

“Concerned Photography”

Introduction:

Photographers who work in the genres of “photojournalism” and “documentary photography” are sometimes identified as “concerned photography.” This type of image has an effort to be factual while still having a point of view and wishing to change the mind of the viewer and perhaps call the viewer to action. It is difficult to judge the impact of an image. Some would say that images caused the United States to pull out of Vietnam in the 1960’s. Some would say that images have made a difference in the life of children in Africa. Some would say that they do not make a difference. What do you think?

Think about the effect images have in your life. Think about things in the world that you wish would improve or change. How can you use your photographic skills to make a difference?

Assignment

1. Our photographer of the week is Sebastião Salgado. Do you find his work inspiring? Why or why not.
2. Think of two or three issues that concern you. Write about these issues. How would you photograph these issues in a way to make us care, in a way that would make us act?
3. Shoot thirty photographs (print, slide or digital) that begin to address one of the issues that concern you. Post three most effective images. Also write a short essay on what inspired you to take the images you took and post in the description of image 01.

Biography of Sebastião Salgado from the PND and Kodak Professional Legends Gallery:

His images are gorgeous and beautiful as photographic objects of tone and light. Yet they often express human suffering. "What I want in my pictures is not that they'll look like art objects," he says. "They are journalist pictures. All my pictures. No exceptions."

Many of his images are iconographic, his subjects vast in scope, yet each one shows Salgado's view of human individuals in a certain situation. He shares with us his view of human experience on both the grandest and the smallest scale, and he reaches our hearts by engaging his own.

Salgado rose to international fame with his stark and moving photographs of famine in the Sahel (1984-85). Then he made an indelible impression on the international mind with *Workers* (1986-92), a documentation of manual labor in its most dramatically primitive forms around the world. And he continues to expand his vision and his scope even further today, with the massive project partly shown here, *Migrations: Humanity in Transition* (1993-1999).

Born in Aimores, M.G., Brazil in 1944, Salgado studied economics in both São Paulo and Paris, and worked from 1968 to 1973 as an economist in both Brazil and England. It was in the early 70s, while on a tour of Africa as an economist for the International Coffee Organization, that Salgado began photographing seriously.

Major exhibitions of his work include: Sahel: L'Homme en Détresse (1986); Other Americas (1982); An Uncertain Grace (1990); and Workers (1993).

Salgado has won more than 50 international awards for his work, including the Eugene Smith Award for Humanitarian Photography (USA,1982); ICP's Photojournalist of the Year (USA,1988); the Erna and Victor Hasselblad Award for Life Achievement (Sweden,1989); the Grand Prix National de Ministère de La Culture (France,1994); the Alfred Eisenstaedt Life Legend Award (USA,1998); and the Principe de Asturias Award for Arts (Spain,1998).

A member of the Gamma Agency from 1975 to 1979, and of Magnum Photos from 1979 to 1994, Salgado's work is now handled exclusively by his own agency, called Amazonas Images (e-mail: amazonas@worldnet.fr).

He currently lives in Paris with his wife and their two sons.

Other Photographers and resources to explore:

Mary Ellen Mark

Gordon Parks

W. Eugene Smith

Dorothea Lange

Margaret Bourke-White

Lewis W. Hine

Jacob Riis

Larry Clark

Lorna Simpson

James Nachtwey

Cornell Capa <http://www.icp.org/museum/exhibitions/cornell-capa-concerned-photographer>

Photographers on the website: <http://photophilanthropy.org/>

Concerned photography Exhibit at Art Institute of Chicago

<http://www.artic.edu/aic/exhibitions/concerned.html>