

Artists' Q&As

left:
*And The Third Loses
It All #6* 2010
inkjet print
38 × 38 cm



right:
*And The Third Loses
It All #1* 2010
inkjet print
38 × 38 cm



Ying Ang *And The Third Loses It All*

What camera was used to shoot this series?

A Hasselblad.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed?

I used a film camera and Kodak Portra 400 NC film.

What type of lens did you use?

I used an 80mm lens.

What decisions did you make in the printing of this series and why? For example, is the series printed in black and white or colour? What type of paper did you use? What printing process did you employ?

I have printed these images as colour archival inkjet prints because I don't have access to a colour-processing machine. The photo paper is lustre, which is a standard choice for inkjet prints of this colour palette for me.

What was your reason for shooting this series?

I didn't want to reach a point in my career where I realised that I never photographed the things that meant the most to me. My father is one of those things.

How long did you work on this series?

It is still a work in progress. It has been two years.

Sandy Edwards writes: 'Photography's terminology has changed and the inherently descriptive terms for different styles have become self-limiting. Words such as 'straight' and 'traditional' as opposed to 'art' photography are totally inadequate. The term 'documentary' itself is widely misunderstood, often confused with its brasher cousin, photojournalism.'¹

There is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography. Would you consider this series 'straight' documentary and why or why not?

I would consider it straight documentary because it is a document of people and a place that exists in real time and space.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series?

The biggest challenge for this work is the travel involved. I live in New York and Melbourne and the work is in Singapore and Indonesia.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work?

Many different bodies of work have influenced my work and my relationship with photography. It's not about the photographer, per se, but the works that they have produced... such as Larry Clark's *Tulsa*, Josef Koudelka's *Exiles*, Nan Goldin's *Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, Alec Soth's *Niagara* and Jacob Aue Sobol's *Sabine*. Their influence has been to inspire me to aim to develop an individual voice in a visual world where thousands clamour to be heard.

Is there anything else you would like to add about your work?

No.

¹ Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p.12. Sandy Edwards is a photographer, Creative Producer of ARTHERE and a Curator at Stills Gallery, Sydney.

Paul Blackmore
Festival of the Epiphany,
Russia 2010
type C photograph
36 × 55 cm



Paul Blackmore *At Water's Edge*

What camera was used to shoot this series?

A Nikon F3 and a Canon EOS MK3.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed?

I used both. The films I used were Kodak Plus-X and Tri-X.

What type of lens did you use?

I used 35mm and 24mm lenses.

What decisions did you make in the printing of this series and why? For example, is the series printed in black and white or colour? What type of paper did you use? What printing process did you employ?

It was shot mainly in black and white. The prints are type C prints. I like this type of printing because of the richness of the tones, and it can be done in large format.

What was your reason for shooting this series?

I wanted to tell the story of the global problems of water scarcity and to use this sense of drama as a background to a more intimate story; that of humanity's sensual and spiritual relationship with water.

How long did you work on this series?

The larger project has been going on for eight years. However the images in this exhibition are from four different stories. Each one was shot over a period of two weeks.

Sandy Edwards writes: 'Photography's terminology has changed and the inherently descriptive terms for different styles have become self-limiting. Words such as 'straight' and 'traditional' as opposed to 'art' photography are totally inadequate. The term 'documentary' itself is widely misunderstood, often confused with its brasher cousin, photojournalism.'¹

There is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography. Would you consider this series 'straight' documentary and why or why not?

There is a documentary element to this work; however, I feel this series has a more personal quality to it. Whilst the subjects of the photos are real I hope the images evoke a sense of connection and recognition that goes beyond the content of the work.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series?

The biggest challenge to this series was that I was photographing different stories from different parts of the world and I needed to make them connect and flow as one body of work.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work?

The work of Robert Frank and Sebastião Salgado.

Is there anything else you would like to add about your work?

These six images presented in the *CCP Documentary Photography Award* are part of a larger project titled *At Water's Edge* that will be published by T&G Publishing in late 2011 or early 2012.

¹ Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p.12. Sandy Edwards is a photographer, Creative Producer of ARTHERE and a Curator at Stills Gallery, Sydney.

Daniel Boetker-Smith
Walkway, Albury 2011
Giclee print
50 × 60 cm



Daniel Boetker-Smith Toponymy

What camera was used to shoot this series?

