

Visual Operator Timothy Cole talks to William about photographing the Sydney Opera House.

Written by William

1) The Sydney Opera House is probably one of the most photographed landmarks in Australia and there hasn't been many an original take on the Thing for decades. In the three photos you submitted you managed to capture it in a sea of peoples, a sea of controversy, and embedded in the reflection of another quay icon, the manly ferry. Well done. Is there a conceptual undertaking you have to commit to when trying to get an original take on it as a subject? Or do you just see it and shoot?

I have no rules when photographing other than choosing to work with people and places. The Opera House is our one great architectural masterpiece so it is handy to have as a backdrop to the moments and events at the Quay.

2) Can you tell me how you managed to get that 'No War' photo? It's absolutely stunning. What were the circumstances that led up to you nailing that shot? Was it luck did you get a tip off? By all means tell us the whole story.

March 19th was a job for me at the Quay. I was photographing a charity gig when two women walked past talking about painting the Opera House...I ran straight there...what a day.... I hung around for as long as I could...the cheer from inside the Opera House when Will and Dave were put into the police car was so fantastic...I wish they did it at night and could of walked away laughing...they raised thousands to pay the fines.

3) So what's with the focus of The Quay? What's the interest?

I've always felt excited to be at the Quay. The history, buildings and the people who go there. I also find the lack of respect to our heritage somewhat of a challenge.

4) Is there something about black and white photography that lends itself to the quay or do you use color just as frequently?

Past photographers who documented Sydney inspire me. I do like the timeless feel that B/W can give.

5) Your photos seem to explore some social commentaries on the quay. Is there anything you want to say about that?

The Quay is the soul of Sydney. When we celebrate or are in trouble we tend to congregate there. It's the birthplace of the nation. So much has happened there. It's like a sacred site.