



## **BALLARAT INTERNATIONAL FOTO BIENNALE**

**SEPT 4 – OCT 4 2009**

### **PORTFOLIO REVIEW KIT**

"It's a sort of speed dating for photographers. You get to show your portfolio to a range of career important people, one-on-one, for feedback, advice and direction, and all over a very short time-frame"





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## **What is the BIFB - a brief overview**

### **Background to the Festival**

The Ballarat International Foto Biennale (BIFB) is a photography festival, loosely based on the famous Rencontres de la Photographie d'Arles in France, and occurs once every two years. Currently there are approximately 70 festivals of photography staged worldwide the majority of which operate on the Arles model. Our aim is to raise the profile of photography as a legitimate art form and to raise the profile of Australian photographers and Australian photography on the world stage.

Emerging from the embryonic and highly successful Daylesford Foto Biennales of 2005 and 2007 the Ballarat Festival aims to enlarge and expand this concept into a truly world class global event. Ballarat provides a wealth of fine and gracious buildings, a compact well-defined arts precinct, a substantial population base and superb public transport access from Melbourne and Tullamarine International Airport.

To be held 4<sup>th</sup> September to 4<sup>th</sup> October 2009, the Biennale will bring some of the very best international and Australian photographers to Ballarat for a month long celebration of eclectic and exciting photographic exhibitions. All told the 2009 Biennale will comprise between 150 and 175 separate photographic events including workshops, seminars, portfolio reviews, schools project and programs, multi media presentations and special events as well as a vibrant open entry Fringe Exhibition Program in Ballarat and the outlying region including Daylesford, Creswick, Trentham and Clunes. Any photographer, photographic artist, or group who can find a suitable venue can participate in the Biennale on payment of a modest registration fee. BIFB expects to include upwards of 75 such exhibitions in its 2009 program. This not only broadens the audience base but also increases community involvement and ensures a diverse and democratic festival. Most exhibitions in the main program have free entry.

There will be 20 exhibitions in the main program, all by invitation only and with a focus on fine art photography. Ten of these exhibitions are international artists from China, Lithuania, Canada, USA x 2, Italy, Poland, Germany, Sweden/Hong Kong. See website [www.ballaratfoto.org](http://www.ballaratfoto.org) for details of artist. All but one of the 20 exhibitions will be staged in the Heritage and Arts Precinct (the Art Gallery of Ballarat, the Mining Exchange, the Mechanics Institute, the Ballarat Town Hall, The Ballarat Trades Hall, the Post Office Gallery and Gallery B1) all within a few minutes walk of each other and from the Railway Station. The remaining Core Program exhibition will hang in the Gold Museum at Sovereign Hill.

With the total and enthusiastic support of The City of Ballarat our aim is to increase our audience from 20,000 at DFB'07 to at least 40,000 in 2009 with a greater proportion of interstate and international visitors. In the longer term we anticipate an audience of 100,000 and an event with the prestige of Paris Photo. We have an initial agreement with the City of Ballarat for three festivals 2009, 2011 and 2013.

The 2005 Biennale had an audience of approximately 10,000 with 55 events staged over 28 venues.

The 2007 Biennale had an audience of approximately 20,000 with 128 events staged over 55 venues and 1251 participating photographers exhibited over 7,000 images.

The 2009 Biennale anticipates an audience of approximately 40,000 with 175 events over 75 venues.

Promotion of the event will include paid advertising in interstate, metro, local and specialist media outlets together with a comprehensive public relations and publicity program.



## Portfolio Reviews – An overview

### Dates:

A two day event, Thursday September 3rd and Friday September 4th 2009. The official launch of BIFB'09 is at the Mining Exchange on Friday Evening. All BIFB shows will be open to the public from Saturday morning [Sept 5<sup>th</sup>] so you may like to plan an extended stay to take in shows over the weekend.

### Format:

Reviews will be one-on-one.

### Location:

Ballarat location to be confirmed

### Cost:

Photographers pay a fee for a number of 20 minute one-on-one sessions with the reviewers of their choice to show their work for feedback and advice.

The fee for BIFB 2009 is \$125 per day for four x 20 minute sessions, or \$200 for both days (ie 8 x 20 minute sessions). 30% of available sessions will be held back for BIFB volunteers who commit to more than 40 volunteer hours over the month of the festival.

### Refund policy:

Portfolio Reviews cancelled prior to August 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 will be entitled to a full refund less \$50 administration fee. Portfolio Reviews cancelled after August 1<sup>st</sup> will only be entitled to a refund [less \$50 administration fee] if a replacement candidate can be found for their spot

### Candidates

Candidates are afforded the opportunity to gain valuable feedback on their portfolios from career influential reviewers such as Gallery owners, publishers, picture and magazine editors, academics, curators and festival directors drawn from across Australia and the world.

