

STEPHEN BULGER GALLERY

**RITA LEISTNER**

(b. 1964, Scarborough, Ontario)

**EDUCATION**

- 1999-2000 The International Center of Photography, New York  
1988-1990 M.A. Comparative Literature, The University of Toronto  
1983-1988 B.A., French, English, History, The University of Toronto

**SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 2018 *El Proyecto Edward Curtis*, Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, Puebla, Mexico  
2017 *The Tree Planters and One Tree at a Time* (video), Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto, Canada  
2016 *Buscando a Marshall McLuhan en Afganistán*, Centro de Fotografía de Montevideo, Uruguay  
*Levant Trilogy: Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, 2006 - 2015*, Fotofestival ŁÓŹ, Poland  
2015 *Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan: From Smartphone to Palladium*, The Dylan Ellis Gallery, CONTACT Photography Festival Feature Exhibition, Toronto, Canada  
*Miklat: The Bomb Shelter Project* and the short film *Miklat*, The Galleries of the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel  
2014 *Portraits-paysages de guerre: Liban*, Festival Allers-Retours, Musée Albert Kahn, Paris, France  
*Le Projet Edward Curtis*, Le Musée du Nouveau Monde, La Rochelle, France  
*À la recherche de Marshall McLuhan en Afghanistan*, Carré Amelot, La Rochelle, France  
2013 *The Edward Curtis Project*, The Great Canadian Theatre Company with The National Arts Centre of Canada, Ottawa, Canada  
*The Edward Curtis Project, Ecocentrix: Indigenous Arts, Sustainable Acts*, Presented by the Indigeneity in the Contemporary World Project, The Bargehouse, London, England.  
2010 *The Edward Curtis Project*, Feature Exhibition of the Vancouver 2010 Cultural Olympiad of the 2010 Winter Olympics, North Vancouver Museum, Canada  
2009 *The Last Lumberjacks / Les dernier bûcherons*, Gallerie Pierre Léon, Toronto, Canada  
2007 *Portraitscapes of War (1): Lebanon, 2006*, The Photo Passage at Harbourfront, Toronto, Canada  
2006 *The Women of al Rashad*, Gallery Gachet, World Mad Pride Festival, Vancouver, Canada

**SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 2018 *Canada: Art and Culture*, The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada  
*Imago Mundi—Great and North*, Onsite Gallery, Toronto, Canada  
*From Janet with Love*, World Press Photo Exhibition Digital, Amsterdam, and other cities around the world  
2017 National Film Board of Canada Legacies 150, *From Janet with Love*, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, Canada and Canadian Museum of Immigration, Halifax, Canada  
2013 *Portraits by Iconic Canadian Photographers, Maclean's Magazine*, CONTACT Photography Festival, Toronto, Canada  
2011 *Unembedded: Four Independent Photojournalists on the War in Iraq*, The Photographic Arts Federation of Turkey, Istanbul, Turkey and Sulleymaniya, Iraq  
2008 *Iraq Through the Lens of Vietnam*, The Brighton Photo Biennial, England

- Bienvenue*, La maison de la culture Frontenac, Montreal, QC
- 2007 *Know War!*, The George Eastman House International Museum of Photography, Rochester, NY
- 2006 TOURING EXHIBITION *Unembedded: Four Independent Photojournalists on the War in Iraq*, Elaine L. Jacob Gallery, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI; and Yale University, New Haven, CT; and The CONTACT Photography Festival, Lennox Contemporary, Toronto, ON; and The Photographic Gallery, New York, NY

## DIGITAL STORYTELLING

- 2017 *From Janet with Love* (“Legacies 150” Interactive) The National Film Board of Canada. photography by Rita Leistner, written by Helene Klodawsky.

## BOOKS (as sole or co-author)

- 2014 Leistner, Rita, *Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan*. Foreword by Julian Stallabrass. Bristol, England: Intellect Books, 2014.
- 2010 Clements, Marie and Rita Leistner, *The Edward Curtis Project: A Modern Picture Story*. Vancouver: Talon Books, 2010.
- 2005 Abdul-Ahad, Ghaith, Kael Alford, Thorne Anderson and Rita Leistner, *Unembedded: Four Independent Photojournalists on the War in Iraq*. Foreword by Philip Jones Griffiths. Vermont: Chelsea Green, 2005.

