

**WORLD PRESS PHOTO**

# **WHAT HAVE WE DONE?**

**UNPACKING SEVEN DECADES OF PHOTOJOURNALISM  
THROUGH THE WORLD PRESS PHOTO ARCHIVE**

**At World Press Photo we have the luxury of having direct access to an incredible archive that depicts the history of our media.**

**For our 70 year anniversary, we invited Cristina de Middel to take a critical look at this archive. Cristina has curated an exhibition that will show the viewer how images have shaped our understanding of the world; how certain visual tropes exist and how they continue to influence us.**

**This exhibition is inspiring, critical, mind opening, reflective and hopeful. It will offer a fresh take not only on the World Press Photo archive but will also be the first time that World Press Photo asks an external curator to look at its history in this manner.**

— Joumana El Zein Khoury, Executive Director at World Press Photo.

— World Press Photo Contest judging process  
1980 Jury © ANP 02b



## What Have We Done?

Unpacking Seven Decades of Photojournalism Through the World Press Photo Archive, by Cristina de Middel

**For 70 years, the World Press Photo Contest has been the ultimate time capsule of photojournalism. But the three words that make up its name — World, Press, and Photo — don't mean what they did in 1955. The “world” is no longer filtered through a single Western perspective. The “press” is a fragmented battlefield of digital noise. And the “photo”? Well, it no longer needs a camera to exist.**

**Yet, despite all this change, our visual language keeps repeating itself. We've built a library of tropes: heroic men in action, emotional women in distress, Africa as a place of suffering, and melodramatic white soldiers. These patterns have become shortcuts, shaping how stories are told and, more importantly, how they are remembered.**

**This tension between new tools and old habits raises a crucial question: If the ways we capture and share images has changed, why do we keep telling the same stories in the same way? What do these recurring images say about what we choose to see—and what we ignore?**

**This exhibition is an invitation to rethink not just how photojournalism has evolved but how we, as viewers and citizens, should be learning to read images with a sharper and more critical eye.**

Curated by  
**Cristina de Middel**

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**After 10 years as a photojournalist, Cristina De Middel shifted her practice to a more conceptual approach in order to question the documentary value of photography. In 2012 she produced the acclaimed series *The Afronauts*, triggering a decade of work around the role of photography in creating stereotypes.**

**Besides her prolific career as an author, and as an active member of the photography community, Cristina has been invited to curate festivals like Lagos Photo, PhotoEspaña, and San José Photo in Uruguay. She has published more than 14 photobooks and her work is constantly on show in different institutions and venues.**

**Cristina is also on the board of Vist Projects, a platform to support Latin American visual story-telling and she is a member of Magnum Photos agency and its president since 2022.**



— CristinaDeMiddel@nanigutierrez\_02

Curated by  
**Cristina de Middel**

**When going through the World Press Photo archive, Cristina de Middel identified several tropes and themes that have been repeated over the years. This exhibition examines the recurrence of these visual tropes through the repetition of images:**

- WOMEN WEEPING AND MEN RESCUING
- EMOTIONAL SOLDIER AND DEBRIS
- BEING A MAN AND BEING A WOMAN
- BLACK SKIN AND THE DARK CONTINENT
- SILHOUETTES AND SHADOWS. THE “WOW” MOMENT
- FIRE AND SMOKE



[Watch a short keynote by Cristina de Middel from the 2024 Night of Photojournalism by Catchlight, where she presented the her concept behind the exhibition.](#)

