

# PORTRAIT(S) OF THE WORLD

JONATHAN  
ZABRISKIE

“ Surely all art is the result of one’s having faced danger, of having gone through an experience to the end, to the point where no human being can go further. The farther one pushes, the more honest, the more personal, the more unique a life becomes. ”

Rainer Maria Rilke

# PO

## RTRAIT(S) OF THE WORLD

### A COMMITMENT

I PROPOSE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE HAD THE COURAGE TO DEFY AUTHORITY, TO QUESTION ASSUMPTIONS OR TO FIGHT FOR A GENEROUS CAUSE. ARTISTS, INTELLECTUALS, OPPONENTS OF REGIMES, DOCTORS, RESEARCHERS... MEN AND WOMEN WHO JOINED THE RESISTANCE ON THE DAY THAT THEIR POWER TO CHOOSE BECAME A WEAPON, THE REAL ASSET IN THEIR STRUGGLE.

EACH OF THEIR DESTINIES IS SPECIAL, SHAPED IN THAT SINGULAR, FASCINATING MOMENT WHEN THEY CHOSE SPEECH AND ACTION OVER SILENCE. BEYOND THE DETAILS OF HISTORY, OF INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCE, THESE ACTS OF RESISTANCE HAVE DRAWN THEIR STRENGTH FROM THE DEEPEST REALMS OF HUMAN NATURE: THEY STAND FOR THE RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT, THEY STAND FOR GENEROSITY TOWARDS OTHERS, THEY ARE A CALL TO FREEDOM.

THROUGH THESE MANY FIGURES, SOME WELL KNOWN, OTHERS LESS SO, A SKETCH OF THE FACE OF FREEDOM COMES TO LIFE. HERE, FREEDOM IS NOT AN ABSTRACT OR PHILOSOPHICAL NOTION, BUT REALITY IN PERPETUAL MOTION, RICH IN ITS DIVERSITY.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THESE MEN AND WOMEN IS ALSO A WAY OF INTRODUCING THEM TO A CONTEMPORARY AUDIENCE. THROUGH THE ENCOUNTER, THOSE WHO ENJOY FREEDOM ARE REMINDED OF THE INESTIMABLE VALUE OF THAT RIGHT, WHILE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED ARE GIVEN THE HOPE THAT NOTHING IS IRREVERSIBLE. AND ALL RECEIVE THE MESSAGE THAT THE BUILDING OF A WORLD WITH MORE FREEDOM IS NOT A DREAM BUT A REALITY, IN WHICH EACH AND EVERY PERSON HAS A CONTRIBUTION TO MAKE, HOWEVER HUMBLE.

## PO

# RTRAIT(S) OF THE WORLD

### THE PROJECT

**T**HE AIM IS TO PRODUCE A VAST GALLERY OF PORTRAITS OF MEN AND WOMEN WHOSE EXCEPTIONAL DESTINIES HAVE LEFT A DEEP MARK ON OUR EPOCH. ALTHOUGH THESE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF COUNTLESS PICTURES, OFTEN NO PORTRAIT HAS EVER BEEN TAKEN OF THEM.

PERSONALITIES SUCH AS WEI JINGSHENG, SIMON WIESENTHAL, CHEKEBA HACHEMI, FEMI ANIKULAPO KUTI AND AHMED SHAH MASSOUD WILL BE JOINED BY...

