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# In context : an examination of Larry Towell's work No man's land from the twin perspectives of maker and user

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**In Context:**  
**An Examination of Larry Towell's Work *No Man's Land* from the  
Twin Perspectives of Maker and User**

by Stefanie Petrilli  
Bachelor of Fine Arts, York University  
Toronto, 2004

A thesis presented to  
  
Ryerson University and George Eastman House,  
  
International Museum of Photography and Film  
  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
  
Master of Arts  
  
in the Program of  
  
Photographic Preservation and Collections Management

Toronto, Ontario, Canada &  
Rochester, New York, USA, 2007

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**An Examination of Larry Towell's Work *No Man's Land* from the  
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Master of Arts, 2007  
Stefanie Petrilli

Photographic Preservation and Collections Management

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ABSTRACT

Photojournalist Larry Towell is the only Canadian member of the prestigious Magnum Photos Agency. Over the span of his career he has concerned himself primarily with issues of land and landlessness and has engaged in a number of long-term projects documenting the human stories amid political and religious conflict in Central America and the Middle East; he has also chronicled the migrant Mennonite workers of Mexico. This thesis focuses specifically on Towell's work photographing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in *No Man's Land*, a book project that was accompanied by newspaper and magazine publications, exhibitions, a video, audio CDs, public performances and multi-media projects. The extensive dissemination and documentation of Towell's work from *No Man's Land* offers an opportunity to examine a cohesive body of work in a number of forums and see how the context in which photojournalistic images appear can subsequently affect their meaning. This thesis undertakes a thorough examination of the photographs from *No Man's Land* in the context of the book, the printed press and exhibitions, considering the intent of the photographer in relation to audience perception of the work. With the new direction in photojournalism leading toward more subjective and self-reflexive projects and with expanding opportunities in digital and art worlds, it is essential that context and presentation be thoroughly understood to ensure the integrity of the issues and the photographer's intent.

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And to my family and friends who have stuck by me and encouraged me every step of the way, I thank you.

## DEDICATION

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To my mom and dad, for their love, support and unwavering belief in my potential.

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## INTRODUCTION

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Photographer Arthur Rothstein wrote about his widely reproduced image from the Depression era known as *The Dust Storm* (1936):

In the beginning it was a record, after which it became a news picture, then it became a feature photograph, eventually an historical photograph, and now it's considered a work of art in most museums. It has a life of its own.<sup>1</sup>

What becomes clear from Rothstein's point of view is that images of suffering and conflict have traditionally been presented to audiences in a variety of contexts. Although this shift in usage from document to art object was previously played out over years or decades so that there was a general disconnection from the events once the images entered the context of the museum, today this shift seems to be occurring at an ever increasing rate. According to Martha Rosler, "the conversion from reportage to art attempts to hurry a historical process, abridging the descent interval that is supposed to elapse before war photos are taken as universalized testaments to a set of ideological themes with a powerful hold on the collective imagination."<sup>2</sup> Inherent in this shift in context is the inevitable shift in audience understanding of the work.

Recognizing this, this thesis takes as its starting point an interest in the current evolution of photojournalistic practice and style, in which complex images of conflict are disseminated to the public in multiple contexts at the same time, concurrent with the events they depict. The rapid conversion from the world of reportage to that of fine art, which

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Rothstein, interview with Richard Doud, May 25, 1964, New York, New York, quoted in Martha Rosler, "Post-Documentary, Post-Photography?" in *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, in association with the International Center of Photography, 2004), 217.

<sup>2</sup> Martha Rosler, "Wars and Metaphors," in *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, in association with the International Center of Photography, 2004), 253.

Rosler originally noted in the 1980s, has reached its peak in present day with photographers currently making the conscious decision to present their work simultaneously in a multitude of expanding contexts. Much of this change is the direct result of the transformation of the forums of dissemination, which have been spurred by advances in technology and changes in the photographic market. In light of these shifts, how then can an understanding of these photographs be arrived at if each context carries with it a specific set of expectations? How can audiences negotiate the meaning of an image of another's suffering if the context of the newspaper signifies the photograph is news and the context of the museum signifies it is art?

Further confusing this difficulty in negotiating a singular meaning from multiple contexts is the notion of subjectivity. The new form of photojournalism which is being produced today has tended toward images that are reflective of the complexity of issues and events and which attempt to convey a personal experience as seen through the eyes of the photographer.<sup>3</sup> The current crop of photojournalists approach their chosen subjects and issues with a great deal of personal concern and interest and consequently a very subjective point of view. This subjectivity then becomes apparent in the photographic approach and resulting work. Although the subjectivity of a photojournalist is universally recognized, it also needs to be recognized that audiences are not neutral participants when engaging with such work. "Everyone who is looking at our photographs is also very subjective and they react to it through who they are and they get something from it and you never know if they're getting what we [want them to get]."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Andy Grundberg, "The 'New Photojournalism' and the Old," in *Crisis of the Real: Writings on Photography Since 1974* (New York: Aperture, 1999), 186.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Fusco, "The Attentive Art Director," *Magnum Blog*, April 5, 2007, Magnum Photos Agency, [http://blog.magnumphotos.com/2007/04/the\\_attentive\\_art\\_director.html#more](http://blog.magnumphotos.com/2007/04/the_attentive_art_director.html#more).

“In Context” sets out to investigate the effects of shifts in context through an examination of the contexts in which photographs from the Middle East by photographer Larry Towell were seen. Towell’s integrated project *No Man’s Land* will be examined in the context of newspaper and magazine publications, book form and exhibitions, from the perspective of both the maker and user. Such an aim attempts to come to a more complete understanding of how the meaning provided by each context, coupled with the subjectivities of both the photographer and audience, has an effect on how the work is understood. An examination such as this requires a visual analysis of the photographs in each context in conjunction with an exploration of the perspectives of the artist and audience obtained through interviews, reviews, guestbook comments and Internet discussion. The reliance on primary sources for this thesis project reflects the contemporary nature of this debate and the lack of scholarly writing available concerning this topic. This examination is also reflective of the current thoughts and ideas being debated by photographers, historians, critics, editors and photography enthusiasts in the form of lectures, magazine articles and Internet blogs and aims at contributing a serious analysis of these issues from a very focused study of Larry Towell’s work.

Towell is one of Canada’s preeminent photojournalists who is working in a unique personal style and yet there is very little critical literature available discussing his work. Although literature about his life and work will most likely increase in the coming years as his work gains more critical attention, this thesis project is an attempt to contribute to this discourse and provide a resource for future scholars. Towell is distinctive among photojournalists as he chooses not to embrace the digital trend in photojournalism. And although he is part of the illustrious Magnum Photos Agency, he chooses to live at his home in rural Canada and travel only in the winter and for projects that strike a personal chord

with him. Yet, rather than becoming complacent and producing photographs that mimic his previous work or the work those who have come before him, Towell continues to push the bounds of the medium and his creativity. This has led to a body of work that includes exhibitions, installations, unique book formats, audio CDs, videos, performances and multi-media projects. The variety of contexts in which he chooses to present his work provides an opportunity to examine how the context can alter the work and the way in which audiences receive it. Additionally, *No Man's Land* represents the photographer's own reconsideration of his entire body of work depicting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the course of more than ten years and therefore offers a unique insight into the artist's perspective on his own work.

This thesis takes into consideration different perspectives by gathering information from reviews, audience commentary and interviews and although every effort was taken to gather as much of this primary information as possible the constraints of time and resources inevitably resulted in a selected examination of these sources. However, rather than be understood as an incomplete analysis of Towell's work from *No Man's Land*, the analysis and issues presented in this thesis project can be seen as symptomatic of the broader issues connected with the dissemination of modern photojournalism. It is a project that I intend to explore beyond the pages of this thesis and a topic which will no doubt find its place within contemporary photographic discourse in the years to come.

The analysis of *No Man's Land* that follows begins with an examination of Towell's book, followed by the publications and exhibitions of his work. Although it will be made clear that Towell first envisions his work in the context of publications before he is able to completely realize his book and exhibition projects, I begin in this manner because I was first introduced to *No Man's Land* through my interest in Towell's book. Every context and

progression though a body of work must be recognized as influencing all other readings.

The aim of “In Context” then is to engage in a debate and contribute to the current dialogue regarding how photographs of conflict can be best presented to audiences to preserve the integrity of the photographer’s intent and the events pictured. What follows is a careful examination of *No Man’s Land* viewed from the twin perspectives of maker and user in an attempt to understand the issues raised by each perspective.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

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To consider the work of a photojournalist such as Larry Towell requires that one explore the history of the genre and the various ways in which the photojournalistic image has been used and presented throughout the genre's history. Michael Carlebach has produced two comprehensive studies that examine the growth and influence of photojournalism. In *The Origins of Photojournalism in America* (1992), Carlebach contributes serious scholarly research to the field of photojournalism where there had previously been very little work.<sup>5</sup> Looking back to the infancy of photography, Carlebach traces the history of the profession to the early technical innovations and the photographers who found ways to distribute scenes of daily life to the public. Covering the period between 1839 and 1880, Carlebach focuses his attention on photographers such as Matthew Brady and William Henry Jackson, among others, who took the large and cumbersome photographic apparatus of the time into the field and brought back some of the first images of battlefields.

Carlebach's second book, *American Photojournalism Comes of Age* (1997) looks at photojournalism at the turn of the century and considers how developments in both camera and printing technology led to the proliferation of photojournalistic images on the printed page.<sup>6</sup> Covering aspects of news photography and identifying some of the first photographers of that era to cover war, as well as those who began using photography to document the ills of daily life, the book gives critical background information on how photographs began to be incorporated with text on the printed page. After covering the

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<sup>5</sup> Michael L. Carlebach, *The Origins of Photojournalism in America* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> Michael L. Carlebach, *American Photojournalism Comes of Age* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997).

critical years in the development of photojournalism and picture magazines the book ends in 1936 with the introduction of *Life* magazine, at the point when photojournalism can be said to have truly taken off. Another book which covers the early history of photojournalism, but which is of lesser importance to the needs of this paper, is Tim Gidal's *Modern Photojournalism: Origin and Evolution, 1910-1933* (1973).<sup>7</sup>

Along with the important *Photography and Society* (1980), written by photographer Gisèle Freund, *Eyes of Time: Photojournalism in America* (1988), edited by Marianne Fulton, is another source that provides an overview of the history of the genre by tracing its evolution from photography's beginning in 1939 up until the 1980s.<sup>8</sup> Consisting of a group of essays composed by historians and curators in the field, the book provides an overview that considers how changes in technology, the rise and fall of magazines, the creation of photo agencies and the adoption of the book have all impacted the evolution of the genre. With the last essay concerned with photojournalism of the 1980s, *Eyes of Time* ends just when Larry Towell is beginning his photographic career and therefore provides an excellent backdrop to consider the events and changes taking place that likely influenced the direction of his photographic work and career.

The formation and history of the prestigious Magnum Photos Agency has been covered both in detail and in passing in numerous books. Russell Miller's *Magnum: Fifty Years at the Front Line of History* (1998) is one such publication that does a fair job of outlining the history of the agency and provides privileged insight into its inner workings.<sup>9</sup> *In Our Time: The World as Seen by Magnum Photographers* (1989) is also an important book in this

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<sup>7</sup> Tim N. Gidal, *Modern Photojournalism: Origin and Evolution, 1910-1933* (New York: Macmillan, 1973).

<sup>8</sup> Gisèle Freund, *Photography & Society* (Boston: D.R. Godine, 1980); and Marianne Fulton, ed., *Eyes of Time: Photojournalism in America* (Boston: Little Brown, in association with the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, 1988).

<sup>9</sup> Russell Miller, *Magnum: Fifty Years at the Front Line of History* (New York: Grove Press, 1998).



regard.<sup>10</sup> This book, which celebrates the fifty-fifth anniversary of the agency and also reproduces a number of images by Magnum photographers includes essays such as “The Founders” by Jean Lacouture and “What Is Magnum?” by Fred Ritchin. Another resource that is useful for those interested in the agency is the 2002 M.A. thesis by Michelle Woodward entitled “The Construction of Photojournalism: Visual Style and Branding in the Magnum Photos Agency.”<sup>11</sup> A discussion with the author which can be found in Appendix B, has also provided useful background information regarding the Magnum Agency, the work of Larry Towell and the current state of photojournalism.

The most important resource regarding Magnum for the purposes of this thesis has been *Magnum Stories* (2004), a book edited by Chris Boot.<sup>12</sup> The extremely large and cumbersome book places Magnum within a historical context and also provides useful information regarding how the agency functions. Additionally, the book is extremely interesting in that it provides first hand accounts by each of Magnum’s photographers regarding their working methods and their thoughts on the current state of photojournalism. The book also reproduces many influential photo essays. Most recently in 2007, and coinciding with the sixtieth anniversary of the agency, *Aperture* has published an article by Gerry Badger entitled “Mission Impossible?: 60 Years of Magnum.”<sup>13</sup> While again providing a timeline of the history of the agency, Badger also ponders changes that have been spurred by changes in technology and the ways in which photojournalism has been used and disseminated to the public. Badger also details the creative ways in which the Magnum

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<sup>10</sup> William Manchester, *In Our Time: The World as Seen by Magnum Photographers* (New York: American Federation of the Arts, in association with W.W. Norton & Company, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> Michelle L. Woodward, “The Construction of Photojournalism: Visual Style and Branding in the Magnum Photos Agency” (M.A. diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> Chris Boot, ed., *Magnum Stories* (London: Phaidon, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Gerry Badger, “Mission Impossible?: 60 Years of Magnum,” *Aperture* no. 187 (Summer 2007): 69-83.

Agency has chosen to move forward in order to evolve with the current shifts in photojournalism.

At this point in Larry Towell's career much of the literature regarding his life and work exists in the form of magazine and newspaper articles, as well as interviews. Many of the major Toronto newspapers such as the *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star* and *National Post* have featured stories about Towell and his photographic projects and these were therefore important sources to consult for this thesis project. Additionally, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has also been a useful resource. The CBC award-winning documentary *Beyond Words: Photographers of War* (2006) and an interview featured on the television program *The Hour* are examples of videos which were consulted for this thesis.<sup>14</sup> In addition to consulting these sources I gathered information regarding Towell and his working methods from an examination of his published books, as well as the multimedia projects he has produced for Magnum in Motion.<sup>15</sup> Finally, much background information was revealed during conversations with the artist.

With their publication of *The Photobook: A History, Volume I*, published in 2004, photographer Martin Parr and critic Gerry Badger have produced one of the most useful and wide-ranging resources on the art of the photobook.<sup>16</sup> This book follows the style of many of the books on photojournalism consulted for this paper in that the authors look back to the origins of photography in the nineteenth century to find the first examples of photographs being used in books. Conceived in nine chapters, the first volume traces the

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<sup>14</sup> *Beyond Words: Photographers of War*, documentary video, produced by Greg Kelly and Eric Foss, 2006, A CBC News Production; and Larry Towell, interview with George Stroumboulopoulos, *The Hour*, CBC, June 8, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Magnum in Motion is a multi-media project initiated by Magnum's New York office that allows photographers to publish their photo essays on the Internet. These multi-media pieces allow photographers to combine both still and moving images with text and sound to expand on the narrative possibilities of the photo essay. For more information regarding Magnum in Motion visit <http://inmotion.magnumphotos.com/>. Additionally, see Appendix C for a list books by Larry Towell.

<sup>16</sup> Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Volume I* (London: Phaidon, 2004).

use of the book to nineteenth century England and moves through the centuries and many of the technological and aesthetic evolutions of the medium and finally ends with a consideration of Japanese photobooks. Although the book is very subjective in the selection of photobooks which are depicted, it provides an extremely useful historical timeline of how photographers have used the book form to disseminate their work and ideas. *The Photobook: A History, Volume II* (2006) features mainly contemporary work and is especially useful for its consideration of “The ‘Concerned’ Photobook since World War II,” which focuses on Magnum’s commitment to ‘concerned’ photography through the production of photographic books.<sup>17</sup> As a Magnum photographer, Larry Towell definitely fits under the heading “‘concerned’ photographer” and this chapter finds his book *The Mennonites* highlighted as one of the exemplary photobooks of this genre. Describing Towell as a photographer with “an eye for the striking composition,” yet with a “vision [that] seems freer and less rigid,” the authors also profess that his work in *The Mennonites* “is one of the photobooks that best finds an equitable relationship between image and text.”<sup>18</sup>

Occurring in the same year that Volume I of *The Photobook* was published, the 2004 exhibition “The Open Book” at the Hasselblad Center in Göteborg, Sweden, also produced a catalogue which is similarly useful for understanding the importance of the book to many photographers.<sup>19</sup> *A Century of Artists Books* (1994), from curator and author Riva Castleman, accompanied a MoMA exhibition and also develops the chronology of the artist book, while the exhibition and catalogue *Photography Between Covers* (1989) focuses specifically on the

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<sup>17</sup> Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Volume II* (London: Phaidon, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 256.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Roth, *The Open Book: A History of the Photographic Book from 1878 to the Present* (Göteborg, Sweden: Hasselblad Center, 2004).

Dutch documentary photobook.<sup>20</sup> Finally, for those interested in an extensive catalogue featuring some of the most influential books of the twentieth century there is *The Book of 101 Books: Seminal Photographic Books of the Twentieth Century* (2001).<sup>21</sup>

Focusing specifically on the work of Larry Towell and extremely important as a guide for my examination of *No Man's Land* in book form, is an essay written in 2002 by documentarist and professor Peter Metelerkamp. Entitled "The Aura of the Book: Larry Towell's *The Mennonites* as a Site of Discourse," the essay offers a detailed and thorough descriptive analysis of Towell's book and briefly attempts to place the book within "a contemporary cultural landscape."<sup>22</sup> The essay details a logical method for describing and analyzing a photobook and also provides insight as to how audiences have understood Towell's work in book form as opposed to in the exhibition setting.

Much of the necessary background information concerning the use of photographs in magazines and newspapers was obtained from general histories of photojournalism. These include John G. Morris' *Get the Picture: A Personal History of Photojournalism* (2002) and *Truth Needs No Ally: Inside Photojournalism* (1994) by Howard Chapnick.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, no consideration of picture magazines and the importance of the photo essay would be complete without an examination of the many publications from *Life*. Some of the titles that

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<sup>20</sup> Riva Castleman, *A Century of Artists Books* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994); and Mattie Boom, *Foto in omslag: het Nederlandse documentaire fotoboek na 1945 [Photography Between Covers: The Dutch Documentary Photobook After 1945]* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Fragment Uitgeverij, 1989).

<sup>21</sup> Andrew Roth, et al., *The Book of 101 Books: Seminal Photographic Books of the Twentieth Century* (New York: PPP Editions, in association with Ruth Horowitz, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> Peter Metelerkamp, "The Aura of the Book: Larry Towell's *The Mennonites* as a Site of Discourse," *Documentary Photography and Photographic Theory*, 2002, <http://www.documentarist.net/writing/Aurabook.html>.

<sup>23</sup> John G. Morris, *Get the Picture: A Personal History of Photojournalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); and Howard Chapnick, *Truth Needs No Ally: Inside Photojournalism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994).

would be of interest include: *Life 50, 1936-1986: The First Fifty Years* (1986), *Great Photographic Essays from Life* (1978) and *Looking at Life Magazine* (2001).<sup>24</sup>

Most recently, and of huge importance to my understanding of the photojournalistic image in the context of magazines and newspapers, is the book *Things As They Are: Photojournalism in Context Since 1955* (2005).<sup>25</sup> The book contains a historical essay by curator Mary Panzer, which serves to address the rise of photojournalism, the importance of the picture press, the digital revolution currently taking place, as well as the aims of the book and its accompanying exhibition. The book presents the history of the picture press through a historical selection of some of the most influential and important photo essays and presents these images in the original magazine or newspaper contexts in which audiences would have initially been exposed to them.

My understanding of the impact of using photojournalistic images in museum and gallery settings would not be complete without the assistance of Judy Ditner. Her 2005 M.A. thesis paper and exhibition “Framing War” provides a detailed analysis of how photojournalistic images function in the space of an exhibition and the implications of such display.<sup>26</sup> Born from a visit to the International Center of Photography in New York City, “‘Framing War’ investigates the shifting contexts of contemporary war photography—from news to books and exhibitions—through an examination of photographs from the war in Iraq.”<sup>27</sup> Ditner’s research demonstrates how the context in which contemporary images of

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<sup>24</sup> *Life 50, 1936-1986: The First Fifty Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1986); Maitland Armstrong Edey and Constance Sullivan, *Great Photographic Essays from Life* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1978); and Erika Lee Doss, *Looking at Life Magazine* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

<sup>25</sup> Mary Panzer and Christian Caujolle, *Things As They Are: Photojournalism in Context Since 1955* (New York: Aperture Foundation/World Press Photo, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Judy Beth Ditner, “Framing War: Photojournalism and the Museum,” (M.A. diss., Bard College, 2005).

<sup>27</sup> Judy Beth Ditner, “Framing War, Curated by Judy Ditner at CPW,” *Exhibition Archive*, 2005, The Center for Photography at Woodstock, [http://www.cpw.org/exhibitions/2005/ Framingwar/pages/gallery\\_framingwar.html](http://www.cpw.org/exhibitions/2005/ Framingwar/pages/gallery_framingwar.html).

conflict appear can alter the meaning and subsequent audience understanding of these images. Ditner's views have therefore been useful for my own consideration of Towell's work in the museum and gallery environments.

Additionally, the book *Beautiful Suffering: Photography and the Traffic in Pain* (2007), which accompanied an exhibition of the same title at Williams College Museum of Art, was born of a need to try to come to terms with how to most responsibly present images of conflict in contemporary society.<sup>28</sup> Although it followed an exhibition, the book aims to address not only the context of the exhibition, but also how these images have been used in publications and commercial offshoots. Focusing specifically on photographs which have been produced since the 1980s, the book attempts to address "the dilemmas of picturing suffering in contemporary conditions, examining some of the most prominent and revealing photographic and critical responses to these dilemmas."<sup>29</sup> Rather than providing an answer of how to best disseminate these images to the wider public, the book focuses on providing a range of opinions and thoughts from the field and thus leaves the debate open for future consideration.

*Photography's Multiple Roles* (1998) focuses specifically on the various ways in which a photograph can be used in society.<sup>30</sup> Considering the photograph as an object for artistic expression, a journalistic document, a scientific tool and a product for commercial industry, each essay reflects on how a photograph may fit into these singular roles. Following a similar logic, *The Photographic Memory: Press Photography, Twelve Insights* also provides essays

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<sup>28</sup> Mark Reinhardt, Holly Edwards, and Erina Dugganne, *Beautiful Suffering: Photography and the Traffic in Pain* (Williamstown, MA: Williams College Museum of Art, 2007).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>30</sup> Denise Miller, ed., *Photography's Multiple Roles: Art, Document, Market, Science* (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Photography/Columbia College, 1998).

from professionals in the field of photography and photojournalism.<sup>31</sup> Published in 1987, the book is both a reflection on how press photography has functioned in society, as well as what many individuals feel the future directions of photojournalism might be. The essay, “Photography and Its Uses” by Christian Caujolle, the founder and editor of the journal *Libération*, focuses specifically on the various ways in which photography of the 1980s was challenged by changes in technology and aesthetics and how these various uses signaled the new face of photojournalism. His comments considered alongside the afterword he has written for the book *Things As They Are*, signal the changes in photographic discourse that have evolved with photojournalism since the 1980s.

Other more contemporary publications which consider the trafficking of photojournalistic images in current culture include Susan Sontag’s *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003) and David Levi Strauss’ *Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics* (2003).<sup>32</sup> In Sontag’s most recent reflection on the photographic image, she questions the politics of looking at photographs of conflict and pain. Her philosophical prose examines the various ways in which audiences are exposed to these photographs and their subsequent understanding of these images and of the events they depict. Sontag’s essay is important for this thesis in that she addresses how these images are presented in publications and exhibitions and poses questions such as “what is the point of exhibiting these pictures?”<sup>33</sup> Strauss’ book, which consists of a variety of essays that have been published in a number of magazines, reaffirms many of the issues addressed in *Regarding the Pain of Others* such as the aestheticization of images of conflict. Addressing the images produced by photographers

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<sup>31</sup> Emile R. Meijer and Joop Swart, ed., *The Photographic Memory: Press Photography, Twelve Insights* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: World Press Photo, 1987).

<sup>32</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2003); and David Levi Strauss, *Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics* (New York: Aperture, 2003).

<sup>33</sup> Sontag, 91-92.

such as Sebastião Salgado, Alfredo Jaar, Richard Cross and John Hoagland, Strauss considers the ways in which photographers, editors and curators have used these images and how each context can both highlight important issues and pervert the original intent of the work.

The writing of Martha Rosler has also been an important source for this thesis. Taken from her book *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (2004), her essay “Wars and Metaphors,” which was originally published in 1981, considers the significance of Magnum photographer Susan Meiselas’ book *Nicaragua*.<sup>34</sup> The importance of this essay lies in her “concern with the appearance and context of war images and their effects on the reception of those images by various viewing publics.”<sup>35</sup> Additionally, Rosler poses questions about what the move from photojournalism to art photography means for the future of the genre, a topic that is of great interest to many professionals in the field.

Book reviews from journals and magazines such as *Afterimage*, along with letters to the editor and the public guestbook provided by the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation in Paris are some of the contemporary informal sources which were vital for understanding audience reception of Towell’s work. Since historians, editors, curators and photojournalists are currently questioning the future of photojournalism and how best to present these complex images to the public, many of their ideas have yet to be published in book form. *Aperture*, *Photo District News* and *Columbia Journalism Review* are some of the journals that have been instrumental in providing me with relevant insight into new directions in photojournalism. *The Digital Journalist*, the self-professed “Magazine for Photojournalism in the Digital Age,” edited and published by photojournalist Dirck Halstead, and *ZoneZero*, “a site on the internet, dedicated to photography and its journey

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<sup>34</sup> Martha Rosler, *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).

<sup>35</sup> Martha Rosler, “Wars and Metaphors,” in *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, in association with the International Center of Photography, 2004), 245.



from the analog to the digital world,” represent two sources that have been instrumental in my understanding of the current state of photojournalism.<sup>36</sup>

Additionally, as part of my research I felt it necessary to reach out to as many professionals in the field as possible to gain a better understanding of contemporary views regarding the presentation of photojournalistic images and how audiences might best understand the work being produced today. From photographers such as Pedro Meyer, to curators and editors such as Michelle Woodward, these interviews and the ideas discussed have greatly enriched this thesis project and represent topics that will no doubt be found in future histories of photojournalism.

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<sup>36</sup> Dirck Halstead, *The Digital Journalist*, 1999, <http://digitaljournalist.org/>; and Pedro Meyer, “About ZoneZero,” *Editorial*, September 1995, <http://zonezero.com/editorial/editorial.html>.

Larry Towell was born in Lambton County, in the farmlands of Southern Ontario, Canada in 1953 as one of eight children. He spent his early years on a small farm that his father, who had a small auto body repair shop, rented out to local farmers.<sup>38</sup> It was his mother Helen who first introduced Towell to photography when, on one of her trips to the Salvation Army she found a Kodak box camera, which she gave to her son as a present.<sup>39</sup> Despite growing up to become an internationally known and celebrated photographer, Towell admits that at the young age of thirteen the camera was more of a hobby and he rarely shot more than one roll of film around his home during any given year. In fact, it was not until he left home in 1972 and headed to Toronto to study visual arts at York University that he learnt the practice of photography and was taught how to work in the black and white darkroom.

Looking back and reflecting on his educational career in the arts, Towell is often quoted critiquing the somewhat self-centered notion of the artist that he was introduced to during his time at art school. While in art school it had never crossed his mind to look at the world and question the distribution of power and wealth, as those types of issues were never raised. Rather, he was instilled with the belief that “art was something that came out of your soul” and that “the artist was the most important part.”<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, Towell found the culture of the university art world completely narcissistic and at odds with his upbringing

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<sup>37</sup> For a firsthand account of Larry Towell's background and career see Appendix A.

<sup>38</sup> Chris Boot, ed., *Magnum Stories* (London: Phaidon, 2004), 458.

<sup>39</sup> Candida Crewe, “Focus on a Family Man,” *The Times*, August 30, 1996, sec. T.

<sup>40</sup> Larry Towell, e-mail interview with Miriam Rosen, May 5, 2005. Personal files of Larry Towell.

and he quickly rejected it in favour of looking outside of himself and allowing others to speak.<sup>41</sup>

Towell's first exposure to the realities of the distribution of wealth and power in the world occurred once he left the security of the university environment and traveled to India as a volunteer worker. It was in Calcutta that Towell reveals he "was slapped in the face by the reality of what was going on, about just third world landlessness and poverty and wealth distribution."<sup>42</sup> Beginning to consider these issues, Towell began to question his role in the world and began writing poetry and taking photographs to help him understand what he was experiencing. Once he returned home he felt the need to be alone and contemplate his experience and all he had seen, so he built a raft out of salvaged materials and lived alone on the Sydenham River near his hometown for two and a half years.<sup>43</sup> It was only due to a chance meeting with a woman named Ann, who would become his wife, when he ventured into town to buy some food supplies that he finally decided to return to his home.

For the next ten years, Towell split his time between teaching folk music at a local college and becoming involved with a church organization known as the Canadian Catholic Organization for Peace and Justice. As part of the organization, Towell became involved in a letter-writing campaign to Members of Parliament calling for a rejection of American foreign policy in Central America. Towell and his wife also spent a period of time working in soup kitchens across the United States before he made the decision to travel to Central America. Traveling with an organization called Witness for Peace, Towell wanted to see firsthand exactly what was happening and attempt to affect change as a human rights activist. The horrific events he witnessed in Central America, coupled with the stories he

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<sup>41</sup> Murray Whyte, "Documenting History One Click at a Time," *Toronto Star*, June 1, 2002, sec. K, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

<sup>42</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>43</sup> Simon James, "Just Being Human," *The Royal Photographic Society Journal* (March 2006): 56.

heard from the victims of the conflict, which he felt were not being accurately covered by North American media, inspired Towell to begin a project on the war in Nicaragua.<sup>44</sup> In 1984, armed with his camera and a tape recorder, Towell set out to produce his first photographic record of the individuals he encountered in the midst of the conflict zone.<sup>45</sup> His original intention was to produce a conceptual art piece; however the final result was a book comprised of oral histories, testimonies and photographs called *Somoza's Last Stand*. The book represents one of the many projects Towell would produce while traveling through Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala.<sup>46</sup> While many of his projects feature his photographs accompanied by his poems, Towell is quick to point out that these early works represent human rights documents rather than photo essays.<sup>47</sup> However, according to Murray White of the *Toronto Star*, his work in Central America does represent a pivotal moment in Towell's career for "it was there he first came in touch with the power of an image to convey emotion and truth."<sup>48</sup>

His lengthy exploration of the lives of those living amidst the conflicts in Central America also helped solidify Towell's contempt for conventional news photography, which requires photographers to quickly drop into conflict zones, take a photograph of the most newsworthy moment and then leave. The rapid nature of news photography ultimately generates a distance between the photographer and the subject, a distance that Towell has always attempted to overcome by using a wide-angle lens on his camera and placing himself

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<sup>44</sup> Sandra Martin, "Land Hungry and Dirt Poor," *Globe and Mail*, May 13, 2000, sec. R.

<sup>45</sup> Gord Bowes, "Towell Opens Rare Canadian Show," *Courier Press* (Wallaceburg, Canada), May 4, 2005.

<sup>46</sup> For a complete list of books by Larry Towell see Appendix C.

<sup>47</sup> James, 56.

<sup>48</sup> Murray Whyte, "I'm Known as the Last Guy to Leave," *Toronto Star*, June 1, 2003, sec. F, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

right in the thick of the events.<sup>49</sup> Instead of producing images for the sake of the news, Towell always photographs for the sake of history and ultimately believes in the reflective and contemplative nature of the medium.<sup>50</sup> It is Towell's belief that "it doesn't matter that I work on something for 10 years before it gets published because it isn't meant to explain the moment, but to reflect upon it."<sup>51</sup> Towell is also not interested in providing voyeuristic or exotic images of the locations he travels to and therefore, he insists upon visiting places for several weeks at a time, over the course of several years in order to gain a familiarity with a location and build relationships with individuals, which in the end produces a much more personal body of work.<sup>52</sup>

Recognizing that his photographic work from Central America was not meant for news sources, Towell attempted to find another outlet, besides the book, in which to share his work with the public. Upon returning home to his farmhouse in Lambton County where he and Ann had begun to raise their family, Towell decided to cold call the Magnum Photos Agency in New York City, having heard the name in passing and thinking they might want to sell some of his pictures. It was the late 1980s when Towell made the call without fully realizing that he was about to call the most prestigious and influential photo agency in the world.<sup>53</sup> The woman who answered the phone suggested that Towell submit some of his work for consideration, which was then shown at the next photographers' meeting. Among the slides that he submitted to the agency were a number of photographs of his family that he had been accumulating over the years, photographs taken at home on his own land. It

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<sup>49</sup> Larry Towell, interview by George Stroumboulopoulos, *The Hour*, CBC, June 8, 2005.

<sup>50</sup> "Larry Towell," *Beyond Words: Photographers of War*, CBC, <http://www.cbc.ca/beyondwords/towell.html>.

<sup>51</sup> Boot, 459.

<sup>52</sup> Larry Towell, e-mail interview with Miriam Rosen, May 5, 2005. Personal files of Larry Towell.

<sup>53</sup> Mary Baxter, "Social Consciousness Guides Photographer's Camera," *Sarnia-Lambton Life* (July 2006), 22-23; and Whyte, "Documenting History One Click at a Time."

was actually based on the strength and emotion of these images, quite different from the typical images produced by Magnum photographers, that Larry Towell was asked to join the cooperative as a nominee in 1988.<sup>54</sup> Towell became a full member of the illustrious agency in 1993 and is the first Canadian member of Magnum.<sup>55</sup>

Once part of the Magnum family, Towell discovered the importance and influence the agency had in the photographic field; it was a realization that encouraged him to start photographing more seriously. He thus credits the creative environment at Magnum with helping him to focus and improve his storytelling abilities.<sup>56</sup> Surrounded by photographers such as Susan Meiselas, Alex Webb, Eugene Richards and Josef Koudelka, Towell had a built-in support system. Towell could share a group of photographs with other Magnum members and rely on their thoughts and opinions for creative input. He likens the experience to conducting a portfolio review; the Magnum community provided Towell with the opportunity to have an honest discussion with the people he grew to care about most.<sup>57</sup>

The support of the Magnum community also encouraged Towell to leave his teaching career behind and choose photography as a full time career. There was never any pressure for Towell to change his working methods or his chosen projects; rather Towell

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<sup>54</sup> Crewe, "Focus on a Family Man."