Sample of Works  
A selection of works included in each theme

# WOMEN WEEPING AND MEN RESCUING



Mohammed Badra, European Pressphoto Agency, 2019 Contest



Eric Bouvet, Gamma, 1990 Contest



Horst Faas, Associated Press, 1969 Contest



Hocine, Agence France-Presse, 1998 Contest



Ameer Alhalbi, 2017 Contest



Corinne Dufka, Reuters, 1997 Contest



Christopher Morris, Black Star for Time, 1994 Contest

Sample of Works  
A selection of works included in each theme

# BEING A MAN AND BEING A WOMAN



Grey Villet, 1983 Contest



Sara Naomi Lewkowicz, for *Time*, 2014 Contest



Mat Jacob, Tendance Floue, 2002, Contest



Engelbert Reineke, Government, Press Service, 1974, Contest



Maya Alleruzzo, Associated Press, 2021, Contest



Eddie Adams, Associated Press, 1979 Contest



Jodi Cobb, A Day in the Life / Collins, 1986 Contest



Thomas Ernsting, 1988 Contest

Sample of Works  
A selection of works included in each theme

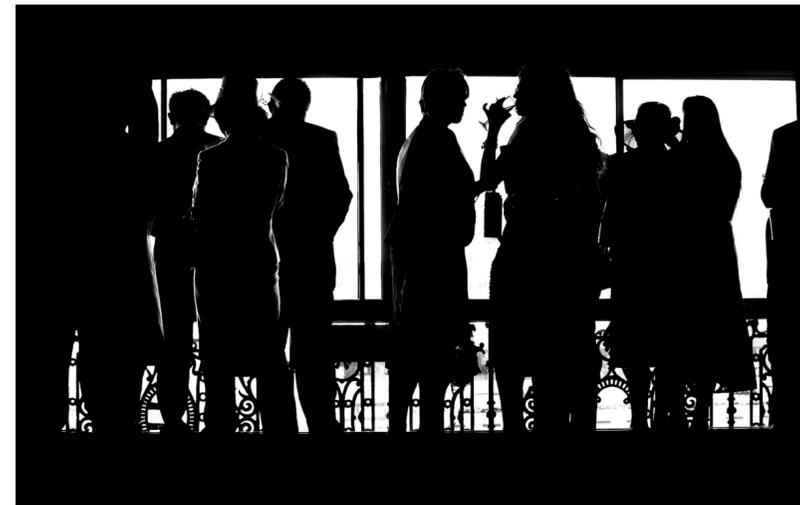
# SILHOUETTES AND SHADOWS. THE "WOW" MOMENT



Michael Kamber, *The New York Times*, 2008 Contest



Seamus Murphy, Corbis Saba for *Independent Magazine*, 2001, Contest



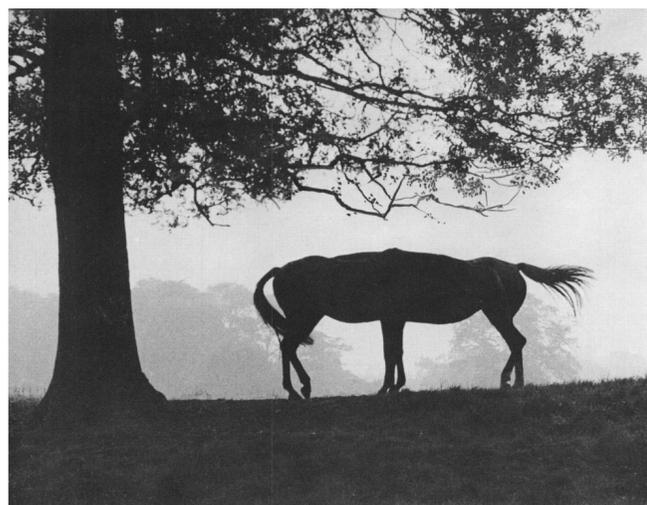
Mark and Jenny Evans, 2006, Contest



Adam Pretty, Getty Images, 2012 Contest



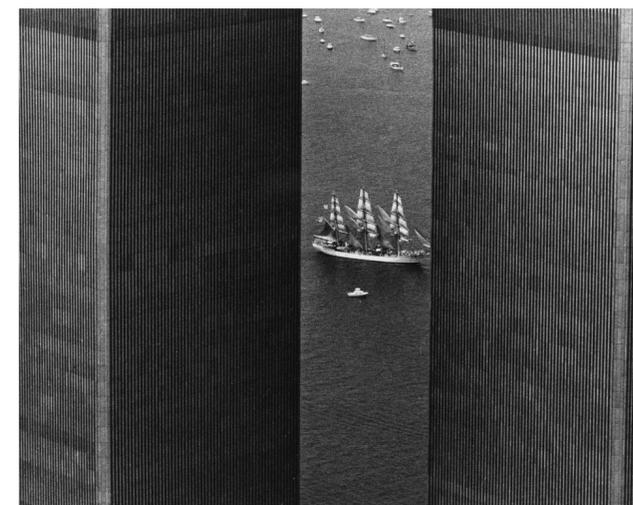
Peter Elinskas, 1967, Contest



Roland G Bell, 1964 Contest



Ernst Saxer, 1967 Contest



Eddie Adams, Associated Press, 1977 Contest

Sample of Works  
A selection of works included in each theme

# EMOTIONAL SOLDIER AND DEBRIS



Christopher Morris, Black Star, 1990 Contest



Wojciech Grzedzinski, Napo Images for *Dziennik*, 2009, Contest



David Turnley, *Detroit Free Press* / Black Star, 1992 Contest



Ta Mwe, Sacca Photo, VII Foundation, Frontline Club, W. Eugene Smith Grant, 2024 Contest



