

## Queensland's Photographic Feast

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Louise Johnson

Friday 14 October, 2011

**QUEENSLAND CENTRE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY: Six separate exhibitions are currently on show at the QCP, featuring works by artists from Australia and Brazil.**

While the current exhibitions at the Queensland Centre for Photography (QCP) are by individual artists with individual backgrounds and intentions, their images all share the common theme of capturing place, purpose and people. Although this may not seem unusual in terms of photographic or digital expression, there is a raw honesty within the exhibitions at QCP which is touching, sometimes confronting, and ultimately inspiring.

Emma Thomson's exhibition *Made in the Shire* was created after her residency in Hazelhurst, New South Wales, and the people in her images were sourced from placing advertisements in the newspapers, resulting in portraits that capture the unlikely beauty of the 'average Joe'.

*Last Light* by Vikky Wilkes captures a similar beauty, but extends to landscape and situation on the shores of Lake Ginninderra in Canberra. While Wilkes' images capture the diversity of both the people and the events they are involved with at the lake, it is the fact that Wilkes captured her images during the last hour of daylight that is most striking. This pre-dusk glow gives an almost eerie ambience to the shadows, the lake, and the people, as if they are not only captured by the photographic lens, but also captured in the stillness of transition between day and night.

Stillness is also a theme used by Brazilian collective Galleria Experiência in Nrem-Rem, a series of images capturing people sleeping in public places. The images are lush with the colour of their locational settings, and although many of the images are taken in busy places, there is a strong serenity within them as the viewer is subconsciously drawn towards the sleeping person, as if they are the calm eye within the storm.

Mark Lehn's *Makrana* takes us far away from the city, to the marble capital of India. Although the marble sourced from Makrana is a symbol of luxury and elegance, Lehn captures the hardship experienced by its residents and workers, contrasted with the intricate beauty of their culture, with women adorned by delicate and colourful saris wielding pickaxes amidst jagged boulders of marble. We travel again in Helen Savory's *Vision Viet Nam*, a series of black and white and colour images which, like Lehn's *Makrana*, capture instant moments of culture through people, objects and landscapes. Savory has an exceptional eye for symmetry and the content of her images are perfectly balanced, infusing the harmony of her subjects into each photograph.

*Congee* by Ka-Yin Kwok is a video documentary of the Sunday lunches that Kwok shares with her father, displaying the quiet intimacy between them despite the seemingly banal conversation and setting. Viewing this film, the audience most certainly acts as a voyeur rather than a guest at the

table, as the lunches take place within the impenetrable vacuum of the artist's relationship with her father which we may relate to or understand, but not be a part of.

**Made in the Shire by Emma Thomson (NSW)**

**Last Light by Vikky Wilkes (ACT)**

**Makrana by Mark Lehn (WA)**

**Vision Viet Nam by Helen Savory (QLD)**

**Congee by Ka-Yin Kwok (VIC)**

**NREM\_REM by Galeria Experiência (BRAZIL)**

Queensland Centre for Photography

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### **About the author**

Louise Johnson is an Art History Honours graduate from the University of Queensland, and a Brisbane-based freelance arts writer and curator.

See: <http://visual.artshub.com.au/news-article/reviews/visual-arts/queensland-s-photographic-feast-186018>