AND THE FUTURE

All four emerging photographers acknowledge that professional photography is a highly competitive endeavour with an ever-increasing number of new entrants wanting to join the field. They also agree that the regional nature of North Queensland more readily presents opportunities to enter and operate within the profession, and make linkages with established practitioners than in capital city locations. Of this group only Mark Tessmann expressed doubts about the certainty of his future successful entry into the mainstream of his chosen genre. Of this sample his alone is the only area with an exclusive industry gatekeeper (CAMS) that annually permit only a small number of new entrants to the motorsport arena.

CHAPTER NINE: THE EXHIBITION.

The role of this exhibition is to share in a public forum the process and findings of the research, especially the visual creative outputs of the research, both with the subjects of the research and with the wider community. The exhibition encapsulates the visual response to the research aims and provides an opportunity for relative comparison and evaluation of the role of working photographers by an audience in relation to many of the questions underpinning the research and articulated as follows:

- What confluence of personal experiences has brought these diverse individuals 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?
- To what extent do they also see themselves playing a role as social or political commentators or visual historians?
- 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?

- To what extent are photographers across a range of genres embracing, fearing, and/or rejecting newly emerging technologies?

The exhibition is also be the first opportunity for the participants not only to see the outcome of the earlier photography session, but to see how their own image relates to those of the other participants within the research.

9.1 THE VENUE: SELECTION CRITERIA.

In selecting a suitable gallery space for the presentation of this research's exhibition component, it was important that the audience/photographer participants be drawn into a space that created a separate experience, a space to be inhabited by the personae of the photographer subjects with minimal visual noise and disruption. Each image thus requires sufficient physical space for it to be considered independently of the others in the exhibition. Only by this means will the uniqueness of the individuals and their personalities have sufficient room to resonate and allow the audience to reflect on their role and significance. Hence key criteria underpinning this central proposition were: location, size, and venue attributes such as the spatial configuration, lighting and availability. Within North Queensland there are a number of dedicated galleries as well as more informal exhibition sites that were considered as potential sites. After viewing several sites (Heritage Bar, Portraits Restaurant and Bar, Jupiter's Casino) it was determined that only a dedicated gallery space could offer the necessary sequential wall area to give each work the opportunity to achieve an independent identity (considered especially

important in the context of such an eclectic exhibition). Twelve months in advance of the range of potential dates to hold the exhibition the most likely galleries were canvassed for their suitability and availability.

The additional criteria for gallery selection were established on the basis of:

- A gallery floor plan/layout that allowed a single sweep of the images on display thus facilitating an immediate comprehension of the scope of the work.
- Sufficient linear wall space to accommodate the size and number of framed images to be displayed with the desired separation between each one.
- Where external environmental distractions would not play a role.
- A desire for a central location to allow participants and interested others in the community the greatest opportunity to attend the exhibition.

In Table 9.1.1 galleries in both Cairns and Townsville are evaluated in terms of the desired criteria.

Table 9.1.1 Galleries Evaluated

| Venue | Location | Layout / Wall space | Linear hanging space | environmental distractions | Availability |
|---|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Perc Tucker Regional Gallery: Upstairs | TVI | L-Shaped | ✓ | Minimal | × |
| Perc Tucker Regional Gallery: Downstairs Artists spaces | TVL | Square/L-Shaped | × | Moderate | ✓ |
| Umbrella Studio | TVL | Square with pathway | ✓ | Open glass sides | ✓ |
| Cairns Regional Galley | CNS | Irregular | ✓ | Minimal | ✓ |
| Vincent Gallery | TVL | Almost square | ✓ | Nil | ✓ |
| Pinnacles Gallery | TVL | Irregular | ✓ | Moderate | X |

The Cairns Regional Gallery, although a suitable venue in many ways, was only ever entertained as a prospect on the basis that there might be no available spaces in Townsville (especially given that Pinnacles Gallery was closed at this time). Townsville is the most central location for all participants so any other choice would disadvantage participant photographers from attending. If for example the exhibition were held in Cairns participants from Airlie Beach would be over 700 kilometres from the venue. Vincent Gallery thus became the most logical choice. The gallery's Townsville location, almost-square open space, and continuous wall space of 41 metres without break or distraction allowed all images to be hung sequentially within their own *territory*. When sparsely populated with viewers this space also gave scope for the exhibition to be observed from a single viewpoint.