Mustafa Hassona, Anadolu Images, 2024 Contest



Tom Stoddart, Independent Photographers Group, 2002 Contest

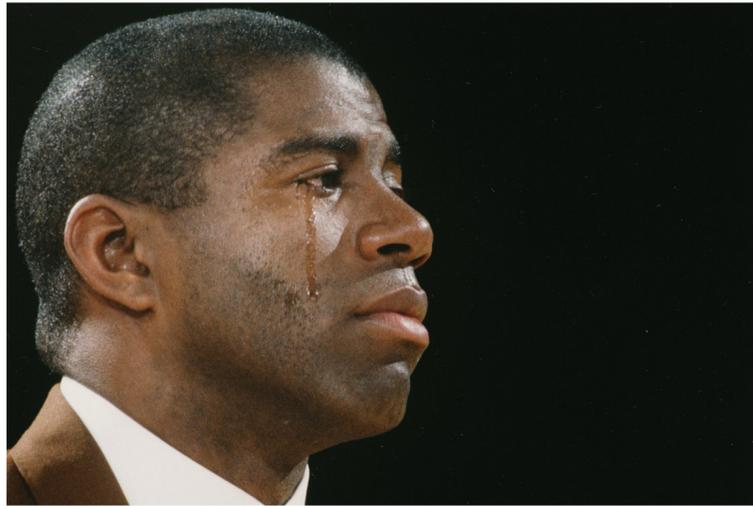


Lorenzo Tugnoli, Contrasto, for *The Washington Post*, 2021 Contest

Sample of Works

A selection of works included in each theme

# BLACK SKIN AND THE DARK CONTINENT



Steve Dykes, *Los Angeles Times*, 1993 Contest



Ekkehart Sachse, 1966, Contest



Francesco Zizola, *Contrasto for Max*, 2002 Contest



Shoba, *Contrasto / Focus*, 2002 Contest



William Daniels, Panos Pictures for *Time*, 2014, Contest



David Valentine, *The Daily News*, 1976 Contest



David Chancellor, 2010 Contest

Sample of Works  
A selection of works included in each theme

# FIRE AND SMOKE



Steve McCurry, Magnum Photos for *National Geographic*, 1992 Contest



Kirk McKoy, *Los Angeles Times*, 1993 Contest



Alberto Garcia, *Saba Press Photos*, 1992 Contest

Graphic adaptation  
Exhibition wall

## UNPACKING SEVEN DECADES OF PHOTO JOURNALISM THROUGH THE WORLD PRESS PHOTO ARCHIVE



A woman grieves over her child, Ameer, who was killed in airstrikes on Saqba, Eastern Ghouta, Syria. By February 2018, the people of Eastern Ghouta, a suburban district outside Damascus and one of the last rebel enclaves in the ongoing Syrian conflict, had been under siege by government forces for five years. During the final offensive, Eastern Ghouta came under rocket fire and air bombardment, including at least one alleged gas attack—on the village of al-Shifunieh, on 25 February. Figures are difficult to verify, but Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported 4,829 wounded and 1,005 killed between 18 February and 3 March, according to data from medical facilities they supported alone. MSF also reported 13 hospitals and clinics damaged or destroyed in just three days. Reports on the end of the siege.

