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SIXTH LEICA/CCP DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

LEICA ARTISTS SPEAK ON MAKING THEIR SERIES



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



LAKI SIDERIS
from the series BEIJING BICYCLE, 2005/06



MICHAEL AMENDOLIA
NORTH KOREAN BLINDNESS

What camera was used to shoot this series? Leica M6 28mm lens and Canon 1DN film SLR camera.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? Film: Fuji 160, 400 and some 800 ISO.

What type of lens did you use? 28-70 mm f 2.8 and a 28mm fixed on both cameras.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? My biggest challenge was to deal with sensitivity involved with working in North Korea, being diplomatic and trying to make something fresh in the small area of the story I was allowed to enter into.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? There are so many influences that to pin down one artist would not be accurate for me to state. In the beginning it was W. Eugene Smith and more recently Sebastião Salgado.

Additional Comments I worked very simply with a small bag around my waist, with a flash and an extra lens, one camera with slow film and the other with fast film.

This is Michael's first year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



CARA BOWERMAN
CHEWTON: FROM A WINDOW

What camera was used to shoot this series? Canon EOS 5D.

Did you use a film or digital camera? Digital

What type of lens did you use? EF24-70mm f/2.8L USM.

How long did you work on this series? It is currently a work in progress - began in April 2007.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? I came to Chewton, not ever having seen it or knowing any residents and with this came my own personal apprehensions. However I was, and continue to be, warmly welcomed into their caring and quirky community.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? The deep, delicate tones of Jack Spencer, the intimacy and charisma of Bruce Davidson's social documentary (particularly his expansive series *Central Park*), and the vivid and luminous compositions of Gueorgui Pinkhassov have all greatly inspired this work.

This is Cara's first year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



JAMES BRICKWOOD SCHOOLIES

What camera was used to shoot this series? Nikon F100 and Nikon FM3a 35mm film cameras.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? Film: Fuji Reala 100 ISO negative and Fuji Press 800 ISO negative.

What type of lens did you use? 35mm f2 and 28mm f2.8.

How long did you work on this series? Two years.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? Keeping up with the amount of partying these kids did. Day in, day out, they just partied hard, so finding time to sleep and recover was difficult. I wanted to document their high times as well as their lows.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? Bruce Davidson and Tamara Dean

This is James' first year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



ANTHONY DAWTON NIGER

What camera was used to shoot this series? I would rather not publicise the make of camera I use, for ethical reasons.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? Digital camera. I shoot RAW uncompressed usually at around 160 ISO until towards the end of the day when I might shift to 400 ISO. I think people look great at this speed especially when converted to black and white (something I do 90% of the time).

What type of lens did you use? On these sort of assignments I use mostly a medium zoom (24-55 mm) and a 70-200 mm VR lens, one on each camera body so that I don't have to change lenses in a dust storm! I carry a third body as back up. I am not a big fan of zooms but the real problem of keeping your sensors clean gives me little choice. In fact one of the shots in the exhibition was taken on my faithful 85mm F2, a lens that is always in my bag if my assistant hasn't borrowed it! I download on my Apple G4 Titanium although on this trip I ran out of space and after using my own iPod to back up had to borrow everybody else's in the team!

How long did you work on this series? The trip itself took ten days but was over 12 months in the planning. I was lucky to know a small but effective NGO (non governmental organisation), the AI Madad Foundation who are funding the building of water wells in a village in the desert area in northern Niger in partnership with UNICEF. It was this partnership that finally got me into Niger.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? There were few physical problems with actually taking the photographs and it only took a little time and explanation to put adults at ease with having a photographer in their village. The most difficult problem is photographing mothers and children when it is clear that the child is soon going to die. It's hard to do, it is even hard to decide if it ought to be done. It certainly caused bitter argument.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? I am not sure who has "influenced" me but I am astounded by the work of Lewis Hine and Sebastião Selgado and moved every time I look at a Harry Callahan or a Diane Arbus. They make me feel inadequate. And when I am at my lowest, in the field either ready to give up or cut some corners or let my standards drop in some other way I try to imagine that I am taking the photographs for John Pilger or Robert Fisk!

This is Anthony's first year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



STEPHEN DUPONT
"AXE ME BIGGIE" OR MR TAKE MY PICTURE

What camera was used to shoot this series? Polaroid L and camera 665.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? Film: Polaroid Pos-neg film at 80 ISO, which gives you a Polaroid print as well as a negative. *(This film is no longer in production).*

What type of lens did you use? Standard lens with the camera, 45mm I think.

