

Martin Edwards

photography

El Busta's Travelling Photography Studio

El Busta's is a street photographic studio which uses an old fashioned camera and our portable darkroom to produce 'real' one-off photos done the traditional way. Participants can see the whole process in action, which only takes a few minutes from taking the photo to the finished print, and can then take away a unique hand-made portrait.

We also put digital copies of the photos in an online gallery which people can see after the event, and which provides a lasting archive of those who took part, be they local or visitors.

This is some background on the idea behind El Busta's, and why we think it would be suitable for festivals, exhibitions and for engaging for the interest of the public.

The British seaside has a tradition of itinerant photographers, as outlined in this blog:

we-english.co.uk/blog/?p=246

In Spain and Latin America, the itinerant photographer took the form the 'minutero' or minute-man, who used a portable camera with a built-in darkroom to produce affordable street portraits. Here's a link to a video of one still working in Madrid:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2Eh7G64_Ao&feature=related

Both these forms of photography are now all but extinct, in the digital age it is so easy for people to make their own portraits on holiday, and high street studios have become more affordable.

It is really because this form of photography is now rarely seen that we have revived the minutero as a way of engaging the public with street photography again.

On the one hand, this is very traditional and might appear to have to have no place in contemporary art, but the 'retro' style of the camera and process, along with a revival of interest in film photography and the darkroom, gives it a fresh currency.

Older members of the public may recall seeing street portraitists in action, while younger people find the event novel and fascinating.

We don't just take photos, but we also show people our working methods and explain the process of going from camera to print, and each participant gets to take away a unique image of themselves, often as a group with friends and family.

We also copy the negatives after the event and create an online gallery of the photographs, which allows people to browse all the portraits made over the course of the event. If anybody wants a digital copy of their portrait, to print, use on their Facebook page etc, we can email them one for a nominal fee.

Here is a link to one such gallery, and another to a video of us at work:

www.martinedwardsphotography.co.uk/galleries/semanacultural

www.martinedwardsphotography.co.uk/photoboosths/elbusta.html

Thus El Busta's is part performance, part studio, part workshop and part archive.

El Busta's has been to a number of festivals and locations in the Bristol area and the South West, including Bristol University's 'Semana Cultural', the Bristol Festival of Photography, the Brisfest music festival and the August Atelier at Spacex Arts Centre, Exeter.

Email us at: elbusta@btinternet.com or phone us on: 07749 226609