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centre for
contemporary
photography

FLASH

CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY
NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY-MAY 2005

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This issue of *Flash* is the last to be prepared from the CCP Transit Lounge, before we move to our new premises designed by Sean Godsell. Our journey from Johnston Street began in 2004 and has taken us to Carlton where we were located in the Australian Centre and more recently we have been located at Colour Factory, just around the corner from the new CCP.

Along the way we have raised the funds to create a new home for photography in Victoria. Unfortunately we have also lost Dr Daniel Palmer, Curator of Projects to his newly created position at Monash University, Caulfield. Daniel is Lecturer in the History and Theory of New Media, Design and Communications Faculty of Art and Design.

With CCP for seven years, Daniel Palmer made an extraordinary contribution to the lecture programs and the E-media gallery. Daniel was also curator of the groundbreaking touring exhibition *Click* (2001). Commencing as the gallery manager on Saturdays, CCP was been beneficiary of the years Daniel was working on his PhD and having the time to contribute with great gusto to the organisation. We thank Daniel and wish him all the best for the future. Daniel will be returning in 2005 to present the Joyce Evans History of Photography Seminars.

Fortuitously, our journey has also found us Karra Rees, Assistant Curator for the CCP. With impeccable credentials in photography and the gallery sector, Karra joined us in transit and will have a formative role in establishing CCP in our new premises. Lastly I invite you all to join us in celebrating the new CCP on 28 April, when we launch not only the building but also the first suite of exhibitions.

Director Naomi Cass

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CCP is a gallery, resource and education centre which supports projects dealing with the photographic image.

COVER

Brendan Lee

Use Your Illusion 1, from *Takin' a Shot* (detail) 2004, Lambda print (original photo Paul Batt) single channel, dual screen, DVD Stereo, 52min

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Full Page \$380 + GST

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One Column \$180 + GST

Quarter Page \$150 + GST

DEADLINE FOR ADVERTISING, NEWS, ARTICLES FOR JUNE–AUGUST FLASH IS MONDAY 2 MAY

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

28 APRIL

CCP GRAND OPENING 6-8PM

29 APRIL–28 MAY

GALLERY 1

THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

Matthew Sleeth and Selina Ou

GALLERY 2

THE ONE THOUSAND OTHER THINGS

Aaron Seeto

GALLERY 3

2005 KODAK AUTUMN SALON

Open-entry, photo-based exhibition and competition

PROJECTION WINDOW

TAKIN' A SHOT

Brendan Lee

9 JUNE–16 JULY

GALLERY 1 THE CHOSEN Cherine Fahd

GALLERY 2 LYRIC THEATRE Siri Hayes

GALLERY 3 BLACK ON WHITE

Curated by Megan Evans and Maree Clarke

GALLERY 4 WOOD Simon Disler

CCP SUPPORTERS



CCP is supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of The Australian, State and Territory Governments. CCP is supported by the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria and the Community Support Fund, and by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. CCP is a member of CAOS, Contemporary Arts Organisations of Australia. CCP's Subscriber Benefits campaign acknowledges the support of Art Monthly, Bond Imaging, Brunswick Street Bookstore, Cinema Nova, The Edge Photo-Imaging, The Printed Image Bookshop and Omnis Framing.

NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

STREET PARTY TO LAUNCH THE NEW CCP

Don't miss the launch of the new CCP in our spectacular new premises at 404 George Street Fitzroy on Thursday 28 April, 6 to 8.00pm. Designed by Sean Godsell Architects, the CCP now offers five exhibition spaces: four galleries and one evening Projection Window, as well as the Visy Education Space presenting a range of programs including Les Walking's Workshops, the new Joyce Evans History of Photography Seminars presented by Dr Daniel Palmer and expanded membership services including the online Imagebank (see page 8) and new awards.

PHOTOGRAPHERS NEEDED

'Contemporary Australian Photography 1980 to the Present' - a research project by Anne Marsh - seeks to analyse and record photographic practice during and after postmodernism. The research will culminate in a book and a website. As part of the initial research, a database is being developed. Photographers interested in being contacted should email their projects to E: Kyla.McFarlane@arts.monash.edu.au or Anne.Marsh@arts.monash.edu.au or T: 9905 4224.