9.1 THE PRESENTATION AND LAYOUT OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The framing style of the works was critical to the central conceptual drama and narrative strength of the exhibition. At once the framing of the works was to perform several co-existent roles: to unify the style of the presentation of the exhibition, to present a very clean and unadorned finish to the works, and yet provide sufficient strength to separate each work as an individual piece, representing very idiosyncratic statements. Possibly each exhibited image might have been better displayed within its own isolated environment to ensure that it is experienced individually without direct contrast and comparison to the others in the study. However to give recognition to such a

scenario would be to deny the other intrinsic research dimension that, although unique and diverse, the participatory photographers are part of the eclectic and idiosyncratic sodality of the professional photographer.

A range of framing treatments for the photographs was considered. These options included a more informal contemporary treatment involving pinning unmounted images directly to the gallery wall. However given the disparate treatments of the subjects and the variety of cropping formats employed, an unadorned black frame and white matt was deemed as providing a unifying theme whilst simultaneously making a clear delineation between images. The framing section material was 30mm square, black painted, routed wood. The outer edges had a very small radius of only a few (1-2) millimetres. A cross section of the framing construction is detailed in Figure 9.1.1.

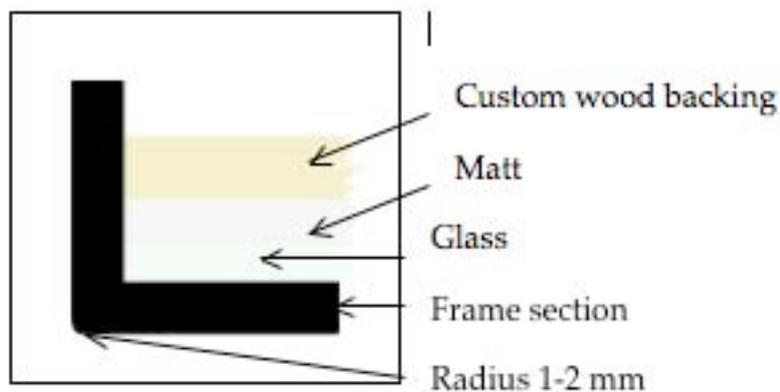


Figure 9.1.1 Framing Section

This treatment is a classical photographic treatment in that it is commonly used as a vehicle to isolate the work effectively from its surrounds, concentrate attention on the content of the work and, in its simplicity, act as a balance to the

tonal complexity of the photograph. A slightly textured, 75mm wide white matt establishes a balanced buffer between the image area and the frame allowing it room to breathe. These framing specifications were uniformly applied throughout (Figure 9.1.1). The only variant to the framing was the overall dimensions determined by the photographic prints themselves. There were three configurations: 18" X 24" vertical prints, 24" X 18" horizontal prints and 20" X 20" square prints. The relative proportions of these configurations are detailed in Figure 9.1.2.

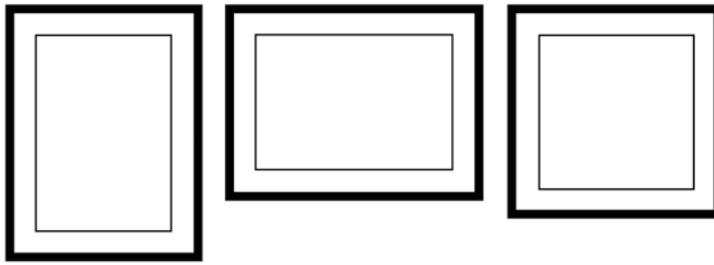


Figure 9.1.2 Framing Variants

Each photograph was also cropped and printed to allow for one inch of latitude in the matt overlap overall, both horizontally and vertically.