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Hocine Zaourar  
Bulent Kilic  
Roberto Schmidt  
Jed Jacobsohn  
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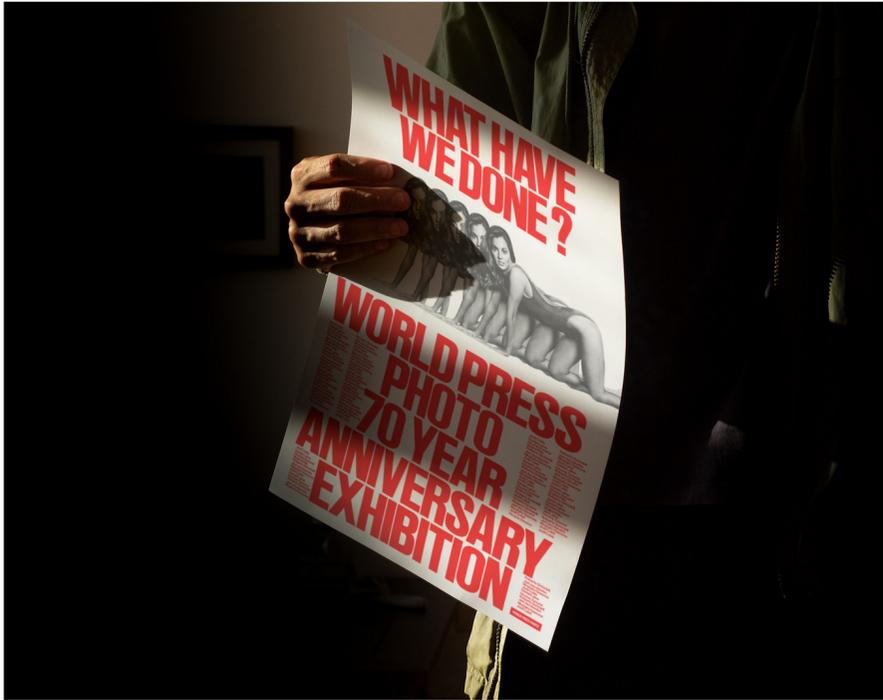
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WORLD PRESS PHOTO



Graphic adaptation  
Didactic material



Graphic adaptation  
Didactic material

# Winners Wall

The wall features all images awarded Photo of the Year since 1955. A print-ready design will be provided, to be produced locally.

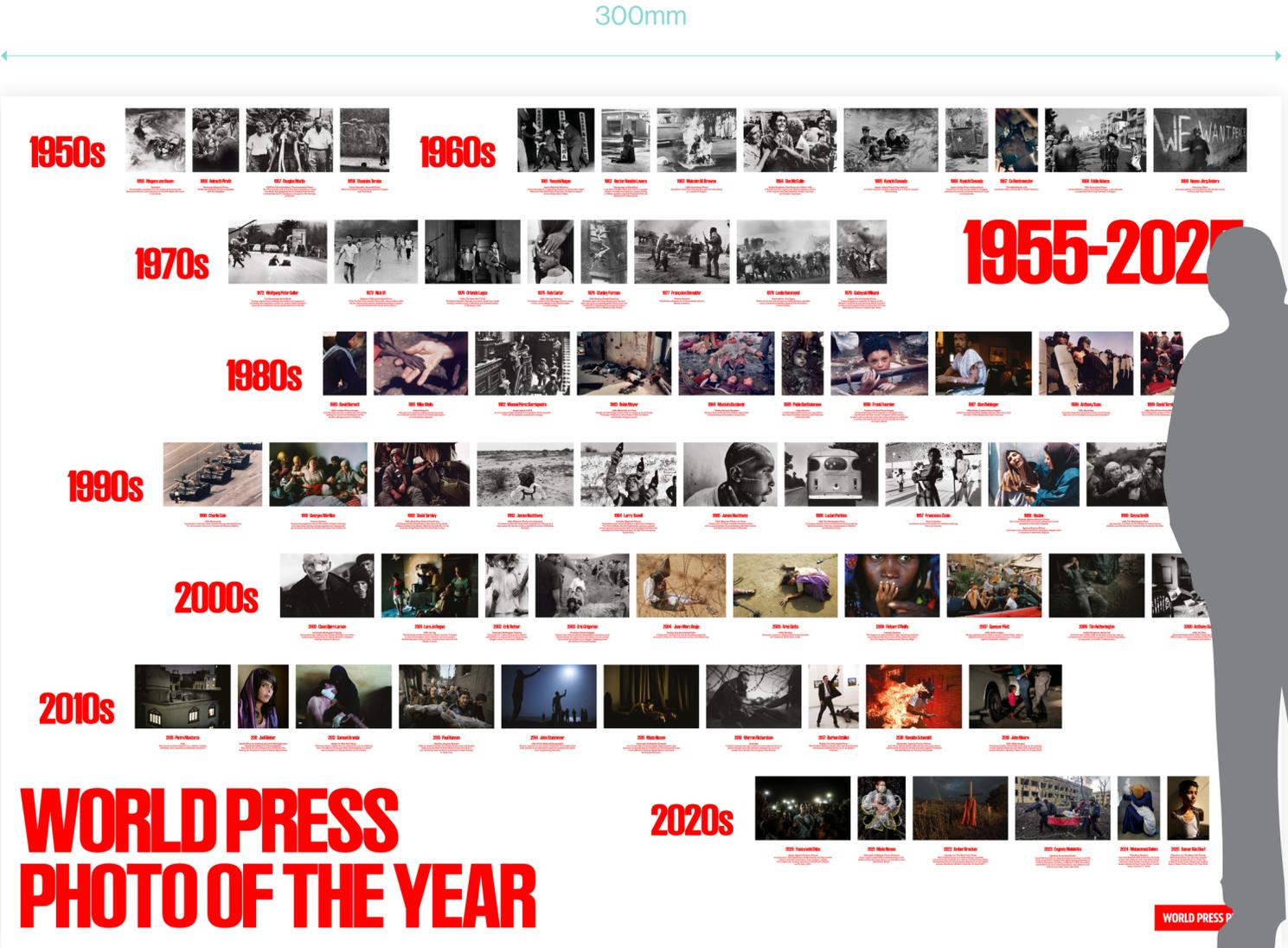
Dimensions of the design can be tailored to your venue.