A Linhof Technika 5x4 field camera, a Mamiya 7II medium-format camera, and a Canon 5D Mark II digital SLR.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed?

I used both film and digital cameras—the subject (and circumstance) decides what format I use. The film I used was Fuji Pro 160 S (medium and large format).

What type of lens did you use?

The Canon 5D Mark II with a Canon 28-80mm lens, the Mamiya 7II with a 50mm lens, and the Linhof Technika with a Rodenstock 250mm lens.

What decisions did you make in the printing of this series and why? For example, is the series printed in black and white or colour? What type of paper did you use? What printing process did you employ?

As I was using different camera formats I was conscious of the need to bring the images together in presentation, hence they are printed the same size and ratio. I used the same type of film in medium and large format to attain a coherency in colour and contrast. The question of colour or black and white is decided by your subject matter; black and white can foreground texture, surface, emotion, drama, and can sometimes be too didactic, in the case of what I was trying to do black and white would have been too much, too over the top. I have used black and white in past projects and would again, depending on the subject and my intention.

The negatives were scanned on an Imacon Flextight scanner. They are standard Giclee prints.

What was your reason for shooting this series?

I was interested in exploring the stories, contrasts and contradictions of the Murray River. It was also a way for me to try to reconnect to the notion of being 'Australian' after being away for many years. Trawling through historical and contemporary tales, and talking to and photographing people and places allowed me to re-imagine my own sense of fitting into an Australian narrative; to place myself.

How long did you work on this series?

It started in January 2010 and continues. I still feel like it is in its early stages.

Sandy Edwards writes: 'Photography's terminology has changed and the inherently descriptive terms for different styles have become self-limiting. Words such as 'straight' and 'traditional' as opposed to 'art' photography are totally inadequate. The term 'documentary' itself is widely misunderstood, often confused with its brasher cousin, photojournalism.'¹

There is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography. Would you consider this series 'straight' documentary and why or why not?

No. Geoffrey Batchen recently said of Taryn Simon: 'She is, at one and the same time, overtly skeptical about the medium's capacity for revealing truth, while nevertheless totally dedicating herself to this same possibility.' I feel the same way about my photographic practice, I think documentary photography is as much about metaphor and fiction as it is about truth.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series?

The problem in doing this sort of work is making connections with people, meeting them, convincing them to be photographed, and getting access to homes or public buildings. It's just a matter of time and perseverance and eventually if you are nice enough to people and ask often enough someone will agree. I think the topic of the Murray River is one that has a high profile right now so people are eager to talk but are also wary of my 'angle'. Once they learn my area of interest is as much personal as it is social or political they loosen up.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work?

Clare Richardson, An-My Lê, Marie-Françoise Plissart, Mark Power, Roni Horn, Chris Killip, Paul Graham, Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, and Edgar Martins.

Is there anything else you would like to add about your work?

I would only add that what I am photographing is segments and fragments of multiple stories; some are fictional, some are unverifiable, some are factual. Sometimes I photograph people and don't ask them questions or talk to them, the photograph becomes the story. Other times the photograph is an illustration of a story they have told me in great detail. Photographs always say too much or too little, very rarely do they say just the right amount.

¹ Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p.12. Sandy Edwards is a photographer, Creative Producer of ARTHRE and a Curator at Stills Gallery, Sydney.

Thomas Breakwell
Squat #4 2010
inkjet print
50 × 60 cm



Thomas Breakwell *Squats*

What camera was used to shoot this series?

The series *Squats* was shot with a Toya Field 45All large-format field camera. It is a very big and clunky camera but produces the best quality images. It is not unusual for it to take me between 30 minutes to an hour to setup and take a shot.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed?

I used Kodak Portra N (160 ISO) 4x5 large-format film. This is quite a slow speed film. Once the film was processed I used a Flextight scanner to convert the negatives to high-resolution digital files.

What type of lens did you use?

The series was shot with a Rodenstock 135mm F5.6 Apo-Sironar-S Lens with Copal #0 Shutter (equivalent to 45mm lens in 35mm SLR format).

What decisions did you make in the printing of this series and why? For example, is the series printed in black and white or colour? What type of paper did you use? What printing process did you employ?

I printed in colour, as I wanted the images to be as realistic as possible and best replicate what the landscape looked like to the naked eye. I printed with a large-format digital inkjet printer (Epson 9900) with Ilford Gold Fibre Silk paper to give me a wide spectrum of colour to work with. I also chose the paper for its smooth surface, which is not distracting and helps the viewer look beyond the surface of the paper and deeper into the image.