The original strategy was to hang the images equidistant around the walls of the gallery according to the order of the classifications established in the text and then in the sub order based alphabetically based on the surnames of the subjects. However due to the balance of vertical, horizontal and square treatments combined with the dimensions of the wall sections this was not desirable. Plate 9.1.2 sets out the variations between the order of appearance of the images within the thesis and in actuality within the exhibition space.

Table 9.1.2 Placement of Images

| Subject of Work | Classification according to experience. | Order in Thesis | Order in Exhibition Layout |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Hutchison | 1 | Chapter | 1 |
| Fraley | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| De Rooy | 2 | 3 | 11 |
| Dymond | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Keating | 2 | 5 | 9 |
| Lake | 2 | 6 | 18 |
| Landt | 2 | 7 | 3 |
| Lynch | 2 | 8 | 20 |
| Marano | 2 | 9 | 10 |
| O'Malley | 2 | 10 | 4 |
| Parsons | 2 | 11 | 12 |
| Rintala | 2 | 12 | 13 |
| Trapnell | 2 | 13 | 5 |
| Treasure | 2 | 14 | 8 |
| Turner, S | 2 | 15 | 7 |
| Zeigler | 2 | 16 | 17 |
| Hitchcock | 3 | 17 | 15 |
| Martin | 3 | 18 | 16 |
| Tessmann | 3 | 19 | 19 |
| Turner, L | 3 | 20 | 14 |

That there is an inconsistency in the order of appearance of the images within the exhibition as opposed to the thesis is of small import. The difference in the two comparative realms of experience of the photographs and their attendant indexical reference and classification in the text is set well apart from the visual experience of the works in the exhibition context. Here the flow between stylistic treatments and orientations / dimensions supplants the consideration of classification based on either length of involvement of the subjects with photography.

Figure 9.1.3 provides a guide to the orientation of each view from a plan perspective. Note the orientation of each view to the entry/exit and to the interpretive materials mounted by the doorway. The intention is to invite understanding of the goals and scope of the works and to place within their research context prior to viewing them.

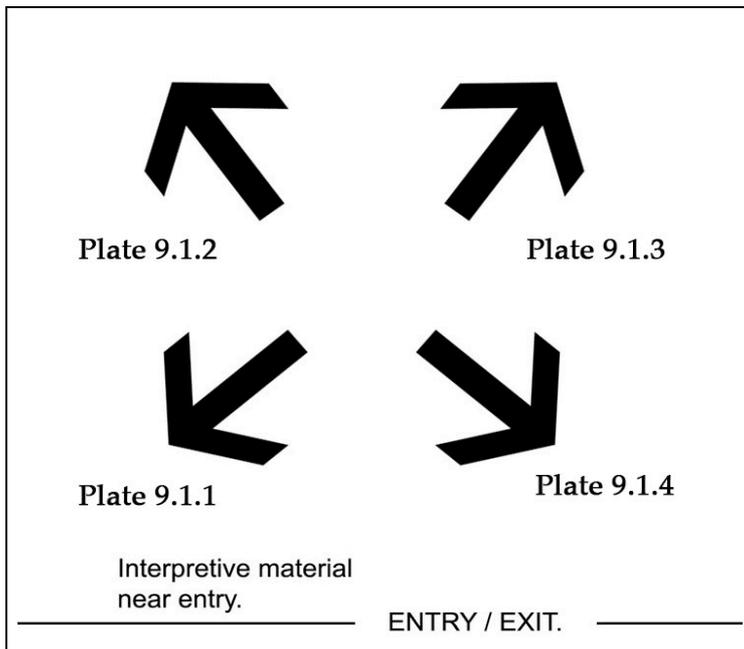


Figure 9.1.3 Image Orientation, Vincent Gallery

Plate 9.1.1 through to Plate 9.1.4 provide sequential 90 degree views around the gallery's interior.

