

THE EYE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

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A Past Revealed and Concealed, Vyshnivka, Ukraine 2015

JOHN DEVOS - SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

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Deepest Darkest – Barry Salzman: *How We See The World: (a century of genocide)*. (images 5-6)

At this Unseen, we will be showing a selection of Salzman's most recent work from the project shot in Bosnia earlier this year, along with a selection of previously unexhibited works.

To quote from Salzman's project statement:

The essential ethics of seeing underpins my landscape works.

In this ongoing project, started a decade ago, I focus on the recurrence of genocide and our collective responsibility as public witness. I use the landscape metaphorically to draw connections between each of these disparate and dark moments in modern history, while suggesting that we, as members of an amorphous humanity, form the true connective tissue between them. ...

Western governments have repeatedly and consistently failed to act in time to stop perpetrators of genocide. ... my work examines our role and responsibility as public witness.

In contrast to the specific locations I shoot, the images are intentionally non-specific. My intent is for the photographs to counter the way information on this topic is typically disseminated – through the precise lens of the photojournalist, historian, or documentarian. ... In creating a "veiled view," by moving the camera during the exposure, I reflect on the self-imposed veils through which we bear witness, suggesting that it is our veiled societal view that continues to upend our unfulfilled promise of "never again."

Metaphorically, the landscape – like us – witnesses all. It sheds its leaves in cover-up and complicity. But through its rebirth, so it rejuvenates. It carries with it the traces of the past and promises of the future. It triumphs over trauma. It is inextricably intertwined with our darkest moments and brightest days.

In these works, I am preoccupied with making aesthetic images not documenting brutal facts. By creating these images, my hope is to provide for moments of reflection as viewers interpret the work in their own way and re-engage with subject matter we think we know."

Deepest Darkest

Cape Town, South Africa

+27 79 138 4203

info@deepestdarkest.com

<http://www.deepestdarkest.com>

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