<sup>55</sup> The photographers of the Magnum Photos Agency meet once a year in order to discuss Magnum's affairs and to review the portfolios of potential members. After a voting process successful applicants are invited to become 'Nominee' members of the agency. The nominee membership allows the photographer the opportunity to get to know the agency and vice versa, however, this membership carries with it no binding commitment for either party. After two years as a nominee, the photographer must then present another portfolio to the agency in order to apply for 'Associate Membership.' As an associate member, the photographer becomes bound by the rules that govern the agency and is able to enjoy all the facilities of Magnum's offices, as well as worldwide representation. However, as an associate member the photographer does not yet have voting rights in corporate decision making. Finally, after another two years the associate member is able to apply for full membership by presenting another portfolio at the member's meeting. Once a photographer is granted full membership the photographer is given full voting rights and becomes a member of the Magnum Photos Agency for life or for as long as the photographer chooses. Magnum Photos Agency, "Magnum Membership," *General Information*, About Magnum, <http://agency.magnumphotos.com/about/general.aspx>.

<sup>56</sup> Boot, 459.

<sup>57</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

was free to continue devoting his time to the issues and projects of most significance to him. For the most part, Towell has worked, often simultaneously, on a number of long-term projects which he usually spends ten or more years. As an example, towards the end of his time in Central America, Towell also became interested in and acquainted with a group of migrant Mennonite farmers who had come from Mexico to farm the land close to Towell's home, and thus began his eleven-year project on the Mennonites. In addition to his projects, Towell will also take assignments that complement his photographic aesthetic and philosophy, stories that relate to "what he calls 'the culture of resistance.'"<sup>58</sup> Some of the assignments that editors have sought him out for include his first magazine essay "Paradise Lost," which focused on the ecological repercussions of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska, a *Life* magazine photo essay on suicide bombers, as well as a project on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina that led to a book.<sup>59</sup>

The central theme that has driven each of Towell's projects and which can be traced back to his connection with the place he grew up is the theme of landlessness. All of Towell's work is tied together by an interest in land; how land makes people into who they are and what happens when people lose their land and thus lose their identities. The theme is present in his work from Central America, where he photographed not so much a civil war, but a rebellion of landless farmers. His project on the Mennonites similarly focused on the fact that the entire identity of the Mennonites was rooted in their sense of themselves as an agrarian culture.<sup>60</sup> In the process of completing the project, Towell spent many years traveling to Mexico in the fall and then back to Southern Ontario in the summer with the

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<sup>58</sup> Martha Langford, "Figures in a Landscape," *National Post*, December 16, 1999, sec. E, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

<sup>59</sup> Magnum Photos Agency, "Larry Towell," *Biography*, [http://www.magnumphotos.com/Archive/C.aspx?VP=XSpecific\\_MAG.Biography\\_VPage&AID=2K7O3R1VY41C](http://www.magnumphotos.com/Archive/C.aspx?VP=XSpecific_MAG.Biography_VPage&AID=2K7O3R1VY41C).

<sup>60</sup> James, 56.

migrant workers. It is Towell's own connection with the rural communities where he has spent most of his life that has provided him with a deeper understanding of the sense of personal loss experienced when an individual is separated from the land he or she once owned.<sup>61</sup> It is also the reason that Towell has continually photographed his own land, capturing his farm where he has made a home and his family who ground him there.

The fourth major body of work to which Towell has devoted much of his career covering that also deals with issues of landlessness is his work from the Middle East. His first impulse to travel to the Middle East came in 1993, when it appeared as though the Oslo Accords would result in the creation of a new nation and an end to the seemingly ceaseless violence between the Palestinians and Israelis.<sup>62</sup> Convinced of the historical significance of the event, Towell wanted to produce a document of the creation of a new nation; a document that would record for history's sake the actualization of peace in the Middle East.<sup>63</sup> The project was approached with a sense of hope and the notion that he would be a part of a peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis. Once Towell was in the environment he quickly realized that there was no end in sight for the violence and that there

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<sup>61</sup> Boot, 458.

<sup>62</sup> On September 13, 1993 Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat shook hands and signed the "Declaration of Principles," also known as the Oslo Accords, at the White House in Washington, D.C. The Oslo Accords consisted of general principles for a five-year interim period of Palestinian self-rule. It represented the first time that the Palestinians formally recognized Israel's existence and that the Israelis acknowledged that the Palestinians were a separate people, with a separate identity and a desire for their own government. However, the documents still left issues of national security and foreign affairs in the hands of the Israeli government. Although the aim of the Oslo Accords was to put an end to years of violence with the mutual recognition of each party, in the end the peace process resulted in more violence and disillusionment. The implementation of an interim period delayed key issues in the Palestinian struggle and in the end it became apparent that Israel had no intention of granting a Palestinian State. According to the M.A. thesis by Joanne Jeresaty, "the Oslo Peace Accords hindered the prospects of real peace in the region by erecting a thin and opaque veneer, which masked the real issues of the conflict." Larry Towell, *No Man's Land* (London: Boot, in association with the Archive of Modern Conflict, 2005); Joanne Jeresaty, "The Oslo Peace Accords: A Flawed Peace Process," (M.A. diss., Central Connecticut State University, 2004); "Israel 1991 to Present: Oslo Accords," *Palestinian Facts*, 2007, [http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf\\_1991to\\_now\\_oslo\\_accords.php](http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1991to_now_oslo_accords.php); and "Declaration of Principles: On Interim Self-Government Arrangements," *Jewish Virtual Library*, The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2007, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/dop.html>.

<sup>63</sup> Whyte, "I'm Known as the Last Guy to Leave."



would be no peace. However, he had already become invested in the conflict and thus stayed on to document the daily lives of those stuck in the cycle of violence.<sup>64</sup> What Towell recognized while immersing himself in the daily lives of the Palestinian people was that yet again he was faced with the issue of landlessness. Towell recognized that the Palestinians were primarily farmers who had lost their land and had been living in refugee camps for over fifty years. In Towell's eyes, the media has not done a fair job of looking at the Palestinians as human beings. In his words, "they lost their farms, they lost their homes, they lost everything, you never think of them that way. They're farmers and shepherds. What happened to them over the years? Why are they in this situation?"<sup>65</sup> Thus, in the end the project returned to the theme he was familiar with and had a personal investment in.

Although the root of the issues in the Middle East was similar to that witnessed while photographing in Central America, Towell found his project in the Middle East more difficult to approach. It was an environment filled with more hatred and aggression due to the long history of the conflict. While the citizens he met in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala were friendly and completely open and accepting of photographers and aid workers, Towell found that the Palestinians were much more private in nature. This was due to both cultural differences, as well as a general distrust of outsiders, for there had been many instances when undercover agents had posed as journalists. Therefore, during the period between 1993 and 1997 in which he was working on his first project in Palestine, Towell had to be accompanied at all times by a Palestinian in order to identify himself.<sup>66</sup> However, as time passed and he began to immerse himself further in the culture and gain the trust of many families, Towell was able to move in closer to the events and the lives of those

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<sup>64</sup> Barbara Oudiz, "Larry Towell" *Eyemazing* 7 (Summer 2005).

<sup>65</sup> Larry Towell, interview with George Stroumboulopoulos, *The Hour*, CBC, June 8, 2005.

<sup>66</sup> Larry Towell, e-mail interview with Miriam Rosen, May 5, 2005. Personal files of Larry Towell.

around him. This increase in proximity and in the personal connection to the work is evident when examining the progression in Towell's work from *Then Palestine* to *No Man's Land*.

After producing the book *Then Palestine* (1999), Towell returned to the project in 2000 during the second intifada, a project he was eventually able to complete with the assistance of the 2003 Henri Cartier-Bresson Award.<sup>67</sup> The award offered him the possibility to spend an extended amount of time traveling and revisiting the area to photograph the current situation. It also provided him with the time to fully think about the issues at hand and as a result the images he produced for his project *No Man's Land* appear more contemplative in nature. Faced with the reality of the physical and mental barrier that exists between the Palestinians and Israelis and the likelihood that there would be no peace in the near future, Towell decided that the most honest thing he could do was immerse himself in the daily events of the Gaza Strip. Photographing from the street, in the midst of clashes and in the lulls in between, Towell's images offer a chaotic and yet very personal and subjective viewpoint. To further encapsulate his point of view from inside the conflict zone, Towell began writing poetry, recording moving images along with ambient sounds and creating wall rubbings from within the city. Incorporated into different aspects of the larger project to which *No Man's Land* belongs, these pieces help produce a more complete account

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<sup>67</sup> The word *intifada* is an Arabic word that literally means "shaking off." The first intifada, or Palestinian civil uprising, began on December 8, 1987 in the Gaza Strip. The escalated violence, which lasted over four years, was initially triggered after an Israeli truck drove into cars carrying Arab workers, killing four Palestinians and injuring seven more. On September 28, 2000 Ariel Sharon paid a visit to the al-Aqsa Mosque, which is the most holy Muslim site in Palestine. The visit sparked riots and street violence and is believed to be the catalyst of the second intifada. However, this account of events leading up to the second intifada has been contested, but regardless of the event that triggered the intifada, September 2000 represents the moment of increased violence in the history of Middle Eastern events that would ultimately claim the lives of more than a thousand Israeli and Palestinian people. Towell, *No Man's Land*; "Israel 1991 to Present: al-Aqsa Intifada," *Palestinian Facts*, 2007, [http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf\\_1991to\\_now\\_alaqsa\\_start.php](http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1991to_now_alaqsa_start.php); Mitchell Bard; and "The Intifada," *Jewish Virtual Library*, The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2007, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/intifada.html>.

of his experience.<sup>68</sup> For Towell, the creative challenges he undertook while working on *No Man's Land* harken back to his experience at art school in the sense that he put himself into the project as much as he could in an attempt to discipline himself to listen to the world more closely and not simply photograph it.<sup>69</sup> And although the projects created for *No Man's Land* represent some of the most important work he has produced, for the time being he does not feel any impulse to return. According to Towell, he has said everything he has to say about the situation and until something positive happens he feels that there are other issues in the world which he needs to explore and approach with fresh eyes. Some of the places he hopes to examine or in which projects are already underway include Afghanistan, Darfur and a project with Doctors Without Borders in Peru.<sup>70</sup>

At the present, Towell has returned home, both figuratively and literally. Choosing to spend the winter months traveling and photographing and the summers at home with his family, Towell currently finds himself at home on his farm working on his latest book project entitled *The World From My Front Porch*, which will launch in 2008 with an exhibition at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York. The book represents his most complex publication yet. Although it will feature photographs of his family and farm, taken mainly within one hundred yards of his front porch, the book will also include his own writing along with found objects, such as old pioneer diaries and children's drawings.<sup>71</sup> Once again, the main focus of the text will be on issues of land and landlessness, drawing both from Towell's experience in the world as a photojournalist and his own experience with his own

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<sup>68</sup> In addition to the book *No Man's Land*, Towell also produced a CD entitled *The Dark Years*, as well as a video *Indecisive Moments*, utilizing the materials he collected while in the Middle East. The ambient sounds, his poems and diary entries have also been used in a number of public performances and to create the online multi-media projects known as Magnum in Motion. Dan Rowe, "Life in Hard Terrain," *Vancouver Sun*, April 12, 2003, sec. D, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

<sup>69</sup> Larry Towell, e-mail interview with Miriam Rosen, May 5, 2005. Personal files of Larry Towell.

<sup>70</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>71</sup> James, 58.

piece of land. The first section of the book essentially explores the history and ownership of his family's farm; a seventy-five acre piece of land that he sharecrops with his neighbours. The second section incorporates his family photographs.<sup>72</sup> Finally, the third section of the book examines the world beyond his front porch, providing his observations about the use and impact of photography and also re-examining the issues he has experienced in the Middle East and Central America, and providing tear sheets and book dummies from his previous work.<sup>73</sup> Complex both visually and intellectually, with his latest project Towell has come full circle.

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<sup>72</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>73</sup> Baxter, "Social Consciousness Guides Photographer's Camera."

## IN CONTEXT

### NO MAN'S LAND THE BOOK

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#### HISTORY OF THE PHOTOBOOK

According to Dutch photography critic Ralph Prins, “a photobook is an autonomous art form, comparable with a piece of sculpture, a play or a film. The photographs lose their own photographic character as things ‘in themselves’ and become parts, translated into printing ink, of a dramatic event called a book.”<sup>74</sup> Although the photobook has gained increasing popularity in recent years, the origins of its use can be traced back to the early years of photography in the nineteenth century. The earliest photographs, known as daguerreotypes, were physical objects that were not hung on walls, but were presented in velvet-lined cases that allowed the owner to open and close them while holding the precious objects in their hands.<sup>75</sup> Once photographs began to be printed on paper they were often assembled in albums that were usually ornately decorated and personalized. William Henry Fox Talbot published the world’s first photographically illustrated book in segments between 1844 and 1846. Talbot’s book, titled *The Pencil of Nature*, consisted of twenty-four original prints accompanied by text. With his publication Talbot highlighted both the art of photography and its ability to gather and present information about the world, essentially establishing photography as “a visual medium with a clear narrative imperative.”<sup>76</sup>

In the early years of the twentieth century a more accurate and efficient method of printing multiple photographs was established and photobooks that addressed a wider range

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<sup>74</sup> Mattie Boom, *Foto in omslag: het Nederlandse documentaire fotoboek na 1945* [Photography Between Covers: The Dutch Documentary Photobook After 1945] (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Fragment Uitgeverij, 1989), 12, quoted in Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Volume I* (London: Phaidon, 2004), 7.

<sup>75</sup> Ute Eskildsen, “Photographs in Books,” in *The Open Book: A History of the Photographic Book from 1878 to the Present* (Göteborg, Sweden: Hasselblad Center, 2004), 11.

<sup>76</sup> Gerry Badger, “Introduction,” in *The Photobook: A History, Volume I* (London: Phaidon, 2004), 10.

of issues were made available to a broader market. Interestingly enough, the burgeoning use of the book that followed these technological advances occurred simultaneously with the growth and success of the picture press. In the 1920s and 1930s photobooks were widely used by documentary photographers to inform the public about issues such as immigration and poverty, and in some cases these books were used as propaganda. At the same time in Europe, the modernist avant-garde adopted the art form of the book as a means to explore the potentials of photography as both a creative and political force in art.<sup>77</sup> Considering those working with the book form on both sides of the ocean, Martin Parr and Gerry Badger cite August Sander, Walker Evans and Bill Brandt as some of the earliest photographers who “demonstrated that the documentary photobook was a complex, subtle, yet passionate art, and not just a bold manifesto.”<sup>78</sup>

One of the most important and influential photobooks to have ever been published is Robert Frank’s *The Americans*. Published first in France in 1958 by curator and publisher Robert Delpire, *The Americans* was unique in both its design and in Frank’s use of a non-linear arrangement of the photographs.<sup>79</sup> Rather than use photographs simply for illustrative or reporting purposes, the book incorporated images in a more fluid, personal and subjective manner. According to Eskildsen, “*The Americans* had a formative influence until the 1980s on the evolving authorial nature of photography.”<sup>80</sup> Equally important, especially in the context of Larry Towell’s work, is the book *The Decisive Moment* by Magnum co-founder

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Volume I* (London: Phaidon, 2004), 23.

<sup>79</sup> A former medical student, Robert Delpire founded a publishing house with Pierre Faucheux in 1951. With his background in medicine and an interest in anthropology, many of the books Delpire published exhibit a “kind of pedagogical imperative.” As the publisher of Robert Frank’s seminal photobook *The Americans*, Delpire sought out the type of documentary work which was being produced by the likes of Frank and Henri Cartier-Bresson. In addition to his influence in the publishing world, Delpire is also a freelance curator and curated Larry Towell’s exhibition *No Man’s Land* at the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation in 2005. Parr and Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Volume I*, 189-190.

<sup>80</sup> Eskildsen, 20.

Henri Cartier-Bresson. The large format book that presented each image free of captions, prized the impact of an image over its role as a purely informative document. Along with accentuating the visual elements of photojournalism, Cartier-Bresson also stationed the book form over magazines “as a space for self-determined, extended sequences of pictures,” and in doing so set new standards for the use of the photobook.<sup>81</sup>

More frequently photographers began to choose their own subjects and work on projects for extended periods of time, gradually adopting the photobook as the ideal presentational form. The visual space of the book allows for specific sequencing, juxtapositions and contrasts not possible in the pages of the magazine, where editors often have overriding control over artistic choices. From the 1970s to the present, the photobook has become the desired form for photographers working in a number of genres and can be said to have truly come into its own. Badger states, “this does not mean that these photobooks are necessarily better, but that it was at this time that the making of serious, subjective and creative photobooks expanded as never before.”<sup>82</sup> The 1970s also represent the moment when shifts in the art market led to photographs becoming more desirable commodity objects, rising in value and beginning to be collected more widely by art institutions. These shifts in the art world opened up more opportunities for photographers to exhibit their work in museum environments. Presenting the work in museums provided photographers the ability to continue to use the book form in the creation of exhibition catalogues. Additionally, since the 1990s significantly more photographers have made the conscious decision to create photobooks that expand upon the exhibition and stand as an

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 20-21.

<sup>82</sup> Gerry Badger, “The Photobook: Into the Twenty-First Century,” in *The Photobook: A History, Volume II* (London: Phaidon, 2006), 9.

artistic form in their own right.<sup>83</sup> Even today, when the possibilities of the Internet and digital technology abound, “it seems that people still need to experience the feel of this object and the ritual experiencing—slowly and in their own space—photographs in a narrative form.”<sup>84</sup> Thus, the photobook remains the preferred art form for many photographers to make a statement and further explore both the aesthetic and contextual possibilities of the photograph.

#### FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE MAKER

Larry Towell first began using the book form in his work in Central America. In his early books the language of his poems and the written testimonies of the victims of conflict provide an important foundation, assisting the images to tell a story. Although text has played an important role in all of Towell’s publications to date, there is a notable progression in his photobooks, as language has slowly given way to the power of the image, along with specific sequencing, to convey emotion and truth in a way that words cannot. Although Towell does not necessarily think of the book form as the prime means of disseminating his work, he is always working towards a book as part of an integrated whole. For Towell, the book represents the ideal context in which to place his identity, make his statement about an issue and carefully orchestrate his ideal vision of a project. Once a specific project is complete the book is what remains as a concrete reminder and resists the potential to “get lost in the avalanche of pictures out in the world.”<sup>85</sup>

Towell’s approach has always been to work on multiple projects at one time over the span of many years and thus he does not embark on a project with a specific concept or

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<sup>83</sup> Eskildsen, 22, 26.

<sup>84</sup> Badger, “The Photobook: Into the Twenty-First Century,” in *The Photobook: A History, Volume II*, 7.

<sup>85</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.



timetable for a book in mind.<sup>86</sup> The creation of Towell's book projects involves the continual act of photographing coupled with the creation of a book dummy; it is an evolutionary process that can span ten or more years. When Towell returned home from Palestine, after the eruption of the second intifada in 2000, he began to lay out and work through the images, it is a process that forces him to "turn the unstructured way I shoot into something cohesive."<sup>87</sup> The process allows him the ability to gain some perspective on the larger project and therefore, when he returns to the location to continue photographing he begins to reflect upon the preliminary layout that already exists. He has found that although this way of working results in the creation of extra work and images that are not used, the process becomes one of discovery where an idea or an image will lead him to the next logical progression.

Although the process of designing a book has always been a very personal process for Towell, where he is able to exert complete creative control over the project, he does rely on the insight of a trusted group of individuals for constructive criticism. Recognizing the need for an alternative perspective on his work, Towell will present his completed book dummies to some of his Magnum colleagues, such as Josef Koudelka. The process allows Towell to step back from the work, look at it in a slightly more detached manner and through the eyes of another person.<sup>88</sup> This finalizing process ensures that the work is both true to the story that he witnessed and presents the work in an original and challenging manner. Towell is adamant about not repeating himself and achieves this by producing something different with each of his projects; it is an aspect of his working method that

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<sup>86</sup> Chris Boot, ed., *Magnum Stories* (London: Phaidon, 2004), 458-459.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 459; and Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>88</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

ensures that each of his books is able to stand on its own and provide a unique insight.<sup>89</sup> In terms of the creation of the book *No Man's Land*, Towell began shooting panoramic images and was interested in the possibility of combining the panorama with 35mm vertical and horizontal images in a single book and having them all harmonize.<sup>90</sup> Thus, the panoramic format influenced the unique structure of the book. Towell's ultimate intent with *No Man's Land* was to create an elegant book that provided an intelligent commentary on the events he had witnessed in the Middle East and at the same time would not be relegated to the realm of the coffee table book. In the end Towell achieved this goal by using unconventional materials, such as the soft cardboard cover, a combination of sequencing and image formats which yields a cinematic effect, as well as through a subjective and self-reflexive chronology and view of the events.<sup>91</sup>

## THE BOOK

With its size and oblong shape, Larry Towell has succeeded in producing a photobook that defies the generic appearance and presence of a coffee table book. With its black cloth spine and thick and soft cardboard covers, *No Man's Land* is not a typical book about the situation in the Middle East. Due to its format it is a difficult book to place on a shelf and forget; *No Man's Land* juts out from a row of books and commands attention. It is also a fragile book, with the cardboard cover suffering easily from the slightest bump, perhaps symbolizing the extreme fragility of the situation Towell found himself in. The top half of the cover features one of Towell's images of a woman in headress walking beside the wall erected in the West Bank. The bottom half is an expanse of black that carries the

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<sup>89</sup> Simon James, "Just Being Human," *The Royal Photographic Society Journal* (March 2006), 58; and Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Volume II* (London: Phaidon, 2006), 256.

<sup>90</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>91</sup> James, 58.

title *No Man's Land* and Towell's name in big block text (Figure 1). The black bar across the bottom coupled with the bold arrow spray-painted on the wall at the top right-hand corner of the image, read as if from a segment of a filmstrip or the wide-screen format in cinema. In fact, as I will discuss, the format and sequencing of images inside the book also possess these cinematic undertones. The back cover of the book is equally sparse and black. The minimal text indicates that the images enclosed within the covers will reveal a reflective essay of both the physical and psychological barriers that Towell encountered on his journey and thus sets the viewer up for the events they are about to witness.<sup>92</sup>

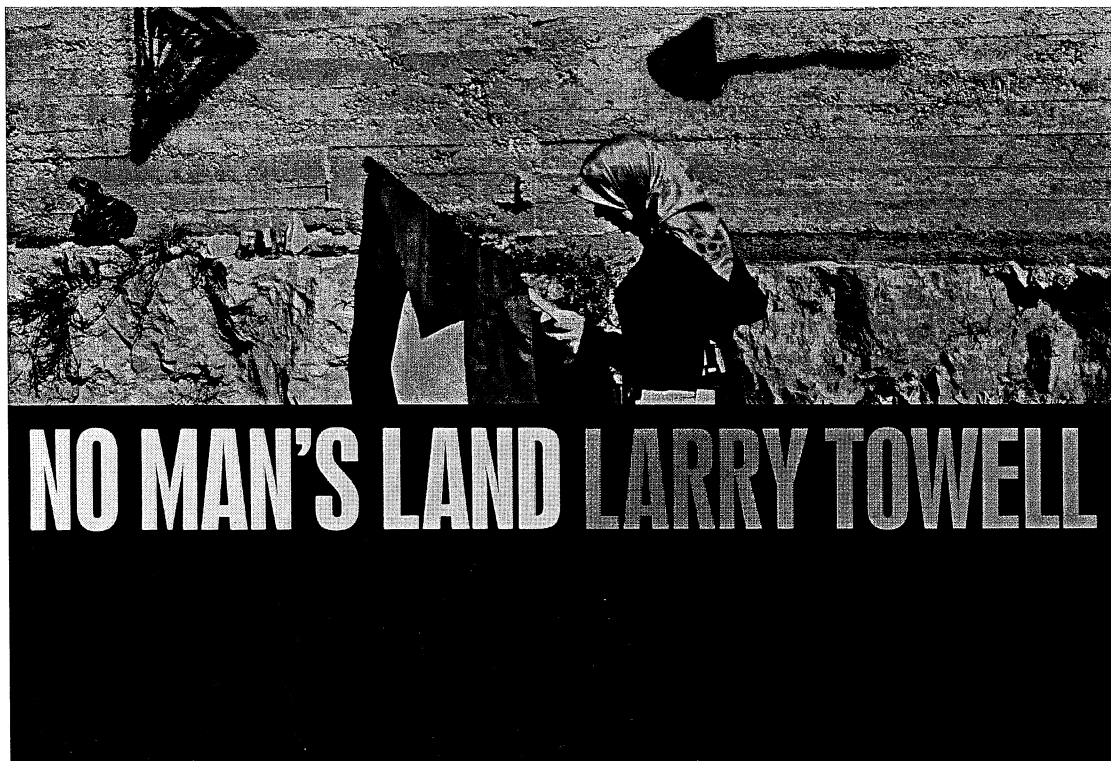


Figure 1. Front cover of Larry Towell's *No Man's Land*. "Palestinian student protesting closure of road to Birzeit University. Ramallah, West Bank, 2001."  
© Larry Towell/Magnum Photos

Opening the book, the viewer is greeted with the title and Towell's name in an expanse of white, free of any credits and publication information. The two-page spread

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<sup>92</sup> Larry Towell, *No Man's Land* (London: Boot, in association with the Archive of Modern Conflict, 2005).

which follows consists of four horizontal images of artefacts Towell found during his trips (Figure 2). The discarded objects, which are actually children's slingshots, read as evidence from a crime scene due to the manner in which they have been photographed, organized and labelled by number. These remnants of battle serve as an entryway into the conflict, symbolizing the fractures, both physical and psychological, which often remain once the battle has passed. This sequence is followed by a brief introduction to the project by Robert Delpire. Rather than contribute an essay on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Delpire's impassioned and poetic introduction provides a character sketch of Larry Towell the "human being" and attempts to transport the reader into the mind and point of view of the photographer.<sup>93</sup> This introduction reads more like a personal letter to the reader, setting the tone and pace regarding the events about to be witnessed.

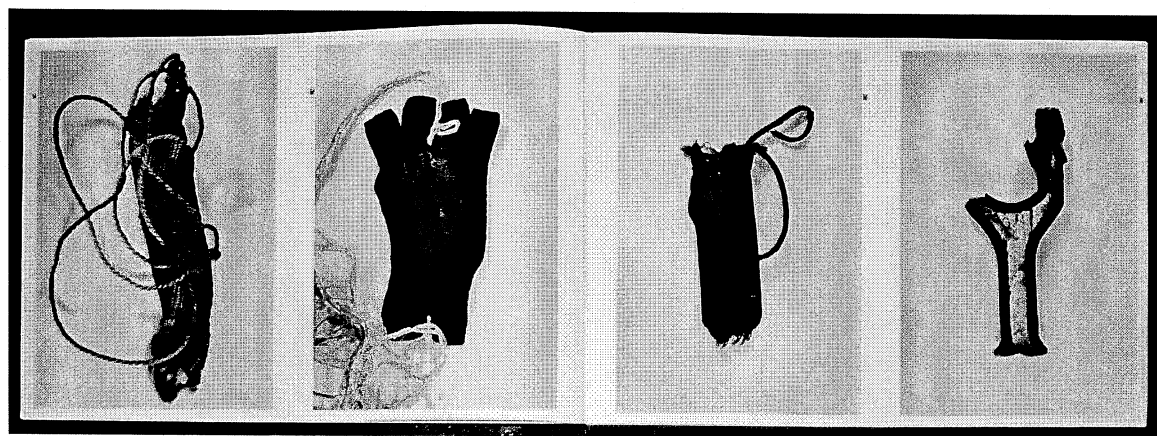


Figure 2. Two-page spread from *No Man's Land* featuring four horizontal images of artefacts Larry Towell found during his trips, images 001 to 004.

The pages that follow attempt to provide a context and set up a timeline of events for the images in the book. Beginning with the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917, when the British Government officially declared Palestine the national home for the Jewish people, Towell provides the necessary historical details of the conflict between the

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<sup>93</sup> Towell, *No Man's Land*.

Palestinian and Israeli people. Although it was his original intention to have the images progress in a chronological order that would mirror the timeline, it becomes apparent from the frenzied pages that immediately follow that there will be no logic or stability in the images of *No Man's Land*. Quite early in his process of working through the sequencing of *No Man's Land*, Towell realized that the reality of what he had experienced during his trips was the failure of the Peace Accords and therefore the book's chronology had to reflect the chaos, the fracture and the dissolution of order, which had become a daily reality.<sup>94</sup> In the very first image to follow the timeline, the viewer is thrust right into the middle of a protest. From this very first image of protest, it is clear that Towell is not the type of photojournalist to shy away from the heat of a conflict and photograph from a safe distance on the sidelines. If the viewer is made to feel as though he or she is standing in the middle of the group of young men preparing to launch Molotov cocktails, it is because Towell has placed himself in



Figure 3. "Protesters with Molotov cocktails. Ramallah, West Bank, 2000."  
© Larry Towell/Magnum Photos

<sup>94</sup> James, 58.

the middle of the drama (Figure 3). It is therefore clear from this first grouping of photographs that although Towell's photographs are meant to capture the reality of a moment these are anything but objective depictions. With the viewer seeing the confusion of battle through the eyes of the photographer, the images act both as a witness to the events and a personal vantage point on the chaos in which Towell found himself immersed.

What is also apparent from the layout and sequencing is that Towell has grouped the photographs into roughly six sections, each of which focuses on different aspects of the issues in the Middle East (Figure 4). However, despite this structure Towell still intersperses images of desolation and hope at random, which reflects his own perspective of the situation. Since photographs in a sequence function in much the same way as words in a sentence, in the same way that changing the position of a word in a sentence can alter its overall meaning, the same effect can be achieved by altering a sequence of images.<sup>95</sup> As

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	IMAGE NUMBERS
Introduction	Opening sequence of artefacts	001-004
I	Images of conflict from the streets of the West Bank and Gaza Strip	005-020
II	Images of daily realities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including images from funerals	021-052
III	Images of daily life photographed mainly inside East Jerusalem	053-077
IV	Images primarily focused on the homes destroyed in the Jenin refugee camp	078-105
V	Images of the 'separation wall'	106-114
VI	Images from the anti-wall protests, including photographs of the completed 'separation wall'	115-126
Conclusion	Closing sequence of artefacts	127-130

Figure 4. Table outlining the six sections identified during analysis of the sequencing and layout of *No Man's Land*.

<sup>95</sup> Marianne Fulton, "Changing Focus: The 1950s to the 1980s," in *Eyes of Time: Photojournalism in America*, ed. Marianne Fulton (Boston: Little Brown, in association with the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, 1988), 178.

mentioned, Towell begins the book with a sequence that thrusts the viewer directly into the climax of battle; much in the same way he was thrust into the events during his first trip back to Palestine when the intifada erupted. Towell then shifts into the realities of life for the Palestinian and Israeli people. Whereas the images of the Palestinians still retain a sense of the dislocation and anger apparent in the first sequence, Towell slows down the pace of the book with his images from inside East Jerusalem by offering a more introspective point of view. Towell then shifts out of this mode in what can be considered the fourth section of the book, where he depicts the destruction of Palestinian homes; a section that clearly brings to mind the overriding theme of land and landlessness that connects much of his work. The sense of despair is followed by a sequence of images from the 'separation wall', which is both a physical and mental barrier between the Palestinian and Israeli people. Although the moments Towell experienced and presents are consuming in their sense of the futility and impossibility of peace, Towell leaves the project and the viewer with a glimmer of hope at the end with a sequence of images of peace protests and the allegorical symbol of two birds.

