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Access and the documentary photographic archive : a case study

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ACCESS AND THE DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE: A CASE STUDY

by

Sara Ferguson

A thesis project

presented to Ryerson University and George Eastman House International Museum of

Photography and Film

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Masters of Art

in the Program of

Photographic Preservation and Collections Management

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2006

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ACCESS AND THE DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE: A CASE STUDY

Masters of Art, 2006

Sara Ferguson

Photographic Preservation and Collections Management

Ryerson University/George Eastman House

ABSTRACT

The thesis project in this report describes the appropriate physical and intellectual arrangement of an archive of documentary photography. Using the Fifty Crows International Fund for Documentary Photography (IFDP) Archive as a case study, the project was undertaken with the goal of organizing the collection so that it would function as an accessible archive of both photographic and written materials. This included physically re-organizing the materials within the archive, developing a database, and creating catalogue records for archive materials in the database. Decisions regarding the project were made by myself and based on the goals of Fifty Crows as communicated to me by Executive Director Andy Patrick and Program Director Lillian Sizemore. The project took place over fourteen weeks beginning in May of 2006 at the Fifty Crows gallery in San Francisco, California.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Lillian Sizemore, Andy Patrick and the Fifty Crows Board of Directors for the opportunity to undertake this project. Their passion and commitment to the field of documentary photography and social change has been a great inspiration. In addition, I would like to thank Sean Corcoran for his guidance throughout the course of the project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Project Background	1
State of the IFDP Archive Prior to Re-organization	5
Physical Arrangement of Prints, Slides and Supporting Documentation	7
The IFDP Archive Database	13
Conclusion	17
Appendix	18
Illustrations	22

Introduction: Project Background

Documentary photographers, committed to a long term engagement with their subject, have a long history of inspiring social change. However, in today's fast paced market of news and media, it is difficult for contemporary documentary photographers to find appropriate venues in which to preserve, archive and showcase their work. Traditional formats such as publications and exhibitions offer limited space in which to make truthful and convincing statements. In many instances documentary photographers explore controversial topics. Often the imagery depicts physical violence and emotionally disturbing situations, causing editors and curators to shy away for fear of offending sponsors and the public who support their institutions. Because of the social importance of this work, it is these photographers that the Fifty Crows Foundation serves to promote. Established in October of 2001, the foundation supports documentary photographers by expanding the distribution of their work and encouraging community action. As a complement to traditional methods of publication and exhibition, Fifty Crows attempts to reach a diverse audience by utilizing television, film and the World Wide Web.

A fundamental component of Fifty Crows' mission is management of the International Fund for Documentary Photography (IFDP). Founded in 1989 as an enterprise of *Mother Jones* magazine, the Fund provides monetary grants to winners of an annual competition. The essays submitted for the grant competition are from projects in a photographer's career that he or she has begun and hope to explore further. The work is varied in subject matter and comes from all corners of the world, providing an international viewpoint on a variety of social issues. Received directly from the hands of the photographer, the archive consists of a print collection, a slide

collection, and related written documentation supporting the photographic materials. The IFDP Archive was acquired by Fifty Crows in October, 2001. Nearly two-hundred photographers are currently represented in the archive. For each year of the IFDP grant competition, beginning in 1990, a number of photographers have been incorporated into the archive among four categories: Winner, Finalist, Project of Note, and Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. Normally three photographers are named Winners each year. In some years as many as thirty Finalists are selected. Although finalists receive no financial award, their work has also been incorporated into the archive. In recent years, a small number of photographers whose work is relevant to the mission of Fifty Crows have been identified as Projects of Note, and their entries are also integrated. In some years, while under the management of *Mother Jones*, the IFDP accepted nominations from the photographic community for a Lifetime Achievement Award winner.

In addition to providing financial support to mid-career photographers, a goal of Fifty Crows was to create a publicly accessible archive of the work funded by the IFDP. This archive would provide a location in which the work can reside, evolve, and be accessed. In addition, Fifty Crows attempts to build long term relationships with photographers, enhancing the archive by following their careers in addition to direct participation with the IFDP.

