

MARK, from page 8

the people who create an image from the street. You have to think on your feet. It's hard to do. That's why I practice it all the time.

A.W.: *You say that documentary journalism has declined as cable television and reality TV has become more popular. What do you think draws people to reality TV?*

M.H.M.: It's not real. But it seems real. It has built in drama. Sometimes I believe photography about life has drama, but it's not as big a kick right away. People are more interested in what's instant.

A.W.: *Do you think it is reversible?*

M.H.M.: No. I've seen trends come and go. Nothing reverses itself. When documentary started going away, people said it would come back and it didn't. Things are so dependent on commercialization.

A.W.: *What do you think the power of documentary is?*

M.H.M.: What we go for are iconic moments. If you succeed in making an iconic moment, it's etched in our memory for ever. Think of the photograph of the girl who had been burned by napalm running away from the soldiers in Vietnam. It did have an impact in us leaving Vietnam. It brought the horror and

reality back in a way that no clip of film could do.

A.W.: *How do you define an iconic moment?*

M.H.M.: An iconic moment is a photograph that we remember that is etched in our brain. It somehow changes our perceptions of things or confirms our perception of the world around us.

A.W.: *How do you create an iconic moment?*

M.H.M.: It happens in front of you, if you're lucky enough.

A.W.: *Have you ever been tempted to interfere with your subject's lives when you're documenting them, if you see something troubling, potentially illegal?*

M.H.M.: I never meddle. You're there, and you're an observer. I've never gone to the authorities.

(In 1971, Mark spent 6 weeks living in Oregon's only state-run psychiatric facility, Oregon State Hospital while she photographed the filming of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." While there, she photographed the female patients living in Ward 81, the only locked ward for women at the hospital. All of the women living in that ward were considered extremely dangerous to themselves and others.)

A.W.: *Tell me about living in the Oregon State Hospital for six weeks.*

M.H.M.: That was good. It was haunted. I swear it was haunted. I heard sounds of people walking above me. I stayed in an abandoned part. It was right next to (Ward 81). I was allowed to leave, and the women would get really jealous if I were leaving. "Are you going to McDonald's?" they would ask. It was a cell, and I could lock myself in. One night, I forgot to do it, and I woke up, and there was a man there. That was really scary.

A.W.: *In January 2007, the United States Department of Justice released a report on the Oregon State Hospital concluding that patients received poor care and treatment. Did you see any hint of this when you were there?*

M.H.M.: No. When I was there, that was not the case. Believe me, you would have seen it in the pictures. There were some people who worked there who were better than others. But you'll see that everywhere. It was the same in the social services in Calcutta — some social workers were fantastic. It was immaculately clean. I didn't see anything that was sadistic. A lot of (the female patients) were on new drugs. They had a dance once a week. They went outside into the yard. They went out swimming. The food was okay.

I tried to go back (in the 90s). I really wanted to do a documentary story about the adolescent ward there. I almost got in. But whoever the doctor or head nurse or whoever was said no.

A.W.: *Did they give a reason?*

M.H.M.: No. She just said no. That is still a story I would like to do.



PHOTO BY AMANDA WALDROUPE

A.W.: *If documentary becomes less frequently published and accessible to a general audience, what will be lost?*

M.H.M.: The opportunity for great photographer's images to be seen. The opportunity for people to learn about different social situations and problems.

That is a lot. The world doesn't revolve around celebrities. It's about mankind! Celebrities are only a fraction of that. You wouldn't know that looking at magazines.

A.W.: *What other stories do you look forward to telling?*

M.H.M.: I don't know yet. I haven't really decided. I have to put together my prom book book I've been working on for four years. I have to resolve that, and then I can think of other things. And I'm doing a book with the University of Texas press of unknown pictures of India and Mexico—pictures I have taken that have been less published. I am also doing a book of my students work in Mexico. Every year, I teach a workshop in Oaxaca. Once that is all done, then I can think of what else I want to do. I know I want to shoot more in the States and in Mexico.

A.W.: *It doesn't sound like you are slowing down one bit.*

M.H.M.: I love taking pictures. I haven't slowed down. I can be better than ever. I don't want to stop.

A.W.: *Why do you say you're better than ever?*

M.H.M.: I have more experience than ever. And if I have more experience than ever, than I am better than ever, and can take even better pictures. It's like playing an instrument. The more you play, the better you get.

What I want

by Julie McCurdy

If you are asking...
what I
want...

Here.
In this moment...

Mostly
I want to laugh with you
way past midnight
in that space of time
before mornings greeting finds us
and last night's passion
has exhausted us
after
you have claimed
every space of skin and
every nerve ending
I own
After
you have stretched me
past the point of beginning or ending

After that
I want to
laugh
with

my lover, my friend, my man.



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