... MOHAMMED **ALI** (USA), ANTHONY **APPIAH** (GHANA), OSCAR **ARIAS SÁNCHEZ** (COSTA RICA), BRAGI **ARNASON** (ICELAND), AUNG SAN SUU KYI (BURMA), BREYTEN **BREYTENBACH** (SOUTH AFRICA), AIMÉ **DÉSAIRE** (FRANCE), FATHER **CEYRAC** (INDIA), HIS HOLINESS THE **DALAI LAMA** (TIBET), MAHMOUD **DARWICH** (PALESTINE), GASTON **DAYANAND** (INDIA), SHIRIN **EBADI** (IRAN), MIGUEL ANGEL **ESTRELLA** (ARGENTINA), FATANA **GELLANI** (AFGHANISTAN), JEAN LUC **GODARD** (SWITZERLAND), XANANA **GUSMAD** (EAST TIMOR), VACLAV **HAVEL** (CZECH REPUBLIC), HIS HOLINESS **KARMAPA** (TIBET), FREDERIK **DE KLERK** (SOUTH AFRICA), NELSON **MANDELA** (SOUTH AFRICA), GABRIEL GARCÍA **MÁRQUEZ** (COLOMBIA), RIGOBERTA **MENCHÚ** (GUATEMALA), TONI **MORRISON** (USA), OSCAR **NIEMEYER** (BRAZIL), MARTHA **NUSSBAUM** (USA), GEOFFREY **ORYEMA** (UGANDA), **RAONI** (BRAZIL), JOSEPH **ROTLAT** (UNITED KINGDOM), SALMAN **RUSHDIE** (UNITED KINGDOM), NAWAL AL SAADAWI (EGYPT), EDUARDO **SÁNCHEZ** (CUBA), AMARTYA **SEN** (INDIA), LEÍLA **SHAHID** (PALESTINE), AMADOU TOUMANI **TOURÉ** (MALI), ARCHBISHOP DESMOND **TUTU** (SOUTH AFRICA), LECH **WALESIA** (POLAND), MICHAEL **WALZER** (USA), JODY **WILLIAMS** (USA), ALEXEI **YABLOKOV** (RUSSIA), MUHAMMAD **YUNUS** (BANGLADESH), ROBERT **ZIMMERMAN** (USA)...

... AND MANY MORE, COMING TO PROMINENCE AS EVENTS UNFOLD AND HISTORY IS WRITTEN. INSTEAD OF MERELY COMPILING AN ILLUSTRATED LIST OF INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENTS, I WANT TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE ELDERS WHOSE THOUGHTS AND IDEALS REMAIN A GUIDING FORCE, AND TO PUT THE SPOTLIGHT ON THOSE WHO WILL SHAPE TOMORROW'S WORLD.

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## RTAIT(S) OF THE WORLD

### AN EXHIBITION, A BOOK

**Q**UON COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT, A SELECTION OF 100 PORTRAITS WILL BE MADE. THESE WILL BE PUT TOGETHER IN A BOOK AND PRESENTED IN AN INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, TOURING THE WORLD AND OPEN TO ALL. WHETHER IN THE STREETS OF NEW YORK, LAGOS, DELHI OR PARIS, THIS REMINDER OF OUR VALUES WILL BE EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC AT LARGE.

DISCOVER CRUCIAL CONFLICTS IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT, MEET THE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BECOME THEIR EMBLEMS, BE SUBMERGED BY THE FORCE OF THEIR GAZE... FOR VISITORS AND READERS ALIKE, THE PRESENTATION OF THESE PORTRAITS IN AN EXHIBITION AREA AND A BOOK IS INTENDED TO OFFER AN EYE-OPENING ENCOUNTER, AN INVITATION TO TRAVEL AND A NEW-FOUND AWARENESS OF HISTORY.

**THE EXHIBITION** OF THESE LARGE FORMAT PORTRAITS HAS A TWOFOLD AIM: TO ALLOW AN ACQUAINTANCE WITH THESE EXCEPTIONAL MEN AND WOMEN, CONVEYING TO EACH VIEWER A SENSE OF CONTROL OVER THEIR DESTINY, AND TO CREATE A GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN BOND BETWEEN DIFFERENT PEOPLE, ACROSS DIFFERENT STRUGGLES.

**THE BOOK** THAT ACCOMPANIES THE EXHIBITION IS MORE THAN JUST A CATALOG. IT ALLOWS THE PEOPLE PHOTOGRAPHED TO SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. I ASKED EACH PERSON THE SAME QUESTION: "HOW DO YOU SEE THE WORLD? YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW?". THEIR REPLIES BEAR WITNESS TO THEIR CONVICTIONS. IN THIS WAY, THE BOOK RECORDS AND TRANSMITS THEIR VALUES.

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# RAIT(S) OF THE WORLD

THE SETTING TO CAPTURE A MOMENT

**N**O MATTER WHERE IN THE WORLD THEY ARE TAKEN, THESE PORTRAITS ARE MADE WITH A LARGE FORMAT 8 X10 CAMERA IN STUDIO CONDITIONS. THE EXHIBITION PRINTS WILL BE LARGER THAN LIFE SIZE.