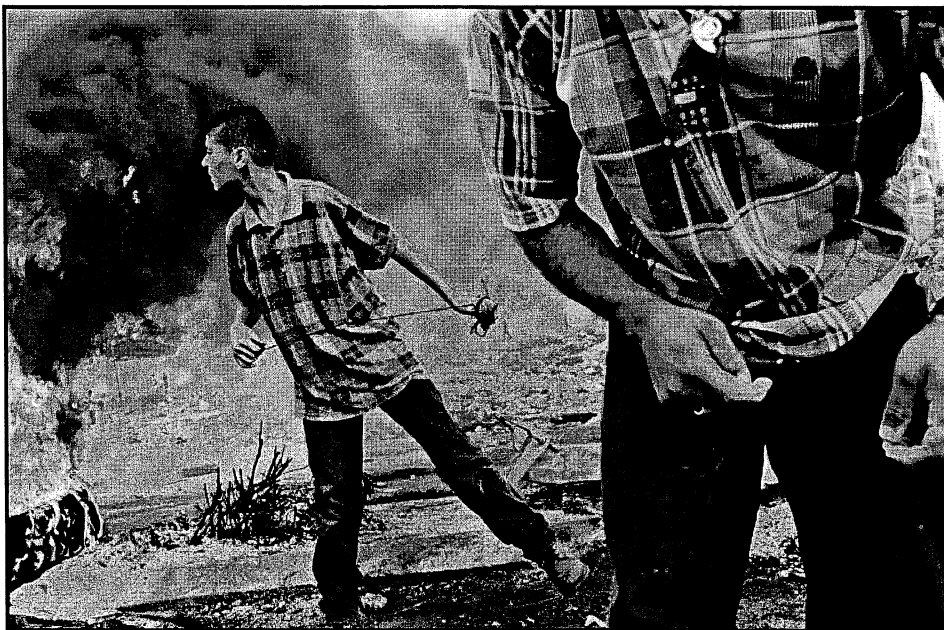


Figure 5. "Palestinian youths clash with Israeli Army. Ramallah, West Bank, 2000." © Larry Towell/Magnum Photos

As much as it is a result of photographing in the heat of a conflict, it is clear that Towell employs aesthetic devices such as skewed perspectives, blurred views, truncated body parts and internal divisions within the frame to reinforce the disconnections and disorder in the lives of his subjects (Figure 5). Additionally, in his analysis of Towell's work, Peter Metelerkamp comments, "there is a consistent sense of open space, wide angles, and fractured planes which problematise the matter of seeing and introduce an element of self-reflexivity," thus acknowledging the position of the photographer.<sup>96</sup> It is also interesting to note that in the first sequence of images, Towell has interspersed photographs that he captured in 1993 with more recent photographs from his experiences in 2000 and 2001 (Figure 6). The combination of images from different decades highlights the exhausting reality and frequency of these clashes. Despite the span of time, this flow of images shows

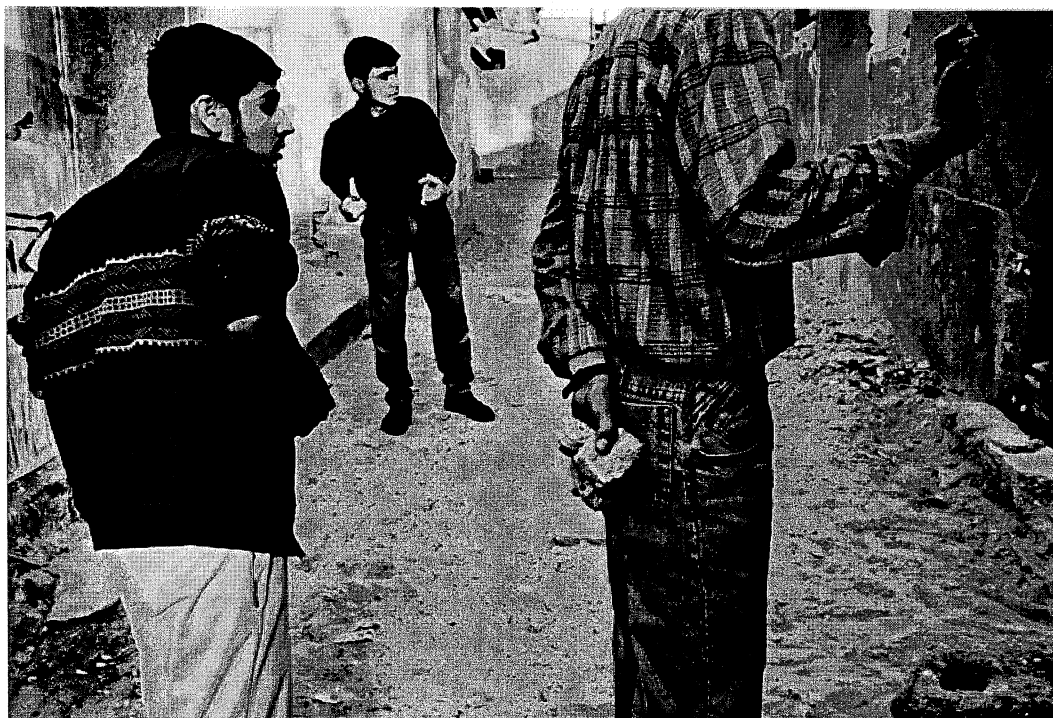


Figure 6. "Awaiting Israeli soldiers in pursuit at wake of Palestinian activist. Shati Refugee Camp, Gaza Strip, 1993." © Larry Towell/Magnum Photos

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<sup>96</sup> Peter Metelerkamp, "The Aura of the Book: Larry Towell's *The Mennonites* as a Site of Discourse," *Documentary Photography and Photographic Theory*, 2002, 7, <http://www.documentarist.net/writing/Aurabook.html>.



that unfortunately not much has changed since Towell first began documenting in the Middle East for his first book *Then Palestine*. What is revealed is that the protesters are still mainly children and their weapons are still stones and slingshots.



Figure 7. Two-page spread of full-frame 35mm horizontal images with white image borders, images 048 and 049.

Up to this point, the layout and sequencing have included a variety of image formats. As was his original intention with the book, Towell manages to bring together both 35mm and panoramic images in a seamless manner. The 130 exquisitely printed black and white images are overpowering and envelop the viewer due to the large size of the book. Full-frame horizontal images span almost the entire page, however they are not printed full-bleed, and instead a thin white border frames each image (Figure 7). Even with the white border, the 35mm horizontal images still seem to flow from one page to the next, an act that mimics the panorama and also visually moves the dialogue forward in a cinematic manner. By interspersing these horizontal images with four vertical images that span a two-page spread Towell slows the momentum so that the viewer can catch their bearings in the heat of the events (Figure 8). However, a visual flow is still maintained by ensuring that the sequence of images progress in a logical manner, as if viewing the events unfolding in Towell's contact

sheets. When using the panorama, the image is either centred over the two-page spread or justified right or left (Figure 9). The white block of space that lies to either side of the image again acts as a visual block, causing the viewer to speed up or slow down the act of looking.

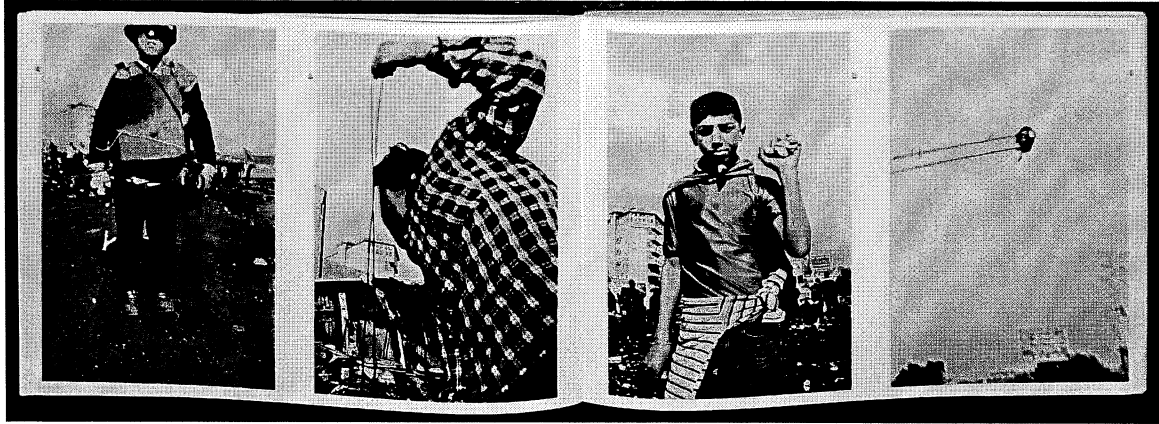


Figure 8. Two-page spread highlighting the continuity achieved through the sequencing of four vertical photographs, images 010 to 013.

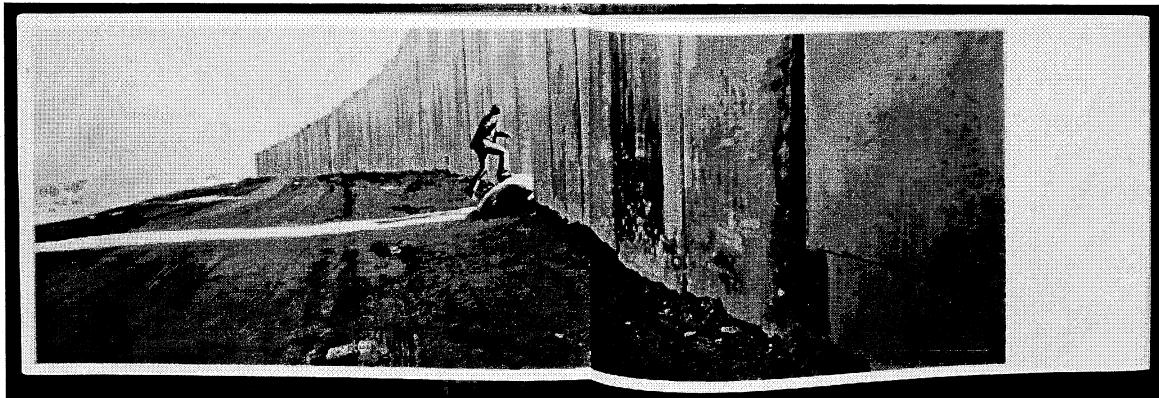


Figure 9. Layout illustrating the placement of a panoramic image over a two-page spread, image 125.

After the initial disorienting sequence of images from the midst of street clashes, Towell introduces the viewer to the daily lives of the Palestinians. The city streets are now free of protesters and those living in the occupied territory are seen going about their lives, while armed guards, dividing walls and military checkpoints stand as evidence that the occupation is very real. Regrettably, an aspect of daily life that cannot be avoided is untimely

death (Figure 10). Whether following the procession of a dead body through the streets or offering a view from inside a morgue, Towell provides a string of images that depict both the anger and the sadness from the numerous burials he witnessed. By tilting his camera,



Figure 10. "Burial of Adnan Dweikat killed in beginning days of second intifada. Nablus, West Bank, 2000."  
© Larry Towell/Magnum Photos

Towell throws the image off balance, visually symbolizing his own feelings of confusion and disillusionment in the tense situation. In a particularly interesting two-page spread, Towell has arranged two vertical photographs of women protesting the occupation on either side of an image of an older man lowering the body of a younger man into a grave (Figure 11). Overwhelmed with these images of death and hopelessness, these images of the women provide a ray of hope, as both women are holding signs stating "Stop the Occupation" even though one is in Hebrew and the other is in Arabic. It is in between these sequences of death that Towell begins to offer the possibility of hope, whether through the images of protesters or even through a rather abstract image of a ray of light shining on a stone; the

stone representing both an object that destroys and divides (Figure 12). The photograph is one of the more ambiguous and suggestive images that Towell captured in a 'decisive moment.'

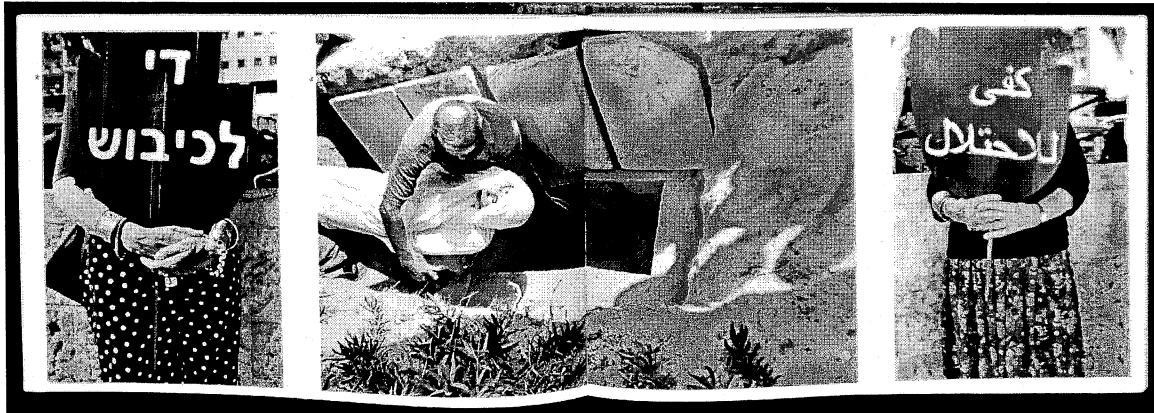


Figure 11. Two-page spread featuring photographs of Israeli and Palestinian women protesting the occupation, on either side of a burial scene, images 043 to 045.

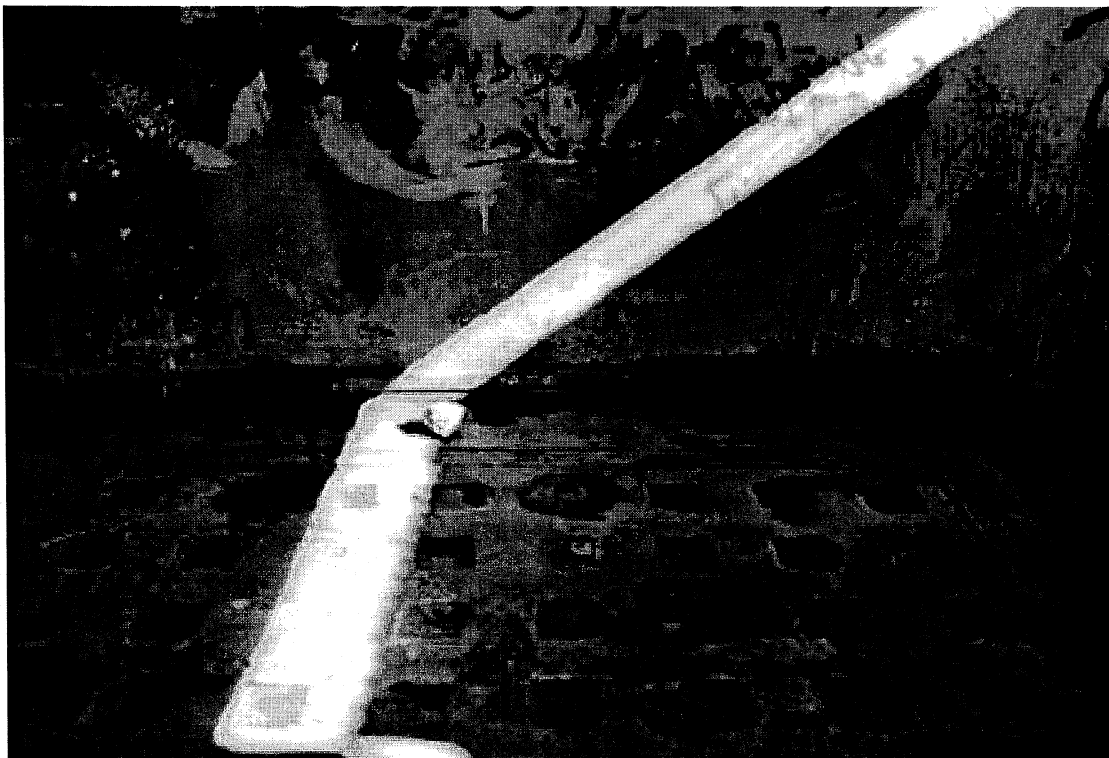


Figure 12. "Stone in light. Gaza, Gaza Strip, 1993." © Larry Towell/Magnum Photos

Following this sequence are images of the Israeli people both in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Towell has stated in previous interviews that during his trips he found it difficult to gain intimate access to the drama and emotion on the Israeli side. He found that his time was often spent with the soldiers, an aspect of civil duty that he felt told him nothing about what was really going on.<sup>97</sup> As a result, many of the images in this sequence are very reflective in nature. The first image in the sequence is a peaceful image of a young girl lighting a candle in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, as an allegorical ray of light shines from above (Figure 13). As mentioned, light represents the possibility of hope, beauty and peace amidst the conflict, and it plays an important role in Towell's work, appearing suddenly in some images and referenced again in his commentary at the end of the book.

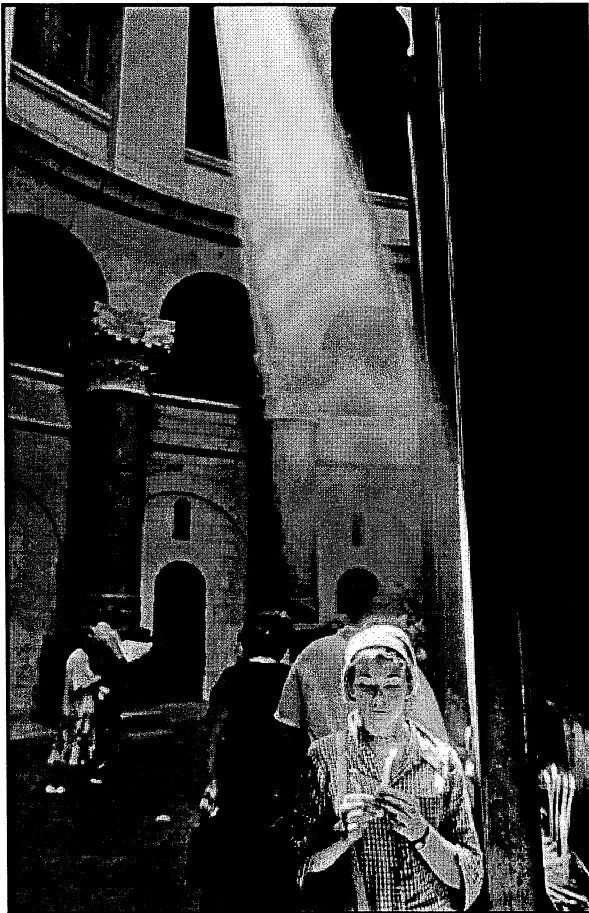


Figure 13. "Pilgrim at Easter, Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Christian Quarter, East Jerusalem, 2000."  
© Larry Towell/Magnum Photos

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<sup>97</sup> Stephanie Nolan, "Endgame in Palestine," *Globe and Mail*, November 18, 2000, sec. R.

The rest of the images that follow depict moments such as a first snowfall, an Easter procession, a bird flying down a vacant street and children looking in a store window. These images stand in contrast to the images of disorder and violence seen in the first half of the book. Although many of the stylistic devices previously discussed are still in use in these images, coupled here with the subject matter of daily life, many of the photographs bring to mind images of Parisian life by photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Brassai and André Kertész (Figure 14). Many of the images in this sequence are also blurred, depicting the bustle of daily life taking place despite the conflict.

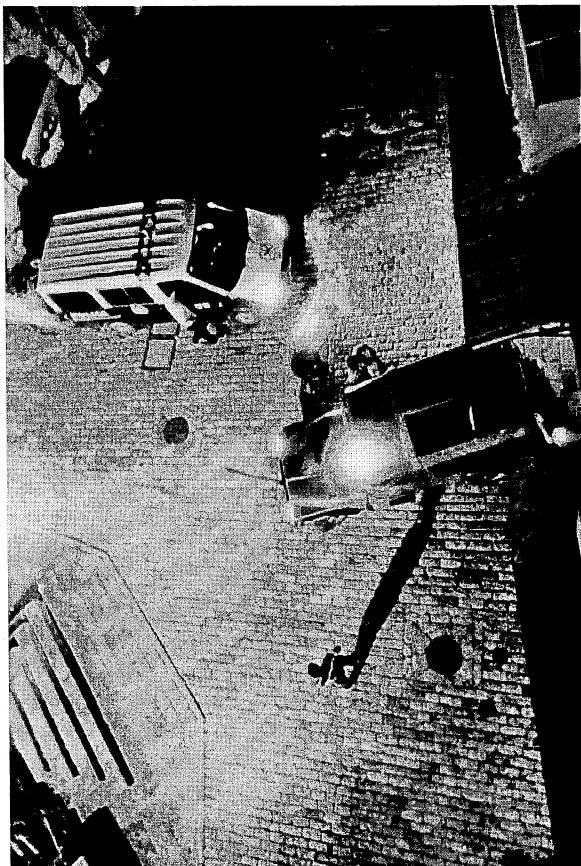


Figure 14. "Israeli soldiers and Border Police. Moselm Quarter, East Jerusalem, 1994." © Larry Towell/Magnum Photos

With a block of white space as a divider, Towell transports the viewer from the poetic moments of daily life and back into the issues of land, identity and separation with the inclusion of the panorama from the cover. The grouping of images that follows depicts the destruction of Palestinian homes in the Jenin refugee camp. The images present the refugees

amidst the rubble; mothers with children looking on as the men attempt to salvage belongings from the destroyed buildings. Towell uses the panoramic camera for many of the photographs in this section. These vast and barren images of crushed concrete overwhelm the viewer as they span the length of two pages and offer no glimpse of possible resolution, only the inevitability of an increase in violence. When individuals are depicted in the scenes, it is with a crushing sense of despair and resignation. Figure 15 pictures a young man leaning against what used to be the interior wall of a home while quietly smoking a cigarette; none of the indications of a home remain. Bisecting the image is the remnant of a wall, a physical structure that once separated the inside world on the right from the outside world on the left. Ironically, the destruction of this physical wall does not represent the breaking down of the divide between the Palestinians and Israelis, but can only lead to the creation of more psychological barriers between the two groups.

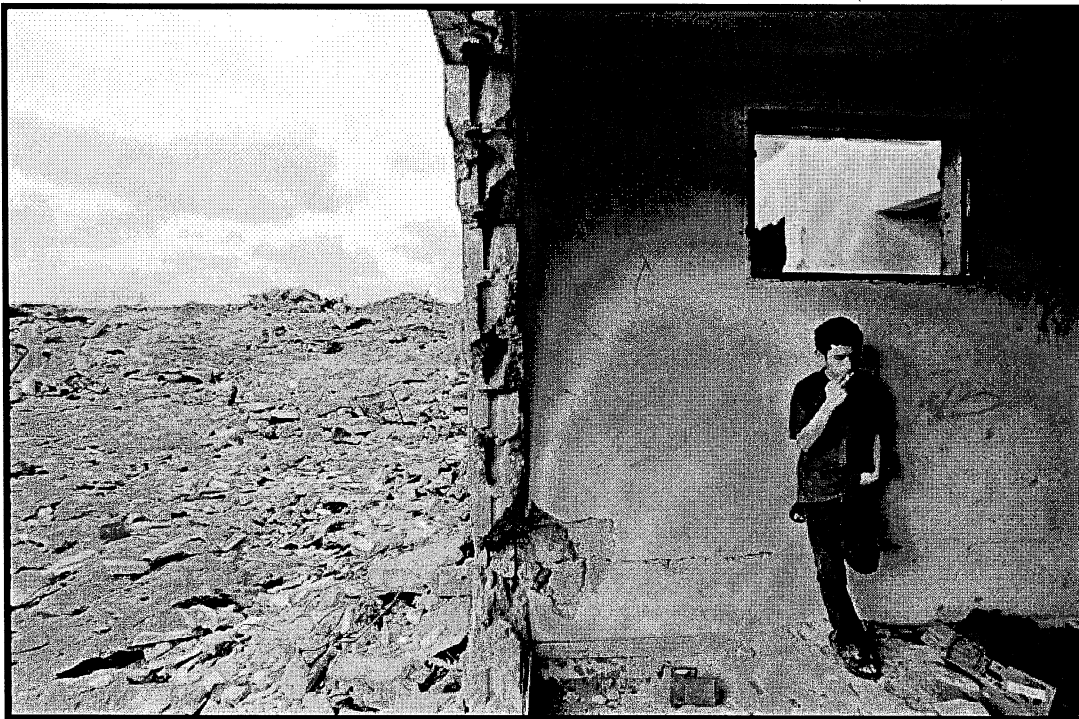


Figure 15. "Boy in destroyed house, perimeter of refugee camp and Gush Katif Jewish Settlement. Khan Yunis Refugee Camp, Gaza Strip, 2003."

© Larry Towell/Magnum Photos



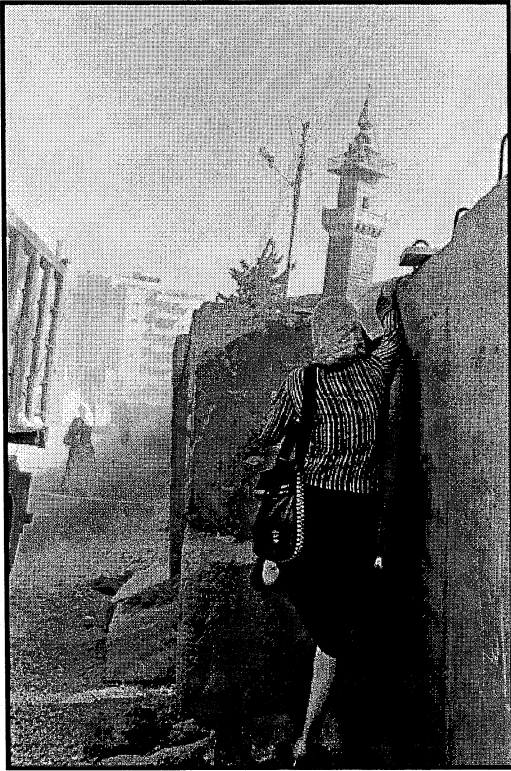


Figure 16. "Woman scaling 'separation wall' running through Palestinian neighbourhood. Abu Dis, East Jerusalem, 2003."  
© Larry Towell/Magnum Photos

Towell follows the destruction with images of the erection of a 'separation wall' in the next sequence. The viewer is introduced to the creation of the wall, whose purpose is to physically separate Israel and the West Bank, directly through Towell's visual perspective. In a strategy he employs elsewhere in the book, Towell stands directly in front of the end of the 'separation wall' and photographs his out of focus hand in the frame, flinging an object toward the massive structure that divides the landscape. The images that follow present the struggles of living with such a wall, which according to the timeline presented at the beginning of *No Man's Land* has annexed further territory within the West Bank. The result is evident in the images of a young boy avoiding detection as he escapes over a lower portion of the wall and of a woman scaling the wall that runs directly through Palestinian neighbourhoods and has thus split communities (Figure 16). With the necessity and ability to scale the wall, the reality is that Palestinians find themselves on both sides of the divide and yet without any land to call their own (Figure 17).



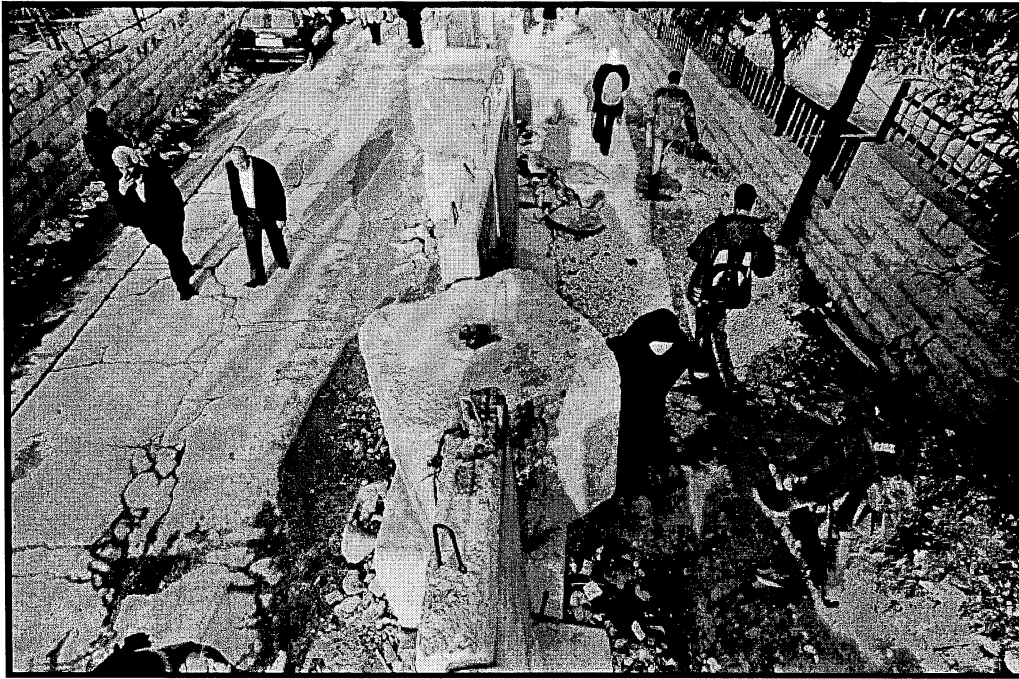


Figure 17. “‘Separation wall’ running through Palestinian neighbourhood. Abu Dis, East Jerusalem, 2003.” © Larry Towell/Magnum Photos



Figure 18. “International and Israeli peace activists protesting with Palestinians along the path of wall. Beit Duqqu, West Bank, 2004.” © Larry Towell/Magnum Photos

Although much of what Towell witnessed during his journeys and is presented in the book reflects the impossibility of achieving peace in the current situation, Towell still finds a way to conclude his book in a positive light. Although the physical barriers are monumental, the final sequence of images depicts Israeli and Palestinian peace activists joining to protest along the path of the wall (Figure 18). It was during his last few trips to the Middle East that Towell began working with the Israeli peace movement and left with a sense of hope after witnessing young Israelis protesting alongside Palestinian farmers for the same cause.<sup>98</sup> Another glimmer of hope is presented in the extremely symbolic image that ends the sequence, where two birds are pictured about to fly over the mammoth wall (Figure 19).

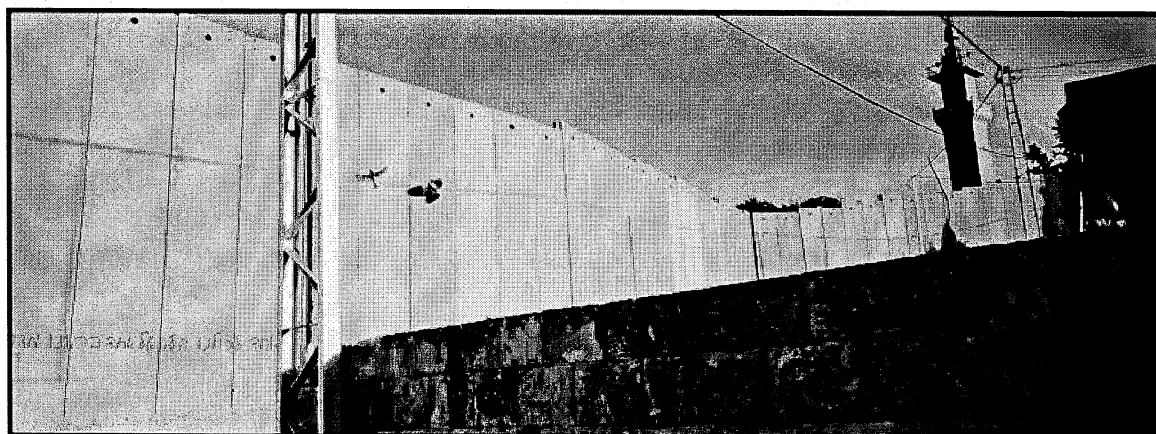


Figure 19. “Newly completed 9-metre ‘separation wall’ running through Palestinian neighbourhood. Abu Dis, East Jerusalem, 2004.”

© Larry Towell/Magnum Photos

And although the written word plays a very small role in this publication, after a list of captions, Towell provides a one-page afterword that reflects on the events pictured within. Written on Remembrance Day from his home in Canada, Towell speaks both of the painful realities and his ultimate belief in the possibility of peace through the non-violent actions of both the Palestinian and Israeli people, through an allegorical reference to light. Thanking

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<sup>98</sup> Larry Towell, e-mail interview with Olivia Snaije, May 23, 2005. Personal files of Larry Towell.

both the Israeli and Palestinian people working towards a peaceful resolution, Towell leaves the reader with the knowledge that although his photographs bear witness to the hatred and violence, "there are internal voices working on peaceful coexistence based on justice."<sup>99</sup> It is these individuals that Towell acknowledges as providing a ray of light and hope for an end to the conflict.

#### FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE USER

If Towell's intention, with the creation of the book *No Man's Land*, was to produce a dramatic and unique site for his disconcerting photographs to come into dialogue with one another in an event that takes the viewer on a reflective journey, then the book can be considered a success. An examination of the reviews for *No Man's Land* in the context of the book revealed mainly positive response to the work. Many of those who reviewed Towell's book immediately recognized that the current photographic approach to such troubling subjects is for the photojournalist to depict the events in a very personal manner. Viewing the work from this perspective, John Levy, editor of the online journal *Foto8* commented that "far from being a descriptive tool for greater understanding or an attempt to add constructive argument to the debate, photographers-a-plenty are today producing books that record an almost lyrical perspective of the violence they choose to witness."<sup>100</sup> As a result, the reader was challenged to interpret these images for the information that they provided about both the events depicted and the point of view of the photographer.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Murray Whyte, "Journey into No Man's Land," *Toronto Star*, May 14, 2005, sec. H, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

<sup>100</sup> Jon Levy, "Cycles," *Foto8* 3, no. 4 (Spring 2005), <http://www.foto8.com/reviews/V3N4/cycles.html>.

<sup>101</sup> Max Kozloff, *The Privileged Eye: Essays on Photography* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 167.

Towell was applauded by many critics for his ability to combine the pure emotion of “a land in limbo,” the incomprehensible normality of the daily violence and the haunting stillness of the in-between moments into a cohesive whole.<sup>102</sup> A review from *Foto8* went into elaborate detail regarding the nuances of moments of struggle interspersed with images of hope. Beginning with an introduction examining the character of Larry Towell the “human being” and Larry Towell the photojournalist, the review looked at the structure and sequencing of the images in *No Man’s Land*. Addressing the internal narrative carefully laid out between the abstract opening and closing images, the review detailed the progression of Towell’s photographs from the volatile clashes to the isolated and battered individuals and landscapes. Although the reviewer acknowledged the moments of beauty and the symbols of hope in some of the photographs, the review ended with the recognition that the ‘separation wall’ is an “ironic visual symbol some 15 years after the free world celebrated the end of the Berlin Wall.”<sup>103</sup> In a similar vein, Wayne Ford wrote that although the large landscape format produces a clean, simple and distinctive design, it was the photographs that engaged the readers. Viewing the living hell that is Gaza through Towell’s eyes, Ford professed that *No Man’s Land* posed questions regarding man’s inhumanity, but provided no easy or logical answers.<sup>104</sup> There was the recognition that while these images of conflict made “desperate sense in their political context,” in a broader and more humanistic way these images made no sense at all, a comment that fully encapsulates Towell’s own frustration at the inexplicable moments he witnessed.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> “No Man’s Land,” *Creative Review* (May 2005): 70.

<sup>103</sup> “No Man’s Land,” *Foto8* 4, no. 1 (Summer 2005), <http://www.foto8.com/reviews/V4N1/nomansland.html>.

<sup>104</sup> Wayne Ford, “Towell’s Testimony of Unrest in Gaza,” *Eye* 15, no. 57 (Autumn 2005): 80, <http://www.eyemagazine.com/review.php?id=124&rid=590>.

<sup>105</sup> “Photos So Beautiful They Hurt,” *Globe and Mail*, May 28, 2005, sec. R, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

For John Allemang of the *Toronto Star*, Towell's book represented a different type of war photography, if it could even be classified as such. In Allemang's view, the images represent the type of photography in which the conflict has become a part of daily life. "The tactics, the background machinations, the corruption and deceit—you'll have to look elsewhere for that kind of complicating detail. *No Man's Land* depicts the heavy consequences of history at the human level."<sup>106</sup> This particular point of view regarding the types of photographs Towell produces and where Towell fits in among the current crop of photographers employing a photojournalistic style is not only discussed in the pages of the printed press, but can also be found on blogs. One particular dialogue regarding the role of the photojournalist with issues of war and peace, explored the effects of war on photographers and questioned whether it is possible for them to offer viewers images to inspire the creation of a better world since all they have seen is utter hopelessness. While the poster Harikrishna felt that "there is no hope in the world of James Nachtwey," this individual discovered the opposite in the work of Larry Towell.