Monolingual Version



Bilingual Version



Graphic and exhibition design by  
**Tres Tipos Gráficos**

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**Tres Tipos Gráficos**

# Tres Tipos Gráficos

**Tres Tipos Gráficos is a creative studio founded in Madrid in 2005 by Alberto Salván and Nicolás Reyners. With a strong dedication to cultural projects, 3tg exports its expertise in collaborating with artists, photographers, curators, editors, architects, and designers to the fields of communication, branding, and exhibition design.**

[www.trestiposgraficos.com](http://www.trestiposgraficos.com)

# Exhibition design proposal

**Playing on the duality and the double meaning of the title 'What have we done,' we position visual communication as the first step—a factual and rational approach to what has been done over the last 70 years.**

**Once inside the exhibition, we reach the second step: the title 'What have we done' takes on a whole new dimension, prompting the viewer to adopt a critical approach and ask personal questions.**

**By extracting the main form from the images, we distill the symbol, the essence of it. WWP generates 'icons' of historical images in the collective imagination, and they are presented as icons themselves.**

**This reference sets a scientific, rational, and straightforward tone, but is also formally playful. It arouses the public's curiosity and invites them to enter and explore the exhibition.**

# Features of the exhibition

## Features of the exhibition

### **A. Exhibition kit**

This exhibition is designed for local production. Custom design solutions tailored to your venue are also available upon request.

### **B. 119 images**

The exhibition will feature a selection of works by photographers recognized in the World Press Photo Contest.

### **C. Anniversary Winners Wall**

The wall features all images awarded Photo of the Year since 1955.

### **D. Didactic material**

- Introduction wall text by Cristina.
- Sectional wall texts covering the various themes of the exhibition.
- Individual image captions, provided in a handout format.
- The didactic materials will be available in both the local language and English. All designs will be supplied in print-ready formats.

## Features of the exhibition

### **E. Education**

A detailed document will be provided, offering guidance for school groups, including tour information and visual literacy resources.

### **F. Promotional kit**

A promotional kit will be provided to support the exhibition's marketing efforts at your location, featuring assets and templates for both online and offline use.

### **G. Support from World Press Photo**

Our dedicated staff will be available to assist with any inquiries related to exhibition organization, production, and promotion.

### **H. Opportunities for Side Programs**

We strongly encourage the inclusion of side programs, such as guided tours, talks and opportunities to engage with participating photographers. WPP staff can participate in or provide support for the organization of these events.

# Rental fee

## Rental fee

- **This exclusive commemorative exhibition will be shown in a select number of cities worldwide.**
- **Standard rental fee, including printing, packing and transportation from NL€30.000 per month, €7000 per extra month.**
- **Local production (preferred option for overseas locations) €25.000 per month, €5000 per extra month.**

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Strategic Partners:



FUJIFILM



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