

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

October 5, 2006

Trent Parke & Narelle Autio

Filed under: [artists](#), [artists & family](#) — alecsothblog @ 9:02 am



Jem, 6am ©Trent Parke

My buddy (and fellow Magnum associate) [Trent Parke](#) and his wife [Narelle Autio](#) are photographers doing fantastic work in Australia. Trent and Narelle have one child, Jem, and another on the way any day.

Last June at the Magnum annual meeting, Trent showed me a book dummy for his new project. It is absolutely stunning. But what is even more remarkable is that he took most of the pictures while his child tagged along.

Trent recently wrote me about his experiences as a photographer/parent:

I used to shoot pretty much every day or any spare moment. Narelle and I gave up any social life we had to be able to continue doing our personal work. Being a street photographer means you never really stop taking pictures. And when I'm not shooting, Narelle is shooting. When Jem came along it changed everything. Both our parents and families live in different states and as we don't have any friends with children here, there is no real

day off (we cant afford the ridiculous prices of childcare). So there was only one real option if I wanted to keep taking pictures and spend time with my son. Push a stroller as well as take pictures.

Jem hates our two bedroom dogbox flat and loves being outside, so when the light gets right we head out. I spend an hour or so shooting and when the light goes we head to the nearest park. He gets a tour and then gets to play somewhere different at the end of it so it works out ok. I've missed some great pictures along the way, but I have also managed to knock a few good ones off that I wouldn't have had any chance of taking had we been at home. It has completely changed the way I work. But I actually think it's for the better.

11 Comments

1. I have a commercial photographer friend who was Mr. Mom and also had his personal work. He took his daughter along and by the time she was five she was reminding him to get a new cable release or going to the fridge to get film. She became a wonderful assistant. Of course she was a very bright little girl.

Comment by [Billie](#) — October 5, 2006 @ [9:49 am](#)

2. I enjoy all of your posts, but in particular as a new father (11 month old boy) and photography student, aspiring photographer, I'm really getting a lot out of these father vs. photographer posts.

Comment by [Tarsh](#) — October 5, 2006 @ [9:50 am](#)

3. I saw some of Trent Parkes work when I was in Sydney Dec 2005, nice stuff indeed.

Comment by [Theodore Williams](#) — October 5, 2006 @ [2:34 pm](#)

4. You can see some of Narelle's work on her In-Public site: in-public.com/NarelleAutio. Some fabulous photos.

Comment by [Luke](#) — October 5, 2006 @ [7:41 pm](#)

5. You can find nicer galleries of Trent Parkes' work (without the magnum watermarks and bigger with a bit less aggressive sharpening)) on [this page](#) on in-public, a website dedicated to street photography.

Comment by [raul](#) — October 5, 2006 @ [9:56 pm](#)

6. Excellent post – while I am young and a family is far from my immediate plans, your series on the parenting/family “vs.” art/journalism dilemma is enlightening and thoughtful. Parke (and Autio) are long term favorites of mine – in fact, Parke's pictures of his wife and his son's birth are amazing testaments to photography much less to the personal experiences of fatherhood and marriage. Please keep up the good work both with the camera and with the pen (i.e. keyboard).

PS- and it troubles me greatly to bore with a technical question, but it is of the brain-teasing variety for my good friend and I — do you have any idea which format Parke was shooting with for his latest long series on the Magnum site (of which this picture of his son Jem, and the book, seem to be a part)? We cannot figure it out.. the pictures stand for themselves, of course, but the

process is alluding us

Comment by [Matt](#) — October 6, 2006 @ [2:46 am](#)

7. I saw the Minutes to Midnight dummy back in June. It was phenomenal – do you know when it's being published?

Comment by [colin](#) — October 6, 2006 @ [4:06 am](#)

8. when people come to me and ask how to initiate in documentary photography i always say to them: start by taking photographs inside your family, take time to see what always was in front of you and you didn't notice, then you will be surprised by yours and after that try to be accept in others lifes.

Comment by [nelson d'aires](#) — October 14, 2006 @ [10:58 am](#)

9. Hey, Alex, since Trent is your buddy, next time you talk to him, will you ask him where I can get a copy of "Dream/Life?"

Comment by [Steve](#) — October 22, 2007 @ [3:19 pm](#)

10. My experience is similar to Trent's. Having two years old son and taking photographs is a very interesting thing to do.

Comment by [Samo](#) — October 28, 2007 @ [6:40 am](#)

11. From what I saw from his Magnum video's and also from the pictures I saw at his Exhibitions, I'd say it's a Mamiya 7 he uses for his colour slide shots. For the Dream/Life stuff he uses an M6, cause it says so at the end of the books.

Cheers,

-Tim

Comment by [Tim Power](#) — February 10, 2008 @ [8:27 am](#)