FINANCIAL REVENGE

Veronica's Revenge, the collection amassed by Baroness Lambert over the last 30 years was sold at auction at Phillips de Pury & Company, New York on the 8 and 9 November 2005. The sale not only set a record for a New York single sale of photography at US\$12,473,240, but may well be judged as the crowning moment of a paradigm shift in photography and contemporary art that has been building for several years. *Veronica's Revenge* was exhibited at the MCA from 16 November to 4 March 2001.

PLANNED BLUNDER

In response to litigious celebrities and victims of over zealous media, Hewlett-Packard is developing a photo blurring device and has filed for a patent on technology that would cause digital cameras to blur the face of those whose pictures are being taken. Circuitry in the cameras would be triggered by a remote device activated by an individual concerned over having their picture taken.

DAYLESFORD FOTO BIENNALE 2005

Hepburn Shire celebrates photographic arts with the month long inaugural Daylesford Foto Biennale from 3 June to 3 July. DFB'05 will be an open forum for the promotion and discussion of photography, including a major exhibition of Singapore-based, Australian photojournalist, Michael Coyne (published: *Newsweek*, *Life*, *Time*, *New York Times*, *Vogue* and *National Geographic*; winner: American National Press Photographers Association, Overseas Press Club of America). Also exhibiting: Julie Millowick, Catherine Acin, Petrus Spronk and Anthony Scibelli. Group shows include the AIPP Australian Professional Photography Awards Travelling Exhibition. Seminars, workshops and master classes from 17 to 27 June and speakers include, Bruce Postle, Jason Edwards, Andrew Chapman, Susan Purdy and Donna Bailey. W: www.daylesfordfotobiennale.org or T: 5348 5703

REPORTAGE

Local and international photographers are invited to enter the 2005 Festival. Screenings will take place at Academy Twin Cinema in Sydney, late August, and for the first time, the show will travel to Melbourne for a season at George Cinemas, St. Kilda. Deadlines for submissions 19 April. Visit W: www.reportage.com.au.

OFFER FOR CCP MEMBERS: BILL HENSON PUBLIC PROGRAMS

This landmark exhibition *Bill Henson: 3 Decades Of Photography* is the first major survey of Henson's work and includes more than 350 works from more than a dozen series since 1974, at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square. As a special offer CCP members can participate in these two programs for the NGV members price of \$12 per person. Wednesday 11 May at 6pm: *Bill Henson in Conversation*, on stage at BMW Edge Federation Square; and Wednesday 15 June at 6pm: *Bill Henson Q&A*, Clemenger BBDO Auditorium, National Gallery of Victoria International, 180 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, T: 03 8662 1555 or W: ngv.vic.gov.au.

INDIGENOUS PHOTOGRAPHER MICHAEL RILEY PASSES AWAY

Michael Riley passed away on 31 August 2004 after a long illness. He was 44 years old. A celebration of the life of Michael Alen Riley was held at St Brigid's Church, Marrickville. At the service several friends spoke passionately about Michael and his work - Linda Burney, Ace Bourke, Hetti Perkins and Djon Mundine. There was a family dedication by Wendy Hockley and Kellie Abraham, a didjeridu performance by Cedric Talbert and Linda Burnie read 'A tribute to My Dad' by Ben Riley-Winters, Michael's son. The Michael Riley Trust will be set up in Michael's name and donations can be made. Michael leaves a significant body of work, which has been reaching increasing recognition recently.

BROOK ANDREW RECEIVES 21ST TELSTRA AWARD

Photographer Brook Andrew has received the Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award in the Works on Paper category for his work *tensio* from the Kalar

The Colour Factory is a state of the art imaging centre for artists, designers, advertising, corporate exhibitors and anyone requiring a service supported by up to date knowledge, skill and quality equipment. We work closely with all clients, offering the finest print and finishing service, ensuring you achieve the highest quality results.

Colour Factory produces a myriad of work ranging from small A4 counter cards for retail stores to ten meter long quality photographic back lit displays for clients such as BMW, Mercedes, CUB for displays in our leading airports. At the same time we produce images for artists on canvas water colour papers and several other mediums all backed up with prompt, skilled and intelligent service.

Our company is committed to the future of photographic imaging, through investment in both analogue and digital photographic equipment; Colour Factory is a leader in the field. An abundance of products can be found at the Colour Factory ranging all the way from RGB CMYK scanning, retouching photography, photographic and ink jet printing through to corporate installations.

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NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Midday series. The award, established in 1984, is Australia's premier showcase for Indigenous art. The award was presented in Darwin by Gulumbu Yunupingu on 13 August 2004.