Keeping these goals in mind, the thesis project, which I have developed in collaboration with Fifty Crows, included re-organizing the physical materials within the archive, the development of a database, and entering catalogue records of the photographic materials into the database. An important element of the project has been cross referencing all of the materials relating to each photographic essay: namely the prints, slides, digital files, published materials, and supporting documents submitted by each photographer upon entering the grant competition.

While cataloguing records will continue to be updated and expanded, the photographic essays represented within the IFDP Archive are now accessible through a searchable database. The database refers users not only to photographic materials in the archive, but also to other sources of information that enrich one's experience of each photographer's work and the subjects that he or she has addressed and documented. In addition, photographic materials have been arranged in a manner that is more practical for a working archive. These archival materials now greatly enhance Fifty Crows' growing collection of books, periodicals, DVD's, and videos relating to documentary photographers and social issues addressed through the medium of photography. Fifty Crows currently has gallery space in downtown San Francisco and has established regular hours in which exhibitions and the research library are open to the public. At this time the IFDP Archive is accessible by appointment only.

State of the IFDP Archive Prior to Re-organization

Because of changes in management throughout the history of the IFDP, there has not been a consistent approach to the formation of the archive. Therefore, before assessing an appropriate method of physical arrangement, it was important to conduct a preliminary inventory of the photographic materials. At the time of this case study the IFDP archive consisted of approximately 1,500 photographic prints and 2,800 slides. The majority of prints in the archive are silver gelatin fiber and RC prints, although some color processes are included. In more recent years of the IFDP digital prints have been introduced. Prior to the start of this thesis project, prints were stored in archival print boxes and arranged chronologically by competition year. (See Illustrations 1 and 2) In many cases the prints themselves had no signatures or labels, and IFDP documentation had to be researched in order to identify the photographer. In addition, attention had not necessarily been paid to the arrangement and sequence of the images. Because Fifty Crows curates exhibitions for their gallery space, many prints had been pulled from their various storage boxes and remained either matted or matted and framed at the start of the project. Transparencies were kept in three-ring binders, which were then stored in large plastic bins. (See Illustrations 3 and 4) While the binders themselves were labeled with the date range of their contents, slide pages and individual slides were not consistently labeled with photographer names. The order of the slides, as with the prints, did not necessarily follow the order prescribed by the photographer. Documentation in support of the grant competition had previously been separated and were stored in file folders for many of the photographers in the archive. However a substantial amount of documentation regarding the essays remained stored in banker boxes and

required sorting and filing. (See Illustrations 5 and 6)

In most cases, each photographer's photographic essay exists in both print and slide format. However, in many cases the essay is not fully represented in each format. Under the management of *Mother Jones*, print submissions were normally copied into slide format for inclusion in the archive and the prints returned to the photographer. In instances where the photographer's work was desired for exhibitions sponsored by *Mother Jones*, images were selected by the venue and the prints were supplied by the photographer specifically for display. Often these exhibition prints were then added to the archive. In other cases, a photographic essay may exist as a set of "entry prints", those prints submitted for the competition, as well as a full set of "gallery prints" provided by the photographer and intended for exhibition. Since coming under the management of the Fifty Crows Foundation in 2001, a standard archiving procedure has been implemented. In addition to digital files, slides or printed work submitted for judging, winners and finalists are now asked to submit a complete set of prints for the archive,

Physical Arrangement of Prints, Slides and Supporting Documentation

In addition to gaining an understanding of the physical materials housed in the archive, it was imperative to identify a clear purpose for the collection in order to determine what arrangement would function best. Decisions regarding the physical arrangement and housing have been based on the documentary nature of the work and the desire to allow access to the material objects for educational purposes. Because of the desire to focus on the work of individual photographers rather than on the history of the IFDP as a competition, or on subject categories, the initial proposal was made to re-order the archive alphabetically. However, practical issues needed to be considered. In the case of the IFDP archive, it was not realistic to house the work from each photographer individually. While many photographers have enough work to justify separation into single boxes, some photographers are represented by less than five photographs. Because this is a growing archive with the work of new photographers added every competition year, it was not practical to consolidate materials into alphabetically arranged boxes. Doing so would necessitate a constant re-ordering of archive materials each time the work of a new photographer was incorporated. In an effort to balance accessibility with practical and aesthetic concerns, and in keeping financial limitations in mind, the decision was made to keep the existing chronological arrangement. (See Illustration 7)

