A white dog is sitting in a body of water, facing away from the camera. The water is calm with gentle ripples. In the background, there is a dark silhouette of a forest or trees under a soft, hazy sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Emma Thomson
Vicky Wilkes
Mark Lehn
Helen Savory
Ka-Yin Kwok
Galeria Experiência

**Queensland
Centre for
Photography**

Emma Thomson

Made in the Shire

Portraits are always poses. Otherwise they are just some form of 'candid' photography that implies that the subject is not complicit in making the image. When people pose for portraits they adopt an agreed construct of identity that documents an idea of a person as much as a look of a person. Sydney-based Emma Thomson attempted to capture this self-constructed idea of oneself during a residency in the New South Wales regional Shire of Hazelhurst. The artist advertised in local media for couples who would participate in collaborative portrait process. The advertisement attracted individuals as well as couples who worked with the artist to strike a pose that represents themselves more or less to themselves. The exaggerated sense of pose in these images underscores the subjects' participation in the creative process. These portrait poses might embody an ideal of the self, or a future vision of the self, but it is nevertheless an idea of the self that is real for them.

right: Emma Thomson *Adele* 2011,
Lambda print, courtesy of the artist.

Emma Thomson *Dean* 2011,
Lambda print, courtesy of the artist.



Vikky Wilkes

Last Light

What are the emotional conditions of 'time'? What does a 'time of day' feel like?

Vikky Wilkes *Last Light* series responds to these questions. *Last light* captures the final hour of light on the shores of Lake Ginninderra in Canberra, towards the end of summer. People and trees are the index of time in these images. The trees capture the glowing aura of a setting sun and the encroaching shadows of a night-phase of life. The landscape wraps itself around people at play like a blanket warmed by the sun. People relax into the landscape. The French philosopher Henri Bergson wrote, "To perceive means to immobilize. We seize, in the act of perception, something which outruns perceptions itself." Wilkes' act of perception in these images has a more gentle approach than 'seizure' but it does withhold states of mind that are uniquely conditioned by the closing time of day. The beauty of these images is in how they articulate people attuned to a temporal mood, and why this very human act of perception is something to be cherished.



above: Vikky Wilkes *Untitled #14* 2009,
Fine Art Archival Pigment Print, courtesy of the artist.

below: Vikky Wilkes *Untitled #1* 2009,
Fine Art Archival Pigment Print, courtesy of the artist.

Mark Lehn

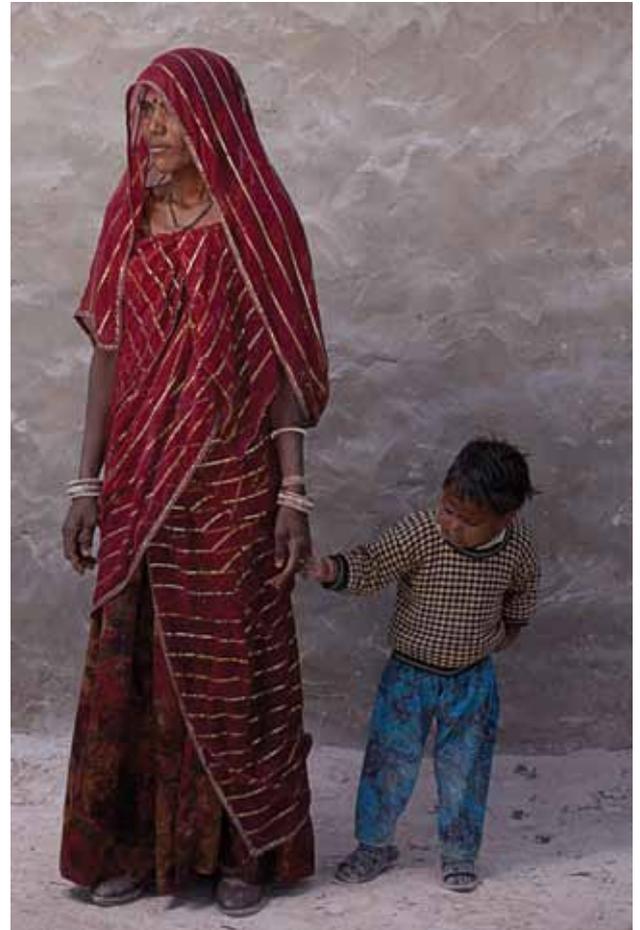
Makrana - The Marble City

Mark Lehn's *Makrana – The Marble City* documents a people and place at risk. The many small micro marble mines surrounding the Indian city of Makrana yield fine quality white marble similar to the cladding of the Taj Mahal. It is an unregulated industry with extremely poor safety and security standards and a lethal existence for miners who average three deaths per month.

