

JERZY WIERZBICKI



started going to meetings of photography enthusiasts—learning from those more experienced.”

On completing his archaeology studies in 2000, Wierzbicki went to work as a photographer on digs in Tunisia, Syria and Turkey, which led to a growing interest in Islamic culture and the beginning of what remains an ongoing project to photograph a range of Middle Eastern cultures.

In 2003, Wierzbicki successfully passed an exam that allowed him to become a member of the Polish Art Photographers Association, and started him on a career path as a professional photographer in Poland.

“As I entered adulthood and started my career, Poland was going through a period of great political and economic change,” recalls Wierzbicki of his initial interest in documenting the city of Gdansk.

“I felt a need to register these changes, since the scenery in the cities was more and more reflect-

ing a monotonous, unified capitalist reality of advertising and billboards. Gdansk has always been a unique city, but now it has lost its extraordinary character.”

Despite a relatively successful career as a photojournalist, teacher and lecturer, Wierzbicki admits to struggling against prejudices he finds both in Polish photography and its art market.

“Being a documentary photographer in my country means being virtually unique,” says Wierzbicki. “In Poland, documentary photography is not commonly practiced and its stature, apart from press photography, is rather poor. Among most Polish photography critics there is the conviction that documentary photography is not art. Although there are several photography galleries in Poland, if any of these galleries decided to deal with documentary photography they would have to be aware of the fact that the work would be difficult to sell.”

“As far as the general art market for photography, Polish art collectors do not consider photography an art, and one can say that the photography market doesn’t really exist. Only recently have a few photography auctions been organized, but I find that all my efforts to sell my photographs have to be directed toward Western Europe.”

Wierzbicki has been the recipient of several important photography awards in recent years, including one from *Newsweek*, Poland (2002), Photographic Confrontations in Gorzów (2004), and the Humanity Photo Award from China (2004). His photographs

are held in the collection of the National Museum in Gdansk.

Wierzbicki has exhibited in one-person and group shows in Berlin and several Polish cities, and has had his images published in *Kwartalnik Fotografii*, a Polish photography magazine, and in the Polish edition of *Newsweek*. He also hopes to publish a book featuring his portrait of Gdansk in the coming year.

“The greatest impact and influence on my photography has been the work of Sebastião Salgado, Robert Frank, Josef Koudelka, and Bruce Davidson,” says Wierzbicki. “I have always been inspired by their work. In my own work, what I’m trying to do is to preserve what I see as a world falling into oblivion. I do not really care what impression my photographs make, and I do not describe them in the terms of being depressing or hopeful. I realize that my photographs often show scenes of a vanishing world, which can evoke sentimental feelings. I suppose everyone should decide for themselves what they see and feel.” —Richard Pitnick

■ PRINT INFORMATION

All prints are fiber-base gelatin silver, archivally processed and selenium toned, numbered in editions of 20, and signed and titled in pencil on the verso. Prices are \$350 for 9 1/2 x 12 1/2-inch prints, and \$500 for 15 x 22-inch prints.

■ CONTACT INFORMATION

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FROM THE SERIES GDANSK SUBURBIA—#003, 2004



FROM THE SERIES GDANSK SUBURBIA—#02, 1997



FROM THE SERIES GDANSK SUBURBIA-#04, 2001



FROM THE SERIES GDANSK SUBURBIA-#03, 2001



FROM THE SERIES GDANSK SUBURBIA-#05, 2000



FROM THE SERIES GDANSK SUBURBIA-#002, 2003



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