

❖ ASHLEY WOODS AWP

“INSECURITY: HIROSHIMA, CHERNOBYL AND AFTER...”

At this very moment in time, many populations are suffering, whether due to natural catastrophes, such as the recent events in Asia or through continued conflict and war. Now, more than ever in our history, is it necessary to take a closer and more interrogative look at the stability, security and peace of our planet and to try and to share responsibility for its future. As Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Association exclaims:

“It is vital that we engage individuals from all sectors of society in a public dialogue on international security – to remind them of the continued danger of nuclear war, to explain to them possible alternatives, and to offer avenues for involvement.”

As man himself continues to inflict suffering upon himself, he also endangers the earth; the environment and all of its precious resources.

Living under such conditions, should we really be thinking of investing further in nuclear technology, whether for energy or for military use? What of the continued and ever growing security risks? Are we not playing “Russian Roulette” and adding further danger to the peace and stability of our already fragile world? In the words of Noam Chomsky (“Preventive War: the Supreme Crime, published Aug 2003) we have entered a dangerous era in which a “new norm of international law” exists, whereby waging war is no longer seen as last resort, but acceptable for reasons of global security.

“You can get more with a kind word and a gun than with a kind word alone.” Chicago gangster Al Capone quoted by Donald Rumsfeld in response to a question on Iraq. 2004.

Acts of war such as the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 (for which 2005 will see the 60th anniversary) or disasters such as that of Chernobyl in 1986 (20th anniversary in 2006) will always be observed, documented and reinterpreted by photographers and artists alike. Those who have a deeper understanding of their subject matter are those who have witnessed events, such as Yosuke Yamahata or Shomei Tomatsu whose documentation of the after effects serve as indelible evidence for generations to come.

This project will reunite an important and diverse selection of existing photographic documents provided by international institutions, associations and independent sources. But importantly it will also allow for the production of new photographic work by renowned photographers / artists, and organised by an independent editors from the international press eg. Geo, Le Monde, El Mundo, Newsweek, The Times.

The main objective of this project is to inform people, especially the younger generation who stand to inherit this earth, of the history of nuclear technology and its diverse uses and

the risks involved in its continued development. The project will allow for research and provide valuable tools to promote positive dialogue with other cultures / ethnic groups on the subject.

A touring exhibition, will be presented whether at existing locations as well as those conceived specially for the occasion (eg. Public outdoor areas). The size of the exhibition will remain flexible for possible future presentation at smaller venues (public halls, schools, universities, etc.). At the same time a book will also be published bringing together a large selection of original material eg. Images, essays and interviews. Other avenues of presentation and communication are also planned such as a DVD for educational use, as well as a specially designed internet archive and chat site that will serve as a means of research and dialogue.

Insecurity: the events

1) Exhibition: existing historic material

A exhibition incorporating the work of respected photographers who have bared witness to the events that have marked the history of civil and military nuclear technology since Hiroshima as well as more creative photographic imagery that serve to symbolize and / or suggest emotion, rather than describe events.

An example of existing photographers work being contemplated for the: Ricky Davila Wood (E), Emmet Gowin (USA), Guillaume Herbaut (F), Kikuji Kawada (JP), Robert Polidori (I), Shomei Tomatsu (JP), Hiromi Tsuchida (JP), Yosuke Yamahata (JP). Originating from Japan as well as America, Bulgaria, China, France, Ukraine, Russia,...

2) Exhibition: new production

The collective exhibition of established works will allow us to look at our past. But what of the present and future? For this project to be complete a number of photographers / artists will be assigned to work on a specific region, community or individual that continues to be effected or is at risk from future nuclear development. This new work will be incorporated at the end of the exhibition.

Each photographer will be chosen according to his knowledge of the region but also because of their diverse backgrounds. In certain cases a journalist or writer will cover the same subject or work in unison with the photographer.

Photographers being considered for assignment:

- Manuel Bauer, Swiss.

Been working in China, Tibet and other parts of Far East Asia for over 15 years. POY, USA and World Press Award winner his work on the Tibetan diaspora. Based in Switzerland.

- Peter Dammann, German.

Winner of the German Hansel-Mieth-Prize and the Gabriel-Grüner-Grant for his coverage of life in and around the Kosloduj Nuclear reactors in Bulgaria. He continues to work on the subject. Based in Berlin.

- Tim Georgeson, Australian.
Frequently works on assignment for National Geographic Magazine and Geo.
Also with Greenpeace International. Lives in Amsterdam.
- Stanley Greene, American.
Winner of the prestigious Eugene Smith 2004 Grant for Humanistic Photography.
Has been working in Russia and Chechnia for the past 15 years.
- Jeff Jacobson, American
One-time civil rights lawyer, his on going project "Changing America", looks at events that have shaped the face of America since the past 60 years.
- Simon Norfolk, British.
Author of "For Most Of It I Have No Words: Genocide, Landscape, Memory",
a look at remains of the places where genocide took place in the 20th century.

3) Exhibition: multimedia presentation.

As an integral part of the exhibition, a multimedia presentation (possibly using state of the art large format flat screens) bringing together a larger selection of photographic material and documents to present the exhibition in the broader context of world events: explaining in more depth the decisions that led up to the A-bomb being used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as understanding the scientific reasons and possibly political arguments behind Chernobyl. Leading politicians and scientists will be asked to contribute and / or narrate this special presentation.

4) Book (exhibition catalogue)

A publication will be edited in relation with the exhibition. The publisher will be a part of the editorial team and will therefore have an integral voice in the overall contents (images and text) and design of the book itself. Translated into numerous foreign languages, the book will be available in bookstores and on the internet as and when the exhibition is first presented. A percentage of sales will help provide funding for the tour and further presentation of the exhibition to those who cannot afford the transport costs etc...

5) DVD

A DVD is planned that will incorporate all project material: stills, essays, interviews, original historic documents, video and website for educational use. Supplied together will the book, the dvd will allow students to interact with many of the people, photographers and establishments that have collaborated on the project.

6) Internet web site

A fully automated site, especially designed and updated using FLASH and HTML.

a) Archive: a simple and easy to access researchable archive showing all material, both audio and visual researched and or consulted for the project. Captions and links provide the viewer with immediate information as to the whereabouts of the original photograph or document and contact details of its author. Images cannot be downloaded except in low resolution. The site is for consultation use only.

b) Chat-line: virtual live discussion groups linking students, schools and associations / institutions around the globe who wish to discuss (sound + imagery) the topic with other groups elsewhere in the world.

c) Links: web links with all partners / institutions eg. Imperial War Museum, who have collaborated on the project as well as important information and links to other interesting sites that propose help and assistance to those communities / people effected.

d) Interactive presentation of the exhibition. The viewer maybe able to virtually travel through the exhibition, looking in detail at individual documents, photographs as well as listening to interviews from around the globe of different ethnic groups talking about their experiences.

7) Documentary film / TV series

In collaboration with a television production company / channel, we hope to be able produce a short and / or full length documentary to coincide with the exhibition and book that could be shown at the same time as the exhibition in public cinemas or on television.

a) Short length film of possible series of 15 – 20 minute programmes showing the "making of" the project. Following the photographers themselves in different regions of the world showing personal stories of people touched by the development / results of nuclear technology.

b) Long length film showing all aspects of the project from Hiroshima to the present day and beyond. All research and material would be used to produce a full and detailed documentary.

8) Feature story / Press promotion

An well edited selection of images and documents – free-of-right- for the promotion of the project will be chosen by the editorial board comprising of professional pictures editors in the international media. The selection will be published in leading magazines and newspaper to promote the number of visitors to the exhibition and internet site and viewers of the documentary.