A WHITE BACKGROUND, A CORNER, A FEW LIGHTS: A STUDIO APPARENTLY IMPROVISED, BUT IN REALITY CAREFULLY PREPARED DOWN TO THE LAST DETAIL. ONCE THEY ENTER THIS SIMPLE, NEUTRAL SPACE, THE SUBJECTS LEAVE BEHIND EVERY CONNECTION WITH THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES AND THEIR IMAGE IN SOCIETY AND THE MEDIA. FROM THAT MOMENT ON, THEY REALIZE THAT I AM NOT JUST THERE TO TAKE THEIR PICTURE. THE CAMERA, AS IMPOSING AS IT IS INTIMIDATING, ADDS ANOTHER DIMENSION TO THE PROCESS. IT CHANGES THEIR RAPPORT WITH TIME.

THE SAME GOES FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHER. SINCE WORKING WITH LARGE FORMAT MULTIPLIES TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS, THE IMAGE MUST BE CONSTRUCTED UPFRONT. I STUDY THE CHARACTER OF THE PERSON THAT I WISH TO PHOTOGRAPH, THEN I ADJUST THE LIGHTING BASED ON MY FEELINGS. THIS TECHNICAL COMPLEXITY MAKES FOR CONSIDERABLE SIMPLICITY AT THE MOMENT WHEN THE IMAGE IS ACTUALLY CAPTURED. ONCE THE SETTINGS HAVE BEEN MADE, EVERYTHING HAPPENS FACE TO FACE, EYE TO EYE. THE CAMERA ITSELF BECOMES ONLY MARGINAL AS THE REAL ENCOUNTER TAKES PLACE.

WITH LARGE FORMAT PORTRAITS, THERE ARE NO LUCKY COINCIDENCES. NOTHING IS LEFT TO CHANCE, EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON THE SUBJECT'S ACUTE AWARENESS OF BEING LAID BARE AND ON THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S METICULOUS CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMAGE.

OUT OF THE SILENCE AND THE UNSPOKEN COMES THE TRUTH OF THE SPIRIT, ITS INNER BEAUTY.





WEI JINGSHENG

# WEI JINGSHENG

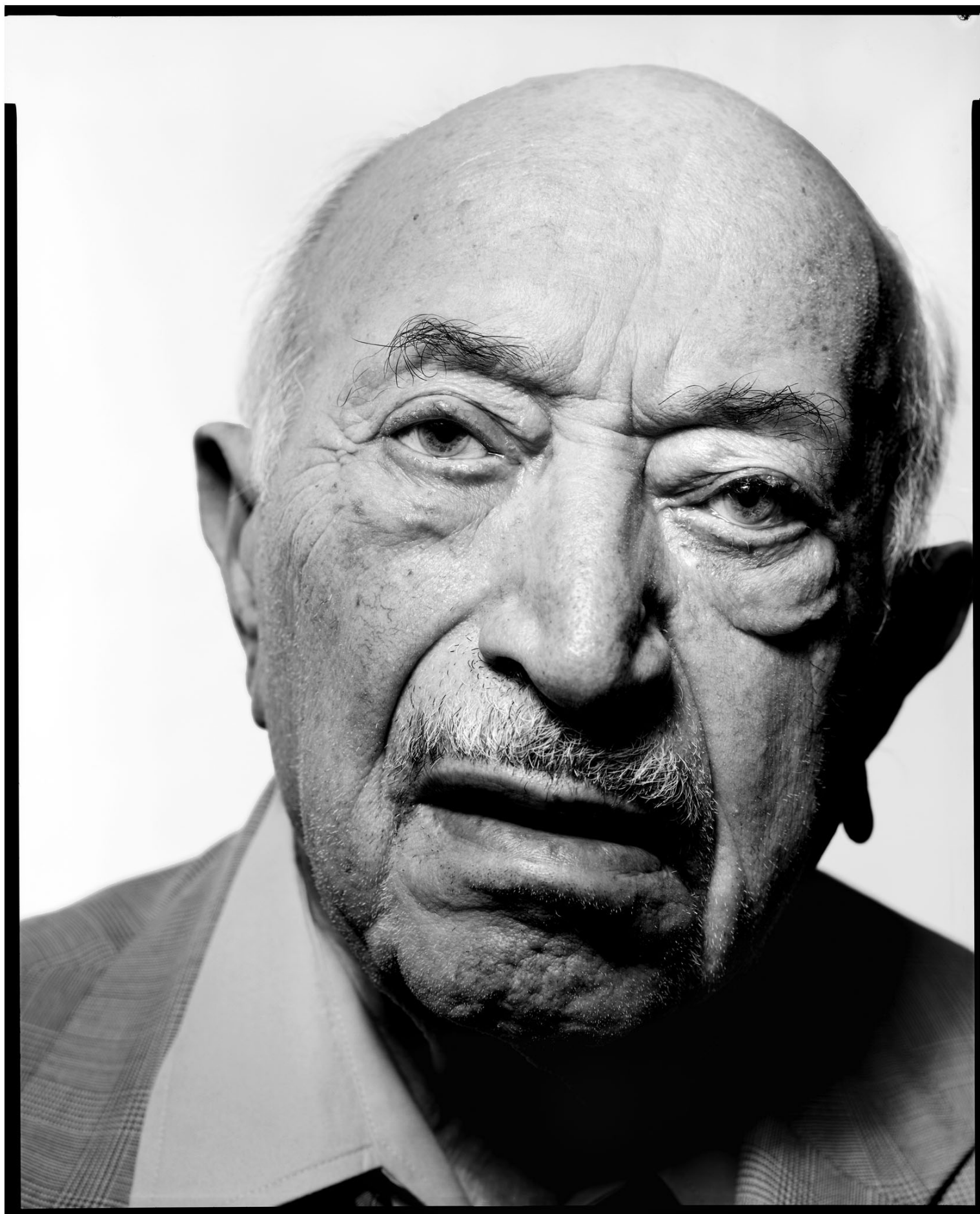
BORN 20 MAY 1950, BEIJING.