Once this decision was made, proper housing issues needed to be addressed. Because a variety of print processes and print sizes will be stored together in one box, the decision was made to sub-house the work of each photographer within customized archival portfolios. Since the work of each photographer is normally consistent in size and material, sub-housing provides

adequate protection while still allowing all materials from one photographer to be easily accessed. (See Appendix 1) Due to the large number of prints and their stable condition it was decided that it was unnecessary to sleeve the majority of prints individually. Cases in which the archive holds a variety of print sizes by one photographer have been addressed on a case by case basis. When necessary, more than one portfolio is utilized. All portfolios are then identified with name of photographer, competition year, project title, number, such as "Portfolio 1 of 2", and arranged by size within a box. There are several instances in which a photographer is represented in more than one IFDP competition, typically as a finalist one year and as a winner in a later year. In these cases the entry documentation has been researched to determine if the winning work is from one project or separate projects. In the case of distinct projects, they are kept separate and arranged in the archive according to the year in which they were entered. In those cases when one project has placed as a finalist in one year and subsequently placed as a winner in another year, all prints have been combined and archived according to the year in which the photographer placed as a winner. Housing all the work from a project together gives the project more clarity, allowing one to gain a deeper insight into its development.

Similarly, addressing the sequence of images is an important element in regards to print arrangement. When the photographer has identified a clear order to the images, this sequence has been respected and kept intact. If it is not apparent from the photographic material and the supporting documentation that there is an intended sequence, an arbitrary order has been assigned. Each print has been given an inventory number that serves as a unique identifier. The number consists of two parts: the last name of the photographer, followed by the number of the print within its sequence. For example, "Goded01" indicates that this particular print is the first

print in the photographic essay by Maya Goded. This inventory number is penciled on the print verso and corresponds to a print record in the archive database.

Because it is important in terms of research to distinguish between an arbitrary order and an order as intended by the photographer, the inventory number may contain a third element that serves to make this distinction. In the inventory number “BenchallalFC01”, “FC” indicates that Fifty Crows has applied an arbitrary order to the photographic essay and that this is the first print in the sequence. In this example, the photographic essay by Nadia Benchallal consists of six prints that have been given an arbitrary order. They have been numbered sequentially and incrementally: “BenchallalFC01”, followed by “BenchallalFC02”, “BenchallalFC03”, “BenchallalFC04”, “BenchallalFC05” and “BenchallalFC06”. In contrast, are cases in which the photographer has determined the of the prints but the IFDP does not have a complete set of the photographs. In these cases the prints are numbered but not incrementally. For example, the archive holds twelve prints by Abir Abdullah. The prints have been numbered on the verso by the photographer beginning with “1” and ending with “20”. Yet their inventory numbers are: “Abdullah01, 02, 03,06,07,09,12,13,14,17,19 and 20”. By assigning an inventory number that corresponds to the numbering system of the photographer, it is clear when looking at the prints or the database that prints “04,05,08,10,11,15,16 and 18” are missing from the archives holdings. Because this is a growing archive and the photographers are still living, it is possible that at some point the missing images from a sequence may be acquired. Using the numbering system described above will allow such materials to be easily integrated without disrupting any numbering sequence.

In order to impose further meaning into the numbering system, I developed a cataloguing

refinement that I have termed “versioning”. There are often duplicate sets of materials for each photographer, such as twenty prints entered for the competition and twenty prints created specifically for the archive. Because the ability to compare and contrast all materials offers important clues to a photographer’s working methods, it was decided that all prints, regardless of their materiality, would be included in the archive. However, because the physical dimensions of duplicate prints typically vary greatly, they will often be housed in separate portfolios within the same box. Rather than assigning different inventory numbers to prints made from the same negative, they have been given numbers that identify them as versions of one another. For example, Sophia Evans is represented by two identical sets of her photographic essay *Dirty Oil Business*, each set consists of twenty prints. Rather than numbering each print incrementally 1-40, they are numbered 1-20 twice and each set is given a unique version number that not only refers to its identity as a duplicate but also its status as submission or exhibition print when this can be determined. Because it may not always be clear which print is meant to serve which purpose, other criteria for distinguishing between versions includes print process, size and quality. The later version number will always refer to the print that is most appropriate for exhibition purposes. The data table view of all prints by Sophia Evans illustrates the versioning system. (See Appendix 2) The smaller inkjet prints are numbered as the first version (in this case the first print is Evans01.1), and all larger silver gelatin RC prints as the second (Evans01.2). Note that “Evans12” is not a duplicate.