I read his pictures differently. They touch me more than some graphic war pictures made under heroic circumstances. There is no heroism or adrenaline rush in Larry Towell's. His pictures are quiet. They make me reflect on the situation. Nachtwey's pictures make me think about the photographer. I am caught in the photographic composition. The light and everything else. Everything except the meaning.<sup>107</sup>

In a much more lengthy and considered review of *No Man's Land*, photographer and photo editor Michelle Woodward provided an alternative view of Towell's work in relation to other books on the subject of Palestine.<sup>108</sup> Similar to the other reviews, Woodward recognized Towell as working in the tradition of 'concerned' photography and as producing

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<sup>106</sup> John Allemang, "Book A Day," *Globe and Mail*, December 15, 2005, sec. R, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

<sup>107</sup> Harikrishna Katragadda, posting on Tiffinbox blog, February 10, 2004, [http://www.tiffinbox.org/2004/02/vision\\_of\\_peace.html](http://www.tiffinbox.org/2004/02/vision_of_peace.html).

<sup>108</sup> For further insight into Michelle Woodward's views on *No Man's Land* see Appendix B; and Michelle Woodward, "Not All Black and White," *Middle East Report* no. 240 (Fall 2006): 40-41.

images that are personal, artistic and engaged in nature. However, although the previously discussed reviewers recognized that the images of clashes and devastation were the result of the loss of land and identity, Woodward read the images simply as meaningless violence rather than a struggle over power and land. Woodward also commented that although Towell attempted to get close to the subjects and depict elements of daily life, he was rarely able to get under the surface and examine the true aspects of their lives. Although she recognized Towell's ability to produce beautiful photographs that capture the singular details and the despair, in her view Towell's success with *No Man's Land* can only be at the level of the street photographer, roaming the streets of Palestinian towns.<sup>109</sup>

Woodward's examination of *No Man's Land* stands in opposition to many of the positive reviews found for Towell's work in his book. Her comments provide an example of the different ways in which audiences can read a group of images in a particular context. Whereas John Allemang understood Towell's images to represent the conflict that had become a part of daily existence precisely because of the issues of land and the loss of identity, Woodward found that the non-linear sequencing of *No Man's Land* led to a series of images that were disorienting and offered little information regarding the larger political picture. Although I discovered these differing opinions and perspectives in my search for audience reception to Towell's work in book form, I found that generally the majority of the readers of *No Man's Land* responded positively to the work and understood the artist's intent. As I will show, the same cannot be said of audience reception to Towell's work as it appeared in the printed press and in exhibitions.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 40.

## IN CONTEXT

### NO MAN'S LAND THE PUBLICATIONS

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#### THE HISTORY OF PUBLICATIONS

In the introduction to *Things As They Are*, Mary Panzer officially states that the birth of the modern picture press can be traced back to the establishment of the *Illustrated London News* in 1842.<sup>110</sup> Although it would inspire the creation of countless other journals and magazines, the illustrations that graced its pages were handmade wood engravings rather than actual photographs, since the technology to successfully reproduce multiple photographs on the printed page had yet to be discovered. This technological advance, coming in the form of the halftone process, was introduced in 1880 when the first photograph appeared in the *New York Daily Graphic*.<sup>111</sup> The halftone process made use of a screen that translated the image into a pattern of dots on a negative. The negative was then transferred to a metal plate that could be run through the printing press simultaneous with the accompanying text.<sup>112</sup> The revolutionary process was at first used primarily by weekly and monthly magazines since the processing of the metal plates was a timely procedure that had to be completed outside of the newspaper offices. It was not until the early twentieth century that newspapers began illustrating their pages solely with photographs. Other technological innovations that facilitated the use of photographs in the printed press include the creation of dry plates and roll film, better camera lenses, the perfection of the telegraphic

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<sup>110</sup> Mary Panzer, "Introduction," in *Things As They Are: Photojournalism in Context Since 1955* (New York: Aperture Foundation/World Press Photo, 2005), 12.

<sup>111</sup> The first photograph to be reproduced by purely mechanical means was captioned "Shantytown," and appeared on March 4, 1880. Gisèle Freund, *Photography & Society* (Boston: D.R. Godine, 1980), 103-104.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

transmission of photographs, and later in the twentieth century, the introduction of the portable Contax and Leica cameras.<sup>113</sup>

According to Gisèle Freund, many of the early photo-reporters set out merely to photograph isolated events that were simply used to illustrate a story, but which never contributed significantly to the content.<sup>114</sup> It was only with the rise of the modern picture magazines in Germany at the end of the 1920s that pictures gained the status of content, becoming the story, and thus photojournalism was born.<sup>115</sup> The new camera innovations allowed photographers to capture both action and emotion. These images were then arranged in a complex manner that allowed the images to tell a story without requiring much additional text.<sup>116</sup> Although the photographic essay began to appear in the magazines of all the major German cities, Hitler's rise to power put an end to the democratic nature of the German press. As a result, many of the most influential photo editors in Germany fled to France, England and the United States where they founded new picture magazines such as *Vu*, *Picture Post* and *Life*.

Founded in 1936, *Life* magazine became one of the most important publications in the United States, employing some of the most prominent pictures editors and photographers of the day. Through the influence of individuals such as picture editor Wilson Hicks and the artistry of W. Eugene Smith, the photo essay matured in style so that

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 104, 127; and Colin Osman and Sandra S. Phillips, "European Visions: Magazine Photography in Europe between the Wars," in *Eyes of Time: Photojournalism in America*, ed. Marianne Fulton (Boston: Little Brown, in association with the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, 1988), 84.

<sup>114</sup> Freund, 15.

<sup>115</sup> Chris Boot, *Magnum Stories* (London: Phaidon, 2004), 4; and Kevin G. Barnhurst and John C. Nerone, "The President is Dead: American News Photography and the New Long Journalism," in *Picturing the Past: Media, History, and Photography*, ed. Bonnie Brennen and Hanno Hardt (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 62.

<sup>116</sup> Bodo von Dewitz and Robert Lebeck, *Kiosk: Eine Geschichte der Fotoreportage, 1839-1973 [A History of Photojournalism]* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2001), 112.



“the structure and internal relationships of the photographs [did] more than provide factual meaning to events or situations, they also [implied] certain values and interpretations of those circumstances.”<sup>117</sup> It is important to note that each story that appeared in *Life* originated with the editors and writers and not with the photographers, which was also the case at other magazines. It is due to this lack of control and personal vision that the Magnum Photos Agency was formed in 1947. The founders of Magnum, Robert Capa, David ‘Chim’ Seymour, Henri Cartier-Bresson and George Rodger, created the agency with two goals in mind. The first was to create a cooperatively owned agency that permitted each of its members to photograph their own causes and interests free of the outside influence of any magazine or editor. The second goal was to ensure that the photographers retained control over copyright and the ways in which the work was disseminated to the public, an aim that gave the photographers creative and editorial control of their own work and allowed them to earn an income.<sup>118</sup>

Although the American picture magazines enjoyed a huge amount of success in the post-war period, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw magazines lose their audiences and advertising dollars due to the growing popularity of television. Magazines such as *Life* were unable to compete with the immediacy of television news coverage and found that many of their stories were already known to their viewers by the time the weekly magazine hit the shelf.<sup>119</sup> While this was the case in the United States, the market for picture magazines was still strong in Europe, where journals such as *Paris Match* and *Stern* had established a strong

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<sup>117</sup> Marianne Fulton, “Changing Focus: The 1950s to the 1980s,” in *Eyes of Time: Photojournalism in America*, ed. Marianne Fulton (Boston: Little Brown, in association with the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, 1988), 180.

<sup>118</sup> Boot, 5-6; and Gerry Badger, “Mission Impossible?: 60 Years of Magnum,” *Aperture* no. 187 (Summer 2007): 70.

<sup>119</sup> Boot, 7; and Fulton, “Changing Focus: The 1950s to the 1980s,” 189.

national following that for a time was able to divert the competition of other mediums.<sup>120</sup> However, by the 1970s this decline in popularity also hit Europe and many publications began to fold. From this period to the present day, photojournalists have had to struggle with the ever shrinking market and in order to remain relevant have had to find other markets.<sup>121</sup> Although photojournalists are still able to find work with publications such as *Time*, many of today's publications are more concerned with the cult of celebrity than world issues. According to photographer Jerome Delay, "to produce a story in Chechnya costs lots of money, okay. And what do you get in return? You put a picture of Chechnya on the cover of *Newsweek*; the issue's not going to sell. You put Britney Spears on the cover—double the circulation."<sup>122</sup> The inevitable result has been that more photojournalists have been turning to commercial and corporate work in order to finance personal projects that usually appear in the form of a book. Others rely on grant money, exhibitions and the sale of print work. As well, many are beginning to turn to the possibilities offered by the Internet, where online publications such as *The Digital Journalist*, *ZoneZero* and *Foto8*, are presenting new opportunities for photojournalists to "transcend the current marketplace" and return to a more serious form of photojournalism.<sup>123</sup>

#### FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE MAKER

Larry Towell rarely works on newspaper or magazine assignments, only accepting those few assignments that fit into his philosophy of work, such as the project on 9/11 he produced for *Newsweek* and his work on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina that became a

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<sup>120</sup> Panzer, 22-26.

<sup>121</sup> Freund, 157-159.

<sup>122</sup> Jerome Delay, *Beyond Words: Photographers of War*, documentary video, produced by Greg Kelly and Eric Foss, 2006, a CBC News Production.

<sup>123</sup> Russell Miller, "A Vanishing Vision," *Columbia Journalism Review* 39, no. 2 (Jul/Aug 2000): 41.

book.<sup>124</sup> However, despite his stance regarding commissioned work, Towell fully acknowledges the power that the press has to disseminate his work to the widest audience possible. Although his work is probably more well known in the context of his books or in the exhibition environment, when working on one of his projects Towell's first intent is to get the work viewed by editors and published in magazines and newspapers.<sup>125</sup> Since Towell prefers to work on multiple projects over an extended period of time, newspaper and magazine spreads allow Towell's work to enter into public discourse in a time frame that is relative to the events and before the book or exhibitions are organized and completed.<sup>126</sup>

Acting as Towell's agent, it is the role of Magnum to ensure that the media outlets are aware of the work Towell is producing and distribute the work. The Magnum Photos Agency works on what is known as the 'distro' system, a sales model introduced by founding member Robert Capa as a means to financially sustain Magnum. Working on a guarantee that a certain body of work will be provided, agents distribute either story proposals or completed bodies of work to several magazines in different territorial and language markets. These photo essays are sold for a fixed sum rather than the usual day rate and expenses that a photographer would receive for an assignment. The 'distro' system is thus a system that allows a story to run in several countries and a photographer to earn a larger income.<sup>127</sup> Since the photo essays stem from personal projects rather than assignments, each Magnum photographer owns his or her own work and is thus able to control and market their own images. Although Towell acknowledges that the photographer always loses some control of their work in the media, the concept of the 'distro' system ensures that the integrity of the

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<sup>124</sup> Boot, 459.

<sup>125</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>126</sup> For a selected list of the publications Towell's work has appeared in over the course of his career see Appendix C.

<sup>127</sup> Boot, 6.

work is kept intact. Recognizing that magazine or newspaper spreads are not entirely his own project, Towell will work with an editor towards the best possible layout, spread and picture selection.<sup>128</sup> Therefore, when Towell states that he does not object to the manner in which his work has been published, it is because he is able to contribute his opinions in the development of each publication. In conversation, Towell revealed that regardless of the audience response to his work in publications, he feels that every publication his work has appeared in remains faithful to his original intent.

In terms of publications that stem from *No Man's Land*, Towell found that the work was favoured more by European press than by the North American press. As opposed to the European press that is more open to exploring different angles of heated debates, North American publications tend to shy away from publishing literature or photographs that will have them labelled as either pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli. Besides the use of singular images to accompany book or exhibition reviews, it is interesting to note that most of the North American publications featuring Towell's work came as the result of a pre-existing relationship between Towell and an editor.

In terms of the popular press, Towell produced a photo essay for *Life* focusing on the cult of suicide bombing after being contacted by David Friend, who was its director of photography at that time. Some of his photographs of the 'separation wall' were also reproduced in *Time* magazine in December of 2003. The three-page spread from *Time* entitled "Walling Off Peace," provided readers with five images introduced by text which served only to give the basic facts about the wall's construction.<sup>129</sup> The images themselves are mainly views of the wall and are quite sterile compared to the chaotic, disorienting and tense visions offered in his book. Rather than exposing readers to the issues in the Middle

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<sup>128</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>129</sup> Matt Rees, "Walling Off Peace," *Time* (22 Dec 2003).

East through the perspective of the photographer, taken out of the context of the book the photo essay seems to provide a much more straightforward point of view. Two of the most interesting examples of Towell's work in publications, in terms of considering how context affects audience response and understanding of the work, appeared in *Aperture*, a photo journal with an art audience, and in the *Globe and Mail*, a newspaper with a much broader audience base.

### THE PUBLICATIONS

The *Aperture* photo spread, which ran in the summer of 2003, represents the most extensive essay of Towell's work found in a North American publication.<sup>130</sup> Titled "Images from No Man's Land: Larry Towell in Jenin," the photo essay, which was actually separated into two parts, presented Towell's work concurrent to when the events took place and Towell began photographing them. The first part of the photo essay included three images taken by Towell, two panoramas and one 35mm horizontal image. The expansive images of

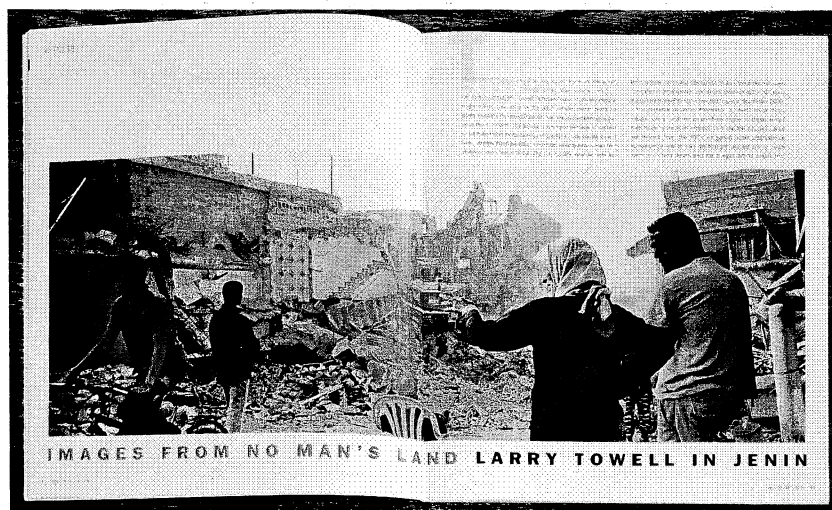


Figure 20. Two-page spread from "Images from No Man's Land: Larry Towell in Jenin" in the Summer 2003 issue of *Aperture*, pages 14 and 15. Text excerpted from the Human Rights Watch report in Jenin.

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<sup>130</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Images from No Man's Land: Larry Towell in Jenin," *Aperture* no. 171 (Summer 2003): 14-19.

destruction depict people sifting through the dust and rubble, and silently watching as their homes are destroyed by bulldozers (Figure 20). Rather than a sense of anger or upheaval, these images carry an air of despair and defeat. In one image a man is captured in the centre of the frame quietly sitting in a lawn chair watching a bulldozer tear through a building. In another, a woman, eyes downcast, precariously steps out from the darkness of a doorframe that presumably had once been the entrance to her home. Pictured without Towell's original book captions and only with the knowledge that these images were taken in Jenin, the reader was left with very little contextual information to understand these images. For readers unfamiliar with the politics of the region or current world affairs, these images could quite simply be the aftermath of a horrific earthquake.

However, Towell's images did in fact appear with written text in the photo spread. Although none of Towell's captions are included, the images appeared with an excerpt from the Human Rights Watch report titled "Jenin: IDF (Israeli Defence Forces) Military Operations."<sup>131</sup> The section of the report that accompanied Towell's images began by outlining the military operation that was undertaken by the IDF in the Jenin refugee camp on April 3, 2002. Although the report acknowledged the existence of Palestinian suicide bombers and stated that the intentions of the IDF were to capture or kill only the militants responsible for attacks on Israelis and civilians, the report continued to demonstrate that in carrying out their attacks, the IDF did not follow international human rights law. According to the report,

The presence of armed Palestinian militants inside Jenin refugee camp, and the preparations made by those armed Palestinian militants in anticipation of the IDF

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<sup>131</sup> The Human Rights Watch is an independent, nongovernmental organization that is dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world. Financially supported by private individuals and foundations worldwide, the organization works to investigate and expose human rights violations and hold the abusers of international human rights law accountable for their actions. Human Rights Watch, "About HRW," *Human Rights Watch – Defending Human Rights Worldwide*, 2006, <http://www.hrw.org/about/>.

incursion, does not detract from the IDF's obligation under international humanitarian law to take all feasible precautions to avoid harm to civilians. Israel also has a legal duty to ensure that its attacks on legitimate military targets did not cause disproportionate harm to civilians. Unfortunately, these obligations were not met. Human Rights Watch's research demonstrates that, during their incursion into the Jenin refugee camp, Israeli forces committed serious violations of international humanitarian law, some amounting *prima facie* to war crimes.<sup>132</sup>

The report continued to outline the events that took place and the human rights injustices, such as the destruction of homes, that the Palestinian people suffered at the hands of the Israeli Defence Forces. Additionally, in a side-bar on the last page of this section, firsthand testimonies from the refugee camp were recorded in a manner that brings to mind Towell's previous work in Central America where he gathered testimonies from the victims of that conflict (Figure 21). Read in the context of the report and without any additional context, the tone of the article could be read as pro-Palestinian in nature.

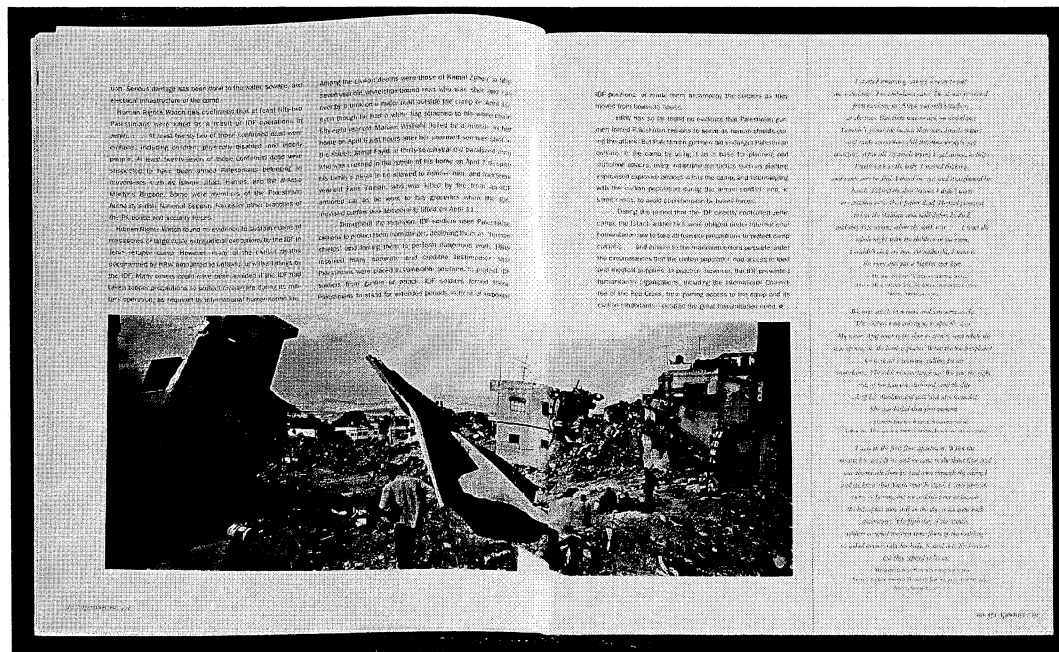


Figure 21. Two-page spread from “Images from No Man’s Land: Larry Towell in Jenin” in the Summer 2003 issue of *Aperture*, pages 18 and 19. Interview testimony from Palestinians in the refugee camp provided in sidebar.

<sup>132</sup> The term *prima facie* is a Latin term that translates to “at first glance.” Human Rights Watch, “Images from No Man’s Land: Larry Towell in Jenin,” 15-16.

The second part of the *Aperture* photo spread was much more ambiguous in nature. The section began with the publication of one of Towell's poems written while in occupied East Jerusalem on November 17, 2001.<sup>133</sup> The images that follow are some of Towell's most abstract and haunting images of destroyed homes that can also be found in section four of his book *No Man's Land* (Figure 22). The nine images that appeared were given a context by the use of a single caption. Identified under the title "Jenin: Still Life," these chillingly vacant images depict the charred remains of homes. Curtains, picture frames, bookshelves and electrical outlets have either melded to the walls or appear vaporized on the

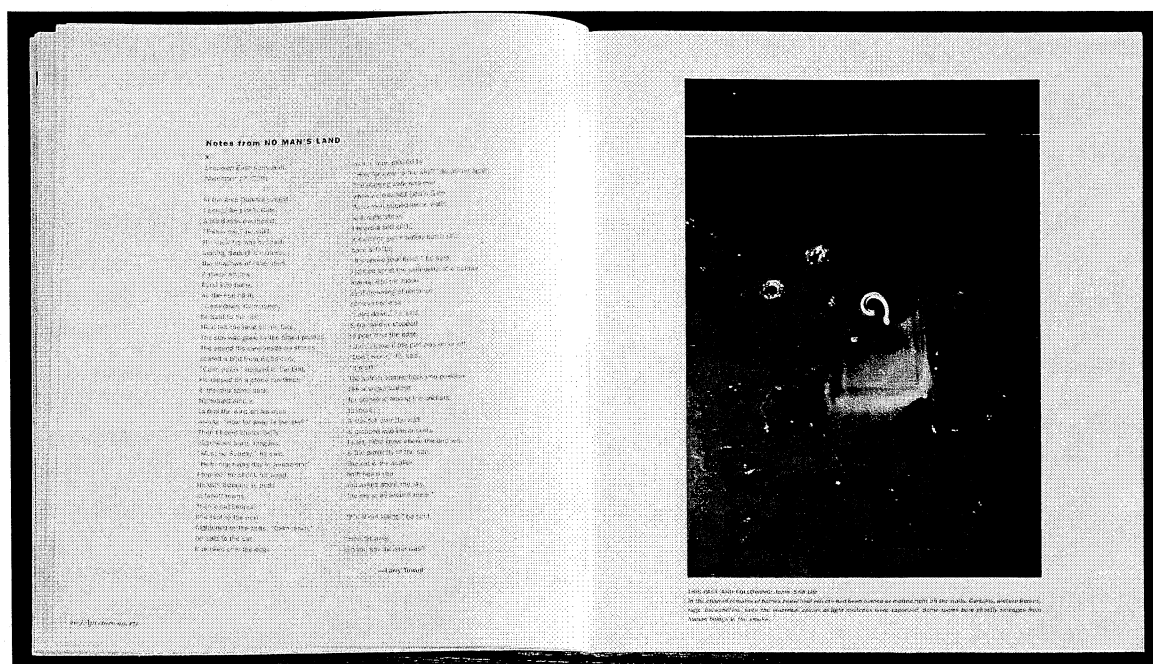


Figure 22. Two-page spread from "Notes from No Man's Land" featuring poem written by Larry Towell and photographs from the interiors of burnt homes in Jenin, pages 20 and 21.

ground. According to Towell's notes, "some of the rooms bore ghostly smudges from human beings in the smoke," the only remnants of human life.<sup>134</sup> Whereas the first section presented the events that occurred in the Jenin refugee camp in a more or less matter-of-fact

<sup>133</sup> Larry Towell, "Notes from No Man's Land," *Aperture* no. 171 (Summer 2003): 20-27.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.



manner, the second section of images was much more reflective and would have been more difficult to read had there been no connection with the first spread.

While the *Aperture* spread represents an extensive and challenging use of Towell's work from *No Man's Land* in the context of a photo journal, Towell's work was also found in the pages of the Toronto newspaper the *Globe and Mail*. When the second intifada broke out Towell secured the financial support of the *Globe and Mail*, through his acquaintance with Nigel Horn, to travel to the region and begin photographing.<sup>135</sup> The paper made a selection of photographs from the more than 1200 frames Towell had shot after his two-week trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories. This selection was then published in the supplementary photography section of the paper on November 18, 2000.<sup>136</sup> Appearing approximately two months after the events occurred, the two-page spread featured six of Towell's photographs accompanied by extended captions and commentary by Towell and an article written by Stephanie Nolan. While giving a brief background as to Towell's interest in the theme of land and the previous work he had done in the Middle East, the article mainly focused on Towell's experiences while photographing and his views on the situation. Nolan discussed the inherent danger faced by photojournalists, along with Towell's need to document for the sake of history. When asked to comment on the situation, Towell stated that in order to understand the situation it must be viewed in the context of an occupation that is both illegal and dehumanizing to the Palestinian people.<sup>137</sup>

The photographs that accompanied these statements depict this conflict and the strife through images of street clashes and death (Figure 23 and 24). In the large vertical image that covered much of the first page, the reader was thrust directly into the street

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<sup>135</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>136</sup> Stephanie Nolan, "Endgame in Palestine," *Globe and Mail*, November 18, 2000, sec. R.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

# Endgame in Palestine

The Globe and Mail commissioned celebrated Magnum photographer **LARRY TOWELL** to document the latest convulsions in the Middle East.

**STEPHANIE NOLEN** spoke to him about what has drawn him to the streets of Palestine for almost a decade.

**T**here are loud photographs. The images of the West Bank, taken in October by world-renowned documentary photographer Larry Towell, bring a barrage of images to mind. The hoarse Arabic chanting of the Palestinian demonstrators at the funerals. The thud of the rubber-coated batons shot by Israeli soldiers. The crack of rifle fire, the clatter of stones, the cheering and whistling that goes up from crowds of boys when they hit a target with their slingshots.

Towell has frozen violence, the violence of the catapults and the Molotov cocktails and the Kalashnikovs. And of regular life for the little girls who pick their way among the rocks that litter the street when the protesters and soldiers move on.

**I'm a father of four—I don't have to be a hero. . . . That whole cult of machismo photojournalism turns me off.**

Towell made a two-week trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories, drawn by the latest round of violence in a region he has photographed for almost a decade. The images shown here were selected from more than 1,200 prints.

The only Canadian ever to be made a member of the legendary photographer-run photo agency Magnum, Towell is almost shockingly unassuming. He does not wear a helmet or a bulletproof vest when he shoots the clashes; with his bushy beard and trademark straw sun hat, he looks like a gentle farmer who has somehow found his way into a riot.

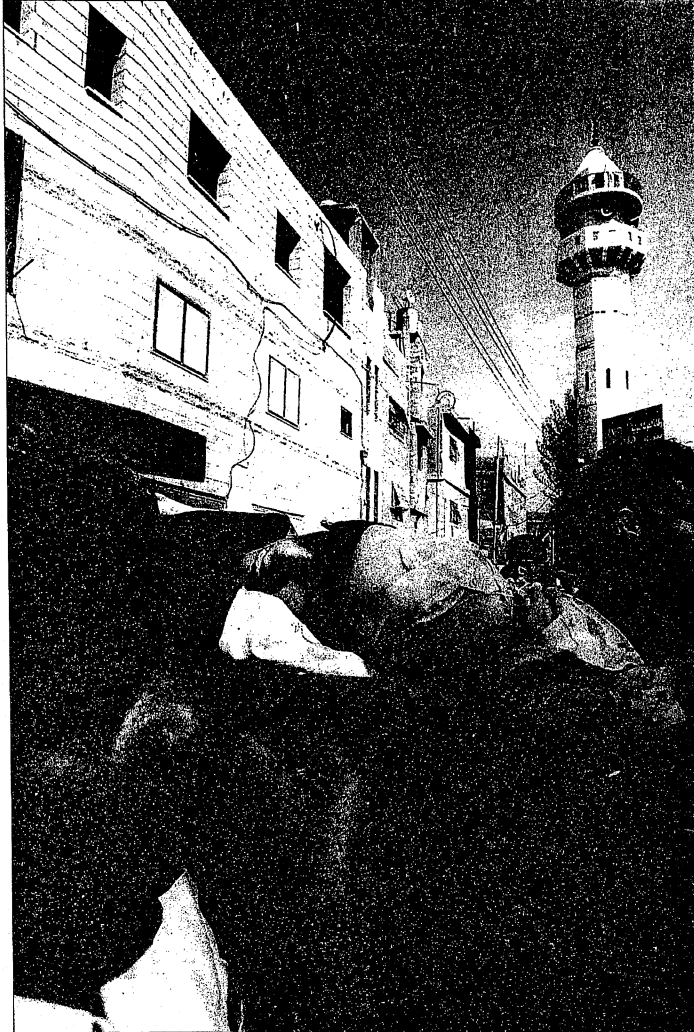
Towell says he is sometimes afraid. "When the live ammunition started, I hid. I'm a father of four—I don't have to be a hero. I don't have to be brave to feel good about myself. That whole cult of machismo photojournalism turns me off."

But on the streets of the West Bank every day, he learned to sense the levels of danger, which rise as the noise drops off. When the Israeli army fires stun grenades, those are loudest. Tear-gas canisters and rubber bullets are loud; live ammunition is much quieter. And the sniper fire is silent; someone beside you simply drops. "That's the worst," Towell says simply.

It was an interest in human rights that led Towell to photograph "the culture of resistance." He recorded the effects of the Contra war in Nicaragua in the 1980s, the war in El Salvador, the mothers of "The Disappeared" in Guatemala, the rebellion in the Chiapas region of Mexico.

In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict he found another twist on a theme that intrigues him: landlessness, and what happens to a people when they lose their land. He first went to the region while the Intifada still raged. In January, 1993, he returned two days after the Oslo Accord was signed in Washington on Sept. 13, drawn by the sense that history was happening.

See **ENDGAME** on page R18



**THE BODY OF MOAYAD OSAMA**

**JAWAREESH, AGE 13**, is carried through the streets of Bethlehem on Oct. 17. Jawareesh was shot in the head by Israeli soldiers. His body was wrapped in a Palestinian flag and carried on a wood-and-canvas stretcher from his home in Aida Refugee Camp, through the streets to Manger Square in Bethlehem. "For me, it's the dead child," says Towell. "I try to bring home a picture that has some meaning. I'm tired of the picture of the screaming Arab, guys with their mouths open, their fists in the air. I want to bring the individual out of the situation."



**THE SHADOW OF A PALESTINIAN**

**DEMONSTRATOR** jumping a stone over a wall toward Israeli army troops in Ramallah. The six-inch concrete wall, the same that sheltered the Molotov-cocktail-makers in the photo on the next page, was demolished by the Israeli army near the end of October.

Figure 23. First page of the two-page spread in the *Globe and Mail* on Saturday, November, 18, 2000.



**ARMED TAKZIMA**, members of the Fatah movement, carry a stretcher bearing the body of Hamed Hamoud, killed in clashes with Israeli soldiers, through the streets of Ramallah. This picture is very ominous to the average Canadian

viewer," says Towell. "It's guys with masks and guns. But it has to be understood that their presence is symbolic. They're there to make people feel better, to make them feel Palestinians are a nation and are armed. They're crowd pleasers.

They may fire a few shots off into the air, but they are not engaged in combat. Their arms are small, and they very wisely because of Israel's greater military might don't use them. But they want the Israelis to see them, to know they're there.

They mask themselves — why? Because they're scared shits of being identified by the Israeli army or undercover agents. From what I saw, Palestinian shooters are almost always lone gunmen, possibly belonging to the Hamas,

but of course I don't know for sure." The disproportionate death tolls (211 Palestinians to 11 Israelis) tell the story of the balance of power and restraint, he says, but notes that even this week, when Palestinian gunmen killed four

Israeli civilians, could mark a change.

## 'I need to put things in the public eye'

**ENDGAME** from page A10

"You have to see this thing in the context of an occupation. It is illegal and dehumanizing. The Israelis have broken too many international human-rights laws and military ones — by international law they are supposed to be protecting the Palestinians (the obligation, under the Geneva Convention, to a people under occupation). That's a long way from

what we're thinking."

What's striking in these photographs is the absence of Israelis. The enemy is unseen. It wasn't deliberate, Towell says. "I photograph both sides, but most of the time I photograph Palestinians because that is where the emotion and the drama was. That's where people are people. If you go to the Israeli side, you can chat with the soldiers for a while, then they fire off a bullet, joke amongst each other. You

can take their picture and they smile. I don't want to be there, it doesn't tell me anything — they're doing their duty." Towell lost five pounds in 12 days on this latest trip, from eating and jostling to get shots of funeral processions and stone-throwing.

"I need to feel useful," he says. "To keep putting things into the public eye, to record certain parts of history, to make sure it becomes part of an archive."



**A YOUNG PALESTINIAN MAN**

**LOADS A STONE** into a homemade catapult in a clash with the Israeli army near the Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem. "They were really angry that day," recalls Towell. The demonstration had just come from the funeral procession of 13-year-old Moayad Osama Jawarneh. Towell says there was a correlation between the death of the person buried in each funeral and the level of anger in the protests that followed it. Jawarneh was shot by Israeli soldiers. "He was very good with that sling," Towell recalls of the stone-thrower. "He was relatively accurate, and rocks in the homemade catapults go further. There was a good chance he could reach the top of the [Israeli army lookout tower], although the rock wasn't going to do anything to soldiers behind a protective screen. It's a cat-and-mouse game."



**A PALESTINIAN MAN,**

**SEMI-CONSCIOUS** from tear-gas inhalation, is treated on the street by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Nablus. "The ambulances were grabbing somebody every five minutes or so. They'd stop at the mobile clinic, and if it was serious they'd continue on to the hospital, and if not they'd treat him there. This guy was almost unconscious, so he must have been caught somewhere, been trapped in a building or

something, most of the time you can run away from the tear gas. They were putting a rubber glove over his mouth, getting him to breathe." Only later did Towell consider the meaning of the crack in the bottom of the man's shoe. "If you drive between the West Bank and Israel, you see the difference in social status. . . . the poverty [in the Palestinian territories] can be quite severe."

Figure 24. Second page of the two-page spread in the *Globe and Mail* on Saturday, November, 18, 2000.

scene, forced to confront straight on the face of a thirteen year-old boy who was shot in the head by Israeli soldiers, his body being carried through the streets. These difficult and graphic images forced the reader to view the situation from the perspective of the Palestinian people. Nolan noted that this perspective is coupled with the notable absence of images portraying the Israeli people. Although this was the case, Towell stated that this was not his original intention. "I photograph both sides, but most of the time I photographed Palestinians because that is where the emotion and the drama was.... If you go to the Israeli side, you can chit-chat with the soldiers for a while.... You can take their picture and they smile. I don't want to be there, it doesn't tell me anything—they're doing their duty."<sup>138</sup> However, despite this statement, the context of the article, coupled with the graphic images and captions that clearly condemn the actions of the Israeli army, in the end adversely affected the way in which readers understood Towell's work.

#### FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE USER

Although the publication of Towell's work from *No Man's Land* in both *Aperture* and the *Globe and Mail* represent only two examples of Towell's work in publications, the negative reader response to both of these spreads and the subsequent outcome are indicative of the larger issue of how context can affect meaning. It is important to note the differences between these two publications in order to understand the way in which the context of each publication alters how audiences understand the photographs presented within. *Aperture* cannot be considered as part of the popular North American press, but rather represents a fine art photography journal which caters to an audience attuned to the art world. In the context of the pages of *Aperture*, photographs are normally understood as art and therefore Towell's photographs, which tend to blur the boundaries between documentary and art,

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

aroused debate. On the other hand, the *Globe and Mail* newspaper is distributed and accessed by a much larger and more diverse audience than *Aperture*. In the context of the newspaper, photographs are typically taken as factual documents which support the text. Towell's subjective images that appeared in the context of the newspaper, which is typically accepted as simply presenting the objective facts regarding world events, were likewise controversial. The audiences of both the art journal and popular newspaper found it difficult to negotiate Towell's photographs and the accompanying text within the specific contexts in which they were presented.

Three days after Towell's photographs appeared in conjunction with text in "Endgame in Palestine," the *Globe and Mail* published a letter addressing both the editors and Towell himself. Itay Rimon of Toronto criticized the one-sided perspective offered by Towell's images and the article. He wrote, "the pictures and words conveyed the false message that the Palestinians are fighting an organized army with stones and other primitive, non-lethal means. Larry Towell asserts that armed Palestinian[s] are few and rarely use their weapons."<sup>139</sup> Rimon then provided factual information on the number of attacks Israelis have suffered at the hands of armed Palestinians. In *Eyes of Time*, Marianne Fulton writes that since photojournalism consists of a precarious relationship between pictures and words, even the slightest change in caption can alter the way an image is understood and possibly put the whole production in doubt. This is especially the case for ambiguous photographs where if carefully selected words are not used to "clarify the situation and put it into perspective, the picture could easily be misunderstood."<sup>140</sup> In the use of images in the printed press, context is everything. In the case of the *Globe and Mail* spread, many readers interpreted Towell's words and photographs as suggesting *all* Palestinians are powerless and

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<sup>139</sup> Itay Rimon, letter to the editor, *Globe and Mail*, November 21, 2000.

<sup>140</sup> Marianne Fulton, "Changing Focus: The 1950s to the 1980s," 244.

non-violent victims of a much stronger and aggressive Israel. According to Towell, the end result was that the *Globe and Mail* lost some subscribers.<sup>141</sup>

Towell also received a negative response to the photo spread which ran in *Aperture*, however, the consequence in this instance had a much more serious and lasting effect. Many of the negative comments were reprinted in the “Letters” section of the Winter 2003 issue of *Aperture*. The magazine received so many letters that it prompted the editors to preface the section by noting that Towell’s portfolio elicited many strong responses and that they had decided to reprint a selection of them. The first letter condemned *Aperture* for publishing what was in their view basically a propaganda piece that presented a unilateral and uneven view of the situation in Israel. According to the writer David J. Russin, “the fact that the written word came from the Human Rights Watch report does not give this depiction validity.”<sup>142</sup> A second and much more lengthy letter from Zeev Deckel, which was actually part of a continued correspondence with the editors, was also reprinted. While the writer agreed with the editors that a photographer’s interpretation of an event or issue is extremely “subjective conceptually in judgement, interpretation, presentation, and message,” he asserted that it is precisely because of this fact that editors must accompany such work with the relevant context that will prevent a subjective interpretation from being understood as reality.<sup>143</sup> In Deckel’s view, as responsible editors, *Aperture* staff should have ensured that at the very least a balancing text was included to ensure that readers were given the fair opportunity to understand the work in a wider context. Possibly as a result of the pressure to consciously represent both sides of the argument, the editors also reprinted a letter that

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<sup>141</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>142</sup> David J. Russin, letter to the editor, *Aperture* no. 173 (Winter 2003).

<sup>143</sup> Zeev Deckel, letter to the editor, *Aperture* no. 173 (Winter 2003).

thanked Towell for his work and for presenting the other side of the debate in Israel, although they also noted that the writer was the translator of the book *Dreaming of Palestine*.<sup>144</sup>

As a result of such negative feedback, *Aperture*, originally slated to co-publish Towell's book, abandoned the project at the last minute. While Towell had already secured the French publisher Textuel to distribute *No Man's Land* in Europe, without the financial support of *Aperture* the whole project was put in jeopardy. Although the institution's website states that *Aperture* is committed to presenting the finest photographic images to the public in the manner intended by the artist and "uncompromised by commercial motive, marketplace trends, or external censorship," according to Towell, *Aperture's* editors chose not to co-publish his book because of the fear of further criticism.<sup>145</sup> It was owing to the assistance offered by publisher Chris Boot and the Archive of Modern Conflict that Towell was in the end able to publish *No Man's Land*.<sup>146</sup>

When asked to comment on the reaction to his work in *Aperture*, Towell responded that since the subject of the work dealt with issues in Israel, the outcome was virtually inevitable. According to Towell, the situation is what journalists refer to as the "chill factor," where before a journalist is about to publish something there is the fear that someone is going to attack their credibility and they will not have all the answers.<sup>147</sup> In Towell's view, he recognizes that any criticism of Israel is bound to get one labelled as anti-Israeli, even if this is not the case. It is also no surprise to him that he received the brunt end of the criticism

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<sup>144</sup> Marguerite Shore, letter to the editor, *Aperture* no. 173 (Winter 2003).

<sup>145</sup> Aperture Foundation, "History and Mission," *About Aperture Foundation*, 2007, <http://www.aperture.org/store/about-history.aspx>; and Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>146</sup> Since the early 1990s, the Archive of Modern Conflict has focused on the ways in which art, especially photography, can be born out of conflict and effectively convey important aspects of the issues. According to its founder Timothy Prus, the Archive's main interest is in the stories of daily life from those existing in conflict zones. In Towell's case, the Archive was able to provide some financial assistance in order for *No Man's Land* to be published. "No Man's Land," *Foto8* 4, no. 1 (Summer 2005), <http://www.foto8.com/reviews/V4N1/nomansland.html>.

<sup>147</sup> Barbara Oudiz, "Larry Towell" *Eyemazing* 7 (Summer 2005).

for the photo essay in *Aperture*. The Human Rights Watch is an extremely well respected organization that also possesses an enormous amount of authority. As a photographer whose perspective is nearly always going to be viewed as subjective, Towell's teaming up with the organization to work on the *Aperture* piece would clearly make *him* the target of all negative feedback. In Towell's own words, "The Human Rights Watch, you can't bury them either, they have a lot of credibility. So when you link up with somebody like that who's going to be the target?"<sup>148</sup>

However, despite Towell's comments about the inevitability of such a negative outcome, a great deal of consideration must be given to examining the context of the work in these publications. In the case of the *Aperture* spread, the images, which appeared without the factual captions that are included in Towell's book, were given direct meaning from the text of the Human Rights Watch. Since the report read as a condemnation of the Israeli Defence Forces for failing to abide by the rules of international humanitarian law, it was a logical extension that the audience would read the same meaning into Towell's photographs, whether or not this was his stance on the issue. With the two-page spread in the *Globe and Mail*, Towell's images were given meaning from his extended captions, which included his own personal commentary on the events depicted. Despite Towell's declaration that it was not his intention to produce images solely from the Palestinian perspective, the absence of an Israeli presence coupled with images of dead Palestinians read as a one-sided standpoint to viewers sensitive to the situation. As was discussed in the previous chapter on Towell's book, this is not actually the case.

In his book Towell does present images of Israelis from his stay in East Jerusalem. Additionally, in his afterword Towell thanks both the Israelis and Palestinians whom he met

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<sup>148</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.



during his journeys and who have been working toward a peaceful resolution. Towell ends the afterword by clearly stating, “I believe in a two-state solution for Palestine and Israel—two equal and uncompromised nations. I know that some day it will happen...if the light is in our deeds.”<sup>149</sup> It is a comment that positions him as neither pro-Palestinian nor pro-Israeli, and a statement that is decidedly missing from his other publications. And herein lies the struggle with the publication of the very type of subjective photojournalism that is being produced by photographers such as Towell. Due to the personal perspective that these images offer, they often require a more extensive context when appearing as selected parts in both newspaper and journal publications. However, due to the constraints of time, space and money, this is usually not a possibility. Thus, when the work is presented in part, removed from the context of the integrated project, the end result is that audiences unfamiliar with a photographer’s work and political stance will tend to read the combination of images and text through their own background and knowledge and not from the photographer’s perspective. The words of Martha Rosler support this assumption. In her essay “Wars and Metaphors” she stated, “it is when one sends one’s photos outside the circle of the convinced that the problems begin.”<sup>150</sup> Such was the case with Towell’s work from *No Man’s Land* in North American publications. As will be seen in the next chapter, it was also the case when the work appeared in the much broader environment of the exhibition.

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<sup>149</sup> Larry Towell, *No Man’s Land* (London: Boot, in association with the Archive of Modern Conflict, 2005).

<sup>150</sup> Martha Rosler, “Wars and Metaphors,” in *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, in association with the International Center of Photography, 2004), 257-258.

## IN CONTEXT

### NO MAN'S LAND THE EXHIBITIONS

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#### HISTORY OF EXHIBITIONS

Although today audiences are more familiar with the notion of exhibiting photographs and especially photographs of conflict, photographs have been exhibited from the very inception of the medium.<sup>151</sup> In 1851 photographs were included in a display at the Great Exhibition, an event that was held at the Crystal Palace in London and whose purpose was to celebrate the technological achievements of industry; the innovation of photography being one such achievement. A year later the Royal Society of Arts organized its first photography show. With the means to accurately reproduce the photographic image in the printed press yet to be realized, the space of the exhibition provided a means to share information about the new technology to the public. While these examples clearly demonstrate that photographs had a place in the exhibition environment early on, it is important to note that these public displays merely celebrated the technological wonders of the medium, namely the ability of the camera to record the precise details of the world.<sup>152</sup> It would be decades before any exhibition of photographs would explore the possibility of sequencing a group of images to elicit specific ideas.

In the early twentieth century, many of the photographers who were part of the Photo-Secession movement began exhibiting their work in a number of galleries. This group became primarily interested in the pictorial aspects of the photographic medium and the ability to transform the photograph into a work of art through superior craftsmanship. With the opening of gallery "291" in New York City, photographer Alfred Stieglitz began

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<sup>151</sup> Liz Wells, *Photography: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2000), 254.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

exhibiting photographs by Edward Steichen, as well as those produced by his own hand, alongside some of the most challenging paintings and sculptures being produced by the European avant-garde, essentially drawing a correlation between the media and highlighting the aesthetic qualities inherent in the photograph.<sup>153</sup> This gradual shift of photography into the art world can in a small part be credited to the acceptance and support of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.<sup>154</sup> In 1947, MoMA mounted what was originally intended as a “posthumous” exhibition celebrating the work of Henri Cartier-Bresson.<sup>155</sup> When it was discovered that Cartier-Bresson was indeed alive, the exhibition was transformed into a retrospective in which the photographer himself played a pivotal role. The current reproduction of the artist’s scrapbook, which includes the images and sequencing Cartier-Bresson presented to MoMA, sheds light on the thought processes behind the layout of the exhibition.<sup>156</sup> It also shows that at this point both photographers and curators were beginning to realize that a deliberate sequencing and arrangement of photographs could be used to draw audience attention to specific ideas and themes often without the use of much

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<sup>153</sup> William Manchester, “Images: A Wide Angle,” in *In Our Time: The World As Seen by Magnum Photographers*, ed. William Manchester (New York: American Federation of the Arts, in association with W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), 23-24.

<sup>154</sup> Naomi Rosenblum, “Documentary Photography: Past and Present,” in *Photography’s Multiple Roles: Art, Document, Market, Science*, ed. Denise Miller (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Photography/Columbia College, 1998) 89.

<sup>155</sup> During WWII, Henri Cartier-Bresson was taken prisoner by the Germans. After three years in captivity and two unsuccessful attempts at escape, Cartier-Bresson finally made his escape in 1943. The Museum of Modern Art in New York, mistakenly assuming that the artist had in fact died in the war, began preparing a “posthumous” exhibition during this time. When Cartier-Bresson reappeared, he was delighted to learn of the exhibition and aided in the selection of photographs for the exhibition which opened in 1947. Steidl, “Scrap Book by Henri Cartier-Bresson,” *Books*, 2007, <http://www.steidlville.com/books/434-Scrap-Book.html>.

<sup>156</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson’s scrapbook included approximately 300 photographs, most of which had yet to be published, that the artist had selected, printed and arranged in the pages of a scrapbook. In the 1990s, Cartier-Bresson re-visited the scrapbook and began re-arranging his images and even removing pages from the book. Most recently, the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation was able to restore the scrapbook to its original form, including thirteen original pages that were untouched by the artist. In addition to the facsimile reproduction of the scrapbook published by Steidl, the scrapbook was exhibited at the Foundation in Paris in 2006, as well as at the International Center of Photography in New York in 2007. Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation, “Scrapbook,” *Exhibitions at the Foundation – Archives*, 2006, [http://www.henricartierbresson.org/prog/PROG\\_expos\\_fr.htm#](http://www.henricartierbresson.org/prog/PROG_expos_fr.htm#).

text. In the case of the 1947 exhibition, the chronological arrangement, often by subject matter, provided insight into the mind and working method of Cartier-Bresson.

Another MoMA exhibition that revolutionized the use of photographs in this environment was the 1955 exhibition *The Family of Man*, curated by Edward Steichen. The thematic and three-dimensional arrangement and sequencing of over 500 photographs were culled from the work of documentary photographers, photojournalists, and street photographers.<sup>157</sup> According to Steichen, the space of the exhibition added an important dimension to the photographic medium. Through specific sequencing, juxtapositions and display methods, Steichen believed that audiences could become actively involved with the photographs and themes of the exhibition, an aspect that he felt no other form of visual communication could claim.<sup>158</sup>

However, it is due to the changes in both the art and photography worlds, which coalesced in the 1970s, which led the way for photography's complete incorporation into the museum setting. As discussed in the previous chapter, many popular publications such as *Life* magazine closed their doors in the seventies due to their inability to compete with the immediacy of television. The result saw more photographers than ever turning to the book form as an alternative means to publish their work. At the same time that this shift was altering the ways in which photographs were being presented to the public on the printed page, changes in the art market were also taking place. According to Martha Rosler, in the early seventies "the escalating prices of traditional art objects...and the consequent weakening of the commercial galleries in the face of wider economic crisis helped direct

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<sup>157</sup> Rosenblum, 89; and Monique Berlier, "The Family of Man: Readings of an Exhibition," in *Picturing the Past: Media, History, and Photography*, ed. Bonnie Brennen and Hanno Hardt (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 213.

<sup>158</sup> Berlier, 211.

attention toward photography as an art form and as a less exalted commodity.”<sup>159</sup> This coupled with the increase in serious scholarly attention to photography and photojournalism led to the acquisition of vintage photographs by museums, galleries and private collectors.<sup>160</sup> Finally, it was not only the traditional art museums that began to collect photographs during this period of change. Recognizing the importance of the photographic medium as separate from all other art forms, institutions such as the International Center of Photography in New York City were founded with a commitment to exploring both the evolution of the medium and its powerful connection with culture and society at large.<sup>161</sup>

Although the incorporation of photographs into the museum and gallery environments has offered many photographers an additional venue for presenting their work to the public, the current site of the exhibition is not without its problems, especially when considering the exhibition of photojournalism. From the perspective of Rod Slemmons, the exhibition of photojournalistic images produced by the likes of Gilles Peress and Luc Delahaye seems contradictory in intent. Slemmons states, “museum audiences are often more disposed to ignore the political and social implications of images like those of Peress, and more apt merely to enjoy their graphic strength, especially since the original social context is usually omitted.”<sup>162</sup> Currently, the historical notion of museums as institutions for the display of art objects and galleries as venues for the exaltation and sale of art as

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<sup>159</sup> Martha Rosler, “Lookers, Buyers, Dealers, and Makers: Thoughts on Audience,” in *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, in association with the International Center of Photography, 2004), 34.

<sup>160</sup> Michael Griffin, “The Great War Photographs: Constructing Myths of History and Photojournalism,” in *Picturing the Past: Media, History, and Photography*, ed. Bonnie Brennen and Hanno Hardt (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 126.

<sup>161</sup> Judy Diter, conversation with author, May 24, 2007, Toronto; Judy Diter, “Framing War: Photojournalism and the Museum,” (M.A. diss., Bard College, 2005); and International Center of Photography, “ICP’s Mission,” *Mission & History*, 2006, [http://www.icp.org/site/c.dnJGKJNsFqG/b.856293/k.B05D/Mission\\_History.htm](http://www.icp.org/site/c.dnJGKJNsFqG/b.856293/k.B05D/Mission_History.htm).

<sup>162</sup> Rod Slemmons, “Professional and Commercial Photography,” in *Photography’s Multiple Roles: Art, Document, Market, Science*, ed. Denise Miller (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Photography/Columbia College, 1998) 132.

commodity objects is being challenged by critics, curators and photographers who are working towards developing new ways of responsibly displaying photojournalism. It is recognized that it is only through presenting these images of conflict with the necessary contextual information that the work can be accurately understood for the events they represent as opposed to as merely works of art.

#### FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE MAKER

Larry Towell has always viewed the space of the exhibition as another means of presenting his work to the public and engaging in critical debate.<sup>163</sup> As previously mentioned, Towell views every incarnation of each of his projects, whether they are books or publications, as being integrated parts of a larger whole. Therefore, in Towell's working method an exhibition of his photographs is always related to a book project. Whether in the museum or gallery environment, when Towell opens an exhibition it is usually associated with the launch of one of his books. In the case of his project *No Man's Land*, the exhibition and book were launched in both Europe and in North America. The exhibition at the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation in Paris was due in large part to the Henri Cartier-Bresson prize which Towell was awarded in 2003.<sup>164</sup> The North American exhibition of *No Man's Land* took place in Toronto as part of the Contact Image Festival and was made possible due to the relationship between Towell and the Stephen Bulger Gallery. For the purposes of this thesis an examination of these concurrent exhibitions provides a useful means to consider Towell's work in the context of both a public institution, which was founded to celebrate the legacy of one of the world's most influential photographers and a private gallery.

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<sup>163</sup> See Appendix C for a selected list of Larry Towell's solo and group exhibitions.

<sup>164</sup> Appendix C also provides information regarding awards Towell has won over the course of his career.

## THE EXHIBITIONS

In 2003, the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation officially opened in Paris in order to preserve and celebrate the photographic legacy of Cartier-Bresson. In addition to showcasing the work of Cartier-Bresson, the Foundation is also committed to exhibiting the work of international photographers, painters and sculptors through a program of three yearly exhibitions.<sup>165</sup> In addition to this stated mission, the Foundation is also committed to encouraging creativity within the arts through its biennial grant program, of which Larry Towell was awarded the inaugural prize. Worth 30 000 Euros, it is presented to a photographer who embodies a philosophy and aesthetic similar to those expounded by the Foundation's namesake.<sup>166</sup> According to the jury, Towell was selected "above all for the quality of his work, the particularity of his approach which never seeks to exploit misery or depict the sensational, the sensitivity of his gaze, [and] the power of his composition."<sup>167</sup> The award is also meant to offer a photographer who has already completed a significant body of work the ability to complete a project that would otherwise be difficult to bring to realization. Most important in Towell's case, as part of the award the recipient is given the opportunity to exhibit their work at the Foundation, accompanied by a published monograph.

The exhibition *No Man's Land* officially opened at the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation in April 2005 and was on display for nearly four months. The exhibition's curator, Robert Delpire, selected approximately sixty black and white photographs to include

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<sup>165</sup> See Appendix D for a list of exhibitions which have been mounted at the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation since its opening in 2003.

<sup>166</sup> When Towell won the award, the prize was funded by the Neufilze Bank and Neufilze Vie. Currently, the award is made possible due to the support of Groupe WENDEL. Barbara Oudiz, "Meeting With Larry Towell" *Eyemazing* 7 (Summer 2005); and Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation, "Henri Cartier-Bresson International Award," *HCB Award*, 2007, [http://www.henricartierbresson.org/prix/home\\_en.htm](http://www.henricartierbresson.org/prix/home_en.htm).

<sup>167</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation, "*No Man's Land*," *Exhibitions at the Foundation – Archives*, 2005, [http://www.henricartierbresson.org/prog/home\\_en.htm](http://www.henricartierbresson.org/prog/home_en.htm).

in the exhibition. The selection combined the 35mm format with panoramic images.<sup>168</sup> In the exhibition, the 35mm photographs were about 16" x 24" in size, while the panoramic images were approximately 16" x 45".<sup>169</sup> In addition to Towell's photographs, the exhibition also included found objects, collages and drawings by Towell and two soundtracks that record the ambient noises, as well as spoken word, from Towell's journeys in the Middle East. Both of Towell's monographs *No Man's Land* and *Then Palestine*, along with four text panels assisted in providing the necessary context for the exhibition.

The exhibition itself was separated into two sections over the two floors of exhibition space available at the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation. Upon entering the Foundation, the visitor climbed a set of stairs to get to the first floor of the exhibition. The first text panel actually appeared at the bottom of these stairs and provided the visitor with the necessary information to understand the body of work the visitor was about to view. The text panel provided background information about how the project came into being, the nature of the Henri Cartier-Bresson award, along with background information regarding Towell's previous work and his work in Palestine (Figure 25). At the top of the stairs one of Towell's images of a boy caught in the action of launching a stone with his slingshot, much of his body cut off by the frame, appeared below the exhibition's title (Figure 26). From this very first image in the middle of a street clash, the visitor was thrust into the frenzy and chaos of the conflict.

The images arranged on the first floor of the Foundation positioned the visitor directly in the heat of the conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis. Similar to the manner in which Towell begins his book *No Man's Land*, all of the images in the first gallery

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<sup>168</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation, "No Man's Land."

<sup>169</sup> Bruno Chalifour, "The Wall of Palestine," *Afterimage* (July/August 2005): 44.



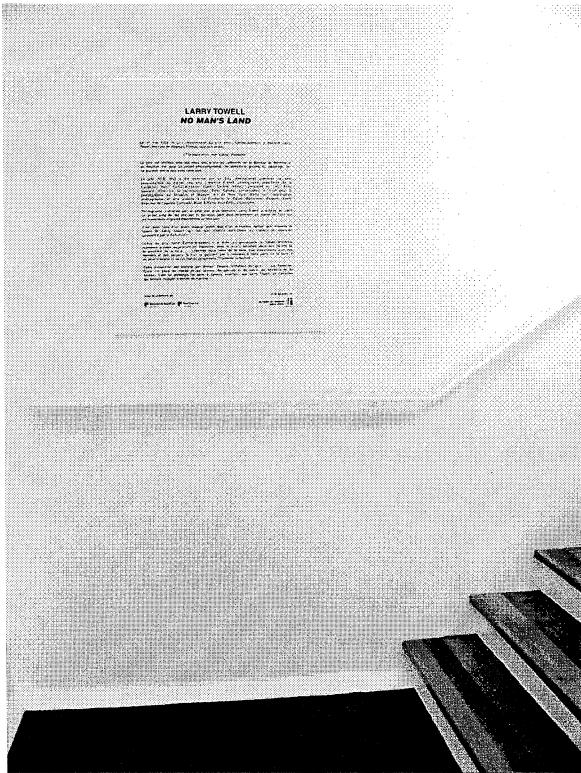


Figure 25. Opening text panel for *No Man's Land* on the ground floor of the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation, Paris, France.

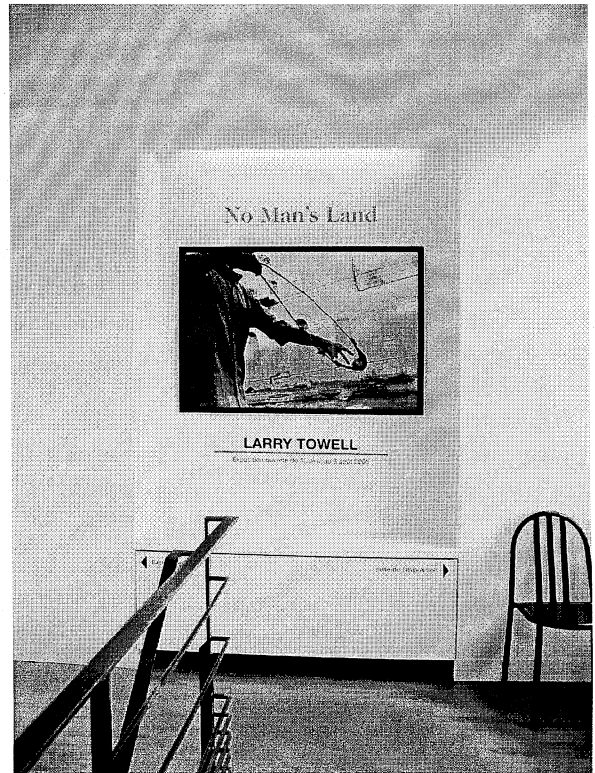


Figure 26. Entrance to the first floor gallery.

space depicted the graphic and violent scenes from the street. Printed at a much larger scale than they appeared in the book, the photographs enveloped the visitor. Trapped in the centre of the conflict, the visitor was made to feel as though the rocks, the Molotov cocktails and the large crowds carrying dead bodies through the streets were rushing towards them. The visitor was essentially placed in the position of the photographer, seeing the events unfold around them much in the same way that the events unfolded in a confusing and disorienting manner around Towell himself (Figure 27). Adding to this overwhelming feeling, the ambient sounds that Towell recorded while in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and which became the audio CD *No Man's Land*, was heard playing in surround sound. The soundtrack captured helicopters flying overhead, frantic shouting from the

midst of battle, crying and a haunting overture of prayers. According to Towell, these deafening sounds are the “sounds of a war.”<sup>170</sup>



Figure 27. Installation shot of first floor gallery showing back wall with two panoramic photographs.

The photographs themselves were organized into groups of two and three images along the longer walls of the gallery space, a grouping that is similar to that in the two-page spreads in Towell’s book. Panoramic images appeared on either end of the room. The photographs were mounted full-bleed in simple black frames, with the image captions, printed on plain white board, appearing centred below each frame. The walls were painted in two different shades of grey, while the back wall containing two panoramas was painted a vibrant and violent red. The gallery space featured little text. Upon exiting the first gallery space the visitor was provided with a lengthy chronology of events, taken from Towell’s book, that literally spanned the entire length of the wall, ceiling to floor (Figure 28). The only other text was the foreward to the book *No Man’s Land* written by Robert Delpire. This

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<sup>170</sup> Gord Bowes, “Towell Opens Rare Canadian Show,” *Courier Press* (Wallaceburg, Canada), May 4, 2005.

text appeared next to Towell's abstract image of a shaft of light illuminating a rock on the ground, the pair separated from the other images in the gallery and serving as a transition between the images on the first floor and those the visitor encountered on the second floor (Figure 29).



Figure 28. Installation shot of first floor gallery showing the historical timeline printed on the wall to the right of the panorama.

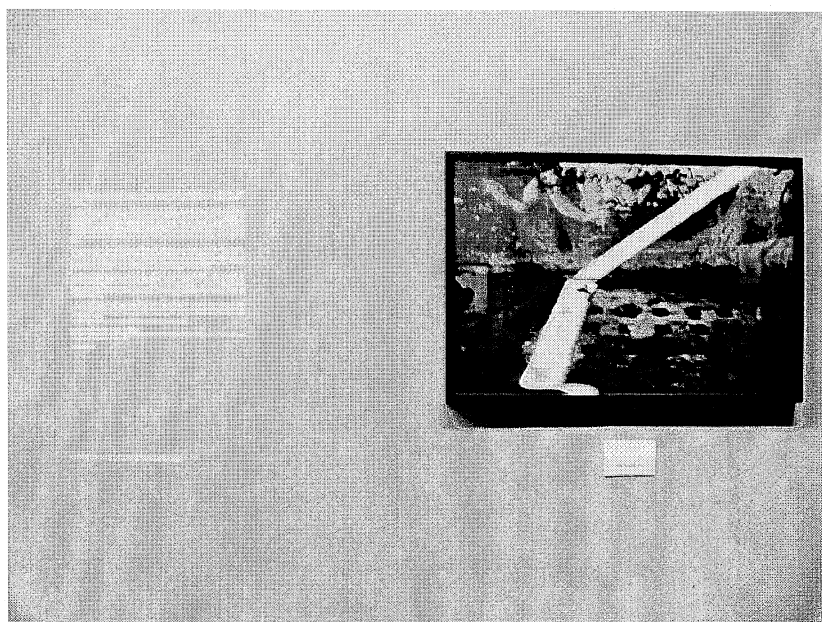


Figure 29. Installation shot from the first floor gallery showing the foreward from *No Man's Land* coupled with the image "Stone in light. Gaza, Gaza Strip, 1993."

After mounting another set of stairs to get to the second floor gallery space, the visitor was once again faced with a disorienting image captured at the funeral of a thirteen year-old Palestinian boy. The frame is overcrowded with bodies. A Palestinian soldier stands in the forefront, his raised gun bisecting his face and jutting out of the frame toward the visitor. The photographer has tilted the camera, which throws the image off balance, with bodies threatening to topple from the frame (Figure 30). This was the last 'loud' image the visitor was subjected to. After being thrust into scenes of hatred and violence, the visitor entered the second exhibition space which was more solemn and reflective in nature. The images presented in this space intersperse the quiet moments Towell captured while roaming the streets of East Jerusalem, images of life continuing in spite of the realities, with images of the destroyed homes in Jenin and the creation of the 'separation wall.'



Figure 30. Entrance to the second floor gallery.

The room was arranged in much the same manner as the first floor gallery. The 35mm vertical and horizontal images were laid out in groups of two and three on the longer walls of the room. Again, two panoramas were hung on the far wall that was painted red, with the other panorama appearing on the opposite end. The main difference with this gallery space was that rather than an empty space in the middle of the room, in which the visitor could stand and pan the room, the space in the second floor gallery was occupied by two displays. While they provided contextual information, the placement of the glass cases required that the viewer walk the circumference of the room, viewing each image in a sequential manner (Figure 31). This space was meant for contemplation and reflection. The



Figure 31. Installation shot of second floor gallery showing the back wall with two panoramas and the display cases situated in the centre of the room.

display cases enclosed artefacts that Towell brought back from his many trips to the Middle East. The broken slingshots and damaged locks and keys, which appeared in the opening and closing sequences of *No Man's Land*, were encased along with a fragment of the anti-

separation fence tape that was used by the Israel Peace Movement in front of Ariel Sharon's home. The case also contained drawings and collages which Towell made during his travels.

Sound was also heard in this space, however, rather than the overpowering noises that Towell recorded from the streets, this soundtrack was taken from Towell's CD called *The Dark Years*. The soundtrack features Towell reading poems and notes from one of the diaries he kept during his trips, and is set to folk music. Again, the soundtrack was meant to transport the visitor to another place, all of the simple and tragic moments of life in the Middle East being filtered through the photographer's eyes, ears and perspective. It is clear that this entire installation was a personal and self-reflexive installation, where the visitor was taken on a psychological journey. Regarding his intentions for the installation at the Foundation, Towell has said, "I always try to personalize a story, to make it meaningful...by trying to bring [people] to the place, to the situation with the sights and the sounds which are all a part of the process."<sup>171</sup>

Upon exiting the room the visitor was presented with the only text panel on the second floor. On the wall above an open copy of Towell's monograph that accompanied the exhibition, was a personal reflection appearing in French which was written by Towell on February 21, 2005 (Figure 32).<sup>172</sup> It began with his recounting the first snowfall in Jerusalem in 2003, a magical moment that seemed to freeze time and completely altered the mood of the city. Both Palestinians and Israelis took to the streets where a snowball fight ensued. A young Palestinian boy accidentally hit an Israeli woman with a snowball and began to apologize profusely, however, she simply smiled at him as if her own son. The

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<sup>171</sup> Olivia Snaije, "Larry Towell: Shooting from the Heart," *The Daily Star* (Lebanon), July 2, 2005. Personal files of Larry Towell.

<sup>172</sup> Although this text appeared in French in the gallery space, visitors to the Foundation were given an English translation of this text panel. Larry Towell, "No Man's Land," February 21, 2005, wall text from the exhibition *No Man's Land* at the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation, Paris, France.



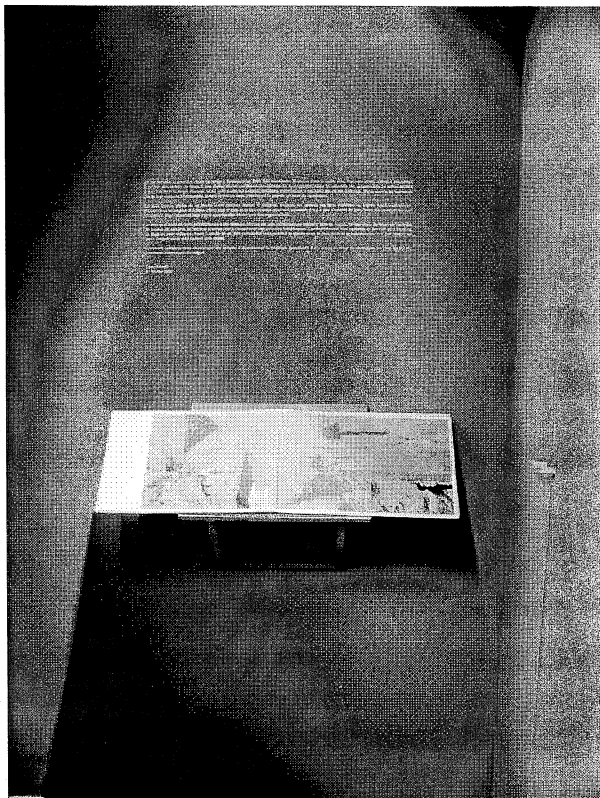


Figure 32. Installation shot of second floor gallery showing text panel above an open copy of *No Man's Land*.

next day the snow was gone and it seemed as though no one remembered that brief moment and everything went back to normal. After this story, Towell explained that much of the body of work presented at the Foundation was captured during the most violent and hopeless years of the conflict. Towell offered no answers to the situation in either his images or in his text, but posed questions as to how peace could possibly be achieved. He left the visitor with one final thought: “Comment faire revenir la neige?” How can we make it snow again; it was a poetic question that struck a chord with many visitors and was echoed by many in the pages of the guestbook.

