

Professor Andrea Liggins

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Research Groups: Creative Industries Research and Innovation Centre;
The Centre for Lens Arts and Science Interaction

Evidence Portfolio: *Portraits – Creative Spaces*

Output Number: 3 of 4

Output Code: WIRAD-UWTSD-AL03

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Output Description: Exhibitions

Author: Liggins, Andrea

Year of Publication / Production: 2011

Location / Venue(s): Plymouth International Book Festival, Peninsula Arts Gallery, Plymouth, UK,
University Gallery Nanjing, China

Media: Photographic prints and publication

Number of Works: 2 series of portraits



Series One: Xavier Mariscal, Barcelona, digital camera



Series Two: Yuko Shimizu, New York, low resolution plastic lens camera

Research Context

The *Portraits—Creative Spaces* project is a development within Liggins' on-going research concerned with the Baroque photographic aesthetic. Two contrasting series of portraits were produced for the publication *Making Great Illustration*, (2011) London: A & C Black Publishers Ltd. The subjects are well-known illustrators from the United States of America, Canada, China and Europe, including Quentin Blake, Ronald Searle and Brad Holland, together with images of their studio spaces. For Series One, Liggins used a high resolution digital camera and Series Two was produced using a plastic low resolution camera.

Although *Making Great Illustration* privileges the more conventional digital photographic series, subsequent exhibitions of the series enabled Liggins to contrast the two different photographic modes as well as their associated pictorial viewpoints and aesthetic intensities.

Research Imperatives

Liggins' focus for this project was to develop her research into the potential of the plastic camera aesthetic in relation to portraiture and imagery of the working environment, and to identify and extend the distinctions between the two photographic modes through portrayals of unsettled and nuanced relationships of sitters and

their personal spaces. Her objective was to encourage a sensation of place rather than its description, and the image as having its 'own world'.

Project Methods

Liggins photographed illustrators in their studio spaces in a number of locations, using a digital camera to produce formally posed, descriptive images for *Series One*. For *Series Two*, though also posed, the portraits were an exploration of the capacity of the 'low-tech' plastic lens to substitute fine detail for blurring and technical sophistication for the impression of a passing glance.

Outcomes and Dissemination

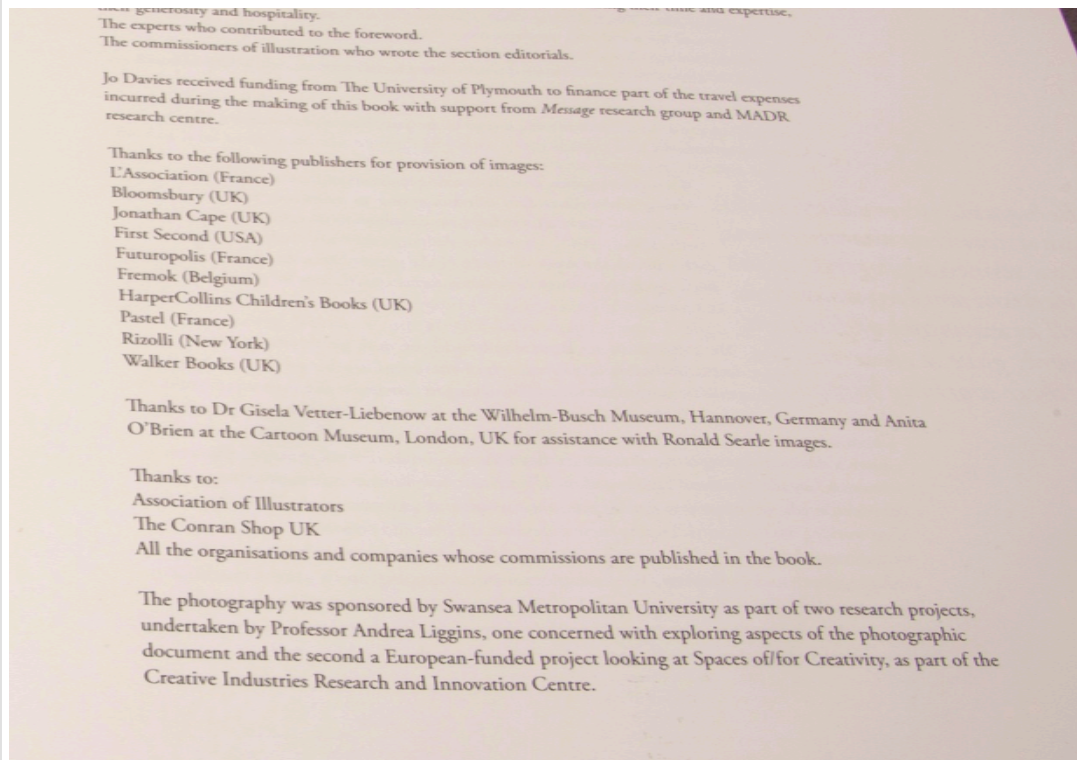
To date the research has been published and exhibited as follows:

- *Series One* and *Series Two* portraits and photographs of a range of artist working spaces in Davies, J and Brazell, D. (2011) *Making Great Illustration* London: A & C Black Publishers Ltd. ISBN 978-1-4081-2453-6, launched at the Cartoon Museum, London
- Exhibition of *Series Two* portraits in the *Making Great Illustration* exhibition at the International Festival of Literature, Peninsula Arts Gallery, Plymouth, 10th September – 20th October 2012
- The exhibition travelled to University Gallery, Nanjing, China, 5th – 8th December 2012

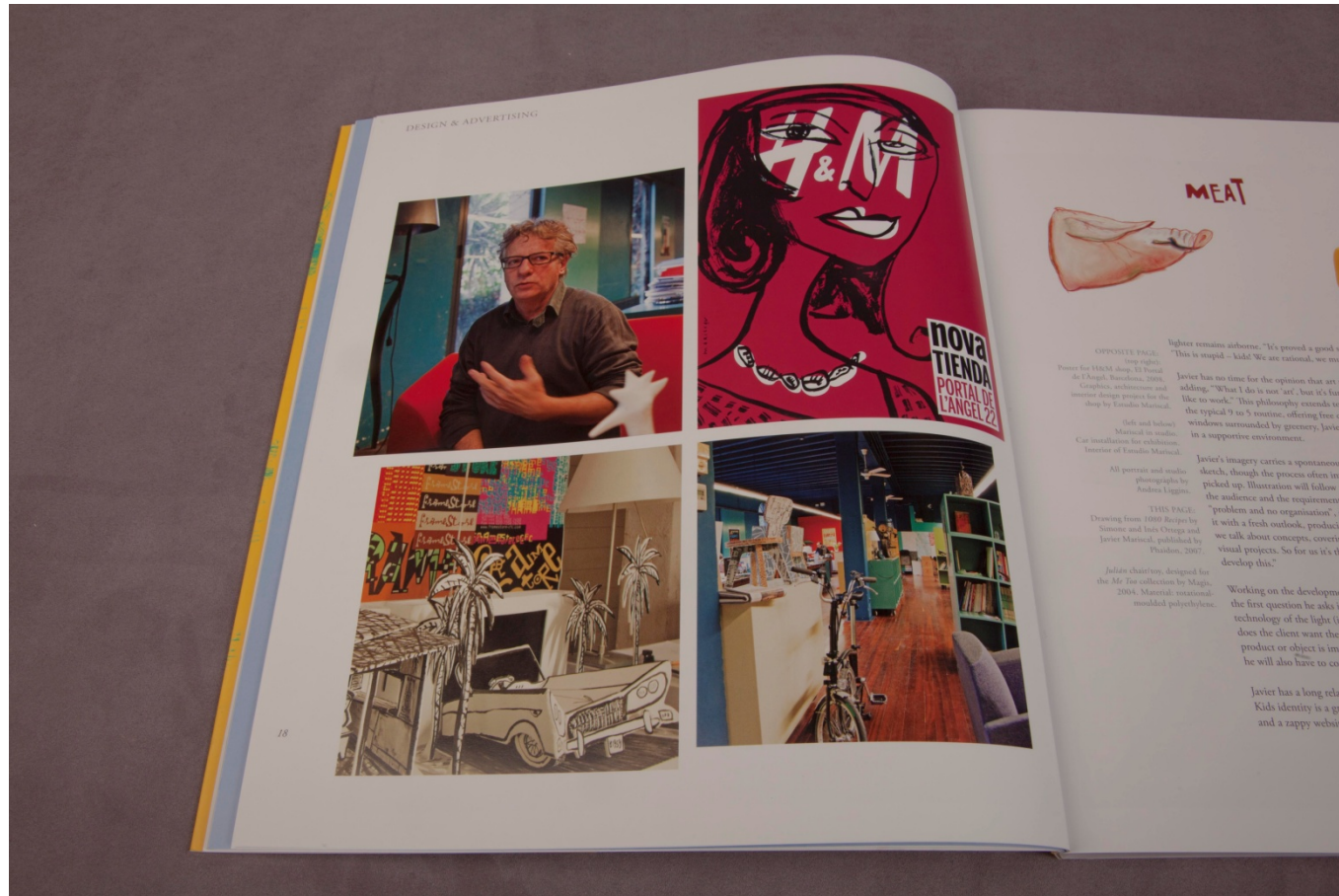
- Continued *Series Two* portraiture, featured in *Culture Colony Quarterly Arts Journal*, Issue 1, Autumn 2013