What was your reason for shooting this series?

The *Squats* series was born from my interest in the way we interact with the land in a modern day context. I wanted to document a particular way that I noticed young people were using the landscape that was unseen to the public. While shooting the series I also became extremely interested in the different kinds of environments that I was finding on the edge of suburbia, which are not always the typical Australian landscape.

How long did you work on this series?

I completed the project over four months in 2010.

Sandy Edwards writes: 'Photography's terminology has changed and the inherently descriptive terms for different styles have become self-limiting. Words such as 'straight' and 'traditional' as opposed to 'art' photography are totally inadequate. The term 'documentary' itself is widely misunderstood, often confused with its brasher cousin, photojournalism.'¹

There is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography. Would you consider this series 'straight' documentary and why or why not?

I have tried to be as straightforward as I can in documenting these spaces, using the same deadpan composition and method for every single shot and tried to avoid any trickery in lighting. However I realise that my work does differ from the conventions of 'straight documentary photography' as I am not trying to document a specific time or event. Rather I am photographing the traces people have left behind in empty spaces to document a subculture. I guess these images are more like crime scene photos.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series?

Apart from actually finding the spaces, the challenge was in getting the compositions the same in each environment and creating continuity within the series without the images repeating themselves or becoming boring.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work?

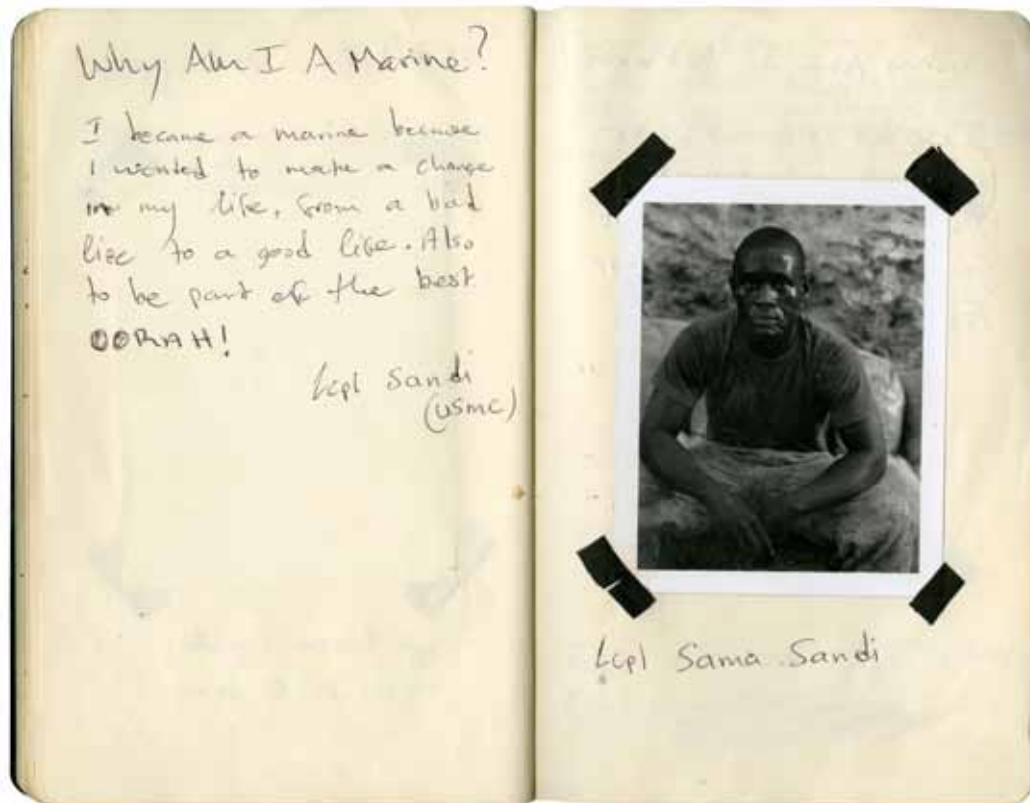
The German photographers Bernd and Hilla Becher heavily influenced this work in terms of technique and method. The American photographers of the 70s and 80s New Colour Movement, such as Stephen Shore, Joel Sternfeld and Mitch Epstein have also influenced me.