The North American exhibition of *No Man's Land* opened in Toronto at the Stephen Bulger Gallery.<sup>173</sup> Open since 1995, the Bulger Gallery has acted as both dealer of Towell's work and official representative of the Magnum Photos Agency in Canada.<sup>174</sup> The

<sup>173</sup> For a list of exhibitions mounted at the Stephen Bulger Gallery since 1995 see Appendix E.

<sup>174</sup> Chalifour, “The Wall of Palestine,” 44.

exhibition, which opened in May 2005, was scheduled to coincide with the Contact Photography Festival that takes place each year in Toronto.<sup>175</sup> Every year the festival is organized around a central theme and in 2005 the chosen theme for the festival was “Questioning Truth in Photography.” According to critic Bruno Chalifour, “the relevance of the show to the 2005 theme becomes all the more obvious when it is noted that 90% of the images were taken from the Palestinian side.”<sup>176</sup> Although Chalifour made this connection, he did note that this did not necessarily mean that Towell’s images represented a pro-Palestinian point of view. However, what is clear is that in the context of the festival and coupled with the festival’s theme, there was the possibility that the *No Man’s Land*

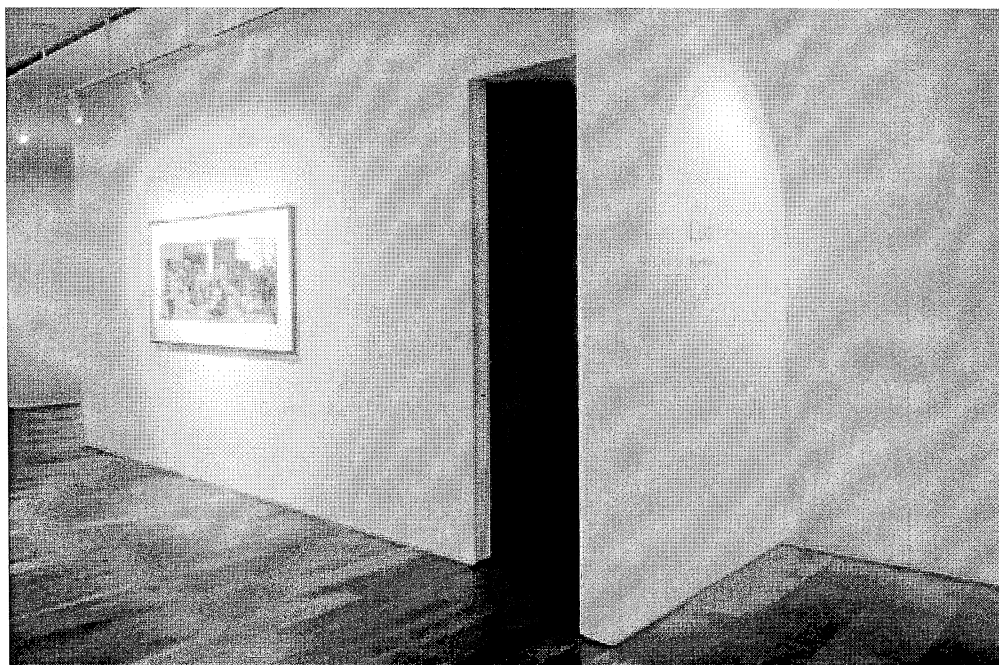


Figure 33. Installation shot of *No Man’s Land* exhibition at the Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto, Canada. The entrance to the exhibition appears at the right with the exhibition’s title.

<sup>175</sup> Contact is a non-profit organization which was co-founded by Stephen Bulger eleven years ago. As one of the organizers of the festival, it has always been Bulger’s aim to promote fine art photography and place Toronto on the international photography map. Celebrating the work of both emerging and international known photographers, the festival aims to broaden the discourse of photography through a program of lectures, seminars, portfolio reviews, tours, a film program, public installations and of course, a number of exhibitions throughout the city. CONTACT, “About Us,” *CONTACT Toronto Photography Festival*, 2007, <http://www.contactphoto.com/about.php>.

<sup>176</sup> Chalifour, “The Wall of Palestine,” 44.



exhibition would read entirely differently than the exhibition in Paris. The site of the gallery and the restrictions of space also produced an entirely different environment for the exhibition to be understood.

The selection of photographs in the exhibition included twenty-one 20" x 24" prints, three panoramic images printed at 26" x 61" and one image printed at 35.5" x 51". All of the photographs were matted and framed, a more traditional choice that gave the prints a different aesthetic appearance than those shown in Paris. It is also important to note that the exhibition did not include any text panels or even image captions for each photograph, keeping with the typical presentation of photographs at the Bulger Gallery. The only information that the visitor was presented with was the name of the photographer and the title of the exhibition that appeared on the wall facing the front door. This title was the only thing the visitor saw upon entering the gallery space (Figure 33).



Figure 34. Installation shot of the grid layout employed at the Stephen Bulger Gallery.

As soon as the visitor walked into the space the visitor was immediately confronted by a long wall containing fifteen of Towell's photographs arranged in a three by five grid

pattern (Figure 34). This unique arrangement of Towell's 35mm horizontal images was devised to overpower the viewer upon entering the space, in much the same way that the sequencing strategies and the use of sound produced the same effect at the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation. The visitor was drawn into the grid that provided no focus or resting point for the eye, essentially mimicking the disorienting nature in Towell's own photographic style. While on some level the use of the layout was an attempt to incorporate as many of Towell's images into the small gallery space as possible, it was also useful for drawing connections and pointing out disconnections in both the images themselves and the events they depict. Towell's panoramic images were hung on either side of this grid, and another appeared on the facing wall. On the wall directly blocking the front window was the image of the Palestinian youth about to launch a rock in a slingshot, the same image used to introduce the exhibition in Paris (Figure 35). The final six vertical photographs were found in a separate nook in the gallery, arranged in a two by three grid pattern (Figure 36).



Figure 35. Installation shot showing the image arrangement at the Stephen Bulger Gallery. Shot taken from the back of the room toward the front window.

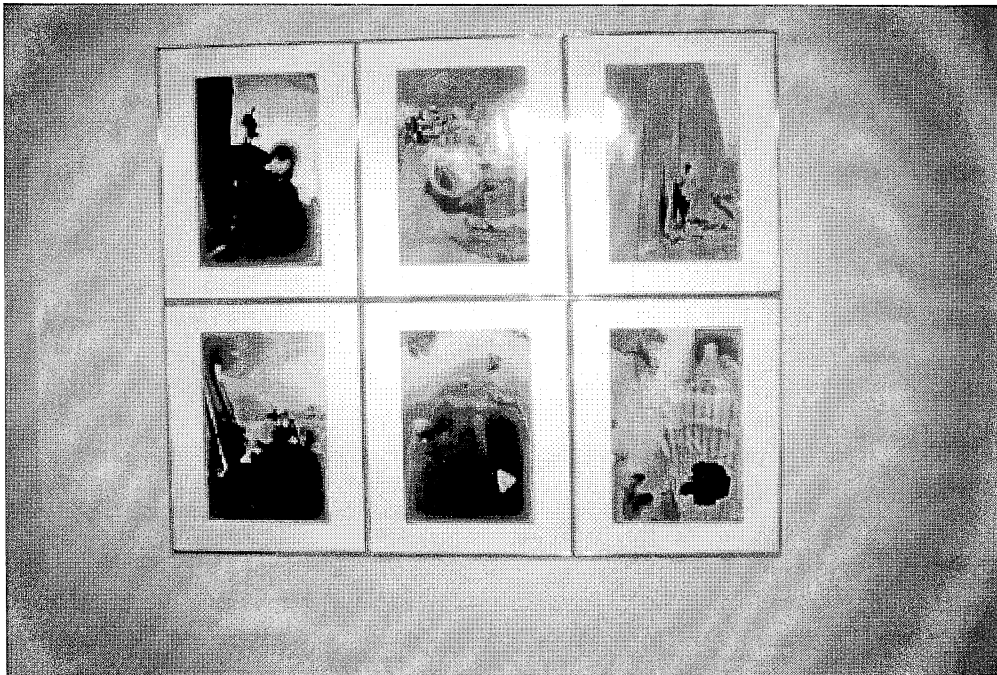


Figure 36. Installation shot of smaller grid structure.

In addition to the lack of sound in the gallery space, the exhibition was also missing the powerful display of found objects and the photographer's own drawings which provided a tangible context in the Paris exhibition. Many of the very graphic, violent and chaotic images from the funerals and street clashes were also missing from the selection of twenty-five photographs displayed at the Bulger Gallery. Besides the large photograph capturing the momentum of the slingshot and a few images of youths preparing to launch stones or Molotov cocktails, the majority of the images presented the destruction of homes, abstract views of the 'separation wall' and individuals living their daily lives despite the occupation. The exhibition at the Bulger Gallery was much quieter in both the literal and figurative sense of the word. Some of the other images that were selected for the exhibition were the more abstract and elusive images from Towell's project. In Figure 36, Bulger selected views of the street, showing the remnants of battle in the form of scattered rocks and bloodied sheets. Also selected was an image seen through the eyes of Towell, a bubble floating in front of the

camera lens obscuring the view of the market in the background. This selection of images, which critic Bruno Chalifour has described as the most pictorial in Towell's body of work, was made by Stephen Bulger based on what he felt worked best in his space, but still remained "truthful to the spirit of the project at hand."<sup>177</sup> Despite this statement, this selection of images provided a different perspective for the visitor who was unfamiliar with Towell's entire project from *No Man's Land*.

#### FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE USER

Larry Towell has been quoted as saying, "my reputation is mostly in Europe. In Europe there is a lot of interest in photography, which is different than in Canada where there is none."<sup>178</sup> It is therefore no surprise that many of the exhibition reviews that appeared in the French press responded favourably to Towell's exhibition at the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation. Very few of the reviewers commented on what some audiences perceived to be a one-sided view of the conflict. Instead, many in the French press realized that Towell is working in the same subjective style that many photojournalists, especially from the Magnum Photos Agency, choose to work in today. Claire Guillot, writing for the French paper *Le Monde*, recognized the fact that Towell did not aim for objectivity in his work, but rather translated into images his personal vision of the conflict.<sup>179</sup> This perspective was expressed in many other reviews and was not lost on the general public. In a comment from the exhibition's guestbook Mikael Dor writes, "unfold truths

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<sup>177</sup> Chalifour, "The Wall of Palestine," 45; and Stephen Bulger, "Bethlehem on a Gallery Wall," *Magnum Blog*, January 14, 2007, Magnum Photos Agency, [http://blog.magnumphotos.com/2007/01/bethlehem\\_on\\_a\\_gallery\\_wall.html#more](http://blog.magnumphotos.com/2007/01/bethlehem_on_a_gallery_wall.html#more).

<sup>178</sup> Gord Bowes, "Towell Opens Rare Canadian Show."

<sup>179</sup> Claire Guillot, "Photographie: Palestine, Terre de Chaos, par Larry Towell," *Le Monde*, June 11, 2005.

through beautiful pictures (the French love this crap)."<sup>180</sup> Rather than be understood as a negative remark, the comment highlights the fact that although there has been much discussion regarding the aestheticization of photojournalistic images in the museum and gallery environments, the French may be more apt to accept that aesthetics do not detract attention from the issues presented. The French style of photojournalism is characterized by a close proximity to the events, where the photographer will move in close to the action despite any potential for harm.<sup>181</sup> It is easy to see how Towell's work could be seen as reflecting this approach. The French style is also closely tied to the aesthetics of Cartier-Bresson who employed complex and surprising contrasts and juxtapositions and is still viewed as both an artist and a photojournalist.<sup>182</sup> It is therefore no surprise that Towell's compelling and complex images would be accepted by the French: there is a similarity in approach and ideals in both Towell's and Cartier-Bresson's work.

Many reviews applauded Towell for the manner in which he chose to present his project to the public. According to Olivia Snaije, as part of his larger project *No Man's Land*, the exhibition was a "perfect example of how art can make a compelling and moving political statement."<sup>183</sup> The incorporation of the found objects, Towell's drawings and the soundtrack with the sequencing of the images was seen as strengthening the overall effect of the exhibition. Frédérique Fanchette commented that the decision to include these artefacts was a move that served to reinforce the impact of his images and their proximity to reality.<sup>184</sup> According to Guillot, viewing the dense and dramatic images accompanied by the noise of

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<sup>180</sup> Mikael Dor, guestbook comment for *No Man's Land* exhibition, 2005, Paris, France.

<sup>181</sup> Marianne Fulton, "Changing Focus: The 1950s to the 1980s," in *Eyes of Time: Photojournalism in America*, ed. Marianne Fulton (Boston: Little Brown, in association with the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, 1988), 191.

<sup>182</sup> Andy Grundberg, "Magnum's Postwar Paradox," in *Crisis of the Real: Writings on Photography Since 1974* (New York: Aperture, 1999), 192.

<sup>183</sup> Snaije, "Larry Towell: Shooting from the Heart."

<sup>184</sup> Frédérique Fanchette, "Towell Touche Terre," *Libération*, April 26, 2005. Personal files of Larry Towell.

helicopters and shouting voices had the effect of transporting the viewer directly into the midst of each image. These deafening noises together with the panoramic images effectively drew attention to the enormity of the damage and the violence.<sup>185</sup>

Although the French reviews provide a useful means for examining the critical response to Towell's project, the exhibition guestbook provides the most interesting understanding of audience reception of the work in the context of the exhibition. From front to back there are more than 250 comments from visitors representing more than twenty countries around the world, which can be seen as representative of the global discourse surrounding both Towell's work and the issues in the Middle East. Many of the visitors thanked Towell and the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation for mounting an exhibition of "devastatingly powerful and irrevocably sad" images that made the situation more real.<sup>186</sup> Diana R. of Denmark commented that the exhibition was one "which makes you wonder, which makes you think. Most importantly, with different eyes...."<sup>187</sup> Although there were numerous comments similar to this one, there were also comments that recognized that these events have been filtered through of the eyes of the photographer, and comments that viewed the work as a one-sided perspective. In one visitor's opinion, when one is looking to recount the truth, it is absolutely necessary to look at both sides of the suffering.<sup>188</sup> Another stated, "I wish there were some pictures of the intense suffering 'on the other side.' We have seen this sort of images of the Palestinian suffering over and over here on the French media."

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<sup>185</sup> Guillot, "Photographie: Palestine, Terre de Chaos, par Larry Towell;" and Didier Gualeni, "Larry Towell's 'no man's land.'" Personal files of Larry Towell.

<sup>186</sup> Don Jagon, guestbook comment for *No Man's Land* exhibition, April 20, 2005, Paris, France.

<sup>187</sup> Diana R., guestbook comment for *No Man's Land* exhibition, 2005, Paris, France.

<sup>188</sup> Yael, guestbook comment for *No Man's Land* exhibition, May 2005, Paris, France.

This dialogue that took place on the pages of the guestbook was extremely enlightening and despite some negative comments, it is worthy to note the comments that feed off of one another and offer a glimpse of hope. When Towell left the project in 2004, he was disillusioned that there was still no peace, but at the same time he saw hope in the Israeli activists who were joining with the Palestinian people in an attempt to bring an end to the occupation. It is therefore important to note the hopes for peace expressed by both Palestinian and Israeli visitors in the guestbook. On one page, Abou, identifying himself as a Palestinian, expressed his gratitude for an exhibition that finally offered a different point of view on the real living conditions of the Palestinians.<sup>189</sup> Right next to this comment, Nathan from Tel Aviv wrote, "I hope this exhibition and many others like it will change the situation in the Middle East."<sup>190</sup>

One of the more interesting and lengthy comments was actually a consideration of how text can be used to alter the context of an image. A comment from an American visitor addressed the subtle differences she noted between the English captions and their French translations. By providing four examples, the visitor pointed out that specific words in Towell's original captions were not accurately translated into French, and thus the same meanings were not preserved in the French captions. Although this has much to do with the difficulty of translating image captions from one language to another, the visitor noted, "among Americans, one finds the point of view that the French downplay the wrongs committed by the Palestinians and emphasize those by Israelis. The translations seem to play to that point of view."<sup>191</sup> This comment provides a useful indication that audiences are

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<sup>189</sup> Abou, guestbook comment for *No Man's Land* exhibition, 2005, Paris, France.

<sup>190</sup> Nathan, guestbook comment for *No Man's Land* exhibition, May 4, 2005, Paris, France.

<sup>191</sup> Phyllis Gestin, guestbook comment for *No Man's Land* exhibition, 2005, Paris, France.

very aware that even the slightest alteration of contextual information can significantly affect the ways in which they read and understand a group of photographs.

Although it would have been equally useful to consider the general public's perspective of Towell's work when it appeared in Toronto at the Stephen Bulger Gallery, no guestbook was provided to record the thoughts of the audience. It is only from the information provided by Larry Towell and Stephen Bulger that this perspective can be gleaned. According to Towell, overall the exhibition was well received by the audience of the Contact Festival. However, from the point of view of Stephen Bulger, there was actually quite a range of response to Towell's work. "We had everything from praise for showing provocative work from this region which illustrated the resolve of human beings in time of hardship, to outright scorn for perpetuating the lies of terrorists."<sup>192</sup> From Bulger's remarks, it is evident that the public response to *No Man's Land* in Toronto was somewhat similar to the response attained in Paris; for some, no matter what the merit of the work or intent of the photographer, the images will primarily be viewed in terms of whose side the photographer is depicting.

In terms of the critic response to the exhibition, a large majority of the reviews were positive, as they were in Paris, with reviewers expressing a great deal of respect for Towell whom they believe was able to "go beyond the type of image making usually found in photojournalism."<sup>193</sup> However, some reviewers also pointed out that in order to photograph in this manner, Towell must necessarily take a side. In his review of the exhibition, *National Post* reporter R.M. Vaughan noted that due to deep-rooted fractures and distrust on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides, to be able to capture even a small essence of daily events

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<sup>192</sup> Bulger, "Bethlehem on a Gallery Wall."

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.



essentially requires that a photographer choose a side.<sup>194</sup> Recognizing that he was not in the position to question the veracity of Towell's graphic and trying images, he also questioned the one-sided view presented by Towell at the Bulger Gallery. In his view, "as an artist, Towell has made his point brilliantly. As a journalist, he is only telling half the tale."<sup>195</sup> Although it has been stated that the very nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will inevitably elicit heated debate from both sides, the nature of Vaughan's comments hint at the problem of displaying subjective photojournalism in the gallery and museum environments without the necessary contextual information to understand the events depicted and the photographer's intent. In the case of the Bulger Gallery, the pictures, presented without any wall text from Towell or composed by Bulger, coupled with the small number of images exhibited, presented a situation which "can nudge the viewer away from reading out of the images toward reading into them."<sup>196</sup>

Bruno Chalifour is one critic who has provided one of the most in-depth and considered reviews of both *No Man's Land* exhibitions. While he went to great lengths to compare the selection of images and effects produced by their layouts, Chalifour also considered the recent trend in which more fine art galleries are displaying photojournalistic images. Rather than question whether photojournalism can be considered art, which he sees as a null point, Chalifour was primarily concerned with "whether the exhibition of such images in a gallery, and their reformatting for the occasion, do not interfere with their content."<sup>197</sup> In his view, the message of the work and the intent of the photographer have the potential to be "corrupted" not only by contextual information included or excluded

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<sup>194</sup> It is important to note that the *National Post* is a pro-Israeli newspaper and therefore the review of Larry Towell's work from *No Man's Land* is filtered through this perspective.

<sup>195</sup> R.M. Vaughan, "No Man's Land," *National Post*, June 4, 2005, sec. T, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

<sup>196</sup> Martha Rosler, "Wars and Metaphors," in *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, in association with the International Center of Photography, 2004), 253.

<sup>197</sup> Chalifour, "The Wall of Palestine," 45.

from the exhibition space, but also from the very context of the gallery itself. Towell himself acknowledges that the environment of the gallery does in some part alter the way his work is viewed and understood, however, he also acknowledges the potential for every environment the work appears in to alter the work in a different way.<sup>198</sup> Although Chalifour recognized the potential problems with exhibiting photographs that possess both “visual and esthetic qualities, as well as...depth and humanism [in] its content” in the context of fine art galleries, he also recognized the potential for constructive dialogue to be created through such exhibitions.<sup>199</sup> In Towell’s own view, this ability to encourage dialogue and debate is precisely the reason why photojournalism should be exhibited in a multitude of venues.

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<sup>198</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>199</sup> Chalifour, “The Wall of Palestine,” 45.

## CONCLUSION

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In a 2006 editorial for the photography magazine *Photo District News*, editor Holly Hughes offered readers an insider's perspective on a new form of photojournalism that has been slowly developing and which the editors at the magazine had been contemplating for some time. According to Hughes, the editors at *PDN* first noticed signs of this new direction in photojournalism approximately four years ago when they were presented with Larry Towell's photographs of the fractured homes left behind by the Israeli incursion into Jenin.<sup>200</sup> These photographs, which close in on the bullet holes and smoke stains on plaster walls, were so abstract in nature that they were difficult to read (Figure 22). These ambiguous images caused the staff at *PDN* to begin questioning why more photographers were choosing to leave behind the more straightforward style of photojournalism for "something evocative, even metaphoric."<sup>201</sup> This evolution in style has not been lost on other editors who have also been tracing these changes through the work of photographers such as Larry Towell, Eugene Richards and Paolo Pellegrin. The photographs in question are personal reflections, noticeably different from typical news photographs. In critic Gary Michael Dault's view, many of these photographs offer an "intimacy without understanding [that] is both exhilarating and disconcerting."<sup>202</sup>

This development of what is being termed the 'New Photojournalism' has also been examined by Andy Grundberg. Although from Hughes' perspective the work of Towell is definitive of this shift, Grundberg looks back to the early 1980s and the publications by

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<sup>200</sup> Holly Stuart Hughes, "Letter from the Editor," *Photo District News* 26, no. 11 (Nov 2006): 16, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Gary Michael Dault, "Through a Glass, Darkly," *Border Crossings* 25, no. 3 (Aug 2006): 94.

Susan Meiselas and Gilles Peress for the emergence of this style. In Grundberg's view, "today's most stimulating photojournalists seem more interested in the complexity of issues and events, and in conveying the flavour of their experience...than in producing easily digested, simple-to-understand images."<sup>203</sup> Many of the critics and editors who are currently trying to deal with these complex images are still attempting to determine the effect that this subjectivity has on the audience. "Everything about the framing and focus of this new work reminds us—to an intrusive degree, according to their critics—that our gaze is being directed by a photographer who wants us to share in his experience."<sup>204</sup>

This subjective approach to photojournalism, as exemplified by the work of Larry Towell, finds itself less often in the pages of popular publications, and more often in the context of books and exhibitions.<sup>205</sup> It is in response to accelerating changes in the photographic field and marketplace that photojournalists seek out these alternative venues for dissemination. For Towell, he is constantly attempting to explore all possible extensions of his work.<sup>206</sup> In addition to the audio soundtracks that he produced for the installation of *No Man's Land*, Towell has also created a documentary video and online multi-media pieces as part of his larger project.<sup>207</sup>

While photographing in the Middle East, Towell carried a video recorder with him in addition to his sound recorder. The resulting footage from these trips was edited into a documentary video in 2005 titled *Indecisive Moments*; the title a reference to the term "the

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<sup>203</sup> Andy Grundberg, "The 'New Photojournalism' and the Old," in *Crisis of the Real: Writings on Photography Since 1974* (New York: Aperture, 1999), 186.

<sup>204</sup> Hughes, "Letter from the Editor," 16.

<sup>205</sup> Grundberg, 185.

<sup>206</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>207</sup> Appendix C provides a useful list of the audio CDs and videos Towell has produced over the course of his career.

decisive moment,” coined by Henri Cartier-Bresson.<sup>208</sup> Screened separately from the exhibitions, the self-professed “video diary of a still photographer” attempts to take the viewer on a visual journey through Towell’s perspective much in the same way that the use of image and sound was used to the same effect in the Paris installation. This notion of expanding the role of the photographer, as one who will incorporate the possibilities of the moving image, is also used effectively in the multi-media pieces produced by Magnum under the moniker Magnum in Motion. These online projects that yet again attempt to find a unique means to incorporate sound, text and spoken word with images, present an opportunity to combine disciplines within one medium in order to appeal to another audience and participate in the debates of the day.<sup>209</sup> Finally, Towell also takes part in public performances as part of his exhibitions.<sup>210</sup> Many of these performances have seen Towell, an accomplished folk singer, perform selections from his CD *The Dark Years* as images from his project are projected on a screen.<sup>211</sup> According to Murray Whyte, “his performances serve to further reveal the thoughtful mind behind the lens, exposing himself not as an objective eye, but a passionate observer.”<sup>212</sup>

Towell is not the only photojournalist who is taking the changes in technology and the marketplace and using them to his advantage in order to engage with the widest audience possible. In Gerry Badger’s 2007 *Aperture* piece that considers the future of the Magnum Photos Agency in the evolving field of photojournalism, he notes that although the concept of the ‘citizen reporter’ and the cultural importance of the Internet present challenges and

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<sup>208</sup> The title for Towell’s documentary, *Indecisive Moments*, is also a take on title of Henri Cartier-Bresson’s seminal photobook *The Decisive Moment*, published in 1952.

<sup>209</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>210</sup> A selected list of Towell’s performances is provided in Appendix C.

<sup>211</sup> Dan Rowe, “Life in Hard Terrain,” *Vancouver Sun*, April 12, 2003, sec. D, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

<sup>212</sup> Murray Whyte, “War Photographer Adds Sound to His Vision,” *Toronto Star*, December 7, 2004, sec. D, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

problems for photographers, they also present opportunities.<sup>213</sup> Citing Magnum in Motion as one of the most important initiatives to come out of Magnum's New York office, Badger views these projects as allowing photographers complete control over their work and to "generally expand the narrative potential of the photo-essay in a way that takes it closer to film."<sup>214</sup> He also notes that while Magnum photographers have historically always made films and published books, these projects along with group monographs, the creation of podcasts and the use of Internet blogs are likely to become important areas for exploration. However, it is important to note that Magnum photographers are not the only photojournalists who are expanding the venues for their work. Articles in both the *Columbia Journalism Review* and *The Digital Journalist* note the increasing opportunities provided to photojournalists through the incorporation of sound and moving image in their work.<sup>215</sup> Lastly, Dirck Halstead, who once lamented the death of photojournalism, now views the Internet as the forum that will offer the greatest opportunities for visual storytellers. He boldly states, "empowerment is at hand, and it will allow the photo-journalist to transcend the current marketplace, whether it is in newspapers, magazines, or even television news."<sup>216</sup>

Despite the future potential of these new venues for photojournalists, it is inevitable that they will also be scrutinized for their possibility to alter audience understanding of conflict and suffering, as was seen in Bruno Chalifour's review questioning the context of the fine art gallery. Despite these claims, it is Larry Towell's belief that these new avenues of exploration do not threaten the integrity of the work, but rather present the work to a much

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<sup>213</sup> Gerry Badger, "Mission Impossible?: 60 Years of Magnum," *Aperture* no. 187 (Summer 2007): 80.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Neil Hickey, "Moving Pictures," *Columbia Journalism Review* (Jul/Aug 2002), <http://cjrarchives.org/issues/2002/4/photo-hickey.asp>; and Brian Storm, "Why Photojournalists Should Gather Audio," *The Digital Journalist* no. 92 (June 2005), <http://www.digitaljournalist.org/issue0506/storm.html>.

<sup>216</sup> Russell Miller, "A Vanishing Vision," *Columbia Journalism Review* 39, no. 2 (Jul/Aug 2000): 41.

broader and diverse audience and allow for an engagement in a photographic culture and the debates of the day. While he acknowledges that every venue has its limitations and that the context of each environment can change the work in a different way, he has also states that, “if you’re willing to live with the limitations then you can discover the potential.”<sup>217</sup> Since Towell ultimately believes that each incarnation of his work, whether in book form or an online multi-media piece, contributes to the larger whole, in his view the difficulty in understanding the work only arises when a photographer caters to one venue. It is a point of view that is also shared by photographer Pedro Meyer. According to Meyer, “the beauty today is that we have so many alternatives to disseminate work. For instance, the internet, books, digital projections, exhibitions, and each one has a specificity all of its own...All are components to each other and all are different.”<sup>218</sup>

My conversations with photographer Larry Towell and my discovery of audience response to *No Man’s Land* through reviews, blogs, and an exhibition guestbook have ultimately shaped the direction of this project. While this project initially began as an attempt to realize the most responsible venue in which to present photojournalism so that the context of the venue did not distort the meaning of the work, I have come to the realization that there is no single venue that can achieve this goal. Rather, my examination revealed that a photojournalist’s purposeful decision to present a body of work in multiple contexts in the end allows for greater dissemination of the work and therefore engages a much broader and diverse audience in critical debate. In considering Towell’s perspective of his work in each context, it has become clear to me that his ultimate intent is to encourage discourse. As a photojournalist who has witnessed much of the pain and sadness in the world, he does not believe that photojournalism has the potential to change the world.

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<sup>217</sup> Larry Towell, telephone interview with author, May 23, 2007.

<sup>218</sup> Pedro Meyer, email interview with author, July 16, 2007.

However, he does believe that he can be a part of the process of change by inspiring debate. This was verified in the pages of the guestbook from the Paris exhibition. Therefore, it is most responsible to present these images simultaneously in a variety of contexts in order to create a broader dialogue, as each context will inevitably draw upon the various complexities in the work. In the end, the complexities in the work of the 'New Photojournalism' must ultimately be recognized as a reflection of the complexity of real life events and the world of which the photographer and audience are both a part of, despite their personal subjectivities.



## APPENDIX A

### A CONVERSATION WITH LARRY TOWELL

MAY 23, 2007

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SP: To start, I was wondering if you wouldn't mind talking about photographers, writers or artists that you see as influencing your work?

LT: Hank Williams, a country western singer. You know, I started out as a storyteller and I probably was playing music long before I was photographing and I grew up on country music and country songs. Dylan Thomas. I think I read his book *The Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas* a hundred times back in the late seventies and into the mid-eighties. It was just basically the use of language, the way the language could bring you on a journey. I was interested in writing more so because that's you know, look, I mean getting in a plane and going out to some conflict area is very difficult. So my earlier influences were just storytellers, both music and poetry and some writers. Uh, photography, I didn't have a lot of influences because I didn't, I mean I can't say I didn't study photography. I did take photography at York, but it was sort of an independent study thing where as long as I showed up to class once every two months I got a pass. You know, I was taught how to process film, but I never learned the name of a photographer.

SP: Yes. I think that's interesting because I also went to York University.

LT: Did you?

SP: I did. So when I was reading about how your education was at York University, I can relate to that because it was the same type of education. Coming into this program I found people were able to list the names of a million photographers and I just didn't feel like I came from that background. At York, they trained you to be *the* artist, the centre of your own universe.

LT: Exactly, yes. I never even knew who Robert Capa was or Henri Cartier-Bresson, so I had no photographic influences in that way. A lot of people come into life, into photography, wanting to be photographers and that wasn't my experience at all. I wasn't influenced by photographers, as I've said. Once I left home I was influenced by my teachers who were conceptual artists. The one thing I learned from that was that you can do whatever you want to do and all things are possible. That was not something I was brought up with. So then I guess my influences would be my teachers. Vera Frenkel, who won the Governor General's Award last year. She's a conceptual installation artist. Really, Tim Whiten, who's also a Canadian sculptor. Very kind of esoteric language in his work. He's very, I wouldn't call it dark, but I would call it certainly esoteric, fetish based. And George Manupelli who is a filmmaker, an American filmmaker, but who taught at York. He actually re-established my love of country music. We formed a country music band called The Artist's Country Band at York University and he played the painting. He had a garage sale twenty-five cent painting and he scrubbed it with keys, his car keys or a nickel, as a rhythm instrument. Myself and a couple of other musicians played piano, guitar, whatever. So I always kind of integrated performance and storytelling, using music and words, in whatever I did because it seemed to be okay. There were no rules at school that said a sculpture was a statue, or that a painting was oil on canvas, it could be anything. For one of my projects I remember I built a campfire and had a marshmallow roast. I played guitar and sang songs around a campfire and I got an A+ for that project. So what I'm saying is that my experience at York was really a very enlightening one for me and it led me to other things.

I then did volunteer work in Calcutta. And then, you know, I was slapped in the face by the reality of third world landlessness and poverty and wealth distribution. I started for the first time to think about those things because this is where my art background did not mesh with what I was seeing. The way I was brought up, you were brought in this world to offer something to it and to give something, not to take from it, and you were not the centre of the universe. So I began to really question my role on earth and I was writing poetry in India and photographing a bit, but not really very good at all. All my early books are out of print, thank god. But you know, I started to process there. I came home and lived on a raft for two and a half years, kind of as a hermit really. And I started reading. I know *The New*

*Internationalist* was an important source of information, it's a magazine on third world issues, development issues. I started to think differently about political structures.

Then two things happened. I was meeting with two individuals in an organization called Canadian Catholic Organization for Peace and Justice, or something like that, and I was teaching folk music at college. Before class I would meet with these two people and we would research, we would write letters to our Members of Parliament saying, Look, you have to separate yourself from American foreign policy issues in Central America. At the time Reagan was emptying the insane asylums of America into the streets and creating thousands of homeless people who couldn't cope with reality on the domestic front. And on the foreign front, he was burning all the villages in Central America to quell peasant rebellions. So the death squads began to emerge, the Nicaraguans rose up and kicked Somoza out in 1979 and I was just beginning to learn about those things. I read an interview in one human rights magazine that was brought around by these two friends of mine by a Salvadorian ex-soldier who'd left El Salvador and was living in a refuge in Mexico. He was talking about how he was in training sessions taught by Americans on how to torture people. They had a fourteen year-old girl, they threw her in a frying pan over fire, a real big frying pan, and broke bones and stuff. They weren't doing it themselves, the instructors were telling them how to do it. And I was shocked. You know, poverty was one thing, but torture was another.

