I have been a witness, and these pictures are my testimony. The events I have recorded should not be forgotten and must not be repeated.

-JAMES NACHTWEY-
Common Wealth Award, Martin Luther King Award, Dr. Jean Mayer Global Citizenship Award, Henry Luce Award, Robert Capa Gold Medal (five times), the World Press Photo Award (twice), Magazine Photographer of the Year (seven times), the International Center of Photography Infinity Award (three times), the Leica Award (twice), the Bayeaux Award for War Correspondents (twice), the Alfred Eisenstaedt Award, the Canon Photo essayist Award and the W. Eugene Smith Memorial Grant in Humanistic Photography. He is a fellow of the Royal Photographic Society and has an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the Massachusetts College of Arts.
While he says it’s difficult to gauge the influence of his own work, Nachtwey was gratified when a Red Cross official told him that his photos of the 1992 famine in Somalia, which he’d taken on spec and were ultimately published in *The New York Times Magazine*, helped mobilize donors “and turn the situation around. He said 1.5 million lives were saved. That made it all worthwhile. It means everything to know your work has that kind of impact.”
Starvation and disease are the original weapons of mass destruction. When you burn fields and kill animals, people are left vulnerable. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed by this means in Somalia.
"It was an unbelievable genocide," said Nachtwey, "people slaughtered with primitive weapons by their own countrymen at close range. To this day I don't understand it." ¹
“During the question and answer period someone commented that Nachtwey often showed esthetically beautiful compositions of terrible subjects. Nachtwey, who joined Magnum in 1986, said his approach was an homage to Eugene Smith, Joseph Koudelka, Cartier-Bresson and Robert Capa.” 1
"It shook my faith," he said, "because the reason for these atrocities was politically oriented, the price paid for industrialization in Romania." ¹
“This is a bedroom where he begins and now it has become a battlefield…” - Nachtwey

Bosnia, 1993 - Ethnic cleansing in Mostar. Croat militiaman fires on his Moslem neighbors.
If you make an honest picture of war, it will be an antiwar photograph.
-Nachtwey ²
"…I still think people want to hold a magazine, read a printed page and contemplate it. Digital interference means that a picture is no longer a photo document but becomes a photo illustration. As journalists we lose our credibility." But, an audience member asked, how is computer manipulation different from dodging and burning? Nachtwey said that he condones darkroom techniques to bring the image closer to what his eye had seen, but he never "plays the hand of God and burns the sky dark."
When the truth is spoken, it doesn't need to be adorned. It just needs to be simply stated, and often it only needs to be said once.\(^2\)
In the present tense, photography is critical in helping create an atmosphere in which change is possible, not only possible but inevitable...it becomes an archive of visual memory, so that we learn from the past and apply its lessons to the future.” 4
For me, the strength of photography lies in its ability to evoke a sense of humanity. If war is an attempt to negate humanity, then photography can be perceived as the opposite of war and if it is used well it can be a powerful ingredient in the antidote to war. 4

Bosnia, 1993 - Mourning a soldier killed by Serbs and buried in what was once a football field.
to create pictures powerful enough to overcome the diluting effects of the mass media and shake people out of their indifference, to protest, and by the strength of that protest to make others protest. 4

Afghanistan is the world’s leading producer of opium poppy. NATO spends tens of millions annually on anti-drug measures to prevent Afghan dope from flooding Moscow, New York and London – and profits from filling Taliban war coffers.
Drug users gather beneath a bridge over an open sewer in Kabul.
Many addicts are former refugees from the Soviet occupation in the 1980s or the civil wars that followed; they picked up the habit in camps in Iran and Pakistan. Others are veterans of those wars. They are now being joined by a new generation of addicts traumatized by the current fighting. Many gather to shoot up in the bomb-blasted ruins of Kabul’s old town, within view of the presidential palace. 5
In 2001, Nachtwey, along with 6 other photojournalists created their own photo agency VII with this mission statement:

“What unites VII’s work is a sense that, in the act of communication at the very least, all is not lost; the seeds of hope and resolution inform even the darkest records of inhumanity; reparation is always possible; despair is never absolute.”

in 2011 Nachtwey decided to leave VII saying that “I disassociated from the agency as a photographer.” His photography business is now being conducted through his own business.


Citations


