

Raise Social Awareness with 4 Continents 4 Change

Natasha Lardera (July 09, 2012)



The photography show held at the SOHO Gallery in Tribeca explores all aspects of the human condition through the eyes of over thirty photographers (more than half are Italian) including children, students, amateurs and National Geographic professionals.

After the great success in Italy, the Shoot4Change photo tour stops in New York at the [SOHO Photo Gallery](#) [2] (15 White Street) with an exhibition curated by Grace Roth and Yelena Futeran that opened on July 5th (and goes on through the 31st) titled 4 Continents 4 Change. This is their first collective exhibition and it showcases images from the continents of Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas, aiming to raise public awareness on social issues by shining a light on events occurring in forgotten regions of the world.

[Shoot4Change](#) [3], a global network of volunteer photographers founded by Antonio Amendola, whose notable work has been praised in the New York Times, the Daily Telegraph, Rolling Stones Magazine, Wired, Sky and La Repubblica, operates under the motto "Shoot local, Change global."



"We are not naive to believe that we can change the world, but what we do know is that every photo and story that we publish and talk about makes us more aware. We are changing our own perspective and how we see the world. The change must come from each one of us and it start with the photos," Amendola said in the past. "In today's world, we are so desensitized by news, images of war, the celebrity culture and the need for immediate gratification from photos we receive through cell phones and facebook. We wanted to preserve the beauty that is in capturing images, in discussing them and in initiating our viewers to the anticipate the next story. But most of all, we wanted to tell the untold stories that the mainstream media would not feature. Our goal is to allow the communities to speak for themselves and show us their struggles."

4 Continents 4 Change explores all aspects of the human condition through the eyes of over thirty photographers (more than half are Italian) including children, students, amateurs and National Geographic professionals. The collection demonstrates all methods of image capture ranging from high end professional equipment to the use of the iPhone.

"We chose stories that we felt would represent the concept of 4 Continents 4 Change at its best," curator Yelena Futeran explained. "Our goal was to provide the viewers with a wide range of work from our photographers that are involved in the network and the stories we cover. We chose 14 'Featured Stories' from the 4 Continents by some of our pro photographers. Many of them are award-winning artists and have been exhibited throughout the world. On the collage wall, we showcase work that came from a wide range of photographers, such as the 16 year old Italian photographer (Francesco Romeo) who did work in Burkina Faso."

Shoot4Change photographers in Asia tell the story of "Those Who Remained," with images from the streets of Fukushima after the 2011 Tsunami. Images from Myanmar by Grace Roth show a world rich in color and texture, despite widespread poverty. "On May 2, 2008, Cyclone Nargis made landfall in Myanmar, crossing the south of the country over two days, leaving a trail of death and destruction. Nearly 85,000 were killed and 50,000 went missing," the photographer said. "I traveled to Myanmar two months later preparing for the worst, expecting to see a country in total devastation. Countless people had lost their homes, their jobs, friends and family and despite these tragedies remained optimistic and hopeful. I was invited into their homes, I was offered tea, I was allowed to document intimate moments without questions. In the face of everything the Burmese had endured, they remained stoic and showed pride in what they still had left."

The pictures from Africa, capture the "City of the Dead," in Cairo, Egypt, with its haunting scenes of villagers who live in a monumental cemetery. Amendola himself is the author of this series. "What is amazing here is the overlapping of the concepts of life and death, old and new," he said, "people live among the tombs and kids play on them. But always with total respect for those buried underground. In 90% of the cases, the buried ones do not belong to the family living 'upstairs', but they care about them like they were their beloved departed ones." And in Burkina Faso, a landlocked country in West Africa, the natives are captured in gritty, mesmerizing images by the aforementioned Francesco Romeo.

In Europe, in Italy to be exact, photographer Giovanni Barba tells the story of Cristina and Salvatore in "The Mud House," where traces of the memory of the land and its history remain etched into a house and the family that inhabits it. These are eople who worked their entire lives in the fields of Teano, in the heartland of Terra di Lavoro, the territory in Lazio and Campagna. They live far into the middle of nowhere in rooms overcome by mold. "Now, too old and worn out to work, they spend their remaining days in the company of alcohol, waiting for the occasional visit from their children or relatives."

In the Americas, viewers come face to face with the gripping topic of "Mental Illness in the American Prisons," (photos by Jenn Ackerman) poverty and violence in the low income communities of New York City and life in the Amazon, where medical missionaries bring treatment to impoverished coastal communities.

An installation of images from the [Occupy Movement](#) [4] unites Europe and America with photos from both the Rome and New York actions, and the work of Next Generation, the Shoot4Change



international project to teach social photography to children around the world demonstrates the global alliance that unifies the organization.

4 Continents 4 Change opened on July 5th in conjunction with SOHO Photo Gallery's annual National Photography Competition winner's exhibition. All proceeds generated from sales of the collection will be used to assist in funding local projects and/or other charitable causes.

Following New York, the tour will stop in Mexico City before returning to Europe with an exhibition schedules to open in Rome in December 2012.

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- [2] <http://www.sohophoto.com>
- [3] <http://www.shoot4change.net/>
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