I actually saw a book review about a woman who became a very good friend of mine later on, Susan Meiselas. It was in a Canadian magazine, *This* magazine, a very small circulation Canadian magazine, on a book review called *Nicaragua*. It was poorly reproduced photographs of hers from Nicaragua. Originally they were shot in colour and they were just printed in black and white in a magazine. I thought, Wow, this is an interesting thing that a person can just go find themselves in the middle of an insurrection, pull out their camera and start photographing. So I ordered the book at the Wallaceburg Library, brought it home and looked at it. And I said, "If she can do it, I guess I can do it too"—if I have to. That was the first kind of body of work, of photographs, that I actually saw that moved me because it was raw, it was real and there was no escaping it as a viewer. Certainly the photographer wasn't trying to run away.

Then I was doing volunteer work, Ann and I. We had a baby already, she was pregnant with her second and we were visiting soup kitchens in America, this was probably 1983 or 1984. I went to New York City to this Catholic worker's soup kitchen, which was started during the depression by Dorothy Day, a Christian activist, and Peter Maurin. It was a community of people that lived in Manhattan, in the Bowery and they had a soup kitchen and they took people in and gave them shelter. So I was there and then I went to L.A. with Ann. I went to New York on my own, I met her in Chicago at a bus station a few weeks later and we went to L.A. From there we went to Houston, Texas to work with refugees who were fleeing the wars in Central America, particularly Guatemala—the level of repression happening in that country was completely ignored by the media—and El Salvador, which because of the funding that the government was getting there was more attention to it in terms of media coverage. They were coming in and needed a place to stay and so this group was working with them and I stayed with them.

So then I read about this organization called Witness for Peace, which was putting Americans—I'm not American, but I was in the U.S. when I applied so they figured I was—into the war zone in Northern Nicaragua. They put American taxpayers there, they were Christian activists, and the idea was a Gandhian thing, a Martin Luther King kind of project, where if you're there then your presence can somehow affect those around you and can protect them. Now whether it worked or not no one will ever know because certainly the contra, who were waging a war against the civilians of Nicaragua, are not going to say they didn't attack this village because they knew there was a group there. They didn't want to hurt them because it would come back on American taxpayers. So that was my first experience and that was my first time in a war zone. I remember this woman at a bomb shelter in Teotecacinte, which is only a kilometer from Honduras where the contra would camp—CIA organized—and they would cross and do raids, burn the villages, shoot people and then take off back into Honduras. So this village is under siege for a month and this woman's little child—you know, during the lulls in the shooting kids would go out and play a little bit from the bomb shelter—and this child had her head blown off by a mortar shell and where the baby had been shot she had a little jar of flowers and she was telling the story. That was kind of the first time I'd ever seen a real victim, a civilian victim, of this conflict. So I decided maybe I can do something about it, I don't think I can change anything, but at

least I can say something. I went back, got a tape recorder and started interviewing people in the war zone, just hitchhiking around in the North on my own and photographing. That's when I started photographing.

So now I just told a long story, if you don't want me to go on like this—

SP: No, no, it's perfect actually.

LT: —I can, I don't need to.

So then there were refugees coming into Canada from Guatemala. At this time we had moved into another farmhouse here and I started organizing locally Central America education and solidarity groups. We were called the Sarnia Central America committee. We would have monthly meetings and presentations, we'd show films, we got the Churches involved, labour unions, students, anybody interested. We would do talks, bring in speakers and show films on Central America. One group that came had just arrived in Canada, they couldn't speak English—the Caxaj family, C-a-x-a-j—and one brother had been shot on the street by death squads in Guatemala and the other had disappeared. So they had escaped. They played music one night for the group and I got to know them. Through them I got to meet a lot of Guatemalan refugees who were coming to Canada and settling in London, which is a town about 45 minutes from me, maybe an hour. I met another Guatemalan in Toronto at an activity and she was the sister-in-law of Ninette Garcia who was organizing what was called the GAM, the acronym for Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo, which is the relatives of the disappeared of Guatemala and it means mutual support group. Through her I contacted her cousin in Guatemala and I went there and I started another book, another project on the relatives of the disappeared in Guatemala.

They were having bi-weekly meetings in Guatemala City and there were protests. They would have protests in front of the National Palace demanding the whereabouts of their disappeared loved ones—there'd been 40,000 people disappeared at this point, tortured to death and buried in clandestine graves—and I started recording their stories. What happened? What happened to your husband? What happened to your wife? What

happened to your daughter? When is the last time you saw her? What is it like? How are you going to get this person back? What are your feelings? What's going on in the world?" You know, those kinds of things. So I interviewed them and then I went up into the North, in the Ixil Triangle, I-x-i-l, where there had been a lot of repression and I started photographing the military installations, the model villages that the Indians were living under, kind of under military scrutiny. That was sort of my beginning, my second project. Then I might have told this story, you might have seen it somewhere, that I really hadn't heard of Magnum?

SP: Yes.

LT: So you know that story. I sent it to Magnum, they saw the work and they liked it. So once I went to New York to meet them, then I became exposed to Philip Jones Griffiths, who did the Vietnam book, of course Susan who'd done the Nicaragua book, Eugene Richards, Alex Webb, you know, all these very famous and very good photographers. And they liked my work. Once I was in Magnum the thing was, just see how it goes, just keep doing your work and we'll see. It was a very important community for me and they made me feel quite at home. The sharing of pictures with this group was a personal thing, where I would go on a trip, I would come back and I'd give someone a pile of fifty or one hundred photographs and they would flip through them and we'd talk about them. You know, what works, what doesn't work; it's like doing a portfolio review or a workshop, except it's personal with the people who you really care about. And through that process I learned a lot. I began to make book dummies and by that time, rather than writing, I was shifting slow gear into a photographer. So I kind of more abandoned my earlier things, writing, music and other forms of storytelling and became a photographer.

SP: Do you still keep a journal or write while you are on your trips?

LT: Sometimes. I always keep a journal and I always write, but I don't write with a lot of intent, unless I decide beforehand to do that. For example, one trip to Palestine it rained all the time, I was in East Jerusalem and I wrote every night then. I just simply made a point of writing poignantly, taking the time and writing into the night about what had happened that

day. That work was transformed into the CD, the Palestine CD, the soundtrack *The Dark Years*. In the other CD, yes, I had a lot of poetry on Central America.

Do I always keep a journal? I always keep a journal, but do I put the effort into making it good? It depends. It depends how much time I have, how busy it is, if I'm exhausted at the end of the day it's really hard to put a lot of effort into writing, but I always keep a minimal journal. For two reasons, first of all Magnum syndicates my work and I have to caption all of my work accurately. Every picture has to be identified and because of that I keep that kind of journal and I glean information and scenes around me in note form. With the Mennonite book I did quite a bit of writing, but I really didn't write a lot during all my trips. I did that book over eleven years. One trip I went specifically to take articulate notes on absolutely everything and I turned that into my text. So, yes, I mean I have boxes of diaries and journals, but it's not the kind of writing that's necessarily serious.

SP: And meant to be published.

LT: Yes, it is not meant to be published. But if I have time and I sit down, I mean I inflected some of the stuff, now as I get older I'll revisit some of that stuff, you know. I always want to be able to revisit places with accuracy from my notes, to write about it later when I'm older.

Photographers who've influenced me? Okay so the next person who started to pay attention to me and who has consistently worked with me on my books in terms of editing and ideas is Josef Koudelka. I have a tremendous amount of respect for him as a photographer, not that we do at all the same things, but well I guess you could say that he was very excited about the Mennonite work because I think in a way it harkened to his own *Gypsies*. There was a relationship between us. So he's always been very close to me in that regard, as an editor, as an older mentor because he's, I don't know, he's in his seventies or something now, a very active photographer. Then the rest of my influences were more like friends, you know, Gene Richards, Alex Webb, people that were in Magnum at the time—Gene is gone, but Alex is still there.

SP: Did Koudelka's panoramic work at all influence you turning to the panoramic image for *No Man's Land*?

LT: I think—yes probably. Now at about the time Josef started with large format there wasn't a good 35mm panoramic camera. I would not do what Josef does with a big camera in the landscape. But if you're shooting panorama and it's black and white it's going to naturally start to look alike. There's obviously a visual representation that has an association with Josef, but his approach is completely different than mine. Once the panoramic camera became 35mm, good quality—I mean there was always the Widelux and there was always the Russian Horizon—but once the Hasselblad XPan came out then I got a camera and then I started shooting. So the existence of the camera came first. Also, I never want to do the same thing twice, so each of my books has to be different than my previous one. The only one thing that I wanted to do that I hadn't seen done before photographically is a combination of panorama and normal 35mm vertical and horizontal in a single book and have it all harmonize. So it was the editing exercise that I was most intrigued with.

SP: Obviously that influenced the format of *No Man's Land*?

LT: Completely.

SP: —the wider format.

LT: Yes, completely. I mean the format of the book is based on the format of the camera. I often make a book dummy every time I make a trip. So when I revisited Palestine when the second intifada erupted in September 2000, I came home—I was there for only twelve days—and I did a book dummy called "Twelve Days in the West Bank." With that I began to think about how to lay this material out. When I would make another trip I would come back, I would work these pictures together and when I went out to shoot again I would often be reflecting upon layouts that already exist, so one thing often fed another. Some of it was physical because it had been created and the rest of it was in my mind, where I'm working toward an accomplished thing. So it's not like I just took a whole bunch of pictures



over a long period of time with *No Man's Land* and did the layout. I was actually doing the layout and then shooting. You know, as a deliberate process.

SP: So it's deliberate sequencing as well?

LT: Yes.

SP: In terms of the creation of the book *No Man's Land*, you've mentioned in previous conversations about the complete control you have in how your images are used. I was just wondering in terms of making *No Man's Land* was the design and sequencing completely your creative input and control?

LT: Yes, all of my books. I'm working on a new one now called *The World From My Front Porch* and because the concept is so different—it includes found objects—I mean the main part of it is my photographs, but there is a whole other section which includes some layout strategies that I have to work with a designer on, but it's a completely different sort of thing. But all of my books I've designed them, I've done the layout, I've done the sequencing. I've done it by myself, except nobody does anything completely by themselves. Anybody who does things well, I believe, goes to the right people for feedback and that's why I mentioned Koudelka and some of my other friends at Magnum. But yes, in the end I'm responsible for the way everything looks. So I designed it, the panoramas, the combination of panoramas and verticals on either side and just the pacing and the sequencing. Now once it's all done, then I show it around and I get feedback and ideas and there are a few people that are very good at criticism, and that's what you want. You don't want someone to say "I love it," you want them to say "Well, I think it has weaknesses." As a photographer you get very close to your own work and you do have to be able to stand back and sometimes those people help you step back and look at it a little more detached. There were a few pictures that were pulled out and that kind of thing—the tweaking. The tweaking is done by me, but you still depend upon intelligence. It's like Margaret Atwood. When she writes a novel people think she hides herself in a cave or her bedroom or her studio or her office and writes by herself for a couple of years. But the way I've understood it, she meets in a hotel with five editors and they just go at her for a week. You know, questioning every word, tearing the text apart,

those kind of things. I certainly don't have that kind of intense experience with mine, but it is very important that you learn to work with others, otherwise you can become too self-obsessed or too introverted.

SP: Do you always think in terms of a book as your first way of disseminating your work?

LT: I usually think of it as the last way, maybe the second last way. I'm always working toward a book for sure. As an author I'm interested in authorship and storytelling and for me there is no other such powerful and important method than creating books. And all writers, all storytellers want to do books. I don't care if you write for a newspaper or whatever. I've seen so many good journalists that are writing for major magazines or papers, but at the end of the day, ten years later, they come out with their book based on their experience. It's no different with photography. I mean I want my work to be seen, I don't want to bury it, I don't want it to live in this sort of cult and esoteric world of high art. I want it in the media. So I want magazines to see it, magazine editors and even newspapers—they don't publish it—but I want it seen like that simply because I'm part of a debate. I live in the real world and I'm photographing things because I'm very concerned about them and because there is a debate going on. Naturally I want to be part of that debate, so it should be somehow in the larger audience.

Now you lose control in the media, but you should never lose integrity there. If that begins to happen, that's where you should be very concerned. Anybody who publishes in the magazines, I mean you'll fight, but it's not like it's completely yours and you have to recognize that. You're fighting for the best possible layout, spread and picture selection and all that. If it's a good editor they're usually working with you and there's an energy, a back and forth kind of energy, which a good editor in any kind of art discipline, or any kind of discipline, should be able to offer. But in the end it is the book that you have your name on. After the book, then you have an exhibition and you may use the pictures in installations, it might go online, in Magnum's case I'll make with them a Magnum in Motion piece, which is a multi-media piece. So I do believe I have to be part of the debate out there in cyberspace. But at the end of the day I want to pull it back and make it something concrete and so it just doesn't get lost in the avalanche of pictures out in the world.

SP: I wanted to talk to you about Magnum in Motion, what your feelings are on that subject. I think it's an interesting combination of the spoken word, sound and image and I know that you do live performances in museum and gallery settings and I'm just wondering if you think that it's a logical extension of the work?

LT: I think everything is a logical extension of the work. I'd like to push the envelope even beyond that. But yes, everything is a logical extension and everything has its limitations. If you're willing to live with the limitations then you can discover its potential. With Magnum in Motion you have a framework, you can't do a one hour piece. It's just like if you have a blog—which I don't and I'm not very interested in—you realize what goes on is pretty chatty, pretty light chatty stuff. But you are appealing to another audience, a younger group interested in photography and that can lead to something else. You are then participating in a photographic culture and the debates of the day. If you want to have a blog you're going to say, Okay look, you can't really write your most important philosophical thesis here—maybe you can, I don't know. With Magnum in Motion for example, I just edited a video called *Indecisive Moments*, which I showed in Toronto about two or three weeks ago at Camera, it's a 45-minute piece. I also made some of it available to Magnum in Motion and they were able to use little bits of it here and there. But I wouldn't say the Magnum in Motion piece is really the best format, however neither is television for anything. It has incredible limitations and the limitations have created a whole environment that has made it very, very commercial. You are always saying, What does the audience want to see and how much can they stand to look and how long can they look? You know, it's very, very commercial and that's not the case with Magnum in Motion or a lot of the stuff on the Internet at this point yet. But you want to use and even master the potential of the medium, whatever it may be. If you're good on television or good on radio, which is even better, than you can use that medium to present the message. That's what Magnum in Motion does.

Digital photography has sort of been the ruination of serious photography in a lot of ways. However, the digital thing has allowed one person, like myself, to record sound, shoot video—and still photograph—and collect a lot more data, which I can then download and transform in whatever kind of framework I can put still photographs. That's where Magnum in Motion comes in, because I can come in with sound and I can come in with

video and combine things. We shouldn't be sitting still you know. The question is what are you going to do with that kind of media? Are you going to use cell phones to photograph pornography or are you going to use technology to be constructive in the world. Either you ignore it or you do the latter. I'd rather do the latter. Magnum in Motion is just a part of that process of combining disciplines within one medium and then moving on.

SP: Well that's what I really understand Magnum in Motion to be, an opportunity for serious photojournalists to remain relevant in the current culture. At times I'm not sure how relevant photojournalism is anymore when you have people who can take photographs with their cell phones and send it around the Internet faster than your average photojournalist. I see Magnum in Motion as a way to take the medium and take the technology and use it to the benefit of photojournalists.

LT: Yes. Yes to all those things. I mean I still shoot negatives. I don't shoot digital. But it is transformed into the digital realm and then you go to Magnum's entire archive—I don't know where it's stored, it's stored somewhere in California—but it's all available, all of my work is available online. We're actually opening our archive up for just anybody to look at it if they want, it used to be just for clients. I remember Cartier-Bresson I'm sure twenty, thirty years ago said there's too many pictures in the world, and that was back then. Well what about today? I mean we are inundated, but we are not inundated with meaningful photography. However, you do have a different phenomenon such as citizen journalism. You know I looked at You Tube the other day and somebody had sent me a link to a guy who shot a video of peasants being pushed off their land in Guatemala and the army burnt their houses. I mean some guy with a camera did that. I wasn't there, no one else was. The media wasn't there. It actually forced a debate with the Canadian Ambassador to Guatemala and the role of Canadian corporations in Guatemala, particularly mining corporations, because the Canadian private businesses control something like eighty percent of land related to foreign investment in Guatemala. These people are being pushed off their communal land because the company, Skye Resources, had purchased rights to it. Well is that coverage a bad thing or a good thing? It's a good thing and it's not a big story for anybody from the *New York Times* or from the *Globe and Mail*, but this guy did it. He also linked it with other things. He told the story of Guatemala in a few sentences, in terms of

the history of repression and linked it to activist groups saying if you are interested in what's going on and you want to work for peace and justice in Guatemala. You can't beat that. Now citizen journalism, most of it is not at all good. Whatever goes on You Tube and Flickr and all these just bushel basket and bushel baskets of stuff, in itself it's fine and it's mostly the photo-sharing community, amateur photo-sharing community that is using these things successfully. But it will never replace—but it's okay to embellish—professional journalism. And these people, the good ones will become professionals some day.

So is photojournalism still relevant? Well, I mean I think it is because it's my life so how could I say no? Is it going to change the world? I don't think it ever changed the world. But it changed me and that's what matters. When I take a picture, it's my picture, it's not the camera that took it, I took it, and it's an issue that I care about. If you can share that somehow and somebody is influenced by it that's great. Now can you change the world? No. Can you be a part of the process of change? Yes, that's the point. You are part of a process that you believe in, you don't need to take responsibility for the outcome, if that was the case then you should give up. The world's not a better place.

SP: In terms of getting the work published in magazines, I know we talked previously about the fact that it wasn't published widely in North American press. Did you try to approach magazines and newspapers and they flat out said no or were they just not interested?

LT: I'm trying to think if I had any publications in North America. Well first of all I have an agency and that's my agency's job. As I said, it was published quite broadly in Europe. Almost nothing in America. There was a guy at the *Globe and Mail*, Nigel Horn was his name and I knew him from before. He's British and he'd worked on Magnum's fiftieth anniversary book—he worked in magazines in England basically and I think his wife was Canadian—but he had a connection here and he was hired to start a magazine for the Toronto *Globe and Mail* because *Saturday Night* had started their magazine and they were afraid of losing readership. Well in the end the *Globe* did not start a magazine, but they brought him over anyway. So he started some balls rolling and when the intifada broke out we made a deal and he gave me a little bit of money and I went over and I shot and I processed the film and got it to him and they ran a pretty big spread. Of course, you know,

the *Globe and Mail* has a pretty good reputation. And of course there was some negative feedback, as that will always be the case, especially because it's Israel. But I don't think it stopped—they said they lost some subscribers over it, but that's probably a good sign. Beyond that only *Life* magazine ran a story. David Friend, a good guy and a good editor, contacted me to do something on the suicide bombing cult when it became a phenomenon and they ran that. I think there are only one or two pictures that made it into the book. Popular North American publications were really, really minimal.

SP: The spread in *Aperture*, was the text that was included and the sequencing entirely your choice? I know we were talking about those letters to the editor and there was a lot of controversy about that and I'm just wondering if that was your selection?

LT: The pictures?

SP: To include those images with the text from the Human Rights Watch.

LT: Oh, yes. Okay, the text I was thinking about was my poem about the blind man.

SP: Yes there's the poem, but I think it was the fact that the Human Rights Watch text was included with your images that was the problem.

LT: Well of course that was a problem with the right-wing because the Human Rights Watch is well respected and has a lot of credibility and there are people that would like to bury any criticism of Israel. Jimmy Carter right now with his new book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, was raked over the coals, but his integrity is so, I wouldn't say untouchable, but it's so high that it's kind of hard to bury him. He's the only US President in history who was able to broker a permanent peace treaty between Israel and an Arab country and he deserves a lot of credit. The Human Rights Watch, you can't bury them either. So when you link up with somebody like that who's going to be the target?

The picture selection, basically some of it was mine, but it was a back and forth with Michael Famighetti the editor. He's kind of a young guy and we got on well. The pictures, I have to

go get the magazine and look at it, I can't remember. But I remember there were a lot of interiors and it was a different approach to the destruction in Jenin. Rather than showing the landscape of buildings where four thousand people lost their homes, it was more like the little details inside of the burned and charred buildings. If there were piles and piles of the dead bodies from Rwanda or Darfur today no one would even raise an eyebrow. I was in London last week working on a book design with a publisher and Roméo Dallaire was being interviewed on the BBC. He was the Canadian UN Peacekeeper there who couldn't stop the massacres. He said the problem was that the black Africans are considered, sort of, the bottom of the barrel in human value. He was just being honest, you know, as to why the world never did anything during the genocide and still continues to ignore it. But anyway, the Middle East is a different situation. Everybody's eyes are turned there because everybody has their roots there. I do, as a Christian from a Christian background, Jewish culture does, Islamic culture does, everybody claims that part of the world. You went to Sunday school and you grew up with that in your psyche, so it's a whole other thing.

SP: I think it's really interesting that I found more negative comments about your work when it appeared in newspapers or in a journal such as *Aperture*. When it was reviewed in exhibitions or in your book there were much more positive reviews for the work. I guess part of it is just because the audience you can reach in magazines is a lot wider than the audience who is going to be looking at your book or the exhibitions, and in those venues the audiences tend to be more familiar with your stance, the situation and are appreciative of your work.

LT: Well I think that's true. I don't know what else I have to add to it except that you shouldn't listen to the critics one way or the other. You should just do your work. But yes, there's always going to be, I mean, when it comes to Israel it doesn't take much to create the chill factor and we journalists talk about it all the time, you criticize Israel and everybody's afraid. So that's just normal. I mean it's not normal, it's abnormal, but it happens to be the case. All it takes is one letter from some loopy person who says, Well, you must be anti-Semitic to publish this work. Of course it's complete nonsense, but people are terrified. You know, I read a good book called *Bad News From Israel* and it was a study by the Glasgow University School of Journalism and they looked at that issue. They looked at why Israel

had been covered the way it had been covered all these years and why journalists do and don't say what's going on. In fact with *Aperture* they then killed my book. They were originally supposed to co-publish *No Man's Land*.

SP: Oh really?

LT: Yes, they were supposed to co-publish it but the editor got cold feet, she was afraid, she was afraid of criticism and she dropped it at the last minute. It was supposed to be an *Aperture* book. I called Chris Boot and said, "Chris I'm in a bind. If this doesn't get co-published then the original publisher, Textuel in France, can't afford to publish it." They would have killed the whole thing just because of special interest lobby groups that are very articulate and completely committed to burying the Palestinian reality, just bury it from view. Just like the history of the Palestinians has been ignored until more recently. Finally there's been attention. It's nonsense, but it's very real. In all my work in Central America I never came up against this. But as a human being my concern is to look at what's in front of me, see it and interpret it with no political affiliations.

I went to see Gideon Levy speak last winter, he's an Israeli journalist and he was touring Universities here in Ontario. He was barred from speaking at York University, where my daughter goes to school. When I went to see him here at Western they were barred from putting up any posters announcing his talk so only twenty people came. He's Jewish. He's Israeli. He's one of the only actual Israeli journalists who actually goes into the occupied territory to actually see for himself what is going on. Most Israelis don't want to know either. But the debate in the Israeli press is actually very healthy compared to what it is in North America and he said that. He also said, "What matters to me is that when I die or when this whole thing is over I just want to make sure that my kids don't say, Dad, why didn't you tell us? Why didn't you tell somebody? Why were you afraid?" That's my position too.

SP: Do you think this is a project you would go back to?



LT: Well I've done two books on it now. No, I don't feel any real impulse because it's, I wouldn't say hopeless, but it's— First of all I don't want to become bitter. I want to support Israel as a country, and I always have, and I want to support the Palestinians, and I always have. I'm not pro or con one or the other, but as a person who believes that all humans are equal then I look at the situation and say, "I'm not sure I have anything more to say." So I'll let other people do what they want to do and I would go back if there was a reason. The reason I went the first time was because I thought there was an end to the conflict coming, that there would be a two-state solution and it would be an end to the war and that I should document the creation of a new country and that didn't happen. Until something really positive happens, I don't know, I don't see it and there's other things I have to do. I don't want to repeat myself as I've said and there's other issues in the world that maybe I need to approach with fresh eyes and see for myself. I'm interested in Darfur, I'm interested in Afghanistan, you know, just other places.

But it bothers me that that work was never exhibited in the US at all except for being in a group show at The Open Society Institute in New York in 2004. I did a selection on the Israeli Separation Wall and OSI hung it in a conference room, away from the general exhibition, and then when they were going to move the whole show to the Washington office they tried to cut mine out completely because there were "complaints." There was a long debate and I did a lot of pushing—but it's incredible eh?

SP: I was wondering if we could talk a bit about the exhibition, the one in Paris. What I'd like to look at in my paper is a comparison of the exhibition in Paris with the one at the Bulger Gallery in Toronto and I found an exhibition review in *Afterimage*, by Bruno Chalifour, which compares the two exhibitions. He was really focused on the size of the prints, the ones at the Bulger Gallery being slightly larger than the ones in Paris.

LT: Really?

SP: Yes.

LT: It's just the space in Paris was so much bigger! [Laughs]

SP: I know. He actually has the measurements, let me see.

LT: What is *Afterimage*?

SP: *Afterimage* is a journal that's published in Rochester.

LT: Oh, that's interesting.

SP: I think it comes out of the Visual Studies Workshop.

LT: The Official Studies Workshop?

SP: The Visual Studies Workshop.

LT: I see. From Rochester? Then I don't know it, it's an in-house. You would have that because that's where some of your ties are. No, I don't know it and I never saw the review.

SP: He talks about the enlargements at the Bulger Gallery, that they were 16" x 24" in size and the panoramas were 16" x 45", and the fact that the enlarged size gave them a poster-like quality. The review really focuses on the issue of showing photojournalistic images in a gallery environment and how it alters the context of the work and affects the way the audience understands the work. I don't know if you have any opinion on this since you haven't read the article?

LT: Well, yes, I haven't read the article. The prints are the same size. Now wait a minute. The prints were the same size, but the way they were mounted in Paris was right edge to edge, so in other words a print would not be matted and framed in Paris. You got more of them in and it was less clean—it was clean—but it was less formal. With Stephen's the very same size prints were put in mat board behind glass and framed, so the whole thing became bigger. But the image size, the actual image was the same size. So I can see he's talking about the dimension of the whole piece, the photograph including the mat board and frame.

Does it alter it? Well maybe you can say all photographs should be in art galleries and why should they be in newspapers and magazines. So the environment does change them. When I do a performance it changes them in a different way. When it's a Magnum in Motion piece it changes them again. I don't have a problem with that. You know there's nothing wrong with the gallery, with seeing things in the gallery, especially Stephen's gallery because he shows documentary work. Now catering to the art world is a problem though and that's not what I do. But I certainly don't mind showing my work in art galleries.

SP: I know that Stephen sells your work. Does the work sell at all?

LT: Oh that didn't sell anything.

SP: It didn't sell anything? I wasn't sure whether it sold because of the tone of the article. That's where I would see a problem, with photojournalistic images being sold as art pieces. I recently read an article and I don't remember which photographers were being discussed, but images of conflict were being sold and the author had a hard time coming to terms with who's wall they would be hanging on. Taken out of the context of conflict does it become an art piece? What do you do with that, when these images become art?

LT: Well the thing is, is photojournalism art? Anybody who's going to buy a picture of conflict, well first of all, it isn't going to happen very much. I don't know, I don't buy photographs. I think there are people who want to own things and a photograph—a very strong photograph of a historical human rights abuse or genocide—they probably buy it because it affects them emotionally and makes them think, which is what art should do. I don't know if that's wrong. I know people often buy and collect things like that, but they don't hang them on their wall—people collect anything. People who collect photographs, it represents for them something about the history of the world. You know, why do people buy books? I mean when you buy a photobook you're just collecting. It's not as expensive. You buy Gilles Peress' book on Rwanda, are you learning something about Rwanda? This book I just got it here, it's been out for four or five years called *Without Sanctuary*, it's postcards of lynchings in America—have you seen that book?

SP: I've heard of it.

LT: My god. So there's all these postcards that the whites in the south were taking photographs and publishing them as postcards of public lynchings of blacks. Who would buy that book? What do you learn from it? You know that happens. Well it's affected you, somehow it's affected you and you want to remember it. If you're a photographer or if you like photobooks you buy it because it's meaningful, it's powerful. It represents something in history that you want to keep, that you want to remember. That's the reason we take photographs, you don't want history to repeat itself. I can't say that that has been successful, but part of the thing is that you want to create a record so that it doesn't happen again. If you buy a book like that, you know when you hear of what's going on in Darfur today, maybe it will make you think more about it. I mean if you buy a print it's a higher end piece and I'm not sure it's bad. But that kind of work doesn't really sell.

For a dealer like Stephen Bulger to host a show, he's brave. The way I work the exhibition it's part of a book and the book is really where you put your identity and make your statement and you put the entire piece. So he has an exhibition, but he also has a book launch and the exhibition launches the book and the book is the body of work. So you can isolate and separate all these things, but unless you see them somehow as being integrated then really I'm not sure any of them hold water. Should the book exist if there's no exhibition? You launch a book, you put all this work into something and you celebrate it with a book launch. If you have a gallery and you sell photobooks the exhibition is part of a process. Should the book exist without the magazine articles? You know, you can argue that it shouldn't, it should first be in magazines and that's the way I work actually. So everything is kind of integrated.

SP: I have another question, and I'm not sure if you'll agree with me or if we already touched upon it in our conversation, but I was thinking about the role that photojournalism plays in current culture and the role of a Magnum photographer and having to deal with all these competing forces and I'm wondering if the photojournalist is becoming more of an artist who's creating journalistic fine art, rather than news history? I'm wondering if you maybe see the future role of the photojournalist as being a fine artist?

LT: Well it's already happening. The value of prints has probably gone up about three hundred percent in the past decade and there are a lot of reasons for that. Mostly because, again, that which is rare becomes more valuable and as digital technology dominates then obviously collectors' prints or the print as something that will last and have meaning in the future becomes more valuable. So I'm not concerned with that, the only thing that concerns me is when photojournalists sell out to the art world and they make photographs for galleries and they make photographs for the art world. That's what I would have a problem with because that affects the way you shoot, it affects the things you shoot, it affects the nature of photojournalism. That's the problem. I don't have any problem with hanging things in an art gallery though. But I do have a problem with when you create documentary photographs for art galleries. That's why Cartier-Bresson never editioned his prints. It changes the way you shoot because then you edition your prints and you are really catering to a certain clientele, only in the art world and only rich. So there's a danger of becoming bourgeois and you'll start to create photographs for that kind of clientele. There isn't going to be pictures from Palestine in there anywhere, or Rwanda, or whatever. But that's more the danger.

By the same token, I don't have a problem with the integration of the art world, being basically art galleries, because I think that art galleries really have a responsibility, much more responsibility than they actually take, in being part of the debates of their day. The problem I have with it is an esoteric language and that language, the language of the art world, is actually being forced down the throats of photographers, photojournalists, and that's what bothers me because it changes the way you shoot and everything. I've even seen it with the Canada Council, which funds artists in Canada. A few years ago they dropped the Photography Department and they rolled it together with Visual Arts and now if you compete for a grant, to do a project, you're being measured with painters and sculptors and not documentary photographers or journalists. And the very language of the application—I was just looking at it the other day—the very language of the application, the very presentation, it caters to a certain type of attitude toward photography. So what they are trying to do is kill it. That's what bothers me.

SP: So do you think there's—

LT: Do I think there's a place in the art world for photography?

SP: Yes.

LT: I hope so. There always has been. Magnum has a new book coming out, it's our sixtieth anniversary book, and what we've done is one photographer will do a selection of half a dozen photographs of another photographer and write about what they like about them. So I was asked to do two actually, but one of them was Werner Bischof and Werner Bischof was one of the co-founders, and he died in 1953, he went over a cliff in Peru. His son Marco Bischof, who I like a lot as a person, asked me if I would do his dad. So I [indecipherable]. He sent me a couple of his dad's books. He's got some new ones out—obviously old photographs—and I was reading through them and you know he kept very good diaries and did sketches and a lot of drawing, he studied Visual Arts actually. And he talks about being in Switzerland and he's having exhibitions of his work in art galleries and this is like in the forties. So you know this is not a new thing.

SP: No, well there has always been the debate whether photography is art. Now just in my research I've come across tons of articles where people are questioning whether photojournalism can be considered art. So it's the same argument all over again, except now let's nitpick the genres to consider whether they're art.

LT: Well the danger is semantics because once you become obsessed with the language then you start tailoring the work because you try and justify the work with the language rather than just leaving it alone. So yes, sure it's art. Does it exist outside of the art world? Of course, it has to otherwise it wouldn't have any value. It's the fact that it exists outside of the art world that gives it value though. So if it has to exist only there then that means you have to create it for the art world and then it loses its significance as documentary work. Is the art world, the art gallery I should say, the best venue for it? I'm not sure what the best venue is, there's many venues. I think the problem is when you only have one. The problem is when the art world, when the art gallery becomes your venue then you're considered selling out to the art world because then you only have one kind of audience and clientele. Then you have to create your work for them and that's the danger. Perhaps the

death of the magazine business or openings in publications has been bad in that sense that—well in every sense—but in the sense that it starts to push photographers in other areas to make a living.

SP: Yes, that's what I'm finding. I mean that seems to be a general trend now that there's no media outlet for a lot of work, photographers are being pushed toward the commercial art world environment.

LT: Yes well the commercial one, in terms of the true commercial one, where you don't even want to put your hands on it [laughs], it's always been the case that if you can't make a living, that's what you do. Or some people essentially want to do that for the money in the beginning. But the same can be true of teaching. Photographers often teach because they can't make a living as a photographer. I think it's great to teach, to share your knowledge with the younger generation once you reach a certain age—like retirement—because you know that they say, You teach by example. Such is the case with commercial work or the art world or whatever. I mean it can all be seen as a sign of not being able to survive as a documentary photographer and you can't survive because the market is so limited, so people diversify. You teach a bit and then you might even do advertising or corporate work for a bit—which I won't do—or then you have exhibitions and you do books and you also do magazines and you have your work in an archive and you own the rights, so it'll always bring in a bit of money. So if you diversify you don't have to worry about selling out. You know, a little bit here, a little bit there, at the end of the day all the sums come in and you can survive.

SP: And you're reaching a more diverse audience.

LT: Yes, you're reaching a much broader audience, a more diverse audience and you're part of the debate. As a teacher you're affecting the next generation and, I mean, I don't teach, but I'll do a workshop once and a while. And that's a more serious form of teaching because it's freelance.

SP: So you're working on your book right now, *From My Front Porch*?

LT: *The World From My Front Porch*. Actually I have two books coming out. *The World From My Front Porch* is coming out in January, officially in the spring of 2008, but it will launch in January or February at the George Eastman House with their show.