The IFDP Archive slide collection provides the most complete record of individual projects. Because the slide collection included numerous duplicates, the main task in the organization of this material was to consolidate each essay into one set of slides that

approximates the sequence of the prints. This allows the slides to act as a record for any missing prints in cases where an intended order has been established. The slides have been numbered and housed in archival binder boxes. The binder boxes are arranged chronologically by competition year to correspond with the print collection, and are housed adjacent to the prints at Fifty Crows' gallery and archive space. (See Illustration 8)

The third component of the IFDP Archive consists of documents written in support of a photographer's submission to the grant competition. This includes the entry form, project statement and the photographer's biography. Additional documents may include caption information, correspondence, and curriculum vitae. These documents are organized in file folders, arranged alphabetically by the photographer's last name, and held in file cabinets in Fifty Crows administrative offices. (See Illustration 9, 10 and 11) Each photographer's folder is labeled with his or her full name, the contest year in which he or she placed and identifies him or her as a winner, finalist, project of note, or lifetime achievement award recipient. (See Illustration 12) If a photographer has placed in the competition multiple times he or she will have a folder for each entry. Because the print and slide collections are arranged chronologically, the parallel filing system also serves as a quick way to locate the photographic material within the archive. In addition to project related materials, the files also contain financial records, contact information, and various other materials of a confidential nature. Therefore these folders are limited to use by Fifty Crows staff and all documentation regarding a photographic essay and a photographer's competition entry is now available within the database for public access.

Pg 12

The IFDP Archive Database

The goal of the database was to create consistent, authoritative, and searchable records of the physical materials in the archive. The database software used in the project was Database Professional. Database Professional has the basic capabilities of all database software making it an affordable option for the project. The software does not function as an image database, meaning it is not possible to import digital image files into individual records. At this time digital image files exist for approximately half of the photographic materials in the archive. Because image records are an important feature of an archive database, a viable method of incorporating digital image files will need to be explored in tandem with a digitization project in the future.

The first step in establishing the database was to design a template. It was important to keep in mind how the database will be searched by both staff and the public when determining which fields are necessary for the database records. Each data record for the IFDP Archive consists of two component parts: a Photographer Record and a Print Record. The Photographer Record includes all relevant information regarding the photographer's essay and his or her entry into the grant competition. Once the Photographer Record is established, it is duplicated and incorporated into a record for each print in the essay. (See Appendix 3) Because the print record portion of the database records information taken directly from the print as a material object such as print dimensions, print process, and any written information transcribed from the photograph, "n/a" is entered in any text fields and drop down fields are left blank. (See Appendix 4)

Another aspect considered in designing a template was the need for consistent

cataloguing procedures. This will effect the types of fields included in the template. It is necessary to control the form and content of the information included in a record in order to keep the data consistent from record to record. For example, when entering data into a new record, a user is required to select the photographer name from a drop down menu. This prevents inputting variations of the name that could prevent access to all relevant records when searching the database. Similarly, because the archive is international in scope, it was important to apply a standard format for recording dates within the database. Regarding a photographer's date of birth, it would be unclear when reading 01/11/1974 if this meant November first or January 11th. By incorporating a drop down menu, a cataloguer has no alternative but to format the date as "January 11, 1974". The template has been designed with scroll box fields for project summaries and photographer biographies. Whenever possible this information is taken directly from materials submitted by the photographer and is kept in the photographer's own words. In addition, the print record portion of the template contains scroll box fields for captions and inscriptions. Inscriptions are transcribed directly from the print and are entered using standard methods of transcription.

Because the IFDP Archive will be acquiring new materials annually, it is recommended that a practical system for integrating new material be developed in order to keep the archive as current as possible. A Photographer Record should be established immediately following judging and all physical entry materials catalogued and housed shortly after the competition. While more and more photographers are entering the competition with digital files, it is still recommended that Photographer Records are established for those who place in the competition prior to receiving any physical materials. Because each photographer is asked to donate additional prints

to the archive, these materials should be catalogued and housed as they are received. Any previous catalogue records for the entry materials will need to be updated to reflect the addition of further prints and version designations will need to be added to the inventory numbers in both the catalogue records and on the physical prints.