A MIRROR TO THE MIRROR – CLIVE HUTCHISON



Plate 9.1.1, Gallery 1, 2005



Plate 9.1.2, Gallery 2, 2005



Plate 9.1.3, Gallery 3, 2005

A MIRROR TO THE MIRROR – CLIVE HUTCHISON



Plate 9.1.4, Gallery 4, 2005

9.2 INVITING ENGAGEMENT

Engagement of the audience with the exhibition was required to take place in two ways. Firstly it required that potential viewers be sufficiently informed via direct mail out, posters, and other by other means such as word of mouth, to come either to the opening of the exhibition, or to visit the exhibition during its period of display. When audience members arrived it was important they were further invited to become directly engaged with the exhibition images via the provision of interpretive materials and via the gallery layout.

9.3 THE INVITATION

It was important for the invitation to stand out from other mail items and to entice potential viewers by being distinctive and immediate. Also for many invitees the arrival of the invitation would have been their first knowledge of the project. Apart from its eye-catching design it also needed to convey a certain amount of mandated text based information. Plate 9.3.1 reveals both sides of the final, DL format invitation. The portrait image of Karen Landt was chosen for the invitation because it was highly representative of the aspirations of the exhibition and the research as a whole as detailed in Chapter 7.5.

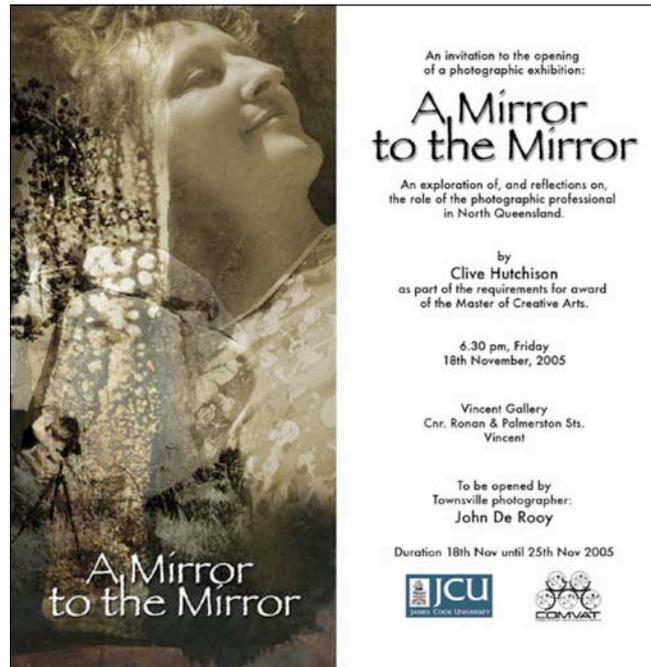


Plate 9.3.1, Invitation - Front and Back.

9.4 INTERPRETIVE MATERIALS

The interpretive materials provided at the exhibition came essentially in four forms:

- an Artist's Statement (Appendix A)
- a further 900 word document, summarizing the background of the project and its aims
- a catalogue of the works with a short descriptive passage regarding each participant.
- identifying wall cards.

The artist's statement was intended to reflect the tone of inquiry of the research for exhibition visitors. Drawing on a prose style, readers were challenged to

embark on a new line of enquiry for understanding the photographers' role. Visitors to the exhibition were also invited within this document, clearly displayed at the entrance to the gallery, to decode the images in a manner of their own liking:

...they [the images] seek to live anew on each consideration of the person and the practice. While there can be no fixed and immovable outcome or perception, nevertheless clues remain alluding to context and intent.

Although I was cautioned by some colleagues that a 900 word panel would not be likely to be read, I was determined at least to provide visitors to the exhibition with a contextual roadmap for understanding and engaging with the images on display and the lives that they (in some small part) represent. Headed *Exhibition Overview*, the panel included the following sub-headings: *Background, Aims of the research, Questions investigated in this research, The Process, Highlights of the process* and *Items of special importance*. Catalogues with additional information regarding the subjects of the images were provided to assist those wandering around the exhibition .

9.5 THE OPENING

The exhibition opening was a critical dimension to the research process. Not only was it the fulcrum in a long process of creative inquiry, it was an opportunity for an interested audience to gain new insights by accessing additional views and interpretations of the exhibition from other informed

parties. Further the opening was an opportunity for a range of participants and assistants to be publicly recognised for their contribution. There was also another more informal, yet dynamic and important process initiated as all interested parties were able to exchange views, compare notes and otherwise add an exciting articulation to the meaning of the process and reflect on the outcome in a communal sense.

