

Pictures of Responsibility by Isabella Balena

A lot of my work stems from chats, preferably over a glass of wine, with friends and like minded people. These chats become ideas, then projects and ultimately god willing, photographs, but without the trust of others, my photos counted for nothing.

When in 2005, friends asked me to participate with the Asbestos Association, I jumped at the chance. The problem was enormous, but little known. Each of us, from author to photographer, undertook to develop a piece of the story. I decided to follow these “hostages to asbestosis” as they tramp from doctors to hospital and negotiated the commensurate bureaucracy. Although unable to gain access to where it happened – the dockyard - I wanted to give substance to the disaster and did so by inconspicuously capturing daily events whether it was in the clinic, office or home.

I used my camera, a device that whilst blinkering the photographer’s vision, also simultaneously freeze frames the image the user exclusively sees. Sometimes I feel that my images do not do justice to what I felt and saw, but nevertheless I would still like to thank everyone who helped me in my attempted portrayals.