



GOODTHINGSUY
ONLY GOOD THINGS!

Award-winning Artist commemorates Anniversary of the Genocide in Rwanda in Johannesburg

BY BRENT LINDEQUE [@BRENTLINDEQUE](#) MAR 12, 2020 🔥 150 💬 0



Photo Cred: Barry Salzman



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Award-winning Artist, Barry Salzman, Unveils 'The Day I Became Another Genocide Victim' at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre.

Update: Due to COVID-19, this exhibition was cancelled

Johannesburg, South Africa (12 March 2020) – Barry Salzman is an award-winning contemporary artist who works in photography, video and mixed media and whose projects have been shown widely around the world. His photographic work, in particular, began with a fascination for the practice as a teenager, during a time when it served as a way for him to grapple with the racial segregation in Apartheid South Africa.

Today, his work continues to explore challenging themes around social, political and economic narratives. Acutely relevant and brave in its willingness to confront, Salzman's photography garnered the 2018 International Photographer of the Year Award in the Deeper Perspective category at the International Photography Awards (IPA) for The Day I Became Another Genocide Victim.

For the last six years, Salzman has worked on ongoing projects that challenge the universal fatigue around the genocide narrative.



Photo Cred: Barry Salzman

Mostly, he applies tools of abstraction to landscape images shot at precise locations where acts of genocide were perpetrated as a means of reminding us that 'that place' can be 'any place'. He fortuitously happened to be in Rwanda in April 2018 working on his landscape project when news broke about a new mass grave that had been discovered. When excavations at the site were ultimately completed, the remains of 84,439 victims were eventually afforded a dignified burial on May 4th, 2019, during the 25th anniversary of the genocide.

The Day I Became Another Genocide Victim is a series of 100 posthumous portraits of victims of the genocide in Rwanda, as imagined through their recovered personal possessions, photographed at Kabuga Village, Rwanda in May and November 2018. Salzman photographed these items, worn by genocide victims on the last day of their lives, as they were taken from the ground at newly discovered mass graves, almost 25 years after the genocide. This will be the first time the project has ever been exhibited in its entirety.

Founder and director of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, Tali Nates, said, "Barry's emotional photographs of the belongings of men, women and children killed during the genocide just because they were Tutsi, honours these unknown victims, not as statistics, but as people that had an identity, a name and a life."

Salzman asks, "Where does one start and stop a project of this nature? Is one single shoe enough or do you just keep documenting the evidence until our capacity to feel becomes numb?" He ultimately settled on a series of 100 images in acknowledgement of a survivor's testimony. She shared her experience of pretending to be dead lying underneath a pile of bloodied dismembered bodies when she heard one of the perpetrators say, "I just need one more, and I'll have 100." Salzman says, "Those words haunted me as I worked in Rwanda. They challenged my sense of what it meant to be a part of this thing called 'humanity'." Further, it is a fitting tribute to the 100 days of the genocide in Rwanda, during which approximately 1 million people were murdered, making it the fastest and most efficient killing spree of the twentieth century.

Each of the posthumous portraits in the series forces us to imagine the life story of one dead person out of the one million victims of the genocide in Rwanda. They humanise people who would otherwise be forever dehumanised. We can never comprehend one million dead people. We can, however, readily imagine the life of that little boy, carrying his doggy backpack and each of the other people represented in this series of portraits. We can know them. Each lived at the very centre of their own life story until the day they were murdered.

Salzman lives between New York City and Cape Town and has a Master of Fine Arts degree from the School of Visual Arts in New York.

The Day I Became Another Genocide Victim opens at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre on April 7th, 2020, at 6 pm. All are welcome to attend. It will run for the duration of the 100 day anniversary of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

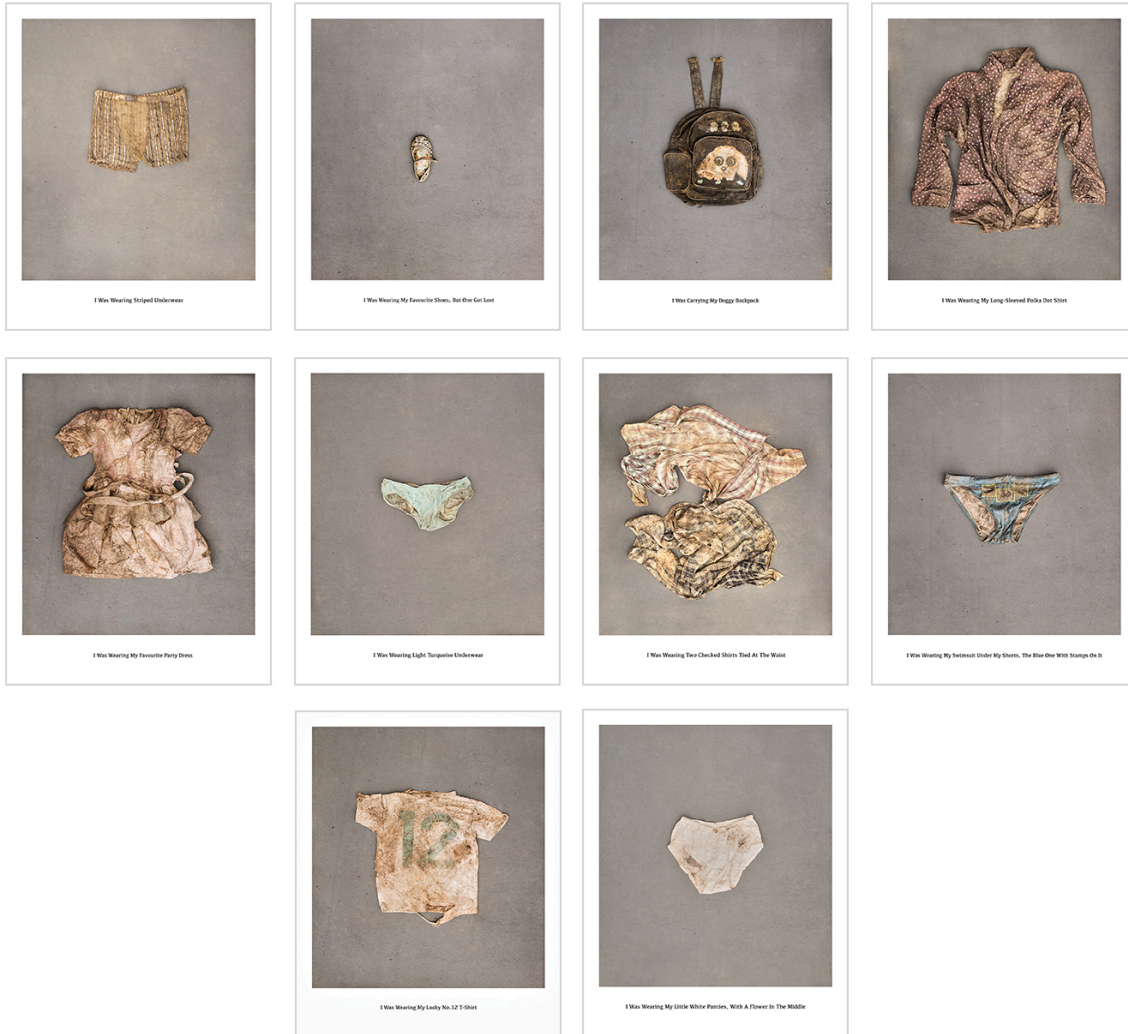


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