

# Dave McKean

March 6<sup>th</sup>.

You know, I still haven't made up my mind whether photographs are essentially deceitful: broken time, people and events shown as they can ever be again, the moment passed the second after the shutter closed, quite sad really, the gentle softness of film grain and reflected colours, far more forgiving than reality, edited into neat little six by four boxes, composed, ordered. Life's just not like that.

Or whether they are actually a bigger truth. I realise I'm not looking at reality, but rather through the eyes of a real person, the photographer, I'm catching a glimpse of how they see life, and since the precious little thing I call truth is only my version, my vision, these flimsy photos actually multiply my understanding of the world by many times, more potently and directly than a conversation, or the news, or maybe a drawing. These images fool me, or persuade me, into thinking that I've learned something by proxy. JUST like life really.

March 10<sup>th</sup>.

Photos spread out in front of me. This is a storyteller at work. The narratives these people represent are immediately apparent. They fall off the crop and back into their lives, the click of the camera forgotten, not realising their ghost selves would be living quite different lives, hanging on gallery walls, lying on unknown people's desks, collected, scrutinized and interpreted. maybe even renamed. I love the compositions, casual, precise; and the humour, a wall painted shadow woman recognises her son out there in the real world, a bill sticker with his mind elsewhere, a man unable to remember where he put his melon, pedestrian pigeons.

Apr. 1: Appropriate.

I called Milcho to find out if he was okay, whether his exhibition and film "Dust" were still up and running despite the appalling game of "I-want-to-play-with-your-toys" currently going on in Kosovo and surrounding sandpits. I called because from the news we were getting in England, I couldn't get a handle on what day-to-day life in Macedonia was like. Milcho faxed back. His reply? Life goes on. People go to work, go to bars, listen to the planes overhead every night. So I look at this pictures and try to imagine it all, and despite the Cyrillic type/graphitti and the odd head garment, it could all be right here. We have bikes in England, and basketball nets, we have apples, and pedestrian signage and yellow cars. This little connection makes it all so personal. I can't switch off like the politicians seem to do, and the army, and the tabloid newspaper editors. I just can't.

Apr. 2

I rewatched Milcho's film. Before the Rain this evening. Working out where the start of the narrative lies is as tricky as working out "who started it" in a children's argument, whose eye for an eye was lost first. "The circle is not complete", written on the wall in the film, spoken at the beginning/end of the film, time cut up, re-ordered and edited, restlessly teasing out a wider and wider understanding of events, and ultimately we realise that no story has a start, these people had lives before the rain, before the camera's click. Hopefully they will have lives after.

Dave McKean lives in Kent, England.

He has illustrated several comics including *Mr. Punch*, *Signal To Noise*, *Arkham Asylum* (Batman), and his own novel *Cages*. He has illustrated and co-written a children's book. *The Day I Swapped My Dad For Two Goldfish*, and has also illustrated and designed all the covers of *Sandman*. He has directed three short films. *The week Before*. *N[eon]* and *Whack'.*, and has collaborated on other films. He has also produced over a hundred CD covers for among others, Michael Nyman. The Rolling Stones, Skinny Puppy. Alice Cooper, and has produced photographs, illustrations and video for Kodak, Sony Playstation, Smirnoff and Eurostar. Dave is the author of two books of photographs, *A Small Book of Black & White Lies* and *Option: Click*.