Is there anything else you would like to add about your work?

I come from a Fine Arts background and have never really considered myself to be a documentary photographer. While my images are documenting a fringe culture or activity, they are also a reflection of my own explorations into these borderlands and of my own interests and desires.

¹ Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p.12. Sandy Edwards is a photographer, Creative Producer of ARTHERE and a Curator at Stills Gallery, Sydney.

Stephen Dupont
Why Am I A Marine?
#5 2009
type C photograph
40.6 x 50.8 cm



Stephen Dupont Why Am I A Marine?

What camera was used to shoot this series?

A Polaroid Land Camera 110B

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed?

I used Polaroid 665 Positive-Negative Film.

What type of lens did you use?

A 128mm Rodenstock lens.

What decisions did you make in the printing of this series and why? For example, is the series printed in black and white or colour? What type of paper did you use? What printing process did you employ?

The work is printed in full colour on Fuji lustre paper from scans of my original journal.

What was your reason for shooting this series?

To give an insight into the US led war in Afghanistan from the perspective of what it is like to be a US Marine serving in Afghanistan.

How long did you work on this series?

Around three weeks.

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There is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography. Would you consider this series 'straight' documentary and why or why not?

Yes, because it is real and honest reportage documenting the human condition of war through the eyes and voices of these US Marines.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series?

Trying not to get myself shot or blown up.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work?

Many, but I like Jim Goldberg.

Is there anything else you would like to add about your work?

Let the pictures do the telling.

¹ Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile 58*, December 1999, p.12. Sandy Edwards is a photographer, Creative Producer of ARTHERE and a Curator at Stills Gallery, Sydney.

Janina Green
Mrs Gowron 2009
type C photograph
21.5 × 25 cm



Janina Green “Did you have to photograph me in my slippers?”

What camera was used to shoot this series?

I used a Nikon D200 and a Mamiya 7.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed?

I used Kodak Portra 160NC film with my Mamiya.

What type of lens did you use?

Mostly a lens equivalent to 50mm (ie: 80mm on Mamiya becomes 50mm).

What decisions did you make in the printing of this series and why? For example, is the series printed in black and white or colour? What type of paper did you use? What printing process did you employ?

I saw this project as an opportunity to use a different camera with a different way of operating. The series is printed as type C prints on standard paper. These were originally mural size for the exhibition at the Latrobe Regional Gallery but I decided to reprint them smaller, book-like, for the *CCP Documentary Photography Award*.

What was your reason for shooting this series?

My six portraits were taken as part of a community history project (Latrobe Valley Ukrainian Photo Project), which was supported by the Ukrainian community in the Latrobe Valley where I grew up. We wanted to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the arrival of Ukrainian families to the Latrobe Valley from Displaced Persons' camps in Germany. We collected stories and photographs, published a book, a set of posters and a DVD of videos. I

contributed an exhibition of portraits, streetscapes and landscapes that hopefully captures the pride of place of the original European settlers.

How long did you work on this series?

I worked on this series throughout 2009.

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There is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography. Would you consider this series 'straight' documentary and why or why not?

My series can be called straight documentary. It focuses on recording for a socially useful purpose.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series?

I have limited experience with digital cameras and wish I had embraced digital technology earlier.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work?

After I started this project, I came across Dutch photographer Bert Teunissen's book *Domestic Landscapes: A Portrait of Europeans at Home*—some of the people sitting in their kitchens reminded me of my mother. I love documentary photography but don't have the fearless drive needed to pursue socially meaningful issues. I usually end up working in a contemplative and solitary way for my own pleasure.

Is there anything else you would like to add about your work?

I shoot most of my work with black and white film and then hand colour the prints. I began working this way in order to be self sufficient—I started hand colouring because I was unable to process colour negatives at home. I was amazed at how the application of even a small area of colour seemed to enhance the emotional effect of a black and white image. Being able to develop, print and produce my images at home meant I could work and manage my family as well. I love all aspects of photographic picture making but I am especially interested in photographic history and theory.

¹ Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p.12. Sandy Edwards is a photographer, Creative Producer of ARTHERE and a Curator at Stills Gallery, Sydney.



Natalie Grono Sea Dreaming

What camera was used to shoot this series?

This series was shot on a Canon 5D Mark II and a Canon PowerShot G11 with Canon underwater housing.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed?

I used a digital camera.