While the archive's library materials were not catalogued as part of this project, any publications about or by a photographer in the IFDP Archive have been noted in the "publications" checkbox within the Photographer Record portion of the database. Therefore these fields will need to be updated as new publications are added to the library.

pg 16

Conclusion

There are many reasons for appreciating photography and many insights that the medium can offer into the human condition. It is unfortunate that so many voices remain unheard. Through the physical arrangement and intellectual organization of the IFDP Archive it is now possible to provide access to the work of these photographers and thereby maximize the variety of ways that their photographs can tell stories and share histories. The IFDP Archive is unique both in its scope geographically and in the depth that it offers. The photographers, who are represented within the IFDP Archive, spend much of their lives exploring their subjects. These storytellers require and deserve the kind of space and permanence that is often not available for contemporary documentary work. I hope that by making this material accessible it now has a home with open doors.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Customized four flap portfolios.

Appendix 2: Print records in the data table format. Inventory numbers for Evans' prints are an example of the versioning system utilized. Note that "Evans12" is not a duplicate print. All first versions are smaller inkjet prints and second versions are larger silver gelatin RC prints

Photographer	Inventory #:	Print Dimensions (cm.):	Image Dimensions (cm.):	Process	digital file	duplicate print
Evans, Sophia	Evans01.1	29.7 x 42	23.7 x 35.5	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans01.2	30.5 x 40.5	24.7 x 36.8	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans02.1	42 x 29.7	35.5 x 23.7	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans02.2	40.5 x 30.5	36.8 x 24.7	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans03.1	29.7 x 42	23.7 x 35.5	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans03.2	30.5 x 40.5	24.7 x 36.8	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans04.1	29.7 x 42	23.7 x 35.5	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans04.2	30.5 x 40.5	24.7 x 36.8	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans05.1	29.7 x 42	23.7 x 35.5	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans05.2	30.5 x 40.5	24.7 x 36.8	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans06.1	29.7 x 42	23.7 x 35.5	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans06.2	30.5 x 40.5	24.7 x 36.8	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans07.1	29.7 x 42	23.7 x 35.5	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans07.2	30.5 x 40.5	24.7 x 36.8	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans08.1	29.7 x 42	23.7 x 35.5	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans08.2	30.5 x 40.5	24.7 x 36.8	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans09.1	29.7 x 42	23.7 x 35.5	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans09.2	30.5 x 40.5	24.7 x 36.8	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans10.1	42 x 29.7	35.5 x 23.7	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans10.2	40.5 x 30.5	36.8 x 24.7	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans11.1	42 x 29.7	35.5 x 23.7	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans11.2	40.5 x 30.5	36.8 x 24.7	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans12	42 x 29.7	35.5 x 23.7	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans13.1	42 x 29.7	35.5 x 23.7	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans13.2	40.5 x 30.5	36.8 x 24.7	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans14.1	42 x 29.7	35.5 x 23.7	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans14.2	40.5 x 30.5	36.8 x 24.7	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans15.1	29.7 x 42	23.7 x 35.5	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans15.2	30.5 x 40.5	24.7 x 36.8	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans16.1	29.7 x 42	23.7 x 35.5	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans16.2	30.5 x 40.5	24.7 x 36.8	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans17.1	42 x 29.7	35.5 x 23.7	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans17.2	40.5 x 30.5	36.8 x 24.7	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans18.1	42 x 29.7	35.5 x 23.7	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans18.2	40.5 x 30.5	36.8 x 24.7	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans19.1	42 x 29.7	35.5 x 23.7	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans19.2	40.5 x 30.5	36.8 x 24.7	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans20.1	29.7 x 42	23.7 x 35.5	inkjet print	☒	☒
Evans, Sophia	Evans20.2	30.5 x 40.5	24.7 x 36.8	silver gelatin rc	☒	☒

Appendix 3: Sample database record. Because some database fields are scroll boxes, their contents are partially hidden in this view.