## SELECTED FEATURE STORIES (by)

- 2018 Leistner, Rita, “The Tree Planters,” in Hutton, Jane, Daniel Ibañez and Kiel Moe eds. *Wood Urbanism*. New York: Actar, 2018.
- Leistner, Rita, “Heroes of the North: What Rita Leistner’s photographs of tree planters tell us about Canada,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 2018 (print and on-line)
- 2014 Leistner, Rita, “Embedded with Murders,” in Stallabrass, Julian, ed. *Memories of Fire: Images of War and the War of Images*. London: Photoworks, 2013.
- 2012 Leistner, Rita, “Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan,” 12-part series, *Literary Review of Canada On-Line*, Winter 2012.
- 2007 Leistner, Rita and Timothy Dylan Wood, “Hanging the Past — Exploring the relationship between photography and state narratives at Cambodia’s Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocidal Crime,” *Idea&s*, Spring, 2007.
- Leistner, Rita, “War Stories: Portraitscapes of Lebanon,” in *The Walrus*, September 2007.
- Leistner, Rita, “The Last Lumberjacks,” *The Walrus*, March 2007.
- 2006 Leistner, Rita, “The Women of Al Rashad,” *The Walrus*, February 2006.
- 2005 Leistner, Rita, “The Road to Najaf,” *Idea&s*, Spring 2005.
- Leistner, Rita, “Death is our Business: The Gravediggers of Najaf during the Siege,” *COLORS 63: FRONTIERS*, Winter 2004/2005.
- 2004 Leistner, Rita, “Kurdish Express,” *Outpost*, July/August 2004.
- Leistner, Rita, “The Burning Tip of the Spear,” *The Walrus*, February 2004.
- 1997 Dandy, Gavin, Rita Leistner and Matthew Ross, editors, “Screefers: The Tree Planters of Canada,” *Canadian Geographic*, Spring 1997.

### SELECTED ESSAYS (by) IN EXHIBITION CATALOGS

- 2018 Mraz John and Rita Leistner, El Proyecto Edward Curtis: Una historia moderna de imágenes descolonizadoras.” Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, Puebla, Mexico.
- 2016 Leistner, Rita, “La sensación en los ojos de Elsa Medina,” in *Elsa Medina*, Mraz, John, ed., Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, Puebla, Mexico.
- 2015 Leistner, Rita, “Miklat,” in *Shelters*, The University of Beer Sheva, Israel, 2015.
- 2014 Leistner, Rita, “Portraits-paysages de guerre,” in *Les âmes grises: récits photographiques d’après-guerre* (French). Festival allers-retours, Musée Albert Kahn, 2014.

### SELECTED REVIEWS (by)

- 2018 Leistner, Rita, Review of *La Batea*, by Stephen Ferry and Elizabeth Ferry, for *The Photobook Review*, Issue #014, Spring 2018.
- 2014 Leistner, Rita, “Television Wars, Review of Michael Maclear’s *Guerrilla Nation: My Wars In and Out of Vietnam*,” (essay) in the *Literary Review of Canada*, Spring 2014.

### ANTHOLOGIES (chapter by)

- 2018 Leistner, Rita, "Photography Goes to War," in Neumüller, Moritz, ed. *The Routledge Companion to Photography and Visual Culture*, London: Routledge, 2018.

### SELECTED MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS (photographs published in)

*Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Walrus*, *GEO France*, *Libération*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Australian Journal of Photojournalism*, *Macleans*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Cambodia Daily*, *The Phnom Penh Post*, *Up Here (the magazine of Canada’s arctic)*, *Mother Jones*, *ZUM: Revista de Fotografia* (Brazil), *Colors*, *Chinese Photography Magazine*, and many more.