How long did you work on this series? Confidential at this moment.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? Excited crowds wanting to have their pictures taken, police swinging truncheons and AK-47's, and suicide bombing threats.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? In this style, Bill Bourke and Peter Beard.

This series was awarded First Place in the 6th Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



STEPHEN DUPONT
PSYCH WAR IN AFGHANISTAN -
ON OPERATIONS WITH US FORCES

What camera was used to shoot this series? Mainly Leica M6.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? Film camera was used with Tri-X B+W film.

What type of lens did you use? Leica Summicron 35 mm.

How long did you work on this series? Over six weeks.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? Becoming close and friendly with my subjects...building of relationships...trying to keep safe and not get killed by the Taliban.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? Robert Capa, Don McCullin and Gilles Peres to name a few.

Stephen was also a finalist in the 2nd biennial Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



SEAN HOBBS THE HORROR OF WAR

What camera was used to shoot this series? Hasselblad 501cm.
Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? 120 film, Kodak T-Max, 100 ISO.

What type of lens did you use? Hasselblad CB 80mm f2.8 fixed 'standard' lens.

How long did you work on this series? On location in Northern Uganda for about ten days.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? The remoteness of the location—I was told from several sources that it was not a good idea to make the trip by road as it was considered volatile. I had to talk my way onto a light plane being used to re-supply relief organisations in the North.

Once on location I set about doing my work. I spent daylight hours conducting interviews and shooting stills. After dark I would continue to interview and shoot video. I used the middle of the day when the light was too bleached to write up notes.

I felt constantly 'busy' coping with the workload and subject matter. And whilst I was hearing and recording their horrific stories, I wasn't really listening because I was operating in 'visual' mode.

When I left however, and 'clocked-off' so to speak, my brain began to sift through all of the data I had collected. That process was disturbing, hearing their stories again in my mind, really listening to what they had said and connecting with it. I felt disturbed for a few weeks.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? When I was a child, images such as Nick Ut's photograph from the Vietnam War of Kim Phuc, the *Napalm Girl*, made me question the world I lived in. The film *Baraka* by Ron Fricke had a profound impact on me when I was in my mid-teens. I still watch it a couple of times each year! The book *No Logo* by Naomi Klein also changed my life. It showed me what one person's tenacity and convictions can achieve. I admire the photographic works of Sebastião Salgado and Lewis Hine. Stephen Dupont has been an excellent mentor and endless fountain of encouragement. He has always been willing to lend me an ear.

Additional Comments: Prior to becoming a professional I used to wonder how independent photographers managed to get into war zones. The prospect seemed impossible, but it's not as hard as it seems. It's the same as regular travel—you apply for a visa and book an airline ticket. People will look at you funny, but rarely will they say you can't go. And even if they do, there are other avenues, there is always a way to get to the story.

This is Sean's first year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



JESSE MARLOW DON'T JUST TELL THEM, SHOW THEM

What camera was used to shoot this series? Leica M6.
Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? Fuji 400 ISO film.

What type of lens did you use? 28 mm + 35 mm lenses.

How long did you work on this series? Two years—and still ongoing.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? Shooting in public places has become harder in recent years, so this is an obvious challenge for any photographer working on the street.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? Several - photographers, Joel Meyerowitz, Lee Friedlander, William Eggleston and the Australian painter Jeffrey Smart.

This is Jesse's first year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



NATALIE MCCOMAS BIRTHDAY WISHES

What camera was used to shoot this series? Nikon F80.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? Film. Fuji Superia X-TRA 400 ISO. I was a student when I shot this series and could only survive by buying cheap film! But I swear by it. It gives the most vibrant and saturated colours and suits my style of shooting.

What type of lens did you use? 24-85 mm Nikkor f2.8 lens.

How long did you work on this series? Eight months.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? Finding the parties and then getting permission from parents to photograph the children were the main challenges. Once I got access to a couple of parties, met parents and told them what I was working on I became a part of this 'birthday circuit' and was invited to more and more. I also offered the parents a free cd of the photos I took as a thank you for their trust in me.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? Martin Parr, Joel Sternfield and Jordi Bernado.

Additional Comments: I photographed 35 under-12-year-old parties throughout the eight months. I originally began shooting them because I was working with children in the job I had at the time and they would tell me all about their own parties. It surprised, overwhelmed and intrigued me with how extravagant they were—especially in comparison to any party I ever had or was ever invited to as a child.