Abdullah, Abir

Inventory #: Abdullah01

Print Record

Print Dimensions (cm.): 20.5 x 30

Image Dimensions (cm.): 19 x 28.4

Mount Dimensions (cm) :

Print Process: silver gelatin rc

Condition: Excellent

Identifying Mark: label

Caption

Freedom Fighters rest or watch TV on the floor, the way they spend the majority of their time at the Freedom Fighter's Rest House at College Gate, Mohammadpur, Dkaka.

Inscription

printed in ink on label, verso:

1. Freedom Fighters taking a rest on the floor. Some of them watching Tv. This is how they spend their time at the "Freedom Fighters' Rest

Tracking

Date

Activity Type

Regarding

Related Media

☐ duplicate print

☒ slide

☒ digital file

☐ CD

☐ photocopy

Photographer Record

Project Title: *Freedom Fighters (War Veterans of Bangladesh Liberation War, 1971)*

Project Country: Bangladesh

2001

Winner

Country of Passport: Bangladesh

Region: Asia/Pacific

D.O.B.: 20 February 1971

Supporting Documents

☒ entry form

☒ full statement

☒ bio

☒ correspondence

☐ publications

Project Summary

"You remember us for only two or three days a year. The rest of our time is spent on this floor in turmoil and illness," said Mojai, a veteran of the war of independence of Bangladesh, now a resident of the rehabilitation center for war veterans. Before the war, the lives of many people in Bangladesh had been based on dependence and ignorance. Ironically, those who fought the Pakistani Army to change this scenario have now become dependent and highly ignored.

Photographer Bio

Abir Abdullah worked as a freelance photographer from 1994 to 1995 and is currently working as a staff photographer at Drik Picture Library in Bangladesh. He was recently assigned a project (Pleasure of Life) by the World Press Photo Foundation and is developing a photo essay on air pollution in the city of Dhaka.

Notes

Captions have been edited from print labels

Appendix 4: Sample database record for project existing only in slide format. Because many of the fields are scroll boxes, the contents are partially hidden in this view.

Bazan, Ernesto

Inventory #: Bazan03

Print Record

Print Dimensions (cm.): n/a

Image Dimensions (cm.):

Mount Dimensions (cm) :

Print Process:

Condition:

Identifying Mark:

Caption

Drive-In, American Style, Havana

Inscription

n/a-slide only

Tracking
Date

Activity Type

Regarding

Related Media

☐ duplicate print

☒ slide

☐ digital file

☐ CD

☐ photocopy

Photographer Record

Project Title: *"The Special Period" in Cuba*

Project Country: Cuba

1996

Winner

Country of Passport: Italy

Region: Europe

D.O.B.:

Supporting Documents

☒ entry form

☒ full statement

☒ bio

☒ correspondence

☐ publications

Project Summary

My work in Cuba examines the unique historical moment that the island has been experiencing since the collapse of the Soviet Bloc.

With my photographs I want to document both the Cubans' struggle in this uncertain future and the spiritual strength with which they attempt to escape with dignity and courage from the degradation of their daily life.

Photographer Bio

The photographs of Italian photographer Ernesto Bazan explore the shattered promises of the Revolution in post-communist Cuba. Since the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, Cuba has been confronted with an uncertain future, an unstable economy and a widening gap between the haves and have-nots. The egalitarian utopia of Castro's Cuba has been turned on its head: "When a doctor earns the equivalent of \$6 a month and a whore earns \$50 in an evening, then the

Notes

ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1: IFDP Archive prints prior to re-housing.

Illustration 2: Portion of Archive prints after preliminary inventory.

Illustration 3: IFDP slide collection prior to re-housing.

Illustration 4: IFDP slide collection prior to re-housing.

Illustration 5: A portion of the IFDP Archive written documents prior to re-organization.

Illustration 6: Additional written documents and photographic material prior to re-organization.

Illustration 7: Archive prints after rehousing.

Illustration 8: Slide collection after re-housing.

Illustration 9: Fifty Crows gallery space after written documents have been sorted and filed.

Illustration 10: IFDP
Archive documents after re-
organization.

Illustration 11: Photographer files in order alphabetically by last name.

Illustration 12: A photographer's file after contents have been consolidated and re-organized.

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