### Reviewers

Reviewers confirmed for 2009 include\*:

Reviewer	Organisation	Available Thursday Sept 3rd	Available Friday Sept 4th
Laura Bilby	Foto Freo	**	**
Anthony Browell	Photographer, Sydney	√	√
Sally Brownbill	Photographer, folio consultant, Melbourne	√	√
Naomi Cass	Center for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne	**	**
Brian Gilkes	Pharos Editions, Melbourne	√	√
Linda Groom	National Library Canberra	√	√
Diana Gold	101 Collins St Melbourne	**	**
David Hagger	Dickerson Gallery, Melbourne	√	√
Adam Harding	Horsham Gallery	√	√
Merle Hathaway	Victorian Public Galleries Assoc	√	√
Shaune Lakin	Monash Gallery of Art		√
Julie Millowick	BIFB president	√	√
Thomas Roessler	Photographer, Germany	√	√
Susan van Wyk	National Gallery Victoria	√	√
Madeline Say	State Library of Vic	**	**
Michael Wennrich	RMIT	√	√

\* list of reviewers subject to change

\*\* Reviewer confirmed, but the specific day(s) available still to be confirmed



## The BIFB Portfolio Review “how-to guide”

(edited, but based on good advice from “A guidebook for presenting work at photography festivals” Presented by Photolucida and friends at: [info@photolucida.org](mailto:info@photolucida.org) and “MARKETING GUIDEBOOK FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS”, Mary Virginia Swanson © 2005 available at: [www.mvswanson.com](http://www.mvswanson.com))

This document contains suggestions on how to prepare your portfolio and how to get the most from your review sessions.

In brief:

- Tightly edit your work and the portfolio you bring along should be a complete body of work with a solid, cohesive vision, consisting of 15-20 prints. If you have two on-going bodies of work, bring small selections of both.
- Print images at the same size and on the same paper. Protect the work but not in a complicated manner that it takes too much of your 20-minute session to wrap/unwrap each print. Present your portfolio in such way that you can easily carry it, present the work efficiently, and pack it away with minimum fuss. Presentation format suggestions include:
  - Clamshell portfolio boxes
  - Print box with same size naked prints
  - Print your own book / self designed albums
  - Portfolio with Mylar sleeves
- Learn as much as you can about your reviewers before you show up at the review sessions. Be honest about which reviewers are the most appropriate for reviewing your work. It's detrimental to your investment to choose a prominent person based on their reputation as a reviewer if your work doesn't fit into the category they wish to see. *[details of the style of work reviewers would prefer to see will be distributed closer to the review date]*
- BE ON TIME FOR YOUR SESSION. If late for your review, it is your loss and the time will not be made up.
- You will have a 20 minute time slot for each review so be sure you have practiced your presentation and that it takes less than 20 minutes – allowing time for feedback / advice from the reviewer. Also ensure you are packed up and ready to move on when your time is up. If the reviewer is keen to continue a conversation, offer to make a follow-up appointment to meet with them later.
- Bring something to leave-behind with the reviewers, ensuring it includes all of your contact information.
- Take notes after each session and if the reviewer has asked you to send further information after the review, follow up in the week after the session.



## Preparing For Your Reviews

When you first hear of the reviewer opportunity, and hopefully a couple of months before the event, look through the reviewer list to identify who is coming and what their photographic interests are. *[Details of the style of work reviewers would prefer to see will be distributed closer to the review date.]*

Clear some time to prepare existing work, or create new work dedicated to the review.

Finalise the material you'll be including in your review folio at least one week prior to the event. If you've started relationships with the reviewers from past reviews or submissions consider where your current work sits in relation to what you've presented in the past.

## Your Portfolio

The most common, efficient and easiest to manage is a stack of loose prints inside a clamshell portfolio box. These may be:

- Matted (may add weight)
- Sleeved in protective Mylar envelopes
- Simply a nice stack of naked prints

It's neatest to have a set of same dimension and reasonably flat prints nicely stacked in the same size box.

However, if you're presenting delicate work, such as alternative process prints and/or printing on delicate papers, it might be most appropriate to have matted prints.

Alternatively you may show book templates / dummies to publishers and the like, which should be bound into a book.

A portfolio book, with spiral bound Mylar pages, is used widely in the commercial photo world and can be used for the portfolio review, however many reviewers like to see the actual prints.

## Number of Prints

Edit fiercely and cut it down.

Between 15-20 images per portfolio is a good number. You only have 20 minutes and by the time you walk in, set-up and allow time to pack-up; there will not be a great deal of time to spend on each photograph.

If you are certain you would like to show more than one body of work, or if your prints are extra-large – or awkward to manoeuvre you'll need to do a tighter edit.

It's recommended to choose a primary solid body of work with between 15-20 images, but it's often a good idea to bring an alternate portfolio(s) or additional examples in case you find you're 'off the mark' with the reviewer, or if they really like your work they may ask what else you do. Some reviewers look at photos very fast and they may have time to see what else you've got.

If you do have a second or third portfolio, ask the reviewer what he or she would like to see. No sense spending time with photos the reviewer has no interest in.

