

# RAW

an audio/photographic tool for conveying minimally-mediated impressions of everyday life

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Records and accounts of everyday life in our pasts and presents are often mediated by numerous third parties (researchers, producers, editors, and so on). We feel this mediation degrades the full sense of awareness and appreciation we could achieve of other peoples and places. The goal of the RAW project is to develop a new kind of recording tool, together with a method for processing and presenting the material captured with the tool, that enables a more direct, minimally-mediated relationship between its user and the later audience, possibly in a far away place or time.

*What happened in that minute before you took a picture?*

RAW is a system combining a tool and a process for capturing and conveying audiovisual impressions of everyday life. The project aims to enable a relationship between the user of the tool and an audience in a different place or time with an absolute minimum of editorial mediation by a third party.

The RAW tool consists of a digital still camera and a high-quality digital stereo audio recorder that captures the minute of sound *before and after* a picture is taken. The relationship created between sound and image forms a disjoint flow and opens a new field of audiovisual expression. These previously uncaptured moments in time can be kept as personal artefacts or archived for later study.

Audio is recorded binaurally using high-quality miniature microphones that are placed in the user's ears. The apparatus strives for the closest possible recording of what the user of the tool is hearing while they are taking pictures. This design was chosen in an attempt to enable the later audience to immerse themselves "into the shoes" of the person who originated the content they are experiencing, and to place greater emphasis on the subjective point of view of this original source.

We chose the African country of Mali as a starting point for thinking about the RAW project because we feel this country has a particularly rich and diverse culture that is not well recognized or understood within Western societies. We conducted a large scale workshop over three weeks in August 2003 in three locations in Mali: Bamako, Timbuktu, and Ségou; and worked with 23 people. The content gathered by these and other participants from other workshops is presented in an interactive installation.



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