

Intro

Hello, I'm Ed Gendron a photographer and filmmaker.

I'm writing to let you know about my presentation of my documentary photography project

"War Reenactors: Who Gets to Tell History?"

This project delves into the question of who gets to tell history and what that ultimately means. I photographed and followed WWII reenactors for about 8 years, in the hopes of understanding why someone would want to reenact war. The culminating work is an extensive photography project which conveys stories about who we are and who we think we are, but mostly about who people wish themselves to be. I've performed this presentation live, over zoom as well as live in-person. It includes approximately 50 minutes of photographs and stories that you couldn't have dreamed up, even if given years to do it.

Most recently, I gave this presentation for Vermont to a live audience. I had previously presented it over zoom, as a live-broadcast, to an online audience, and was invited back for the in person presentation.

Thank you for having a look at my project. I'm available to discuss the project more. You can contact me...

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Artist Statement

In the Reenactor Project, I photographed and followed war reenactors for years, in the hopes of discovering why someone would want to do this.

It's culminated in a large photo project and many stories about who we are - or who we think we are. But mostly about *who* people wish themselves to be.

My documentary work gives my audiences a front-row seat to the world.

Like all humanities-based work, it permits my audiences to engage with far-flung communities.

In an increasingly divided world, it allows for real dialogue between people of different beliefs, because studying the humanities draws us away from simpler ideologies.

This work teaches us, not only, who we have been & who we are, but also who we can be.

Why do I do documentary work?

It's tough work. It's very demanding, so I often ask myself that very question. But, I think that I create, in order to express the absurdities of being alive, the good and the bad.

I grew up in southwestern Virginia., far away from art museums and at that time there was no internet. Nevertheless, I loved drawing people I knew and things that would catch my eye. In college, I became a psychology major but simultaneously I broadened my artistic experiences as much as possible by taking classes and ultimately majoring in Art. As a result, I developed a broad skill set. I draw, paint, do photography, animation, and graphic design.

While still a student, I interned in the local psychiatric institution and had constant, direct experiences with the patients. Some were scary, some were touching, even funny in an unexpected way. All were unpolished, raw, and human. This is what I strive to express in my artwork. I like to joke that, at the end of my internship, I was "cured" of my desire to become a psychologist. I've pursued an artistic career ever since.

Along the way, I discovered the Surrealists and also noticed that documentary work could be every bit as strange and beautiful as the surrealists paintings I admired.

Though it's not always in the forefront of my work, there is a throughline of narrative elements in everything I do.

Artwork Samples



©Edwin Gendron 2021,
"Buy the Ticket, Take the Ride",
Documentary Photograph



©Edwin Gendron 2023,
"Opening Night",
Documentary Photograph



©Edwin Gendron 2023,
"Fifth Platoon Leader",
Documentary Photograph

Artwork Samples



©Edwin Gendron 2023,
"Reenactor Child",
Documentary Photograph



©Edwin Gendron 2023,
"Found",
Documentary Photograph



©Edwin Gendron 2023,
"Reenacted Photograph",
Documentary Photograph

Artist Bio

Ed Gendron is an independent artist, photographer, and filmmaker who currently resides in New Haven, CT. He grew up in the hills of VA and received his MFA in Film and Photography from Radford University. Initially a painter and printmaker, Ed was inspired by the stories of people whose portraits he painted, so he embarked on documentary film and photography as a way to connect with people and tell their stories. Most recently, he has documented WWII reenactors in the American South, Northeast, and Midwest culminating in a series of photographs and a feature length documentary film called *Playing Soldier* (2017). His photographic work has been selected for juried exhibits at University of North Florida, Eastern Carolina University, Artspace New Haven, and the Durham Arts Guild.