What type of lens did you use?

For this series I used mostly wide-angle lenses. I used a 28mm fixed lens, which I often shoot with, on the Canon 5D Mark II. The lens I used on the Canon G11—which is also equivalent to a 28 mm—was a zoom lens. I like a wider perspective, as I like to be fairly close to my subject most of the time.

What decisions did you make in the printing of this series and why? For example, is the series printed in black and white or colour? What type of paper did you use? What printing process did you employ?

I pictured this essay in black and white when I shot it, so I made the images black and white. I have printed on cotton rag to give the images depth and texture.

What was your reason for shooting this series?

The reason for shooting this series was documenting my recent life and vision of the beach. Having grown up on the shores of Australia and after recently having my first child I began to see the beach in the same dream state as I did when I was a child.

How long did you work on this series?

I have been continually working on this series for two years.

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There is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography. Would you consider this series 'straight' documentary and why or why not?

I see documentary as documenting life as it happens—this is (or was) the world around me at that moment.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series?

Lighting and capturing a moment in water were challenges; as well as sand and water with camera gear. Most of the children in these pictures I knew, but not all; which could have become problematic in light of current views of photographing children. Thankfully for me it hasn't been, but I guess it could prevent a photographer from capturing documentary moments like these.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work?

Sally Mann and her work *Immediate Family*. I am influenced by many photographers: Sebastião Salgado; David Alan Harvey; Mary Ellen Mark; Trent Parke; and Antonin Kratochvíl to name a few, but also many writers/novelists especially Gabriel Garcia Márquez and his exploration of magic realism.

¹ Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p.12. Sandy Edwards is a photographer, Creative Producer of ARTHERE and a Curator at Stills Gallery, Sydney.

Glendyn Ivin
Untitled #1 2010
pigment print
33 x 50 cm



Glendyn Ivin Vladivostok Skate Boys

What camera was used to shoot this series?

A Leica M8 Digital Rangefinder.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed?

A digital camera.

What type of lens did you use?

A Leica Summicron 35mm (Version 4).

What decisions did you make in the printing of this series and why? For example, is the series printed in black and white or color? What type of paper did you use? What printing process did you employ?

The photos are printed in colour via an inkjet printer.

What was your reason for shooting this series?

These images are part of a larger body of work, which forms a portrait of Vladivostok, a city in the far east of Russia.

How long did you work on this series?

I spent about 30 minutes with the boys.

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¹ Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p.12. Sandy Edwards is a photographer, Creative Producer of ARTHERE and a Curator at Stills Gallery, Sydney.

There is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography. Would you consider this series 'straight' documentary and why or why not?

Yes. There was very little intervention from me. Once the boys were comfortable with me being there, I just photographed them as they were.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series?

I speak no Russian, and these boys spoke no English. In these situations I'm always amazed at how a smile and a camera can break down barriers very quickly. Also, I chose to shoot at 'last light', so once I started shooting I really only had 15 to 20 minutes of usable light.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work?

Of course there are many, but filmmaker/photographer Wim Wenders seems to bring his cinematic eye to his still photographic work, whether it be landscape, street or documentation. I think Wenders encouraged me to pick up a camera and approach the still image with the same eye as I use when I'm thinking about films.

Fiona Morris
*A young woman dressed
up for the event 2010*
archival inkjet print
36.5 × 52 cm



Fiona Morris Miss South Sudan Australia

What camera was used to shoot this series?

I used a Canon 5D Mark II because it records very well in low light with high ISOs.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed?

A digital camera.

What type of lens did you use?

I used a 28mm lens. I have used this fixed lens on many projects.

What decisions did you make in the printing of this series and why? For example, is the series printed in black and white or colour? What type of paper did you use? What printing process did you employ?

I decided to photograph the pageant in colour mainly because of the incredible colours that the young South Sudanese were wearing. They have an amazing sense of style and often wear very vibrant rich colours including lime green and hot pink. I chose to print on inkjet lustre to bring out the contrast in tones.

What was your reason for shooting this series?

I made this series because I am interested in how refugees are living and integrating into Australian Society. South Sudanese refugees are relatively new migrants when you look at the history of immigration in Australia, as they have mainly arrived in the last decade. I had heard about this fabulous beauty pageant that brought together the community on so many different levels celebrating their culture and talents. I had no idea just how visually amazing it would turn out to be and how the audience would be so excited and involved.

