GLOBAL PHOTO PROJECT

LEcTURE PRESENTATION, WORKSHOP, EXHIBITION AND SLIDESHOW
THE 13th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THINKING, JUNE 17-21, 2007
LOUIS DE GEER CONGRESS HALL, NORRKÖPING, SWEDEN
THE FACE

The face tells its story: of laughter, worry, hope and fear. It’s a landscape, a map of our experiences. Each face expresses its personal fate and is, at the same time the face of mankind.

From the instant of birth we inevitably age. This process unites all living beings and transcends the limitations of race, religion, nationality and language.

The Global Photo Project acknowledges life’s transience as a fundamental human condition that can give everyday life meaning, a necessity for human growth. I want to contribute to a heightened feeling for life and an increased empathy for all those who share this time on earth.

The project is the process of meetings: from the first contact to the exhibited photographs and extending to the resulting dialogues, debates, seminars and workshops. An important part of the project is thus to present the exhibitions in public sites, such as streets, parks, galleries, museums and railway-stations. Also to bring these portraits into class-rooms, office spaces and conference rooms and expose them to people who, in one way or another, may affect the life conditions of those being portrayed.

BACKGROUND

The Global Photo Project is a development from an early project produced in 1997 in Södertälje, Sweden. I photographed 168 people born during the 19th century. Black-and-white pictures, close up, without make up or jewelry, no gestures, poses or smiles. Naked faces. The enlargements are part of the permanent exhibition on Health and the Body at the Science Center “Tom Tit’s Experiment”, hung like a string of pearls around one of the large exhibition halls.

SO FAR...

In cooperation with humanitarian organizations, hospitals, schools, museums etc., I’m presently creating a complementary work in 20 different countries around the world. The number of people being photographed is proportional to the average life expectancy in each country, one photograph for each year of life. In other words, each location is represented by 40-80 people. Local exhibitions are produced and presented in each country.

In 2002 the photo part of the project in Russia was finalized in cooperation with the Swedish Embassy and the State Technical College School of Visual Arts in Moscow.

In 2003-2004 the Project in Thailand was accomplished in cooperation with the Swedish Embassy in Bangkok, UNFPA, PPAT, Swedish Institute and the
Chiangmai City Museum. Exhibitions were presented and seminars on health and quality of life were arranged.

Collaboration with the UN in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, commenced in 2004. Other partners are the Swedish Honorary Consulate and the American University in Central Asia.

In 2006 the Kyrgyz portraits were photographed. They were partly made in the UN house in Bishkek but many "models" who fulfilled the criteria of age, gender, ethnicity and varied social background were found as we were setting up mobile studios in market places and other public areas. We worked in old-age homes, a sanatorium, a crisis center and neighbor villages.

Also in 2006, the project was selected by the Swedish Institute to be part of the "Sweden Upgrade", journey through Russia with the aim of presenting an image of modern Sweden. The 73 Russian portraits were enlarged to measure approximately one square meter. Each portrait was exhibited at the Chuvashian National Museum in Cheboksary and at the Proekt Fabrika in Moscow.

The Russian series was also part of an International Seminar in Moscow on the low fertility rate in the country, organized by UNFPA and Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation.

WHAT’S NEXT...

Once the photographic work is complete, all the photographs will be assembled into one large exhibition. Each country will be represented by a horizontal age progression hung in such a way that if you follow them vertically, you will be looking at individuals of the same age in different parts of the world. This produces a very uneven right edge, indicating the radically different conditions governing life expectancy, with all the political and social questions this raises. The aim is to first present this global survey at the U.N. Headquarters in New York and then world-wide.

Books, documentary films, as well as TV- and Internet-versions of this work are also planned. The visual material is complemented by interviews, statistics and other forms of documentation.

INVITATION

Join the creation of a modern “Family of Man”!

This is an invitation to the participants to explore its possible applications in different countries, organizational settings and themes. How can we use these portraits to initiate change, invite self-reflection and constructive dialogue? Find new possible contexts, venues, partners and funding?

Through the 1980’s he worked teaching photography, at the same time as he was pursuing further study of his craft, focusing on traditional b/w fine printing and on early photographic processes. In the 1990’s he turned his camera to architecture, design and the visual arts and also the performing arts, especially contemporary dance.

Solo exhibitions in Stockholm and other cities in Sweden, Russia and Hong Kong. Group exhibitions in Sweden, Finland and Russia.

Several books on art and Architecture, most notably “Stockholm Town Hall” for which he and the book received six grants and awards, in Sweden and internationally.

Kodak Award 1987, numerous grants from the Swedish Art Grants Committee and other institutions.

Swedish PEN World Association of Writers Stockholm Award, 1996.

In his work Sviestins continuously explores the themes of life/death, light/space, body/movement and the human spirit. He unceasingly moves to expand the use of the media, seeking to find new and meaningful contexts.

www.sviestins.com - password: Global_Photo_Project

Lecture/presentation on Monday 13.40 in conference room R7, followed by discussion/workshop at 15.20. I will be available in “Flygeln” foyer during coffee breaks, otherwise call/sms +46(0)70 717 29 71 or leave your business card in the mailbox at the exhibition and I will contact you.