SP: So is that show happening now, because I think there was a little—[Both laugh]

LT: Yes, I know. It is happening. I better get on it actually.

You asked me if I'm going back to Palestine, well right now I'm doing other things. I'm working on an AIDS project with Doctors Without Borders. I made a trip to Peru and I worked with a medical group in prisons there and I did a quick trip for a book. I did a book dummy and the publisher liked it and he wants to publish it. And it is also coming out at the same time, but I'm trying to push him to put it off until the fall. So I'm working on that. I also want to do a tour, a performance, when *The World From My Front Porch* comes out. It's much more complicated as a book, as I've said, because it has a long written essay and it has all these artefacts, you know, three-dimensional things that I want to include. But that's my next project I guess.

The text addresses land, the meaning of land, what land means to people, how losing it causes many wars, from the Middle East to Central America. The wars in Central America were not civil wars, they were peasant rebellions, the rebellions of landless farmers, that's what they really were. What is civil war, what does that mean? It doesn't mean anything. You use the word civil war and it means you don't have to identify the problem. You just get to blame somebody, you just get to blame all those people who can't get along. What is this about a civil war? Wars aren't civil. So this book it has pictures of my own family, the central part, but the text is all about land because really in the end the central part is about my own land and about how having this little farm also affects my world view. I've looked at the history of this piece of land, when it was owned—well not owned because they didn't have ownership—but when the indigenous people lived on it. The Indian villages were all around me at one time and it goes back to the Ice Age. Then the beginning of the land, the concept of land, landownership, the surveyor comes, surveys the land, builds my house, displaces the Native people and the settlers are coming from all over the place, England,



Ireland and Scotland in this case. And it stays in the family until the seventies and then it's bought by a guy and then I buy it in 1989. Then I get to the centre of the book, which is then my family photographs, photographs of my family taken here, my kids basically in the rural environment. Third part of the book is the world beyond my front porch. So then I look at the Middle East, I look at Central America, I look at the nature of photography. The difficulty is tying all the threads together.

SP: So it's really an evolution of all your projects?

LT: Kind of. I mean philosophically yes. Philosophically I address the issues and I do include tear sheets and book dummies and whatnot of work that I've already published as books in the third part of it.

SP: Great. Thank you very much for the interview.

## APPENDIX B

### A CONVERSATION WITH MICHELLE WOODWARD AUGUST 9, 2007

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Michelle Woodward is a freelance photographer, research and photo editor for the publication *Middle East Report*. She received a Master of Science Degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2002 after completing her thesis paper entitled, "The Construction of Photojournalism: Visual Style and Branding in the Magnum Photos Agency." She is also the author of the article "Not All Black and White," which appeared in the Fall 2006 issue of *Middle East Report*, wherein she reviewed recent photobooks about Palestine, including Larry Towell's *No Man's Land*. She has spent the last sixteen years studying and working in the Middle East and is currently living in Beirut, Lebanon.

SP: To begin, I was wondering if you could give me a little background information on your M.A. thesis? Just a quick synopsis would do, I'm interested in the general idea and any conclusions you came to regarding the function of the agency.

MW: Here's the official abstract for the thesis: This thesis defines the visual style of photographic representation that has been developed by the Magnum Photos agency, the most prestigious international agency for photojournalists. The parameters of this visual style are delineated through a detailed visual analysis of Magnum photographs as seen in their own publications. A classic Magnum style is shown to have emerged from particular historical conditions and personalities involved in the founding of the agency in 1947. Additionally, a new postmodernist visual mode that has emerged within Magnum since the early 1980s, alongside the classic style, is described and analyzed. The classic style and the new postmodernist mode are then discussed in the context of Magnum's need to maintain a differentiated product as market conditions change over time. Magnum's actual exploitation of particular markets as well as the agency's discourse about markets are examined. While in recent years Magnum has promoted their postmodernist mode, after the events of

September 11, 2001, Magnum shifted to emphasize their classic style in a book project documenting the attacks in New York city and the aftermath. This thesis contends that the classic Magnum style remains the definition of "good" photojournalism and thus has important implications for the way viewers perceive events that are mediated through photojournalism.

SP: In your review of Towell's work from the book *No Man's Land*, you commented that his book lacked an involvement with the subjects presented and therefore he never got below the surface of the issues. From my conversations with Larry he talked about his involvement with individuals in the community and that he was able to get so close to the conflict because he was able to befriend many in the Palestinian community. I was just wondering, on an aesthetic level (both of the images themselves and of the sequencing in the book), why did you get this impression from his book?

MW: First of all, I don't have the book with me here so my response is based solely on my memory—not necessarily reliable! In my review I acknowledge that Towell got close to moments of conflict as you cite him explaining in your question. What I thought he did not portray was anything that helps explain the conflict to a viewer. There was no sense of what people are fighting for or against and why (besides a generalized nationalism represented by Palestinian flags). There are very few scenes that show the internal politics that mobilize those who engage in the conflict and give the conflict meaning. I don't remember getting much of a sense from his photographs of, for example, the Palestinians' lack of resources, decline of control over space and land, dwindling ability to move from place to place, the difficulties getting permission from Israel to travel, build, work, farm, develop infrastructure. In other words, as I say in my review, "The images give the impression of people engaged in meaningless violence, rather than struggling over power and land. This results from showing moments of clash, conflict, and separation between Israelis and Palestinians but rarely giving any sense of the political forces and social mobilizations behind either occupation or resistance."... "Towell focuses on the micro level of individual lives. He is effective in giving voice to a feeling of despair, pain and localized chaos but by rarely getting involved in his subjects' lives the images seem to be by a photographer wandering the streets but never getting below the surface."... "in his photographs he focuses heavily on violence, both its

perpetrators and its victims. Although not as dramatic, a depiction that also examines the work of various peace activists, civil society groups, religious charities and political factions would be unique and illuminating."

Basically it's on the level of content that I get the impression of skimming the surface, not from his aesthetics. Putting the captions at the back of the book does not help either because it's not easy to learn what the photo is about and emphasizes the images are artistic expression over information. I do wish a photographer would one day explore the complicated relationship between Israelis and Palestinians at the points where they interact. Not just between soldiers at checkpoints and people waiting in lines, though I think there is something there to explore too that hasn't been done. But also through civil society groups, peace activists, doctors...

SP: In your view, is Towell's book more of a "coffee table" book that simply shows an assortment of events in the conflict between Israel and Palestine or do you feel that there are different and more complex layers in his work and that his work is also a subjective and personal reflection rather than straight-photojournalism?

MW: I don't believe there is such a thing as non-subjective photography. There are styles of photojournalism that are meant to look more "objective" but that's just another style, another mode of working with its own embedded assumptions and rules. Towell's book is much more than a "coffee table" book, and in my article I praise what he does so well. It is layered and complex, but I think it remains the view of an outside observer. That is absolutely fine, I am not saying that position is "bad" or "wrong."

SP: I was wondering, as an artist yourself, if you have a preferred means of disseminating your work to the public (i.e. through books, blogs, exhibitions)? If so, why do feel your choice is best suited for your work?

MW: I have gradually gravitated to a mode of work where I concentrate on the photographs and think a lot less about disseminating it. I feel I have reached the most people through both my website and my blog, but I don't think the computer is the best way to view the

photos. I like doing exhibitions but they are time consuming and expensive and very few people see them in the end. Books have been beyond me, but I think they are a good way of getting work out to viewers. In general though, I feel that the best place for good photojournalism is magazines and newspapers because so many more people will see them there. Since I don't do photojournalism I don't publish there, except for the occasional photo or specialized Middle East magazine. For what I do, a kind of documentary-art, books might be the best platform because I could control the color and contrast, etc. of the images, their sequencing and combine them with text where I want viewers to have more information.

SP: Now that traditional media outlets such as picture magazines have ceased to be the primary outlet for photojournalists, do you feel that books, exhibitions in commercial galleries, multimedia projects, etc., offer new possibilities to photojournalists to fill this void?

MW: For photojournalists or documentary photographers books do seem to have become a much more important and desirable outlet. I think book publishing has become cheaper; there are more photo books out now than I ever remember. Multimedia projects on websites seem to have become a new possibility over the last five years or so. But exhibitions of photojournalism in commercial galleries have been going on since the 1980s. I think magazines actually still are the primary outlet for photojournalists; *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Stern*, *Geo*, and on and on, including the Sunday newspaper magazines (*New York Times Magazine*, for example). There are more picture magazines in Europe too. Photos are now used big, often over two pages in *Time* magazine and many others. Many newspapers now use photos in color and larger than ever. And now magazines and newspapers use photos for slideshows and multimedia online too, not just in print. So, although those traditional picture magazines like *Life* have folded, I don't think it has meant the end of newspapers and magazines as primary outlets.

SP: What do you feel photojournalists gain or lose by publishing their work in these forums?

MW: In magazines and newspapers they gain eyeballs, viewers, a larger audience. They lose some control over layout, text, editing. Books give greater control over those things, but

you then have to think about the book audience, tailoring it for an aesthetic experience. They have to be concerned that layout and design might overtake the photos themselves, as one example. And not nearly as many people will see the work.

SP: Do you think the context of a gallery (a commercial gallery) in any way alters the understanding or interferes with the content of photojournalistic images?

MW: Yes. I think in a gallery setting a viewer is primed to look at the aesthetics of the work, because that is the usual mode in a gallery. I think this makes looking at photojournalism there a bit confusing for viewers. Should they be admiring the composition, color palette, light or trying to learn something about the subject of the photo. I saw an exhibit by the photo agency VII in NYC a year or so ago and found it very off-putting because a number of the images were really gruesome. Later in the day I saw one of the photos, by Gary Knight I think, over at the UN building in an exhibit about Darfur. In that context I found his image to be much more powerful as I then understood the meaning of it. In the Chelsea gallery there was only a minimal caption of the three girls posed against a desert background. At the UN exhibit the caption explained that they were going out to collect firewood and that many girls had been raped while doing so. Suddenly their expressions made more sense and the wide open space of the desert became meaningful as a place of danger, not just a pretty backdrop. In other words, I felt a jolt of empathy for the girls whereas in the gallery I had simply admired their beauty and that of the photo. On the other hand, I don't think photojournalism should shy away from aesthetics; they make an image more powerful and effective. I believe that photos are very limited as modes of conveying information and thus photojournalism needs to be accompanied by words. However, perhaps there is nothing wrong with the same photo having more than one purpose—one as information and one as visual poetry, or art. Harder to understand is buying a big lush print of dead bodies or scarred faces (like Nachtwey's Rwandan man with a machete scar across his face that was also in the exhibit). It's a complicated issue with no answer. I think different viewers will also have different experiences.

SP: A lot of the work being produced by photojournalists (such as Larry Towell) has been evolving into a "fine art journalism" over the years, do you believe that this evolution of the

photojournalistic style affects the ways in which audiences and critics understand the images and the events they depict?

MW: I think what you are seeing is individual photographers migrating into a documentary practice (longer term involvement with a subject or theme) who are aware of the importance of aesthetics and multiple audiences. I don't think photojournalism as a whole is headed that way. Perhaps this is a new genre, but not one that's pushing out the many many new photojournalists out there.

SP: Do you see the future of the photojournalist as being a fine artist?

MW: No. There is still a demand for photojournalists and many young photographers are getting into it.

SP: The current state of photojournalism finds photographs of current events being presented to the public while the events are still taking place. Additionally, these images are being presented in a multitude of contexts at the same time (with publications coinciding with exhibitions and book releases). From my interview with Larry Towell he mentioned that he does not have a problem with photojournalists presenting their work in a variety of venues, as he believes the work reaches a much broader audience, encourages a larger debate about the issues presented, allows photographers to diversify and ensures that they are not "selling out." I would say that it is perhaps more responsible to present photojournalism in a variety of venues simultaneously as each venue is better suited to draw upon different aspects or facets of the events depicts and therefore leads to a more complete understanding of the issues. What are your thoughts on this issue, do you agree or disagree and why?

MW: I agree it's good to distribute your photos through multiple contexts. It's important for reaching multiple audiences and also for the photographer to make a living. And I agree with Towell that it may help create a larger debate about the issues.

SP: That's great. Thank you for the interview.

## APPENDIX C

### LARRY TOWELL CAREER OVERVIEW

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#### EDUCATION

1972 – 1976                      Bachelor of Fine Arts York University  
Toronto, Canada

#### AWARDS

2005                              Prix Nadar, for *No Man's Land*

2003                              Henri Cartier-Bresson Award

2002                              Roloff Beny Book Award

2001                              British Design and Art Direction (D&AD) Award, 1<sup>st</sup> Prize

2000                              Society for News Design Award, La Nacion  
Photo-Eye Award, Citation of Excellence

1999                              Hasselblad Foundation Award  
Roloff Beny Book Award  
Picture of the Year, Best Use of Photography in Books

1998                              Alfred Eisenstadt Award, 1<sup>st</sup> Prize  
Pictures of the Year Foundation, University of Missouri,  
"Pictorial," 1<sup>st</sup> Prize  
Overseas Press Club, New York, Citation of Excellence  
Society of Publication Designers, Magazine of the Year  
Society of Publication Designers, Merit Award

1997                              Golden Light, Best Monograph Award for *El Salvador*  
Society of Publication Designers, Merit Award

1996                              Oscar Barnack Award  
El Mundo Award

1995                              Ernest Haas Foundation Award  
Canadian National Awards, Gold Medal

1994                              Canadian National Awards, Gold Medal  
Canon Photo Essay Award, Picture of the Year  
World Press Photo, 1<sup>st</sup> Prize in "Daily Life Stories"



- World Press Photo, 1<sup>st</sup> Prize in "General News Stories"  
World Press Photo, Premier Photo of the Year
- 1993 World Press Photo, 1<sup>st</sup> Prize in "Daily Life Stories"  
Western Canada Magazine Awards, Gold Medal
- 1991 Western Canada Magazine Awards, Gold Medal  
W. Eugene Smith Foundation Award  
Canadian National Awards, Silver Medal

#### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2008 The World From My Front Porch: Larry Towell  
George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, USA
- 2007 The Mennonites: Photographs by Larry Towell  
Arthur Ross Gallery, Philadelphia, USA
- 2006 Larry Towell: No Man's Land  
FOAM, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 2005 Larry Towell: No Man's Land  
Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation, Paris, France  
Projects  
Michael Gibson Gallery, London, Ontario, Canada  
Larry Towell: No Man's Land  
Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto, Canada
- 2004 Mennonites  
Alice Austin House Museum, New York City, USA
- 2003 Larry Towell: The Mennonites  
Kunsthalle Erfurt, Erfurt, Germany  
Larry Towell: Projects 1985-2000  
Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver, Canada  
Larry Towell: I Mennoniti  
Oratorio del Caravita, Rome, Italy  
The Caixa Forum, Barcelona, Spain
- 2002 Larry Towell: Works 1985-2000  
Leaf Rapids National Exhibition Centre, Leaf Rapids,  
Manitoba, Canada  
Canada House (Canadian High Commission), London, England  
University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George,  
B.C., Canada  
Gallery Lambton, Sarnia, Ontario, Canada

- 2001  
 Larry Towell: Works 1985-2000  
 Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Canada  
 Larry Towell: The Mennonites  
 National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland  
 The Leica Gallery, New York City, USA  
 Perpignan International Photojournalism Festival, Perpignan, France  
 McLaren Art Centre, Barrie, Ontario, Canada
- 2000  
 Larry Towell: Mexican Mennonites  
 Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto, Canada  
 Palestine, El Salvador and Home  
 Canadian Embassy, Damascus, Syria  
 Aleppo Photo Festival, Aleppo, Syria  
 Städtische Gallery, Iserlohn, Germany  
 London Regional Art Gallery, London, Ontario, Canada  
 Perpignan International Photojournalism Festival, Perpignan, France  
 The Leica Gallery, New York City, USA  
 FNAC Galleries, national tour, France
- 1999  
 Larry Towell: Palestine, El Salvador and Home  
 Cambridge Art Gallery, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada
- 1998  
 Aubenades de la Photographie, Aubenas, France  
 Chazen Museum of Art (formerly Elvehjem Museum of Art), Madison, Wisconsin, USA  
 Wisconsin Union Gallery, Madison, Wisconsin, USA  
 Vox Populi, Montreal, Canada  
 Sala Caixa Galicia, Lugo, Spain  
 Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain  
 Sala Caixa Galicia, Vigo, Spain
- 1997  
 Larry Towell: El Salvador  
 Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto, Canada  
 El Salvador  
 Noorderlicht Photography Festival, Groningen, The Netherlands  
 Larry Towell: Family Album  
 The Leica Gallery, New York City, USA  
 Manifestations Culturelles, Nablus, Ramallah, East Jerusalem, West Bank  
 Sala de la Expositions Kiosko Alfonso, La Coruña, Spain  
 FNAC Galleries, national tour, France
- 1996  
 Larry Towell: Three Projects  
 Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto, Canada  
 Zelda Cheatle Gallery, London, England

- 1995 Das Bildforum Foto Festival, Herten, Germany
- 1994 The Photo Passage, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, Canada  
 Shepard College, Shepardstown, W. Virginia, USA  
 Retrospective, Nieuwekerk Cathedral, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
 Recontres Photographiques de Normandie, Abbey St. Ouen, Rouen, France  
 Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Canada
- 1992 DV8 Gallery, Victoria, B.C., Canada  
 National Library of Canada, Ottawa, Canada  
 The Photo Passage, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, Canada
- 1991 Forest City Gallery, London, Ontario, Canada  
 La Mois de la Photo, Maison de la Culture, Montreal, Canada  
 Spencer Gallery, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada  
 Christ Church, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
- 1990 Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada  
 Dunlop Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada
- 1989 Gallery TPW (formerly Toronto Photographer's Workshop), Toronto, Canada  
 Sarnia Public Art Gallery, Sarnia, Ontario, Canada  
 London Regional Art Gallery, London, Ontario, Canada  
 The Photographer's Gallery, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada
- 1988 Gifts of War: An Exhibition of Photographs From Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala  
 Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada

#### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2007 Social Works: Goldchain, Pietropaolo, Towell  
 Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
- 2006 Les Troubles du Cadre  
 Galerie Le Château d'Eau, Toulouse, France
- 2005 A Growing Legacy: Recent Additions to Gallery Lambton's Regional Collection  
 Gallery Lambton, Sarnia, Ontario, Canada  
 Moving Walls 9  
 Open Society Institute, Washington, D.C., USA  
 The Leica Gallery, New York City, USA

42<sup>nd</sup> Street digital billboard, Port Authority, New York City,  
USA

Magnum Photos

DFOTO, San Sebastián, Spain

Cervantes Festival, Alcalá de Henares, Spain

2004

Magnum's New Yorkers

Museum of the City of New York, New York City, USA

Killer Shots: A Photographic Response to War

SF Camerawork, San Francisco, USA

Moving Walls 9

Open Society Institute, New York City, USA

La Collection Photographique de la FNAC

Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie, Palais de  
l'Archevêché, Arles, France

Magnum Stories

Archive and Visitor Centre, The Guardian Newsroom,  
London, England

The Faceless Figure: Photographs from the Collection

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA

Michael Gibson Gallery, London, Ontario, Canada

2003

Photography Past/Forward: Aperture at 50

Sotheby's, New York City, USA

September 11<sup>th</sup>: The Events in New York from the Point of  
View of Magnum Photographers

Weltkulturerbe Völklinger Hütte, Völklinger, Germany

Confronting Views: An International Photography  
Exhibition

The Photographer's Gallery, London, England

Les Choix d'HCB

Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation, Paris, France

Confronting Views: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Contemporaneo Temporaneo, Rome, Italy

Killer Shots: A Photographic Response to War

Catherine Edelman Gallery, Chicago, USA

Amnesty International Photo Show & Silent Auction

Pikto Gallery, Toronto, Canada

The Caixa Forum, Barcelona, Spain

Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Turin, Italy

Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York City, USA

The Leica Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic

Paris Photo, Paris, France

2002

Confronting Views

Noorderlicht Photography Festival, Groningen, The  
Netherlands

- Out of a Clear Blue Sky: Documentary Photographic Images:  
 New York September 11  
 Housatonic Museum of Art, Bridgeport, Connecticut, USA  
 Nihonbashi Mitsukoshi, Tokyo, Japan  
 School of Visual Arts, New York City, USA  
 Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada  
 New York State Museum, Albany, New York, USA  
 Chicago Historical Museum (formerly Chicago Historical Society), Chicago, USA  
 Forest City Gallery, London, Ontario, Canada  
 Fondazione Italiana per la Fotografia, Turin, Italy  
 Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland  
 The National Arts Club, New York City, USA  
 Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA  
 Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, Canada
- 2001
- Photographs Witnessing War & Conflict  
 Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada  
 Cinema Museum, Saronique, Greece  
 The Photographic Centre, Skopelos, Greece  
 New York Historical Society, New York City, USA  
 Here Is New York  
 Spring Street Gallery, New York City, USA
- 2000
- The Art of Documentary Photography  
 Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine, USA  
 Michael Gibson Gallery, London, Ontario, Canada  
 Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, France  
 New York Historical Society, New York City, USA  
 The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan  
 Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, Italy  
 Kunsthaus, Zurich, Switzerland  
 Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain  
 Botanique, Brussels, Belgium  
 Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 1999
- The Pursuit of Happiness: Visual Essays on Global Human Rights  
 The Alternative Museum, New York City, USA  
 The Barbican Centre, London, England  
 The Art Directors Club, New York City, USA  
 Le Pont Gallery, Aleppo, Syria
- 1998
- Galerie Le Château d'Eau, Toulouse, France  
 Jewish Museum of Heritage, New York City, USA  
 Station Gallery, Whitby, Ontario, Canada

- 1997  
 Art Gallery of North York, North York, Ontario, Canada  
 The Art Gallery of the University of Sherbrooke's Cultural  
 Centre, Sherbrooke, Québec, Canada  
 Milton J. Weill Art Gallery, New York City, USA  
 Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec, Québec City,  
 Canada  
 The National Arts Club, New York City, USA  
 Casa de Vacas, Madrid, Spain  
 Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, New Brunswick,  
 Canada
- 1996  
 pARTs Gallery, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA  
 Kent Gallery, New York City, USA  
 Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey, B.C., Canada
- 1995  
 The Art Institute of Boston, Boston, USA  
 Galerie St. Etienne, New York City, USA
- 1994  
 Galerie Le Château d'Eau, Toulouse, France  
 Ansel Adams Center for Photography, San Francisco, USA
- 1993  
 Nikon House, New York City, USA  
 International Center of Photography, New York City, USA  
 Hagerstown College Art Gallery, Hagerstown, Maryland,  
 USA

## BOOKS

- 2008  
*The World From My Front Porch* (forthcoming)
- 2006  
*In The Wake of Katrina*, Chris Boot, UK
- 2005  
*No Man's Land*, Chris Boot, UK; Textuel, France
- 2000  
*The Mennonites*, Phaidon, UK, France
- 1999  
*Then Palestine*, Aperture, USA; Marval, France
- 1997  
*El Salvador*, DoubleTake Books/W.W. Norton, USA
- 1994  
*House on Ninth Street*, Cormorant Books, Canada
- 1992  
*The Prison Poems of Ho Chi Minh*, Cormorant Books, Canada
- 1990  
*Somoza's Last Stand*, Williams-Wallace Publishers, Canada
- 1988  
*Gifts of War*, Coach House Press, Canada
- 1983  
*Burning Cadillacs*, Black Moss Press, Canada

## SELECTED NEWSPAPER, PERIODICAL & MAGAZINE PUBLICATIONS

CANADA	The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star, Canadian Geographic, The National Post, The Observer (Sarnia)
USA	The New York Times, The New York Times Magazine, Aperture, Photo District News, American Photography, DoubleTake, LIFE Magazine, TIME Magazine, Rolling Stone, Esquire
INTERNATIONAL	Bilanz (Switzerland), Profil (Austria), GEO, Stern (Germany), Paris Match (France), Télérâma (France), Le Monde (France), Le Nouvel Observateur (France), Libération (France), Royal Photographic Society Journal (UK), DNA (Brazil), Photo Italia (Italy), La Revista (Spain), Granta (UK), Al Ahram International (Egypt), Het Parool (The Netherlands), Elle (France), Westfälischer Anzeiger (Germany), L'Humanité (France), Connaissance des Arts (France), Photo (France), The Daily Star (Lebanon), Eyemazing (The Netherlands)

## DISCOGRAPHY & FILMOGRAPHY

2008	<i>The World From My Front Porch</i> , Audio CD (forthcoming)
2005	<i>The Dark Years</i> , Audio CD
2005	<i>Indecisive Moments: Video Diary of a Still Photographer</i> , Documentary Video
2005	<i>No Man's Land</i> , Audio CD
2004	<i>Mary's Accordion</i> , Video
2002	<i>The Mennonites</i> , Audio CD
1979	<i>Feathers and Bones</i> , LP

## SELECTED PERFORMANCES

2006	George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, USA
2004	Camera, Toronto, Canada
2003	Emily Carr School of Art and Design, Vancouver, Canada
2002	Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, Canada Sarnia Library Theatre, Sarnia, Ontario, Canada

- 2000  
Hannover College of the Arts, Hannover, Germany  
London Regional Art Gallery, London, Ontario, Canada
- 1998  
Maine Photographic Workshops, Portland, Maine, USA  
National Union of Journalists, Copenhagen, Denmark  
University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada  
Chazen Museum of Art (formerly Elvehjem Museum of Art),  
Madison, Wisconsin, USA
- 1997  
International Center of Photography, New York City, USA  
Interfoto Conference, Moscow, Russia  
Kiosko Alfonso, La Coruña, Spain  
Noorderlicht Photography Festival, Groningen, The  
Netherlands



## APPENDIX D

### EXHIBITION HISTORY

HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON FOUNDATION

PARIS, FRANCE

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#### 2008

*January 16 – April 13*

Saul Leiter

*April 28 – July 27*

Saul Steinberg

#### 2007

*January 17 – April 22*

Bruce Davidson: East 100<sup>th</sup> Street & Time of Change

*May 10 – August 26*

Fazal Sheikh: Moksha & Ladli

*September 12 – December 23*

Helen Levitt

#### 2006

*January 18 – April 9*

Portraits by Henri Cartier-Bresson

*April 26 – July 30*

Joan Colom: Les Gens du Raval

*September 21 – December 23*

Henri Cartier-Bresson's Scrapbook

#### 2005

*January 13 – March 26*

Giacometti/Cartier-Bresson: Une Communauté de Regards

*April 15 – August 4*

Larry Towell: No Man's Land

*September 21 – December 18*

A Tribute to Bill Brandt

#### 2004

*April 7 – July 26*

Fazal Sheikh

*September 8 – December 19*

Documentary and Anti-graphic Photographs

2003

*April 29 – July 26*

Inge Morath  
Les Choix d'HCB

*December 10 – March 28*

What I've Seen

## APPENDIX E

### EXHIBITION HISTORY STEPHEN BULGER GALLERY TORONTO, CANADA

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#### 2007

<i>January 11 – February 10</i>	The British Are Coming A Group Exhibition: Chris Coekin, Daniel Meadows, Tony Ray-Jones
<i>February 15 – March 17</i>	Volker Seding: Animal Kingdom
<i>March 22 – April 28</i>	Laura Letinsky: Somewhere, Somewhere
<i>May 3 – June 9</i>	Sarah Anne Johnson: The Galapagos Project
<i>June 14 – July 21</i>	Richard Harrington O.C.: A Retrospective
<i>July 26 – September 1</i>	At Leisure A Group Exhibition: Jaret Belliveau, Marco Bohr, Scott Conarro
<i>September 6 – October 6</i>	Mary Ellen Mark: Ward 81
<i>October 11 – November 10</i>	Mark Ruwedel: Shelter
<i>November 17 – December 22</i>	André Kertész: SX-70s

#### 2006

<i>January 14 – February 11</i>	Antarctica A Group Exhibition: Frank Hurley, Joan Myers, Herbert G. Ponting
<i>February 18 – March 25</i>	Vid Ingelevics: Platforms
<i>April 1 – May 6</i>	Bertrand Carrière: Caux
<i>May 11 – June 17</i>	Tomasz Gudzowaty: Ship Wreckers
<i>June 22 – September 2</i>	Bruce Davidson: Selections from New York 1959-1992
<i>September 9 – October 28</i>	Dave Heath: 1960s
<i>October 29 – December 22</i>	Robert Burley: Great Lakes

## 2005

*January 8 – February 19*

*February 26 – April 2*

*April 9 – May 7*

*April 9 – May 21*

*May 14 – June 25*

*June 30 – August 27*

*September 10 – October 29*

*November 5 – December 22*

Bibliotheca: A Group Exhibition

Mark Ruwedel: Westward

Magna Brava: A Group Exhibition

Sarah Anne Johnson: Tree Planting

Larry Towell: No Man's Land

André Kertész: 1920s-1980s

Jim Goldberg: In the Open See

Robert Frank: In Canada

## 2004

*January 10 – February 21*

*February 28 – April 3*

*April 10 – May 22*

*May 29 – July 10*

*July 17 – August 28*

*September 11 – October 30*

*November 6 – December 18*

Crime Scene: A Group Exhibition

Volker Seding: Façades

Sunil Gupta: Homelands

Ian MacEachern: Photographs

Summer Review: A Group Exhibition

Phil Bergerson: Shards of America

Laura Letinsky: Hardly More Than Ever

## 2003

*January 11 – February 15*

*February 22 – March 22*

*March 29 – May 3*

*May 10 – June 14*

*June 21 – July 26*

*August 2 – August 31*

*October 1 – October 25*

*November 8 – December 20*

Suture: An Exhibition of Medical Photographs

Bertrand Carrière: Signes de Jour

André Kertész: New York State of Mind

Magnum: A Group Exhibition

Ruth Kaplan: Bathers

Summer Review: A Group Exhibition

Queen Street: A Group Exhibition

Alison Rossiter: Light Horses

## 2002

*January 12 – February 16*

Animal Logic: A Group Exhibition

*February 23 – March 30*

*April 6 – May 4*

*May 11 – June 15*

*June 20 – July 27*

*August 1 – August 31*

*September 5 – October 5*

*October 12 – November 16*

*November 23 – December 21*

## 2001

*January 20 – February 17*

*February 24 – March 24*

*March 31 – April 28*

*May 5 – June 9*

*June 14 – July 28*

*August 4 – September 1*

*September 15 – October 13*

*October 20 – November 17*

*November 24 – December 22*

## 2000

*January 15 – February 19*

*February 26 – March 25*

*April 1 – April 29*

*May 6 – June 3*

*June 10 – July 8*

*July 15 – September 9*

*September 16 – October 21*

*October 28 – November 25*

*December 2 – January 13*

Lida Moser: Québec, 1950

Vincenzo Pietropaolo

Chris Rainier: Sacred Places and Ancient Markings

National Treasures: The Canadian Press Archives

Summer Review: A Group Exhibition

Shelby Lee Adams: Appalachia Today

Laura Letinsky: Venus Inferred

George S. Zimbel: A Survey from 5 Decades of Photographs

White: A Group Exhibition

Jock Sturges: New Work 1996-2000

Diana Shearwood: Motel and Guggenheim Series

Volker Seding: Architecture Series

Vid Ingelevics: Project Photographs 1992-2001

Summer Review: A Group Exhibition

Phil Bergerson: Extracts of America

Mark Ruwedel: Earth Work

Ray K. Metzker

Laundry: A Group Exhibition

Dave Heath: 1940s to 1960s

Milton Rogovin: A Retrospective

Larry Towell: Mexican Mennonites

Mid-Century Jazz Images: A Group Exhibition

A Century in Times Square: A Group Exhibition

Lee Friedlander: 3 Projects

Daniel & Geo Fuchs: Conserving

Luis Mallo: Laminas

## 1999

*January 16 – February 13*

*February 20 – March 20*

*March 27 – April 24*

*May 1 – June 5*

*June 12 – July 17*

*July 24 – August 28*

*September 9 – October 16*

*October 23 – November 20*

*November 27 – January 8*

Home: A Group Exhibition

Michael Schreier: Desert's Muse

Jim Goldberg: Rich and Poor

Shelby Lee Adams: Appalachian Legacy

Astronomical and Space Exploration Pictures

Elizabeth Siegfried: Lifelines

Bertrand Carrière: Les Images – Temps

Paul Buchanan: The Picture Man

Edward Sheriff Curtis: Canadian Pictures

## 1998

*January 17 – February 14*

*February 21 – March 2*

*March 28 – April 25*

*May 1 – June 6*

*June 10 – July 11*

*July 18 – August 29*

*September 9 – October 17*

*October 24 – November 21*

*November 28 – January 9*

Blue: A Group Exhibition

Lutz Dille: Photographs

Bill Owens: Suburbia

Jock Sturges: Photographs

Reva Brooks: Photographs

Summer Review: A Group Exhibition

Gabor Szilasi: 40 Years of Photography

Michael Torosian: Selected Works 1973-1998

Volker Seding: Mainstreet

## 1997

*January 17 – February 22*

*March 1 – April 5*

*April 12 – May 31*

*June 12 – July 12*

*June 28 – August 28*

*September 13 – October 11*

*October 18 – November 22*

*November 29 – January 10*

John Max: Swallowing a Diamond

Phil Bergerson: Shards of Civilization

Mark Ruwedel: Along the Shores of Departed Lakes

Pekka Turunen: Against the Wall

Summer Review: A Group Exhibition

Larry Towell: El Salvador

Denis Farley & Mark Ruwedel: Landscape

Irene Fay

## 1996

*January 6 – January 28*

*February 3 – March 2*

*March 9 – April 6*

*April 13 – May 11*

*May 16 – June 21*

*June 28 – August 28*

*September 12 – October 19*

*October 26 – November 30*

*December 7 – January 11*

40 Photographs Celebrating 20 Years of Lectures

Larry Towell: Three Projects

Renato Begnoni & Mauro Fiorese

Bertrand Carrière: Voyage a Domicile

Danny Lyon: Civil Rights & Conversations

Summer Review: A Group Exhibition

Michael Schreier: Comedy of Postures

Ralph Eugene Meatyard

E. Boubat, H. Cartier-Bresson & W. Ronis

## 1995

*March 23 – April 22*

*April 29 – May 27*

*June 3 – July 1*

*July 1 – August 31*

*September 9 – October 7*

*October 14 – November 11*

*November 18 – December 16*

Phil Bergerson & Wright Morris

Five Photographers: A Group Exhibition

Helen Levitt

Summer Review: A Group Exhibition

Shelby Lee Adams: Appalachian Portraits

Marion Post Wolcott

Robert Burley: Viewing Olmsted

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