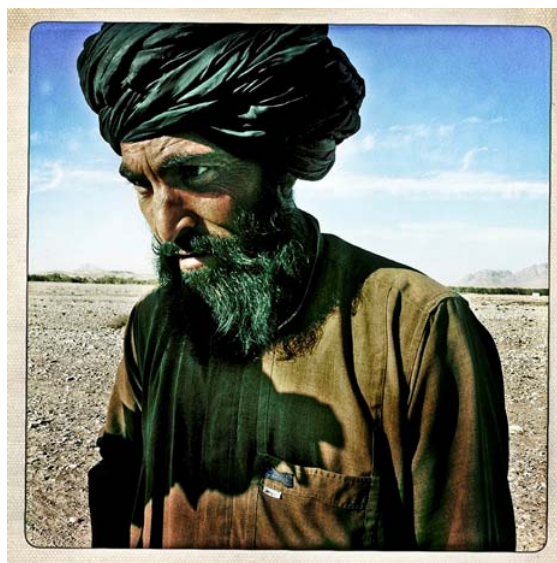


February 9, 2011

The Sony World Photography Awards

Posted by *Elisabeth Biondi*



Why would anyone spend three days in London, where there is tons of fun to be had, in a windowless room looking at thousands of pictures from morning till night? Last month, my reason was to join a jury for the Sony World Photography Awards, which last week made public its shortlist. The winners will be announced in April in an extravaganza event at Leicester Square.

My category was photojournalism and documentary photography, with entries from a hundred and sixty-two countries. 2010 was a year of floods, but the most photographed disaster was the earthquake in Haiti. Afghanistan was no longer at the forefront of pictures submitted; this in itself was a statement about the year's priorities. Fortunately, it wasn't all gloomy—there was also movie-watching in India, gladiators, beach-goers, weddings, and beauty contests.

I love being on juries, especially when they are well organized and the judges are knowledgeable and committed to photography. At the beginning we were four relative strangers from different countries in a darkened room, but we parted as friends. Humor was an important element in our search for extraordinary stories, and I appreciated my cohort's taste for irony, as well as their wisdom. "A picture is like a carpet," said my fellow-judge the photographer Rena Effendi. "It has to have eternal harmony."

Here's a selection from the shortlisted stories.

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Photograph by Alejandro Chaskielberg. *The Hunter.*



Top image: Photograph by Balazs Gardi. Helmand Province, November 4th.

Photography by Filip Daniel. *Flood Walls, Poland, May 19th.*



Photograph by Bernd Seydel. Martial Arts.



Photograph by Robin Hammond. Rape, Democratic Republic of Congo.



Photograph by Pavel Wolberg. Fat Man Competition, Ethiopia.



Photography by Emiliano Larizza. Haiti earthquake, Port au Prince, January.



Photograph by David Chancellor. Elephant Hunter, Zimbabwe.



Photograph by Tommaso Bonaventura. Beauty Contest, Italy.