MELBOURNE COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHER BRIAN BRANDT DIES

Photographer Brian Brandt passed away on 4 October 2004 after a short battle with Motor Neurone Disease. When film photography was the only option, Brandt was the preferred practitioner for graphic designers and art directors in Melbourne. It was almost impossible to escape a Brian Brandt photograph in Australia in the late 20th century. Magazines, newspapers, billboards, advertisements, posters, catalogues and websites carried his work. From the sixties to the nineties, Brian Brandt & Associates was arguably the busiest studio in Melbourne. 'Brandty' and his young team of photographers offered a specialist photographer for every project – cars, fashion, industrial, food. Brandt set up CPL colour labs in the attic space of his Warburton Lane studio where he hired a young Brian Gracey away from Latrobe Studios.

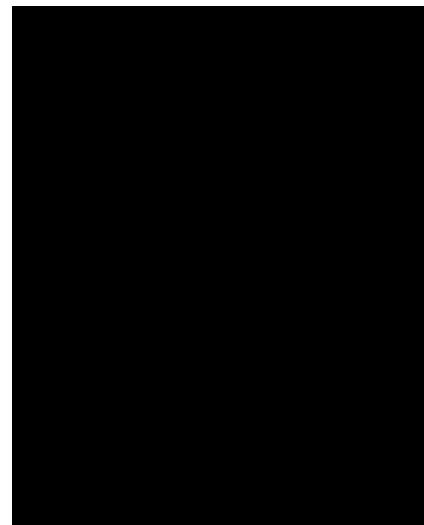
RICHARD AVEDON DIES AT 81

Richard Avedon, the revolutionary photographer who redefined fashion photography as an art form while achieving critical acclaim through his stark black and white portraits of the powerful and celebrated, died 1 October 2004. Avedon's influence on photography was immense, and his sensuous fashion work helped create the era of supermodels such as Naomi Campbell and Cindy Crawford. But Avedon went in another direction with his portrait work, shooting unsparring and often unflattering shots of subjects from Marilyn Monroe to Michael Moore.

DAVID ROSETZKY WINS THE INAUGURAL ANNE LANDA AWARD

Congratulations to Melbourne artist David Rosetzky for winning the inaugural Anne Landa Award for Moving Image and New Media Work at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Rosetzky received \$25,000 and his work, *Untouchable*, was acquired for the Gallery's collection. Aged 34, Rosetzky's work was most recently represented in the 2004 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Contemporary Photo-Media at the Art Gallery of South Australia, and in *Living Together is Easy* which was shown at Art Tower Mito, Japan and at the National Gallery of Victoria.

David Rosetzky
Untouchable 2003 (detail) 3 channel synchronised digital video projection, colour, sound. Commissioned by the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art Melbourne, funded by Arts Victoria. Courtesy Sutton Gallery, Melbourne and Kaliman Gallery, Sydney.



SUSAN SONTAG 1933–2004

A great artist is dead. When Susan Sontag died in December 2004 she was widely acknowledged as a great luminary of late modernity. She was reliably inventive, always clever and engaging. She could take an old idea and mine its overlooked value. She could be radical and innovative. She knew how to twist an idea. She was sharp and keen and now, greatly missed.

Details

Some details of her life add slightly to her allure. She was born Susan Rosenblatt into a family of diasporic Jews. When she was five, her father died in China while on a business trip. The early family atmosphere was probably unsentimental. At school she was precocious and awkward. From early on, her natural pose was to be active and self-confident; she was a successful debater at school and busied herself with the arts. When her mother remarried, Susan at age twelve, took her step-father's name Sontag. The family lived first in Arizona and then California. There is little in her biography to suggest a particularly tortured or unhappy childhood. On the contrary, she seems to have been an adult all her life. She seemed to have been an alert intellectual, already engaged as a child in cultivating her sensibilities.

Sontag went to the University of Chicago at seventeen years of age and shortly thereafter was married to an aspiring academic who went on to produce some laudable investigations of Freud. Two years later her only child, David Rieff, was born. In time, he would achieve his own distinguished career in journalism and political commentary. Sontag had long, private relationships with women, never boasting of the cross-over. Her early university training developed her canonical knowledge but, at the same time, she was drawn to the new and transgressive. After separating from her conservative husband, she went to Paris and

eventually brought back the avant-garde to America. She moved in circles shaped by French cinema and existential philosophy. She was intellectually enthralled by the traditional and contemporary mysteries of old Europe.