Lehn uses an Ansel Adams' sense of scale in the Makrana landscape to foreground the precarious plight of hand-hewn mining, and a vital culture at risk. The uplifting smiles and gritty strength of individuals and their elegant cultural pride are positioned in these images on a precipice, literally and metaphorically. Lehn documents the real cost of this industry and clarifies that the people and life of Makrana are far more precious than the marble.

right: Mark Lehn *A marble worker: With no one to look after her child, this marble worker is forced to take her child to work with her.* 2011, Inkjet Print, courtesy of the artist.

Mark Lehn *A child bride on her wedding day with new sister and mother in Law.* 2011, Inkjet Print, courtesy of the artist.



Helen Savory

Vision Viet Nam

Photographic formalism is sometimes considered antithetical to documentary practice, but Helen Savory's *Vision Viet Nam* shows how an elegantly stylised approach to photography can document an emotional engagement with a place and its people. Her vignettes are photographic sketches of everyday life in Viet Nam that focus on formal rhythms and iconic gestures that frame a more fundamental aspect of life in Viet Nam. Architecture, landscape, people and animals assume an abstract structure that seems to generate its own internal energy. There is an underlying 'completeness' about Savory's perspective of life in Viet Nam that is fascinating and beguiling. Hands and feet take on an exquisite eloquence and become extended metaphors about how people connect with the world around them. They show a people 'in touch' with a place and a life. Savory spent 17 years living in Viet Nam, and her photography documents this duration of everyday experience. *Vision Viet Nam* reveals the big picture of life as a series of humble vignettes - vignettes that amount to much more than a sketch.

Helen Savory *At Rest Nha Trang* 1996, Inkjet Print, courtesy of the artist.



Ka-Yin Kwok

Congee

In Ka-Yin Kwok's *Congee* we sit at the table during her family's Sunday lunch. Congee is a Cantonese word referring to meals based on rice porridge and pickled vegetables often eaten for lunch. We experience unspoken emotional tensions between herself and her father, framed by the confined space of a small kitchen undergoing renovation. Collated footage punctuates an awkward rhythm of Cantonese conversation. The artist sometimes struggles with the dialect and feels that this creates a distance between them.

It is a family narrative characterised by fractured intimacy. Although the artist is often in the shot, we assume her condition and seem to personally experience the close but unsettled psychological relationship between father and daughter. Documenting Congee lunch is an innovative and insightful approach to autobiography that relates the microcosm of family relationships to a broader picture of biculturalism as an inevitable journey of transformation.

Ka-Yin Kwok *Congee* 2011, video still, courtesy of the artist.



Galeria Experiência

NREM_REM

'Relational aesthetics' is a term among the buzz words of international contemporary art. It is all about broad-scale collaboration that makes art test its role in society. The idea is to embed the diversity of contemporary social life into the production of art so that art of today has an essentially relational role to everyday life, rather than its ostensibly autonomous role within the prescription of Modernism. So their artwork often sits between genres of documentary reportage, performance and narrative fiction.

Galeria Experiência is a Brazilian example of this relational and collaborative approach to art. Their creative hub includes people working in photography, journalism, advertising and radio and television, and often extends to collaboration with designers, musicians, animators and scriptwriters. In *NREM_REM* they attempt to document the relationship between the individual and society by creating scenarios of surrendering oneself to society. Individuals lie asleep amid the busy spaces of city life. The scenario is crafted from many perspectives – a real event; a performance; a state of mind. But perhaps this series actually documents the individual's vulnerability within society. We see individual people sleeping in public places and we worry about their safety – we cannot let them surrender themselves as such because they are not safe. They appear peaceful, but are we?

Galeria Experiência *Untitled 3* 2011, Digital Image on Rag Paper, courtesy of the artists.



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Catalogue essay: Dr Sally Butler, 2011.
Cover image: Vikky Wilkes *Untitled #26* 2009,
Fine Art Archival Pigment Print, courtesy of the artist.
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Opening Night

Saturday 24th September 5-8pm

Exhibition Dates

25th September - 23rd October 2011

Public Program

Thursday 13th October, 5.30pm

'How to collect photography' presented by Maurice Ortega

Gallery Hours

Wednesday - Saturday	10am-5pm
Sunday	11am-3pm



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