This is Natalie's first year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



MATTHEW NEWTON WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN 'ACTIVIST'?

What camera was used to shoot this series? Nikon D2x.

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

What type of lens did you use? Nikon 50 mm f1.8.

How long did you work on this series? Two years.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? This is a series of portraits of direct action environmental activists shot on location in southern Tasmanian forests. These 'frontline' activists try to stop logging in Tasmania's forests by locking themselves onto logging equipment, setting up tree sits and blockading roads into the forests. This series is part of a broader project documenting the struggle for Tasmanian forests. Gaining the trust of the activists was the key to this project. This involved many months of travelling out to the forests, often on foot and photographing their activities which were often kept secret until the last minute.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? I find I'm influenced/inspired by the collective work of many photographers: those from the agencies Magnum, VII photo and in Australia, Oculi in particular.

Additional Comments: The series was shot using artificial light, flash in a large soft box to give a studio feel to the images. The idea was to give these images a feeling of quietness and strength in contrast to the more gritty and reportage feel of images of the activists when they are engaged in their direct actions. The equipment was carried into the forest to the activists' camps.

This is Matthew's first year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



LAKI SIDERIS
BEIJING BICYCLE

What camera was used to shoot this series? Canon 20D.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? Digital, 100/1600 ISO.

What type of lens did you use? 85 mm lens.

How long did you work on this series? Two weeks.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? Finding a comfortable spot to sit with adequate traffic and a suitable background was harder than I imagined. Finding focus at night!

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? Lately I have been looking at the work of American photographer Larry Fink. His images of public and private events have a profound personal vision that is never overtly egotistical.

Additional Comments: Around 300 images were taken, these were distilled down to 20. Apart from technical issues such as focus and motion blurring, expression (as in any form of portraiture) was the key determinate in whether an image worked or not.

This is Laki's first year as a finalist, and this series was awarded an honorable mention in the Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



STEVEN SIEWERT
THE FLIGHT OF THE FANCIERS

What camera was used to shoot this series? Leica M6, Canon EOS film cameras.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? All sorts from Ilford Pan F, Kodak 400CN, Tri-X, to T-max.

What type of lens did you use? 80-200 mm, 24-70 mm, 35 mm, 16-35 mm.

How long did you work on this series? Three years.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? Speed - I drive sometimes up to four hours and the pigeon liberation takes ten seconds, then I drive back four hours. If I don't get it right I have to wait a week to do it all over again. Unpredictable nature of animals, you can take a punt on the birds flying a certain direction and they will go the opposite for no apparent reason.

Additional Comments: As above-experimentation is always a risk but when it comes off it looks and feels magic.

This is Steven's fourth year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award. He has been a finalist in the third and fourth tours, in addition to winning the first Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



DOUG SPOWART + VICTORIA COOPER
DOCUMENTATION BY A CARCAMERA OBSCURA

What camera was used to shoot this series? The image forming device/camera is a 1985 Toyota Tarago that we converted into a camera obscura in the year 2000. The photographs in this body of work were made by documenting the camera obscura image projected into the car using a regular camera. Early work was made using a Leicaflex SL camera with a 21mm Super Angulon lens—from mid 2005 this work was made with a Canon 20D.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? Digital at ISO 200 (noise reduction).

What type of lens did you use? For the documentation process we used 10-22 mm (digital SLR).

How long did you work on this series? We have been working on the *Carcamera Obscura* and room camera obscuras for seven years. This particular work comes from a series made of our Australian transcontinental journey during 2005 that we constructed into several artists' books in 2006. We continue to work with camera obscura devices.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? Converting the car into a totally light-tight container and still be able to drive it. Overcoming the technical and conceptual aspects of the device and the images that it could make. Parking the car for the long exposures around 1-5 minutes. At times, taking photographs whilst travelling. The car had to be manoeuvred into some very challenging positions in order that it got the best angle. Telling people that we were just taking photographs with the car and we were not doing anything suspicious or illegal. Completing an exposure before a vehicle came along the roadway we were occupying with the car thus requiring us to move to clear the way.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? Artists that work with pinhole imaging and the camera obscura including: Abelardo Morell, Eric Renner, Nancy Spencer, Ruth Thorne-Thomsen, Jo Babcock and Thomas Bachler.

Additional Comments: SEE: <http://www.carcamera.blogspot.com>
This is a text blog of the journey.

SEE: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/17886401@N00>

This site contains 100 images from this journey.

SEE: <http://www.home.aone.net.au/greatdivide>

This is our general home-site and contains a range of material about our arts practice.