But, do ensure that your primary presentation is a complete body of work.

## Print Size

The most common sizes are in the range of 11x14" up to 20x24". Some people do bring extra large work, but you must consider whether you can carry it easily to the reviews, and from table to table.

Some people also bring very small prints. It's worth considering whether the size is appropriate to the image.

Only bring framed work (or oddly shaped projects etc) when the frame is integral to the work.



### **Your folio on computer**

You may wish to show your folio from your laptop computer. We advise against this for a couple of reasons:

Not all laptops have screens which can be viewed well from an oblique angle, and as you are seated opposite your reviewer, both of you cannot comfortably view the screen at the same time.

Batteries and software programs are notorious for malfunctions in such situations [for OHS reasons we are unable to supply power points at each review station].

That said, you are welcome to present your work on your computer, but we advise that you have a spare battery, know your software program backwards, have all the files you wish to show in an easily accessible folder, and don't have file sizes so large that they take any longer than ten seconds to open. This is not a good time to borrow someone else's laptop or upgrade to a new software version.

If things go pear shaped – don't say we didn't warn you!!

### **The Review**

Be polite. Be professional. Be informed. Be patient.

Do not make excuses about your work.

Approach all interviews with the utmost professionalism.

Don't talk too much - first impressions are everything and you only have 20 minutes.

Abide by the time rules. It's rude to both the reviewer and the next photographer if you go over time.

Some overlap is inevitable; however, when the 5 minute warning is called start wrapping it up. If there is more to be said, make an appointment to meet at a later time.

When it is your turn to be reviewed and you can see that the review in front of you is still wrapping up, be patient, not rude, and wait until the previous session is over. If you are pushy and aggressive it does not bode well for first impressions.

While you're waiting for your review time, continue to share your work with your peer group between sessions – critical dialogue among photographers is invaluable. Enjoy your time with the photographic community and *Chill*.

### **Leave-Behinds**

You may choose to leave a visual prompt behind such as a contact card, inkjet print, or announcement card etc. Make sure what you choose to leave is small enough to file in a traditional A4 file folder and that all your contact information is included. An image may help to jog their memory.

You may ask if the reviewer wants a bio and résumé (you may be asked to send these rather than to leave them with the reviewer). So, bring along a package with a statement, a current resume and a CD in case you are asked for it. Be sure to bind the materials together to ensure they stay together as a group. It's wise to include your name and contact details on each page in case materials become separated.



### **After the Review**

Take good notes along with the contact details from the reviewer's business card. Consider the advice seriously and re-edit your work, alter presentation format(s) and apply other advice in order to enhance the returns from your next portfolio review opportunity.

If additional materials have been requested by some reviewers, send this out quickly (eg exhibition proposal, resume, slides, cd's, quick digital prints etc).

Fundamentally you're making new contacts, or renewing them, and forging relationships with the reviewers. Consider this a long-term investment in your photography career. Use the contacts with reviewers and other photographers to update your contact and mailing lists. Keep them updated on your work by sending them postcards when you have new shows.

Following up with your new contacts is essential if you want to maximize your investment in the review. You may like to write each reviewer and thank them for their insights towards your work, advice, and their time.



## OFFICIAL PORTFOLIO REVIEW BOOKING FORM

BALLARAT INTERNATIONAL FOTO BIENNALE Sept 4 – Oct 4 2009

*please complete this form and mail back to BIFB'09 PO Box 569 Daylesford Vic 3460*

Name .....

Contact details:

address.....  
.....  
telephone..... mobile.....  
email.....

*Please book me for :*

Thursday September 3<sup>rd</sup> [ yes / no]

Friday September 4th [ yes / no]

Single day registration [4 x 20 minute reviews \$125.00 inc. GST] [yes / no]

2 day registration [8 x 20 minute reviews – 4 each day \$200.00 inc. GST] [yes / no]

*Financial BIFB members, BIFB'09 Season Ticket Holders and Students with a current student card [send photocopy with your registration form] may deduct 10%*

### Payment options

You may pay by the following methods:

Bank transfer: *Ballarat International Foto Biennale Inc BSB 633 000 Acc # 135184513*

Cheque: *payable to Ballarat International Foto Biennale Inc*

Credit Card: [Visa, Mastercard only] card no: \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Expiry date: \_ \_ / \_ \_ Card Holder: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \$ \_ \_ . \_ \_

### Refund Policy

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Closer to Portfolio Review days you will be contacted by the Portfolio Review Co-ordinator so you can nominate which review panel members you wish to see. A full list of names, backgrounds, and the type of work they wish to see [or not to see] will be provided. It is important that you nominate who you wish to see early, or there is a chance that they may be over subscribed. In such cases you will be asked to nominate 2 additional reviewers should your preferred reviewers be booked out.

The BIFB reserves the right to substitute review panellists should unforeseen circumstances arise, and will endeavour to see that all candidates have the opportunity to gain the maximum benefit from their participation.