### VIDEO AND FILM

*One Tree at a Time* (2017) Run Time 18:30. Producer, Director, Director of Photography

*Miklat* (2013) Run Time 14 minutes. Producer, Director, Cinematographer

Award of Excellence, Best Shorts Competition, 2014

Festival Screenings:

Official Selection 2014 — American Documentary Film Festival, Palm Springs, CA

Official Selection 2014 — Winnipeg Reel to Real Film Festival, Winnipeg, MB

Official Selection 2013 — Bend River Documentary Film Festival, OR

Official Selection 2013 — Chagrin Falls Documentary Film Festival, OH

Official Selection 2013 — New Orleans International Film Festival, LA

*The 21st Chromosome* by Kirsten Johnson (2014) (23 minutes) Director of Photography.

Audience Favourite 2nd Place, Official Selection 2015 — Cinema Touching Disability, TX

## SELECTED AWARDS, GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

Winner of 2018 World Press Photo Digital Storytelling Award and Three Canadian National Magazine Awards Gold Medals. Finalist for the 2017 Robert Gardner Photography Fellowship at Harvard University for The Tree Planters and for three 2014 Media Ecology Association Awards for *Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan* (2015). Awarded a 2010 Canada Council for the Arts Project Grant, a 2007 Arts Partners in Creative Development Grant and a 2005 Ben and Jerry's Foundation Grant for the Exhibition *Unembedded: Four Independent Photojournalists on the War in Iraq*. Associate Fellow, Victoria University in the University of Toronto, 2012-Present.

## SELECTED INTERVIEWS AND PROFILES (about) in print, film and on-line

“Where We Are Now: Stories from an Accelerated Culture: A Conversation with Rita Leistner,” by Bill Kouwenhoven, *Afterimage*, January 2018  
 “An Acclaimed War Photographer Turns Her Lens on Canada’s Tree Planters,” VICE Canada Video, October 2017  
*One Picture at a Time* (2016). Documentary short film about the making of *Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan*, Produced and Directed by Sarah Martin  
 “Rita Leistner,” in Kamber, Michael, ed. *The Untold Stories from Iraq: Photojournalists on War*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013.  
 “In Conversation with Rita Leistner,” Barbara Davidson, *The Los Angeles Times* Re-Framed, July 2012  
 “Photography and Activism: Rita Leistner,” *Canadian Art*, Web Features, Fall 2011  
 “Photographers: Rita Leistner,” *Canadian Art*, Web Features, Spring 2011  
 “Look Closely: Award-winning photojournalist Rita Leistner shines a light on North American native communities,” by Jason McBride, in *U of T Magazine*, Winter 2010  
 “Rita Leistner,” The Hampson Interview by Sarah Hampson, *The Globe and Mail*, June 5th, 2003

## SELECTED REVIEWS AND CRITICAL ESSAYS (about)

### “The Tree Planters” Exhibition

“Seven amazing portraits of tree planters working in Canada’s remote backcountry,” by Jessica Bloom, *Toronto Life*, October 2017

### *The Edward Curtis Project* (Book and Exhibition)

“Restaging Indigenous-Settler Relations: Intercultural Theatre as redress rehearsal in Marie Clements’ and Rita Leistner’s *The Edward Curtis Project*,” by Brenda Vellino, *Theatre Research in Canada*, 38.1. 2017  
 “The Frozen Bodies of Edward S. Curtis,” *The Literary Review of Canada*, by Wanda Nanabush, April, 2011  
 “An Intervention into Native Identities Leads to More Questions,” *The Globe and Mail*, by Michael Harris, January 24, 2010

### *Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan* (Book and Exhibition)

- “Rita Leistner’s *Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan*,” *Kultura Wspolczesna* (Contemporary Culture) journal (Poland), by Kalina Kukilko-Rogozńska, 2018
- “Confessions of a Digital Naïve,” *Media and Culture Reviews*, July 16 2014
- “Rita Leistner and Smartphone Photography,” *Chinese Photography*, June 2014.
- “A New War a New Medium,” *Source: The Photographic Review*, by David Bate, London, Spring 2014
- “First New Book of 2014 is a Doosie!” The International Center of Photography Library Blog, by Deirdre Donohue, January 2014

