



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**NEWCASTLE**  
AUSTRALIA

**VICE CHANCELLOR'S DINNER**  
NEWCASTLE CLUB 23 MARCH 2010

# Our Acheivers

Photomedia is committed to driving industry linked projects that offer professional experience to students to equip them for careers in highly competitive fields such as photojournalism, fashion photography, portraiture, advertising, and other areas of visual communication.

This exhibition is a collection of photographic portraits by students studying Photomedia in 2009 in the School of Drama, Fine Art and Music. It is also a celebration of their subjects-those who featured in the newspaper column 'Out to Achieve' published in the Newcastle Herald and affiliated newspapers.

The exhibition is a showcase of the published images along with the students' own selection from the photographic sessions the images give an incite into how the students, as fine art photographers interpreted the written word and captured the essence of their subjects personality and achievements.

The exhibition highlights the strong links forged within the university community such as the strong link between the university gallery and the schools academic programs.

**Miranda Lawry**

BFA Convener

**Gillean Shaw**

University Art Curator

ACHIEVER

Jennie Thomas

Richard Vella

Nguyen Thai Vinh

Trudy Thompson

Alan Williams

Elizabeth Wright & Jessica Maiden

Hannah Jones/Thompson

Tim Hyde

John O'Connor

Philip Morgan

Philip Matthias

Samuel Croger

PHOTOGRAPHER

by Herald Photographer

by Aaron Bellette

by Dermod Kavanagh

by Sharon Aldrick

by Roger Hanley

by Michael Randall

by Katrina Coleman

by Meredith Weaver

by Michelle Maartensz

by Christine Menz

by Elise Neal

by Chris Brown

# Richard Vella

Photographed by

# Aaron Bellette

I enjoy the challenge of photographing people and endeavouring to capture the persons' personality and essence in a single frame. I had scoped the Conservatorium out in the morning of the shoot so that I knew some specific areas where I could photograph Richard.

I wanted to capture an image that did not necessarily include an instrument in the frame and so instead I explored corridors and artworks as background for the portraits. When the time came to photograph Richard we used three different locations and created three distinctly different images, each to highlight different facets of Richard's personality.

**Aaron Bellette**

# Alan Williams

Photographed by  
**Roger Hanley**

My motivation for saying yes to this gig was, frankly, more technical than anything else – an opportunity to play around with some particular lighting techniques in a portrait situation, which I don't get to do often enough.

But the most rewarding part was, as always in portraiture, the interaction with the subject. Alan Williams was most generous with his time, and we ranged freely through his Central Coast home looking for possibilities. The key isn't, in the end, the technical matters, but one's ability to help the (nearly always apprehensive) subject relax, so the process becomes a collaboration. A few exceedingly lame jokes from me, and we were off and running.

**Roger Hanley**

# Hannah Jones Thompson

Photographed by

## Katrina Coleman

Though I began with ideas that were quite straight forward in parallel with the text, I later had visions of Hannah slashing around in the ocean. Although asking someone I barely knew to immerse themselves clothed in the cold ocean water may have been a little far-fetched, for this experience thinking outside the square was an important aspect in gaining a resolved, strong and punchy image that would be competing along-side other images in the media.

The first images that I photographed on the shoot show water plummeting from my garden hose showering Hannah under a flimsy umbrella. It was like a juggling act between the hose, the tape and the camera. As I became more acquainted with Hannah, as we moved on to different scenes, amidst the embrace of chaos and spontaneity, I was able to capture an essence of Hannah's personality. These images were the strongest ones.

This was a wonderful opportunity and a good way to showcase your work, and also to meet interesting people in the process.

**Katrina Coleman**

# Sam Croger

Photographed by

# Chris Brown

As a contributing photographer for the magazine Reverb, I am often sent to capture the latest trends at music and fashion gigs. Having to think on the spot and using instinct to attain shots that have a degree of creativity as well as to capture the message for the subject and the magazine is exhilarating.

I met Sam Croger and immediately started to plan how I would capture his enthusiasm as well as to describe his qualities as an Achiever. Sam impresses you immediately, he is so bright and involved in his area of Engineering. I wanted an image that spoke of both these qualities. I decided to photograph him from a lower perspective which would really put Sam as a dominant force in the frame - looking out at the world and his choices. Sam was a genuine and friendly subject whose enthusiasm was contagious! This made him an easy and willing subject to photograph.

**Chris Brown**

# Nguyen Thai Vinh

Photographed by

# Dermod Kavanagh

My involvement in this project has been very enjoyable and rewarding on many levels. I was able to meet and get to know a lovely, unassuming man who is a quiet achiever in his field and a very committed and successful student.

The shoot involved consideration of the brief: what the images should say. The strong grounding in art practice and theory I have gained during my Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours) and prior work with the University Gallery, has been enhanced through this collaboration. The experience of working closely with the Marketing Division of the University has acted as a bridge between my knowledge and its potential real world applications. It has provided invaluable experience in working as a freelance photographer. The project epitomizes, for me, the changing role of Universities, in which greater interdepartmental collaboration and involvement with community and industry groups provide clearer pathways for students beyond their studies.

