

MURRAY FREDERICKS AND  
MICHAEL ANGUS ON LAKE EYRE

TAKE  
TWO



# SALT LAKE CINE

IN THE DOCUMENTARY *SALT*, CO-DIRECTORS MICHAEL ANGUS AND MURRAY FREDERICKS GIVE VIEWERS AN UNOBSTRUCTED LOOK AT FREDERICKS' BICYCLE JOURNEYS OUT INTO THE MIDDLE OF LAKE EYRE TO PHOTOGRAPH THE LANDSCAPE. THEY TELL **SIMON DE BRUYN** HOW THEY WORKED TOGETHER TO KEEP THE FOOTAGE HONEST.

## MURRAY FREDERICKS

I had been going out onto the lake for a while, and started taking a camera out there, just documenting it for my own reasons. To me it was artistic record. I started playing with it, trying different things, and the idea of doing some video art popped into my head, something that would supplement the exhibitions.

I showed some footage to a director and realised that what had become completely normal to me was anything but normal to everyone else. He suggested there was a doco in it and I didn't believe it for a long time.

I had met Mick earlier and he'd expressed interest in helping me with it, and we met up and decided to work together. We agreed that the work would follow its own course, to evolve; we didn't want to force the story. We had big discussions about where we were going to get our three chapters from, but decided not to force it. That came out of my approach to the artwork in the first place and going to such a desolate flat empty place and allowing stuff to come out of it.

Mick wrote me a shot list before I went out the next time. We agreed I wouldn't do anything for the camera but Mick told me to record certain things, and he said he wanted a wide, a mid, and a close up of everything you do, and that fuckin' killed me.

I got very good at setting up the camera, we shot over three years so I got very good, and you just develop methods and your own way of work-

ing. We were going to make it more of a traditional doco where I shot a lot of stuff and Mick did some interviews, and we actually went out together on a trip onto the lake. But we just laughed our heads off for two weeks, and it just didn't fit. We discovered that far more things could be said without words and with far more depth.

A few people have said that it looks like there's a crew there, some of the time, given the set ups. But one of the aspects of me being out there for five weeks is there's unlimited amounts of time, which is so rare in our lives, so you actually have the time to try things and learn how to do things.

One of the great things about being out there for five weeks is that I'd get into a routine and switch the camera on at certain points, like every time I called my wife, and I started to forget the camera was even on. Or I'd relax so far, so it didn't matter.

Moods out there build slowly and then after a day they build really big, and Mick would talk to me about getting this stuff down, to be honest to the project. He gave me instructions to not describe anything that I see, but talk about how I was feeling out there and what I was thinking about.

We also were very strict with editing. We would always think about what worked for the project, and that played into the artistic premise behind the whole thing. When I went out there I'd take 200 shots over three years and exhibit ten, so we applied this hard editing to the footage as well.

## MICHAEL ANGUS

It started when he called and said I'm going out onto the lake again and I'm going to take a video camera with me. When he got back he showed me the footage and I was blown away. That stunning opening image of Murray riding across the wet surface was in the footage and I was gobsmacked. I said that if he needed any help with it I'd love to help, as I thought there was a doco in it. And that was it for 12 months.

I eventually heard from him again and he said he thought I might be the one to do it. I went up to his place for a chat, to see how we got on, and to see if we were on the same page. It was fantastic; we had wine and Guinness and what have you, and we realised that the focus Murray wanted for his artwork was the same focus I realised was needed for the documentary. So that was our meeting point, and it went from there.

The first time he had a lot of footage talking about his art and I said we don't want any theory, any intellectualizing your art, just shoot what you do out there. We talked about different shots, and getting close ups and I told him to film every satellite phone conversation he had with his wife.

Murray came back and of course it was beautifully shot. And the thing I loved is that the frame was from a photographer, and it wasn't traditional cinematography by any means, it was moving stills and there was something hypnotic about that.



# TAKE TWO




ONE OF THE STUNNING SHOTS FROM THE FILM



I went out with Murray and I stayed out there for 10 nights and we did lots of interviews, but when I got back in the edit, I could see myself in it and I could hear the influence of what I was interested in. I felt it was really clumsy and brought it down into Sunday Arts talking heads sort of stuff. I did four weeks of edit until I decided to cut all the stuff with me out of it, and we decided to just focus on what Murray had done alone.