***Unembedded: Four Independent Photojournalists on the War in Iraq* (Book and Exhibition)**

- “You Weren’t Meant to See This,” by Stephen Gregory, *Rabble.ca*, May 16, 2006
- “The Treacherous Medium: Why Photography Critics Hate Photographs,” by Susie Linfield, *Boston Review*, Sept 2006
- “Unembedded,” in *Photo 8*, by Ruth Hedges, May 2006
- “Live from Iraq,” by Nina Berman, *Alternet*, Dec 2005

**SELECTED RADIO AND TELEVISION**

- 2017 CBC Metro Morning with Matt Galloway, “The Tree Planters,” Nov 14, 2017  
ICI Radio Canada Y a pas deux matins pareils, avec Marjorie April, “Homage aux planteurs d’arbres,” Nov 10, 2017
- 2014 Public Radio International, Produced by Stephen Snyder, “New Photos from Iraq Trouble Photographer Who Covered the Last War,” June 20, 2014  
TVO The Agenda with Steve Paikin: Panelist, “War Through the Lens”
- 2013 TVO The Agenda with Steve Paikin: Panelist, “A Picture’s Worth”
- 2005 CBC Television, The HOUR with George Stroumboulopoulos— “Rita Leistner in Iraq”
- 2004 CBC Radio, The Current with Anna Maria Tremonti — “The Women of al Rashad”  
CBC Radio, Toronto Here and Now, with Matt Galloway — “Crazy Horse in Iraq”

**TEACHING POSITIONS**

- 2010 – 2016 The University of Toronto. As Adjunct Professor, created original course, “The Art and Purpose of Photojournalism and Documentary Photography.”

**SELECTED LIVE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (PANELS, PRESENTATIONS, ROUND TABLES)**

- 2018 “Le monde des arbres,” In conversation with 2018 Man Booker Prize-shortlisted author Richard Powers, Festival America, Paris, France (Sept 23, 2018)
- 2017 “From the Field to the Gallery Wall,” Phase One Stand Out Photo Forum, Toronto  
“From the Battlefield to the Cut Block,” The University of Toronto
- 2016 “Buscando a Marshall McLuhan en Afghanistan,” Centro de Fotografía de Montevideo, Uruguay  
“Buscando a Marshall McLuhan en Afghanistan,” Roberto Mata Taller de Fotografía, Caracas, Venezuela  
“Buscando a Marshall McLuhan en Afghanistan,” Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico D.F.

- “Rita Leistner: Una Fotografía Comprometida,” Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico D.F.
- 2015 “The Virtual and the Physical,” with Fred Ritchin and Penelope Umbrico,” Photoville 2015, Brooklyn, NY, USA  
 “From Smartphone to Palladium,” Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival, Toronto, ON  
 “War and Representation,” with Brian Palmer and Sebastian Meyer, The School of Visual Arts, New York, NY
- 2014 “Levant Trilogy: Miklat and the Bomb Shelter Project,” The University of Beer Sheva, Israel  
 “Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan,” Book Launch, The International Centre of Photography, New York, NY  
 “Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan,” Book Launch, The Northrop Frye Centre, The University of Toronto, Toronto, ON  
 “Art and War,” with Michael Kamber and James Wellford, Spur Festival, Toronto, ON
- 2013 “Iraq War—Ten Years Later,” Public Radio International Lecture Series, with Sebastian Junger, Bob Woodruff and U.S. Army Col. Ross Coffman, Boston, MA

### **COLLECTIONS (public and corporate)**

Comanche National Museum and Cultural Centre, Lawton, OK  
 Le Musée du Nouveau Monde, La Rochelle, France  
 The Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, Canada  
 The George Eastman House International Museum of Photography, Rochester, USA  
 The North Vancouver Museum, North Vancouver, Canada  
 The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada  
 The Toronto Dominion Bank, Canada

### **LANGUAGES**

English: Mother tongue  
 French: Full proficiency  
 Spanish: Working proficiency

### **JOBS**

1997-1998 Teacher of English as a Second Language, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
 1992-1997 Film Lighting Technician, Grip / Electric, Toronto  
 1983-1992 Planted over a half a million trees in Canada (seasonal)