Beginning

Her early publications were fiction and book reviews. New York's charmed circles of Hannah Arendt, John Barth and Elizabeth Hardwick gave her encouragement. Nonetheless, the fiction failed to find an audience beyond a small circle of elite readers. But in the next few years, her intellectual significance surfaced and the embryonic ideas of the novels became ground-breaking arguments. In the novel *The Benefactor*, for instance, her comment "Life is a movie. Death is a photograph" becomes the precursor for her brilliant study of the image in *On Photography*.

She understood the importance of our modern visual culture. Images and advertising are on every surface, city walls, clothing, egg shells, motor cars, telephones; our vision is constantly filled with messages. So accustomed are we to this colour and movement that we commonly overlook the obvious. Sontag stepped into the chasm between what we see and what we understand and explained how the photograph, the image and the camera, act like a passport that bypasses moral boundaries. She plunged into the thorny debates on the significance of the image. "Photographs that everyone recognizes are now a constituent part of what a society chooses to think about, or declares that it has chosen to think about. It calls these ideas "memories"; and that is, over the long run, a fiction".

The cruel image

Thinking about the real and the image has been a persistent problem since Plato. Sontag translated this into the contemporary dilemmas of the witness. We see all the time, but seem

not to understand. How can that be? We have recorded human atrocities over and over again, yet they continue to occur. Virginia Woolf's opposition to war, enunciated in *Three Guineas*, brought her to the conclusion that we are barbarians. Sontag takes a different tack: she catches us by the scruff of the neck and makes us look again. If the image has not stopped human cruelty, then let's think about that.

In *On photography* (1977) and *Regarding the pain of others* (2003) Sontag wondered why it was that when we look at images we are not moved to change ourselves. If the purpose of producing, collecting and displaying the painted and photographic image is to shock, horrify and instruct us – and this can be the case whether the image is of human suffering or the latest fashion item paraded on the runways of a Parisian boutique – then why doesn't it work? We are confronted with the irreducible question – *what does art do?* Can we be educated through the image? Did the French Impressionists, for example, really change the way we now see light and movement? Has the Hollywood action film, with its spectacular visual effects, altered the way we understand violence and destruction? Has the photograph of Mapplethorpe's lilies or Huynh Cong Ut's snap of Vietnamese children fleeing their napalmed village changed our sensibilities?

Sontag answers in the negative. The image does not change us collectively, it does not shift the world and make it a better place. No image, no matter how vivid, exciting, complex or clever, can exact such worthy changes. And there is, of course, the risk that they achieve the opposite. Sontag was mindful that the daily consumption of violence through television, cinema and advertising imagery, can teach us to be dull and cynical about the evocation of strong feelings. These daily doses of human pain may not engage our

sympathies but teach us instead to fear our sympathetic responses. Sontag knew there was too much cruelty in the world, and that we had to learn to be parsimonious in our responses.

In a world saturated with consumer hype, in which we readily adopt the role of spectator, Sontag thought we might have traded the ability to be shocked for the stamina to resist alarm. She was impatient with fraud and mendacity; she constantly appealed to a fundamental sense of human dignity without defining it too closely. She was stern about claiming to not know what is right, good and proper. Innocence and naïveté have no appeal, no cachet. She stated, “no-one after a certain age has the right to this kind of innocence, of superficiality, to this degree of ignorance and amnesia”. It was not a question of whether images of atrocities educate us to feelings of indignation and compassion or whether the commodification of violence in, say, children’s cartoons, mass advertising and so on, makes us immune to sadism. The emphasis is not on the details of the image, it is on the personal intellectual equipment we bring to it. Sontag maintained we have enough ideas, concepts and analytic tools at our disposal to read the world; we have no excuse for being dazed by photographed nudes in quietly erotic poses or postcard shots of the beach at sunset. We cannot claim to be ignorant of human depravity and so set aside the “slaughter-bench of history” in order to enjoy the confectionary of the visual.

The technologies of communication may be ungovernable, but we are capable of understanding how the camera is both tool and weapon. Images can be fictions and artists can be tricksters. Sontag’s thoughts on this made the forensic into an art form.

The end

Her most famous work was probably *Notes on Camp* (1964), a dazzling display of analytic virtuosity on a topic of no great importance. It brought American popular culture into a relationship with French aesthetics, and it extracted a new sensibility from old erudition. This is what Sontag did best. She taught us to look, and not look away, to stare human history in the face, and be brave.

