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A new promising photo contest

Interview with **Teresa Sartore**, artistic director of the first edition of **Prisma Human Rights Photo Contest**

ph.: Alvise Forcellini



Teresa Sartore (Venice 1981) is the artistic director of the first edition of Prisma Human Rights Photo Contest. Since 2005 she has been internationally involved in several research and photographic projects dealing with human rights. From Cameroon to Morocco, from Palestine to Malta and Greece, from England to Germany, Belgium and Italy, her work focuses on migration issues, ethnic minorities rights and transculturality. Her projects are driven by the idea that change is possible through knowledge, research, art and social action. She holds an MA in Anthropology from SOAS School of Oriental and African Studies, London University. She has been working as research assistant at Heidelberg University (2009-2013) and visiting researcher at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (2011-2013). Since 2013 she lives and works in Venice as Communication Manager and Event Organiser at Lightbox, and Editor at My Art Guides.

www.teresasartore.tumblr.com

How come the idea of your contest?

“The idea of organizing a human rights photo contest comes from the Global Campus of Human Rights and its will to complement academic research with other media of knowledge, such as photography, to reach a wider international public and foster a better understanding of human rights issues and their protection. The Global Campus is a project coordinated by the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation (EIUC) thanks to the support of the European Union and based on the collaboration among seven EU-funded Regional Master

Programmes on human rights and democracy from Europe, Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, South East Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Caucasus. Prisma Human Rights Photo Contest was born from the collaboration between the Global Campus and Lightbox, a publishing house and a communication company specialized in Contemporary Art. Lightbox has an international network of collaborators that contribute to give a global, but at the same time local, vibe to each project. I am honored that I was appointed as Artistic Director of the contest and had the possibility to conceive the first edition of Prisma, with the aim of creating a network of international artists, intellectuals and professionals interested in strengthening the protection of human rights and the promotion of democracy and peace. Prisma’s purpose is to become an annual event for photography - and other forms of art- on human rights worldwide.”

What are the results so far?

“I would say that the results are amazing, especially if we think that Prisma was at its first edition. After the launching event, last May, with Alfredo Jaar as a special guest during the Venice Art Biennale openings, we had a huge number of noteworthy submissions, and it has been really difficult for the selection committee to decide. We selected 20 photographs among images sent by photographers, professional and amateur, from all over the world. The exhibition just ended, it was held from 11 September to 11 October at the Monastery of San Nicolò (EIUC premises) in Venice. The selected images were on show along with photographs from the powerful project “Zones of Silence” by the guest photographer Rena Effendi. Furthermore we had an outstanding jury: Rena Effendi, internationally renowned Azerbaijani photographer; Isabelle Gattiker, General and Programme Director of the International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights in Geneva; Almir Koldzic, Co-Founder and Co-Director of Counterpoints Arts, organization comprising creative arts and cultural projects exploring refugee and migrant experiences; Azu Nwagbogu, Director of the Lagos Photo Festival and of the African Artists’ Foundation; and Alberto Prina, photojournalist and Founder of the Gruppo Fotografico Progetto Immagine and of the Festival of Ethical Photography. The theme of this first edition



ph. Max Bastard - A Peasants Struggle

was “Freedom”. The value of Freedom is at the very base of the concept of human rights: freedom from oppression, freedom of speech and belief, freedom from fear, freedom of thought, freedom of opinion and freedom of movement. **The winner of Prisma 2015 is Max Bastard**, who, according to jury, best illustrated the relevance of Freedom with his wonderful photograph “A peasants Struggle”. This image forms part of an ongoing larger body of work which narrates, through photography, the AmaPondo people’s decades old struggle in South Africa to maintain custodianship over their heritage and land, and to be free to choose their own destiny. An Honorable Mention was given to the touching autobiographical photograph “Love Notes on Toothbrushes” by Ivan Kovalev. Few words of love and support, scratched on toothbrushes, that Ivan

secretly managed to send to his wife while both were prisoners of conscience in the 80s in the USSR.” **Considering your experience, probably you have developed your own views of what are the most common mistakes or the most effective ways in choosing right photos for a contest. Do you have any advice for photographers who want to join the next editions of Prisma?**

“This is not an easy question. We selected the most powerful images on the basis of subject, originality, artistic merit and style. One important aspect is that each photographer can participate to the contest with just one image. Therefore, the image submitted should be powerful and communicate the message and the story behind it.”

www.prismaphotocontest.com