CHAPTER TEN: REFLECTIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS

10.1 REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESS AND PRODUCT

The process of this research has taken the researcher in many unanticipated directions and revealed aspects of the professional photographers' roles hitherto largely unexplored. Whether meeting indigenous elders at Kowanyama in the company of photographer Kerry Trappnell, being guest of honour at a *mumu* in the settlements of Port Moresby with photographer Susan Turner, stalking rare birds with wildlife/travel photographer Paul Dymond or experiencing early morning aerial photography with John De Rooy, each interview and photographic session with a photographer in this study has been uniquely revelatory. Without exception the directness, openness and generosity of time and spirit of every participant photographer was outstanding and integral to the success of the study.

The image making process was both challenging and rewarding. In every instance the individuality of the experience of the subject photographers, their life and work, was mined through preparatory research, interview, and observation, all contributing to the final image. This approach is both the strength and, potentially, the Achilles' heel of the work. The constant in this equation is the eye of the author, bringing a regime of consistent perspective and approach.

Of equal importance to the study are the personal ramifications and resultant implications. Having been involved with photography for over three decades as practitioner, photography educator and photography researcher, it has been essential to create a refractive mirror for my own experiences of photography and being a photographer. This has been central to both the processes of conceiving and creating the works and in revisiting both early and adult recollections of, and interactions with, photography. This research has become critical to a re-examination of my own work, redefining first principles of photography and clarifying new directions.

10.2 EXHIBITION OUTCOMES

The opening was very well attended with the gallery full of people from the outset. Almost the entire staff of the College of Music Visual Arts and Theatre were in attendance at some stage during the evening. In addition fifteen of the twenty subject photographers were able to attend (I had received apologies from four of the other five who all attended the exhibition during the following week; Susan Turner was stranded in PNG with visa issues.)

Introductory remarks by Graeme Evans and the additional comments from John De Rooy cast light upon aspects of the process that otherwise might have gone unnoticed. John De Rooy, a busy aerial and commercial photographer commented that the process of being interviewed for this research had caused him to reflect in new ways on the nature, value and first principles of his image making, and that being formally photographed (the first time it had happened

in his adult life!) had also made him more acutely aware of the photographer/subject interaction/relationship.

The interchange of ideas and connections between photographers, and between the author, this project, and the photographers, has been very gratifying. Beyond the official gallery opening most participants and contributors continued with a social gathering at the researcher's residence. Many have expressed interest in reading these research outcomes in addition to experiencing the exhibition component of the research. An unanticipated response to the exhibition opening was an invitation from Frances Thompson, Director of the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, to re-hang the exhibition at the city gallery throughout January and February of 2006. This has since transpired and made the exhibition accessible by a much wider public audience.

10.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

The approach to portrait photography adopted here is driven by the individual nature and style of the work of each participant and their characters. Hence on every occasion it is, by necessity, idiosyncratic and hence, in many instances, ignores certain widely accepted conventions. Whilst single image treatments are employed (e.g., Martin, Trapnell and Dymond), often multiple images are compiled and overlaid in the search for a more comprehensive referencing of the subject within a single overall totality (e.g., Lake, Hitchcock, Fraley). Whether viewers will derive extended meaning, or some added acuity, from the

multiple approaches is yet to be determined. If indeed this does occur, each individual's experience of the image and the meaning they take from it will be unique. There is also no way of knowing whether the meaning they derive will reflect the photographer's intention, as is true of a novel or most other pieces of creative expression. However, does this matter? Is not the fact of engagement with the image the most important aspect of the process? Are not the vicissitudes of the responses of others an additional exciting ingredient in the *life* of the image? Is this equivocal equation an expansion of each image's potential to make meaning and give *punctum* precisely in the manner and measure appropriate to each individual viewer? Post modern perspectives on the representation of images suggests that a lack of fixity in viewers' responses forms part of a "productive instability in relation to both the subjectivity (of the artist, of ourselves) and meaning" (Jones, 2002: 22)

The role of the portrait and its execution, especially in the light of new digital tools in the *post-photography* era, is also worthy of further investigation. New questions arise: At what point does the manipulation of image data represent a move from enhancement to falsification, given that to some extent photographers have always *adjusted* their images? To what extent do photographers have a *duty of care* to their portrait subjects to portray them in the most mimetic or alternately sympathetic manner possible? To what extent are such decisions driven by the context or intent of the image making?