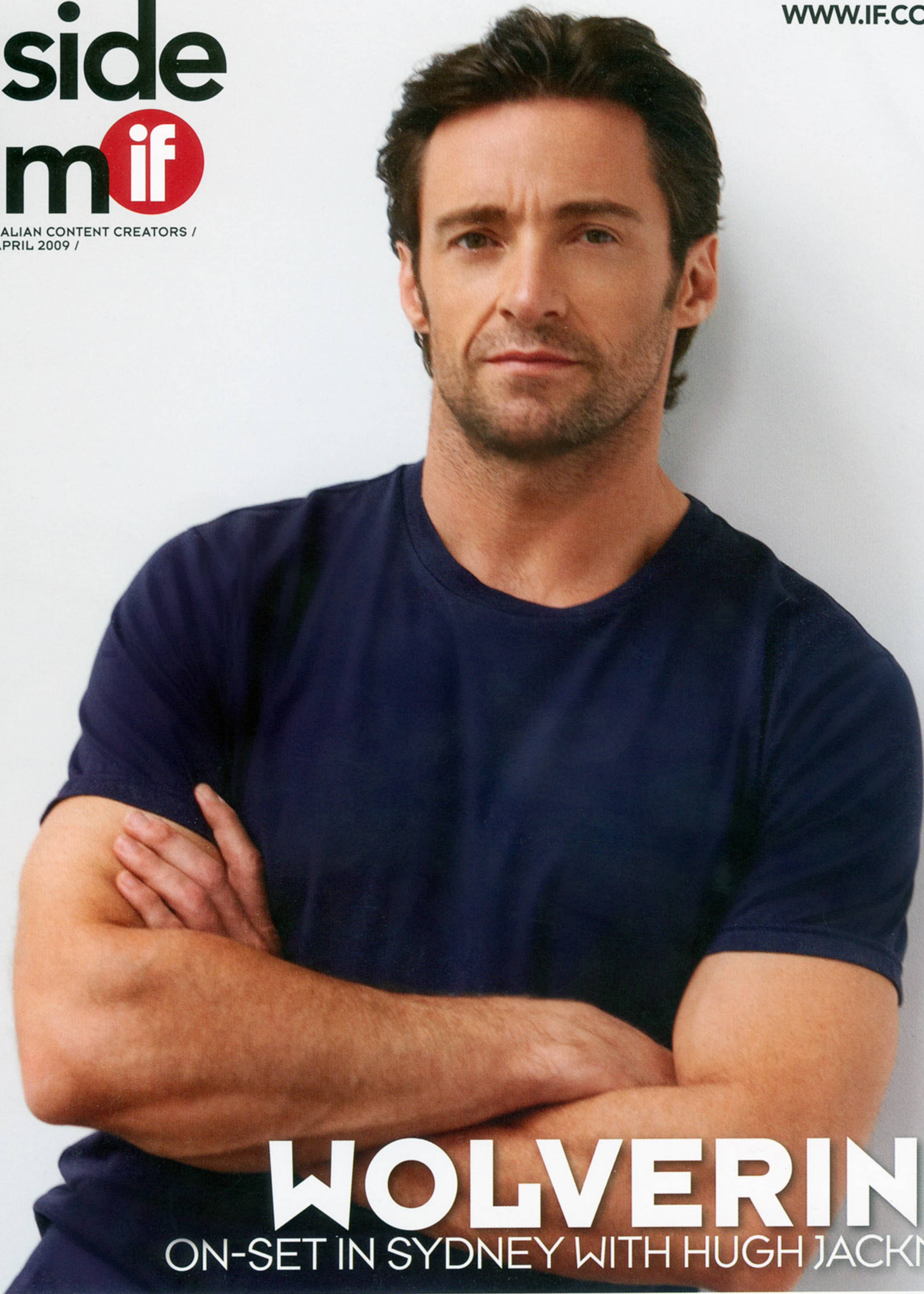
The hardest thing throughout the film was leaving stuff out, and if it brought attention to the shot at all, whether it was the stuff with me, or some of the showy helicopter stuff, then we kept it out. Even though we cut the interviews out, I did give Murray some instruction for the video diaries that are spliced into the film. I said don't tell us what you're doing; just tell us how you feel.

The opening shot is captured on 3 chip DV

and we spent a lot of time trying to recapture that shot in HD. We kept waiting for it to rain again to get that shot again. But one of the themes of the film is that you can't control what nature does, but there we were trying to. 

**Salt premiered at the Adelaide Film Festival in February and will screen on the ABC later this year. Simon de Bruyn was provided with travel and accommodation by the Adelaide Film Festival. Go to the [INSIDEFILM](http://INSIDEFILM) website to see the trailer.**





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