Exhibitions and Presentations

Invited Speaker/Workshops

- **Documentary Workshop: War Reenactors: Who Gets to Tell History, Vermont Humanities, Live Presentation, St Johnsbury Athenaeum, (May 2023)**
- **Documentary Workshop: War Reenactors: Who Gets to Tell History, Vermont Humanities, Online Presentation (December 2021)**
- **Filmmaking Workshop: The Art of Animation, New Haven, Ct (August 2021)**
- **Filmmaking Workshop: Animation: What Is It, Why Do It? How Are They Made? New Haven, Ct (August 2020)**

Juried and Invited Exhibitions - Photography

Some Body: Examples of the Human Form, West Hartford, CT, (February 2022)

Reenactor Moments, Solaris Film Festival, Vienna, Austria, (September 2020)

Collaboration: A Potential History of Photography (Laura Wexler, Susan Meiselas, Ariella Azoulay, Wendy Ewald, Leigh Raiford, and Sarah Fritchey, Curators), Artspace Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, (July 26 - Sept 14, 2019)

State of the Union (Jim Richardson, Juror), Photoplace Gallery, Middlebury Vermont, (January 3 - January 27, 2018)

Regarding Leisure (Alexander Diaz and Christopher W. Luhar-Trice, Jurors), University of North Florida Gallery, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida (March 5 - May 5, 2015)

9th Photographic Image Biennial Exhibition (Burk Uzzle, juror), Wellington B. Gray Gallery, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC (January 22 - February 15, 2015)

Pixel and Grain Regional Photography Exhibit (Jeff Whetstone, juror), Durham Arts Guild, Durham, NC (October 3 – November 1, 2014)

Roanoke City Art Show, Show (juried), Art Museum of Western Virginia, Roanoke, VA (2002)

Fifth Biennial Exhibition, Show (juried), Olin Gallery, Roanoke College, Salem, VA (1998)

One Person Exhibits - Photography

Come See the Crocodile Woman, XYZ Gallery, Blacksburg, VA (2003)

Grants & Awards

Ella Fountain Pratt Emerging Artists Grant, Durham Arts Council, Durham, NC (2009-10)

Best Special Effects, Progeny Motion Picture Festival (juried), Blacksburg, VA (2006)

Animation Award, Highlander Film Festival (juried), Radford, VA (2006)

Special Effects Award, Highlander Film Festival (juried), Radford, VA (2006)

Film Screenings

"Playing Soldier" (feature-length documentary film)

- **NH Docs Documentary Film Festival, Yale's Whitney Humanities Center, New Haven, CT (2018)**
- **Best Video Film and Cultural Center, Hamden, Ct (2018)**

"Fishbowl" (feature-length MFA film)

Ava Gardener Film Festival, Smithfield, NC (2008)

Lyric Theater, Blacksburg, VA (2008) "Planning Ahead" (animated short)

Blue Ridge Vision Film Festival (juried), Roanoke, VA (2006)

Progeny Motion Picture Festival (juried), Blacksburg, VA (2006)

Highlander Film Festival (juried), Radford, VA (2006) "Desideratum" (animated short)

Progeny Motion Picture Festival (juried), Blacksburg, VA (2004)

Related Motion Picture Work Experience

- **Invited Panelist, Animation Workshop, NHdocs, New Haven Ct, (2020)**
- **Cinematographer, Music Video for Thabisa Rich/Mxolisi Therealmxo Lokwe, (work in-progress)**
- **Animator, Where Are You Jay Bennett?, a Rock Documentary by Gorman Bechard**
- **Emerging Artists Grant Panel Reviewer, (Film Category) Durham Arts Council, (Fall 2014)**
- **Filmed interviews for the the Center for Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Education of NC. (Holocaust Speakers Bureau) (Spring 2014)**
- **Invited Panelist, Animation Workshop, NHdocs, New Haven Ct, (2020)**

Past Press Coverage

Daily Nutmeg Website

<https://dailynutmeg.com/2019/11/19/ed-gendron-movie-ing-up/>

Downloadable PDF

http://www.edgendron.com/uploads/2/7/0/7/27071761/daily_nutmeg_article.pdf

Contact Info

email: visodds@yahoo.com

<http://www.edgendron.com/>