10.4 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Limitations inevitably exist in research, most critically, and inevitably, in terms of scope and method. An early decision was to choose depth of engagement with a smaller sample over the broadest achievable snapshot. Areas not represented include scientific (astronomical, microscopic and many other sub genres), forensic, aspects of news and photojournalism, underwater, and tourism. Considering that photography has played such a major enabling role in so many branches of science, these omissions alone create significant scope for further case study research.

Many participants work across genres and have multi-dimensional roles. Although this was acknowledged in Chapter Four (and elsewhere within the research), especially in respect of regional photography, this has to a large extent been ignored in favour of concentrating on one, more in-depth, area of involvement for each participant. For all but two photographers (Turner and Tessmann) only one interview and photographic portrait session was possible because of the busy schedules of the participants. In some instances (most notably Zeigler) that decision in turn imposed restrictions on the sense of personal validity underpinning the photography of the subjects. A minimal intervention approach was necessarily adopted when photographing subjects who were simultaneously working with their clients or completing their photographic work in a restricted time window (Parsons and Treasure). To

some degree this also impacted on the level of engagement and potential success of the image making achievable on the single occasion available.

10.5 THE IMPACT AND VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

The essential core and value of this research is the embedded and revelatory aspects that emerge from the engagement with each individual participant photographer at work. The insights gained through interview and image making unmask a world rarely glimpsed or understood by casual observers or even members of the photographic profession itself. The research has unveiled modes of operation, values and aspirations rarely expressed or revealed through other channels by this group. Often the photographer participants critically reflected on their roles, working contexts and the importance of their work for the first time as part of this study. They also generally expressed having little prior insight into the working parameters and beliefs of other photographers, despite sharing the same broad occupational label. Some participants have read aspects of this research prior to publication and tendered critiques of its significance. Glen O'Malley described the chapter section that engaged with his practice as "...the most insightful commentary on my work in the 30 years that I have been taking photographs and exhibiting them." (O'Malley, 2006: telephone conversation)

Gaining insights and understandings of the role and contribution of professional photographers is both significant and valuable. It is they who bring their craft and artistry to adding individuals' and society's images to the

cavalcade. It is they who largely supply the wider catalogue of images that populate our imaginations with places, peoples, events and ideas. It is through them that the visual diversity of our existential context is established. It is they who add a valuable dimension to our understanding of how we see ourselves, our place amongst others and our place in the wider world. Recognising them as cataloguers and conduits enriches this relationship and our experience of this work. Having now delved into the practices and lives of a range of North Queensland photographers of varying genres and with differing backgrounds, levels of experience and aspirations, the door is now firmly open for further exploration.

10.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are many areas for further research that could evolve from this project. One is a longitudinal study of the emerging photographers to ascertain the degree to which their aspirations have been met and to explore further the paths their professional lives have taken. An expansion of the study to map more comprehensively the various genres of professional photography and to take into account regional and metropolitan differences would also be a logical extension. Involving photographers from abroad could also be an additional possibility. The impacts of new and next technologies on the status, working methods, styles and outputs of practitioners is also a fascinating area for further study, not only in relation to this sample of photographers, but more broadly in terms of the discipline.

As is the case with any practice based creative arts research project, the possibilities for extended work are significant. One of the beauties of the discipline lies in its ability to individualise and specialise. The future of photography, and research in the creative arts more generally, is a burgeoning and exciting field. I look forward to embracing new and stimulating challenges into the future that will provide further insights and understandings into the most fundamental question posed by this research: “What is it to be a photographer?”