This is Doug and Victoria's first year as finalists in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



EMMA THOMSON
THE HOMEMAKERS

What camera was used to shoot this series? Mamiya RB67.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? Film 120 Kodak VC 160 ISO.

What type of lens did you use? Standard lens.

How long did you work on this series? Six months.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? Probably the biggest challenge was directing a scene using non-professional models. These are ordinary people with no modelling experience, so getting them to hold a particular pose whilst looking natural was definitely a challenge.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? I am influenced by a combination of artists, I am drawn to the implied psychological narratives found in Gregory Crewdson's work in particular his *Twilight* series, Tina Barney's *The Europeans* series where detail of gestures and décor are part of a larger narrative of the lives of her chosen subjects, and the banal humour evident in Martin Parr's photography.

Additional Comments: To light this series I used studio lights and flash to capture an artifice and also to help put emphasis on the idea behind this series.

This is Emma's first year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



TAMARA VONINSKI
L'HIVER

What camera was used to shoot this series? A Holga camera pieced together with velcro, tape and cardboard.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? Black & White film, 400 ISO film.

What type of lens did you use? Holga cameras have standard plastic lenses. I used two Holga cameras during my four month sojourn in Paris.

How long did you work on this series? I was on an artist residency at Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris through the Art Gallery of New South Wales for four months during the winter season.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? Although France is the traditional home of street photography, the current privacy laws have almost eradicated the art and practice of photographing spontaneous moments on the street. I photographed on the streets of Paris in the time honoured tradition of photographers like Henri Cartier-Bresson, Eugene Atget, Edouard Boubat, William Klein etc.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? In many ways, I was influenced by all of the street photographers who have lived in Paris and wandered the streets before me. Their black and white photographs of Paris were like distant memories. During my winter sojourn, I was inspired by the art, passion, and conversation surrounding my artist residency by the 300 international artists living at Cité Internationale des Arts.

Additional Comments: The six photographs from *L'hiver* are part of a much larger series. The photographs are real moments captured on film using a Holga camera. I chose this camera because the natural vignettes of the camera mirror how I see the world around me. The camera, therefore, is like a visual extension of my subconscious.

This is Tamara's fourth year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award. She was also a finalist in the third, fourth, and fifth biennial tours.



TOM WILLIAMS
LA SANTA MUERTE (SAINT OF DEATH)

What camera was used to shoot this series? Nikon F100 and Voigtlander Bessa R2A.

Did you use a film or digital camera? If film, what type and speed? Film, Fuji Provia, 400, 800 and 1600 ISO.

What type of lens did you use? Nokton 40 mm F1.4 for Voigtlander.

How long did you work on this series? Three months.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? The main challenge was working in areas of Mexico City with severe crime problems. Violence is very common, as is drug use, and the murder rate is very high. But I was lucky to be introduced to people who helped me in many ways. Once I had been observed being looked after by people who are greatly respected by believers in La Santa Muerte I was treated very kindly and was able to talk to and photograph many people involved with the cult. Also my Spanish was a little bit rusty and I had to be ready to explain to people what I was doing. They were sometimes suspicious, because the cult generally has a bad reputation in mainstream society and they wanted to be sure that I would not be making fun of them or painting a very negative picture.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? Robert Frank, Walker Evans, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, George Krause, Diane Arbus, Maya Goded, Nan Goldin and William Eggleston.

Additional Comments: Good research is very important with this kind of project. I needed to understand what I was seeing and to organise to be at the right place at the right time while remaining safe. At first I walked into some situations I should not have attempted alone. Making contacts and being given helpful introductions was crucial and the series could not even have been initiated without the help of several people in Mexico.

This is Tom's first year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.



LISA WILTSE

MAKING UP THE NUMBERS IN WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES

What camera was used to shoot this series? Canon Mark EOS Mark II.

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

What type of lens did you use? Primary lens was a 16-35 mm, f2.8 Canon, primarily fixed on 24 mm.

How long did you work on this series? The series was taken over a period of two weeks while on a road trip for the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

What were some of the challenges you faced in shooting this series? Challenges I faced were trying to gain trust between the locals in a short period of time on a personal level. Various media outlets in the past have left scars within the aboriginal communities so there was suspicion amongst the locals.

Is there a particular artist or artists who have influenced your work? Photographers whose work I admire include Mary Ellen Mark, Francesco Zizola, Alex Webb and Helen Levitt.

This is Lisa's first year as a finalist in the Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.