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# SIXTH LEICA/CCP DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

## SENIOR STUDENT RESPONSE SHEET



EMMA THOMSON  
from the series THE HOMEMAKERS, 2006

**SENIOR STUDENT RESPONSE SHEET**

A number of the photographic series in this exhibition deal with social issues including environmental issues, poverty and health. Choose a series from the exhibition that deals with an issue you think needs to be addressed. What do you think the photographer is trying to communicate with this series?

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Look at the way the photographer has used light, colour, written text, composition, perspective, camera angle, and devices such as cropping or framing the image. How do these things influence the effect that this photographic series has?

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The depiction of everyday life is a theme explored by many contemporary artists. Emma Thomson's series *The Homemakers* (2006) documents the lives of middle-class Sydneysiders living in suburbia. Thomson says: "Shot in a documentary style, I selected a particular setting from the subjects' home to capture a scene from daily life." Why do you think photographers might concern themselves with common, everyday or familiar subject matter?

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What can a photograph reveal about its subject? Do you think that the couples in this series collaborated with the photographer in deciding how they would be represented? Why/why not?

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Do their poses appear natural or contrived? How has this been achieved?

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Are there any photographs in this exhibition that you wouldn't normally expect to see in an art gallery? If so, which ones?

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Why might these images not normally be put on exhibition?

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Who might make these 'rules' about what photographs should be exhibited?

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This exhibition will travel to various metropolitan and regional venues in Australia throughout 2008 and 2009. For this reason works have been displayed in standard sized frames, enabling them to be packed into crates more easily. Many of the artists gave instructions as to how their works were to be arranged. Choose a series that has been arranged or displayed in an interesting way. What effect does this have on how you look at and understand this series?

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Do the colour images in the exhibition differ in appearance and psychological impact from the black and white images? How?

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Which do you think are more effective? In your answer refer to one or more of the photographic series exhibited.

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Choose a series and discuss how these images influence, move or surprise you.

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If you were on the selection panel for this year's *Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award* which series would you have chosen as the winner? Why? Consider the theme, subject matter, style, use of colour, and how the images work together as a series.

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Would you consider the photographer's written text in your decision? Why?

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Make a list of the themes or subject matter addressed by artists in the exhibition.

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Are some artists dealing with the same subject matter and/or themes? Choose two series that deal with similar subject matter and discuss how they relate.

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In her seminal 1977 text *On Photography* Susan Sontag wrote: "The camera is a kind of passport that annihilates moral boundaries and social inhibitions, freeing the photographer from any responsibility towards the people photographed... The photographer is supertourist, an extension of the anthropologist, visiting natives and bringing back news of their exotic doings and strange gear."<sup>1</sup>

Refer to the above statement in your discussion of one of the series in the *Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award*.

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## ENDNOTES

1. Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, Penguin Books, USA 1977, p.42.

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