Exhibition, International Festival of Literature, Plymouth, 2012



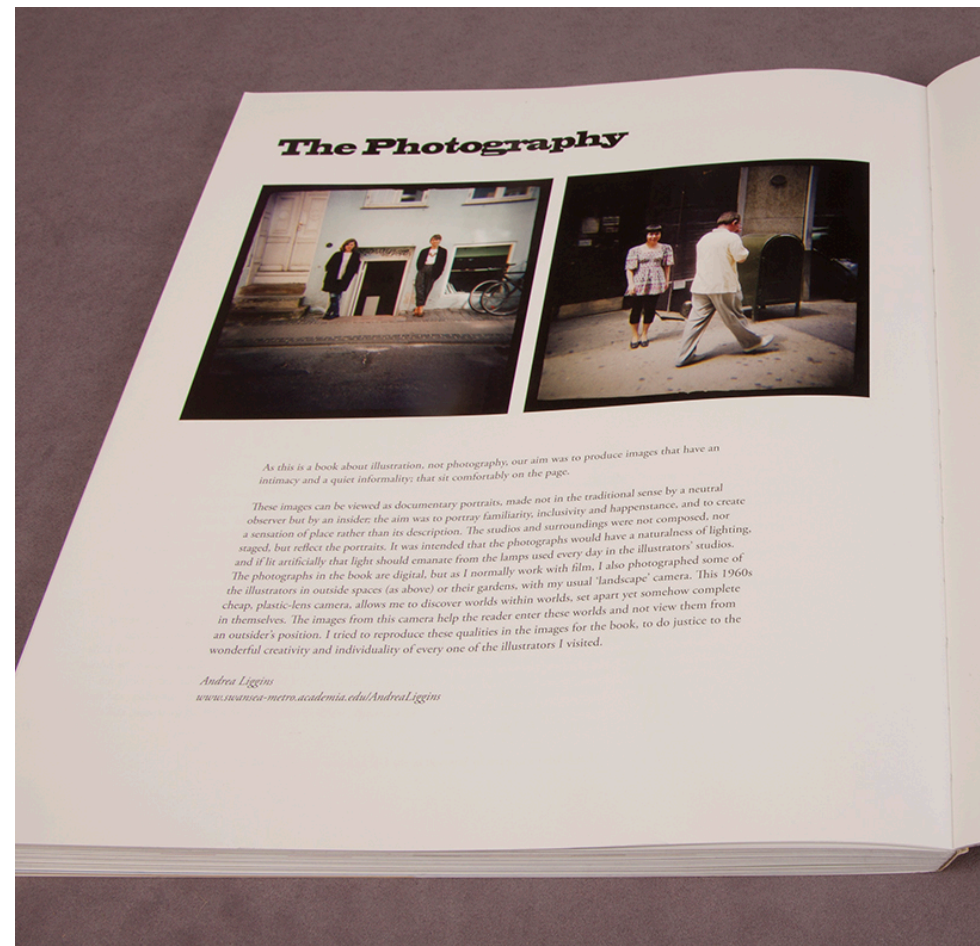
Making Great Illustration cover and acknowledgement page



Making Great Illustration Xavier Mariscal and two photographs of his studio space for Series One



Making Great Illustration Xavier Mariscal, Hvass and Hannibal, and Emma Dibben for Series One



Series Two examples in *Making Great Illustration*

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Ronald and Monica Searle, France, *Series Two*



Rob Ryan, London, *Series Two*

CCQ Features
55th Venice Biennale
The Starry Messenger



The Starry Messenger – Bedwyr Williams in Venice

Wales is at the Venice Biennale again this year with Bedwyr Williams' exhibition, *The Starry Messenger*, which explores the relationships between stargazing and the individual, the cosmos, and the role of the amateur in a professional world. **Nia Roberts** talks to him about the pleasures and pressure of representing a nation:

Portrait: **Andrea Liggins**

Bedwyr Williams is the Welsh artist participating at the Wales in Venice/ Cymru yn Fenis Collateral Event of the 55th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, in a project jointly curated by MGSTYN and Oriol Davies and supported by the Arts Council of Wales. www.artscouncilofwales.org.uk/artists/wales/venice

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Nia Roberts: Six months is a long time for an exhibition to be running, especially when it's so far away and there's not much contact with the exhibition once it's opened. Does this feel strange after such an intense period of preparation?

Bedwyr Williams: It is a long time and I can't stop thinking of the investigators having to be with it for long periods, maybe getting fed up with it. It reminds me of this German boy who moved into our street when I was a kid in Old Colwyn. If we paid him he would crap in a nearby building site called Measodwbank. The 'bulld-up' was huge, cutting the bargain and then everyone walking to the spot to watch the deed. We wouldn't go back there for weeks and by then it would have clipped in the sun.

NR: Did you feel extra pressure because the exhibition is on such a big stage as the Biennale in Venice and that you were 'representing' Wales, or did you go about it like any other exhibition?

BW: There was pressure but I put the 'Biennale' thing to the back of my mind and tried to enjoy the experience. There aren't huge expectations placed on Wales and if we weren't there the art-world wouldn't be overly worried, but this is a good thing as it takes the pressure off. >>



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Continuing portrait work: Bedwyr Williams, CCQ Arts Journal, Issue 1, Autumn 2013