How long did you work on this series?

The beauty pageant was a one-day event.

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There is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography. Would you consider this series 'straight' documentary and why or why not?

I don't ever use the term 'straight' documentary, rather, just documentary—which is what this series is. It documents an event as it unfolds, and as a photographer I have tried to be as inconspicuous as I can, attempting to record what was happening as though I was not there.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series?

Initially getting access to photograph, as I was not part of a media organisation, but there to photograph it purely as a personal project. Throughout the day there was a film crew also making a documentary about the pageant who got precedent over me because it was for TV. It was a bit tricky trying to get good photos without having the film crew in the shots.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work?

Nan Goldin, Bruce Davidson, Jim Goldberg and Ed van der Elsken.

Is there anything else you would like to add about your work?

I enjoyed photographing this pageant immensely as it was a celebration of South Sudanese culture, their beauty, and a means to share their stories with the wider Australian community.

¹ Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p.12. Sandy Edwards is a photographer, Creative Producer of ARTHERE and a Curator at Stills Gallery, Sydney.



Christina Simons Roller Derby

What camera was used to shoot this series?

A Nikon digital SLR.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed?

A digital camera.

What type of lens did you use?

A Nikkor 24-70 1:2.8G lens.

What decisions did you make in the printing of this series and why? For example, is the series printed in black and white or colour? What type of paper did you use? What printing process did you employ?

The images are printed in colour on Metallic paper.

What was your reason for shooting this series?

I first encountered roller derby in the movie *Whip It*, directed by and starring Drew Barrymore and Ellen Page. At the time, I thought it looked quite spectacular. Later I found out that there is in fact a derby scene in Australia influenced by the rockabilly, psychobilly and punk subcultures, which piqued my curiosity even further. So I thought it could be a rather visually enthralling subject and sport to examine.

I find derby to be a tremendously empowering and exciting sport for women, filled with eccentricities and playfulness that entertains those both on and off the rink.

How long did you work on this series?

I worked on this series for two months.

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There is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography. Would you consider this series 'straight' documentary and why or why not?

In the words of Bill Jay, in *On Being a Photographer*, the idea of documentary photography began as 'objective evidence' of factual things. This definition has expanded over time to describe the position of the photographer in a 'real time' ephemeral context. I aim to maintain minimal subjective manipulation of the phenomenon at hand. Conversely, the way I choose to portray this content is my own position, with many subjective decisions involved to render the final imagery. The series *Roller Derby* is both of these things; an objective record in time and a careful construct of choices.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series?

Low light and movement were challenging and derby league rules and guidelines on the track made some desired images tricky.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work?

Diane Arbus, Werner Bischof and Sebastião Salgado.

¹ Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p.12. Sandy Edwards is a photographer, Creative Producer of ARTHRE and a Curator at Stills Gallery, Sydney.



CJ Taylor *Beast in Show*

What camera was used to shoot this series?

A digital SLR.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed?

A digital camera.

What type of lens did you use?

From memory I used a mid-range zoom; long enough not to be intrusive but close enough to still be a part of the action.

What decisions did you make in the printing of this series and why? For example, is the series printed in black and white or colour? What type of paper did you use? What printing process did you employ?

Colour, gloss and inkjet dry prints. The colours are bleached and intense, intimating the intensity of the dog show ring and suggestive of the limited colour spectrum which dogs can see.

What was your reason for shooting this series?

A colleague was telling me a story about how their headstrong Airedale Terrier peed on a judge's leg at a local oval where the SA Kennel Club resides. It turned out to be down the road and I had a new film camera to try out. When I got there it seemed like another world, a very strange world. I think I took maybe two photos and talked to people. Everyone was very welcoming and I was hooked.

How long did you work on this series?

I started in 2009 and it's still going, like an endless ball game...

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There is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography. Would you consider this series 'straight' documentary and why or why not?

In the sense that 'straight' documentary relies on the photographer taking an observational stance, then yes. I don't intrude or arrange shots, I just stand quietly, observe and capture what I see. Quite frequently people would assume a pose for me to take a photo, even though we had never spoken. People are there to show their dogs and often, themselves, and almost expect photos to be taken. I oblige by taking the image but never use them. There are no identifiable people in my photos, it would take the focus off the primary participants, the dogs. It's the picture I take just afterwards, once I've been welcomed into the scene, that's always the most interesting. People are the reason why the dogs are there, the reason why dog shows are strange, but not the reason I take the pictures. The dogs are just the innocent bystanders bearing witness to the banal.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series?