She was brave. She was a towering luminary of the chattering twentieth century; no art form, be it cinema, photography, fiction, painting or architecture, eluded her gaze or was unchanged by her insights. She was intellectually brave, and physically. Her illnesses were long and hard, yet throughout, she remained cool, high-brow, low-brow, dramatic, serious, flamboyant and notorious. Her startling

physical appearance, her dark, brooding good looks, her refusal to affect feminine or glamorous styles, combined to define a signature appearance that gave her a public style for life. That style remains as a beacon.

Joanne Finkelstein

Associate Professor Joanne Finkelstein is Pro Dean Postgraduate and Director of Liberal Studies at the University of Sydney. Her publications include, *The Fashioned Self*, *Slaves of Chic*, *After a Fashion*, and most recently, *The Sociological Bent: inside metro culture*.



MEMBERS ON PHOTOGRAPHY

THE OPEN DOOR

The iconic image, *The Open Door* is easily recognised as William Henry Fox Talbot's (1800–1877) pioneering photograph of 1844. It intrigues me, not only because of its visual power, but also as a point of convergence between art, craft and science. Talbot's development of the salt print process in 1839 had a profound effect on image making and continues to fascinate practitioners today.

Family connections allowed the young Talbot access to elite and wealthy aristocrats in England and he travelled extensively through Europe, becoming acquainted with some of the world's great art collections. Motivated by his shame at not being able to sketch well – as was expected of a gentleman of his time – Talbot turned to science to discover a way to render his world on paper. In 1834 he discovered the salt to silver nitrate ratio that created and fixed an image.

Talbot saw photography as the beginning of a new art form (influenced by the Dutch School) whereby the familiar and the everyday is significance subject matter. I am interested in the persistence of Talbot's methods, in spite of the meteoric rise of digital technologies. Our digital age has pilfered the contemplative "way of seeing", and intrinsic beauty is replaced with a uniformity of imaging. It is easy to push the print button for another pixel perfect poster from our Epson "archival" printer.

The Open Door is not just a happy accident. His first photograph of the door and broom was titled *The Soliloquy of the Broom* dated 21st January 1841. This image evolved over time with Talbot photographing the same location and scene with the broom at different angles, on either side of the door and changing perspectives, but at times it is only the shadows formed by the broom which identifies the difference in each of the recorded images.

In late April 1844 he returned to the setting and photographed this image of *The Open Door*, tightly structured and composed. The broom acts as an obstruction to the doorway – the light drawing an invitation into the room. The symbolic tradition of the doorway is seen as a boundary between life and death. The door is purposely left ajar representing hope.

Talbot chose this image for the first plate as a powerful beginning to the second part of his book *The Pencil of Nature*. *The Pencil of Nature* is acknowledged as the first book illustrated with photographs. Described as the most important publication since the Gutenberg Bible in 1456, it was published in six parts using twenty-four original photographs in each. I was fortunate to view one of these rare copies from the collection of the National Gallery of Australia.

Outstanding scholar, experimenter, thinker and artist, Talbot was destined to become one of the most influential scientists of the nineteenth century. He created an art form and craft born of the world of science. As photographic imaging continues to extend and develop today we continue to debate and struggle with the relative merit of different technologies.

He left the door ajar...

Further reading: Schaaf, L. J. L. J. (2000). *The Photographic Art of William Henry Fox Talbot*. Oxfordshire, Princeton University Press.

Ellie Young is completing a Masters of Applied Science (Photography) on the salt print. She is also Director of 80 Gold Street, with an emphasis on hand crafted processes in photography.



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CCP IMAGEBANK

In a new offer exclusive to Centre for Contemporary Photography members, you are invited to upload one of your fabulous images and accompanying information to the publicly accessible member's Imagebank at www.ccp.org.au/imagebank

Visitors to the site will be able to search the Imagebank via name, medium, genre or year. Every CCP Imagebank record will be accessible via google in addition to the thousands of weekly visitors to the CCP website.

Participating CCP members have the opportunity to enter the **Nikon award for the best online image and win a Nikon D70 camera complete with AF-S Nikkor 18-70mm lens, valued at \$1,900 (rrp).**

The winner will be announced on www.ccp.org.au and publicised in the CCP Flash newsletter.



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