**Dermod Kavanagh**

# Liz Wright and Jessica Maiden

Photographed by

# Michael Randall

While hanging the MPhil examination exhibitions for Jessica and Liz, I was approached by Marketing to take some images of the girls and their work for the Newcastle Herald - then and there. With exactly 3 seconds for thought into the composition I put the girls together and shot away.

This impromptu photo shoot came about as we three photographers all happened to be together. It was a classic example of how some photographers feed on the energy of the moment, able to capture everything in an instant, whilst others need time and follow a process in considering the elements of a good photograph. I am most certainly the latter and enjoyed the immediate interaction of working with these two subjects, who as photographers themselves, had strong ideas about the shoot.

**Michael Randall**

# Philip Morgan

Photographed by

# Christine Menz

My approach was not only to capture Philip's unique personality but also his enthusiasm for his profession as a teacher of good health education. We looked for locations that would project this and while we did he talked about his pursuits and objectives (goals) attached to his work. He spoke of his belief that health education should start with the young, no junk food and lots of exercise. I also found out that he practiced what he preached when he mentioned that he himself rode a bike to work everyday.

On reflecting back, this experience has been a big step forward. Compelling me to step outside myself and do something that perhaps I would never have undertaken. Not only did I learn something about the marketing and media process but I also met an inspiring person. Yes. I can say daunting at first but well worth the effort.

**Christine Menz**

# Tim Hyde

Photographed by

# Meredith Weaver

When I discovered there was an opportunity to be a part of the Newcastle Achievers project I immediately put my hand up. The prospect of being involved in semi-professional capacity and having my work published was too good to pass up. Upon meeting Tim I got the impression that he was a serious guy very focused on his goals in life. My first idea was to present Tim as a future business leader and asked if he could turn up to the shoot in a business jacket. In one of the shots taken Tim is seated at the bottom of a set of stairs alluding to Tim beginning his career in business. I thoroughly enjoyed my time working with both Bernadette McTeare from Marketing and Media and Tim through the many different challenges that came up along the way. Searching for creative solutions, dealing with time constraints and working around different schedules were just some of the issues addressed. As a student photographer I found all aspects of this project a very valuable and rewarding experience.

**Meredith Weaver**

# John O'Connor

Photographed by

# Michelle Maartensz

Photographing for Marketing and Media's Achiever project was a very different way of working for me. All I knew of my subject was a name and a brief history of his work at the university. There was a vague description of where we might be able to take the photographs, a time restriction and I was to consider the image was to be a square format when it went to print. I usually have a well-planned and almost completely controlled environment when taking photographs in my art practice so I was a little nervous before the shoot.

Having Renee Vincent from Marketing and Media accompany me, made the process of taking the photos very easy. Renee engaged John in a fascinating conversation about his work, that showed the passion, love and enthusiasm for his roles at the University and through this passion, a range of facial expressions I could capture.

It was a privilege to meet and photograph such an inspiring person.

**Michelle Maartensz**

# Philip Matthais

Photographed by  
**Elise Neal**

On receiving the option of collaborating with media to complete this project, I saw an opportunity to experience another genre of photography and jumped at the chance. This was the first series of photographs that I would take which followed specific guidelines in order to produce an image specifically for publication.

To comply with an established brief means that certain aspects of your usual practice and creative control may be changed and adapted to suit the outcome of the photo shoot. I felt that by photographing Philip Matthais for OUR ACHIEVERS was a very valuable educational experience which resulted in a series of images which, although very different from the images I would normally produce, were quite enjoyable to produce.

**Elise Neal**

# Trudy Thompson

Photographed by

# Sharon Aldrick

As a photographer you become a perfectionist and lighting, location and subject all play an integral part of capturing a perfect image. However, with little time, the vagaries of the elements and not meeting your unknown subject before the shoot, it can become an anxious time.

We starting shooting straight away as the rain was coming and I knew the overcast soft light was the perfect light for me to capture a powerful yet intimate, moody shot. I worked with the storm clouds to create a dramatic back drop and also used some unusual poses using the lines on the running track for a contemporary composition. When the rain became heavy we transferred to Mingara gym where I used a mirror and the reflection to get in close and show a beauty beyond her athletic physic. I also worked with the interesting architecture and light to create some compelling images of Trudy staring straight into the lens; I love the powerfulness of a stare directly into the lens when shooting portraiture.

**Sharon Aldrick**

# Jennie Thomas

Photographed by

# The Newcastle Herald

Jennie was the first of the 'Our Achievers' columns and was photographed by a Newcastle Herald photojournalist.

Our photomedia students then took up the challenge to have this real life photojournalistic experience and the results are here for us all to enjoy.

The partnerships and collaborations have been invaluable for these students, and the response to this exhibition shows another side of the process. It is here that the curatorial side of a photographer's practice shows those other images that would not normally be seen which are chosen by the artist/photographer for public display.

Congratulations to all the achievers, both subjects and their photographers as we see both print media and fine art media as a complete story.



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