Having exhausted the local, freely accessible, dog shows I wanted to photograph the larger events at the Royal Adelaide Show and interstate. This meant organising and trying to convince people I wouldn't be in the way and wasn't there to step on the turf of the 'official' photographers. Once I said I was an artist most either lost interest or said yes or the threat disappeared and they let me do it in a semi-official way. For the larger shows, wearing an official ID tag means you just blend into the background. Technically the most challenging aspect is the low light encountered in dimly lit enclosures, I'd never use a flash, as it's too intrusive. Steady hands win the day.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work?

Many and varied, from photojournalists Robert Capa, Gerda Taro and our own Stephen Dupont—whom I'm chuffed to be exhibiting alongside in this show—to pivotal Australian artists including Bill Henson, Anne Zahalka, Marian Drew, Robyn Stacey and Toby Richardson. The list goes on...

Is there anything else you would like to add about your work?

Art isn't strange, life is. I suspect no-one knows this more intuitively than a dog.

¹ Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p.12. Sandy Edwards is a photographer, Creative Producer of ARTHERE and a Curator at Stills Gallery, Sydney.

Lisa Wiltse
Chaqui Baths 2010
digital lambda print
32 x 48 cm



Lisa Wiltse *In the Shadow of Cerro Rico-Potosi, Bolivia*

What camera was used to shoot this series?

A Canon 5D Mark II.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed?

A digital camera.

What type of lens did you use?

I used 28, 35, 50 and 85mm lenses.

What decisions did you make in the printing of this series and why? For example, is the series printed in black and white or colour? What type of paper did you use? What printing process did you employ?

I like to keep the printing simple by using luster paper and lambda printing.

What was your reason for shooting this series?

I became interested in Potosi, Bolivia and photographing the Indigenous community after reading about its tragic history where thousands of subsistence-income miners died in ominous Cerro Rico mines. I had no expectations of how this story would unfold. I knew of its rich history and that the town was struggling to scratch out a living from the mines, but I wanted to get to know the locals firsthand.

How long did you work on this series?

I worked on this series on and off for a period of about three months.

Sandy Edwards writes: 'Photography's terminology has changed and the inherently descriptive terms for different styles have become self-limiting. Words such as 'straight' and 'traditional' as opposed to 'art' photography are totally inadequate. The term 'documentary' itself is widely misunderstood, often confused with its brasher cousin, photojournalism.'¹

There is no universally accepted definition for what constitutes documentary photography. Would you consider this series 'straight' documentary and why or why not?

I shoot organically and allow the situation to steer how I shoot, not the other way around. I would consider myself a documentary photographer and I shoot artistically, I want to tell a story in a unique way. I don't know whether my work is straight or traditional, or what any of that means. There is no 'pure' photography. What makes photography so interesting is that it is inherently subjective. Documentary photography is story telling and can be straight, traditional or artistic, that is the beauty of it, it shouldn't be defined as any one thing.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series?

I had decided that the best way to understand the mines was to experience them in person. We reached the entrance to the Candelaria Mine—one of the hundreds of mines currently operating underneath Cerro Rico. The entrance was littered with debris and a couple of ore carts lay on their sides; metal tracks, half-buried in the mud extended from the low tunnel entrance. Upon first entering the mine it didn't seem so bad, a string of lights extended down the tunnel, and plastic pipes ran along one wall. About every ten meters there was an audible hiss coming from the pipes where fresh air was delivered from the outside world. I had to remind myself that this was not a typical tour, but one of the most dangerous mines in the world.

Any illusion that this trip would be easy disappeared about 100 meters into the shaft. The lights disappeared, the tunnel roof lowered, and my hard hat was the only thing that kept me from injuring my head on the rock above. Finding myself in a cloud of grey dust I realised that my mask was still around my neck; I quickly pulled it over my face, wondering if I had already inhaled something toxic.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work?

So many great photographers have influenced me; one of my all time favorites is Mary Ellen Mark.

Is there anything else you would like to add about your work?

No.

¹ Sandy Edwards, 'Surfacing', *Photofile* 58, December 1999, p.12. Sandy Edwards is a photographer, Creative Producer of ARTHERE and a Curator at Stills Gallery, Sydney.