WEI JINGSHENG WAS ONLY AN ELECTRICIAN AT THE BEIJING ZOO WHEN HE STOOD UP TO DENOUNCE THE REGIME OF DENG XIAOPING, WHICH JAILED HIM FROM MARCH 1979 TO SEPTEMBER 1993. HE WAS THEN ARRESTED BY THE NEXT REGIME, UNDER JIANG ZEMIN, AND JAILED FROM MARCH 1994 UNTIL NOVEMBER 1997, WHEN HE WAS EXILED TO THE UNITED STATES.

“ Wei Jingsheng is one of the most famous but least known Chinese of his generation. Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for four years running, for two decades he was the living symbol of the struggle for democratic rights in the People’s Republic of China. He spent 18 years in China’s toughest labor reform camps, but his writing has struck fear into the hearts of two generations of Communist Party leaders. His fight for democracy now continues unabated from his new base in the West. “

Marie Holzman,  
sinologist and biographer of Wei Jingsheng





SIMON WIESENTHAL

# SIMON WIESENTHAL

BORN 31 DECEMBER 1908, BUCZACZ (UKRAINE),

DIED 20 SEPTEMBER 2005, VIENNA (AUSTRIA).

IN 1941 ARCHITECT SIMON WIESENTHAL WAS DEPORTED FROM L'VIV (THEN IN POLAND) AND INTERNED IN NAZI DEATH CAMPS UNTIL 1945. AFTER THE WAR HE FOUNDED THE JEWISH HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION CENTER, FIRST IN LINZ AND LATER IN VIENNA, AND BECAME AN IMPLACABLE HUNTER OF NAZI WAR CRIMINALS, TRACKING DOWN ADOLF EICHMANN IN 1959.

“ Simon Wiesenthal must take immense credit for his lone struggle to end the impunity of Nazi war criminals in the 1950s, in a hostile environment. During the Cold War both East and West seemed eager to outdo each other in turning a blind eye to former persecutors of Jews now hiding in the divided halves of Germany. He also managed to overcome the general indifference of European nations and public opinion with regard to the tragic fate of the Jews, his constant insistence on recalling the facts ensuring that the memory of the Holocaust could not be swept under the carpet of History. “

Serge Klarsfeld,  
lawyer and historian



CHEKEBA HACHEMI

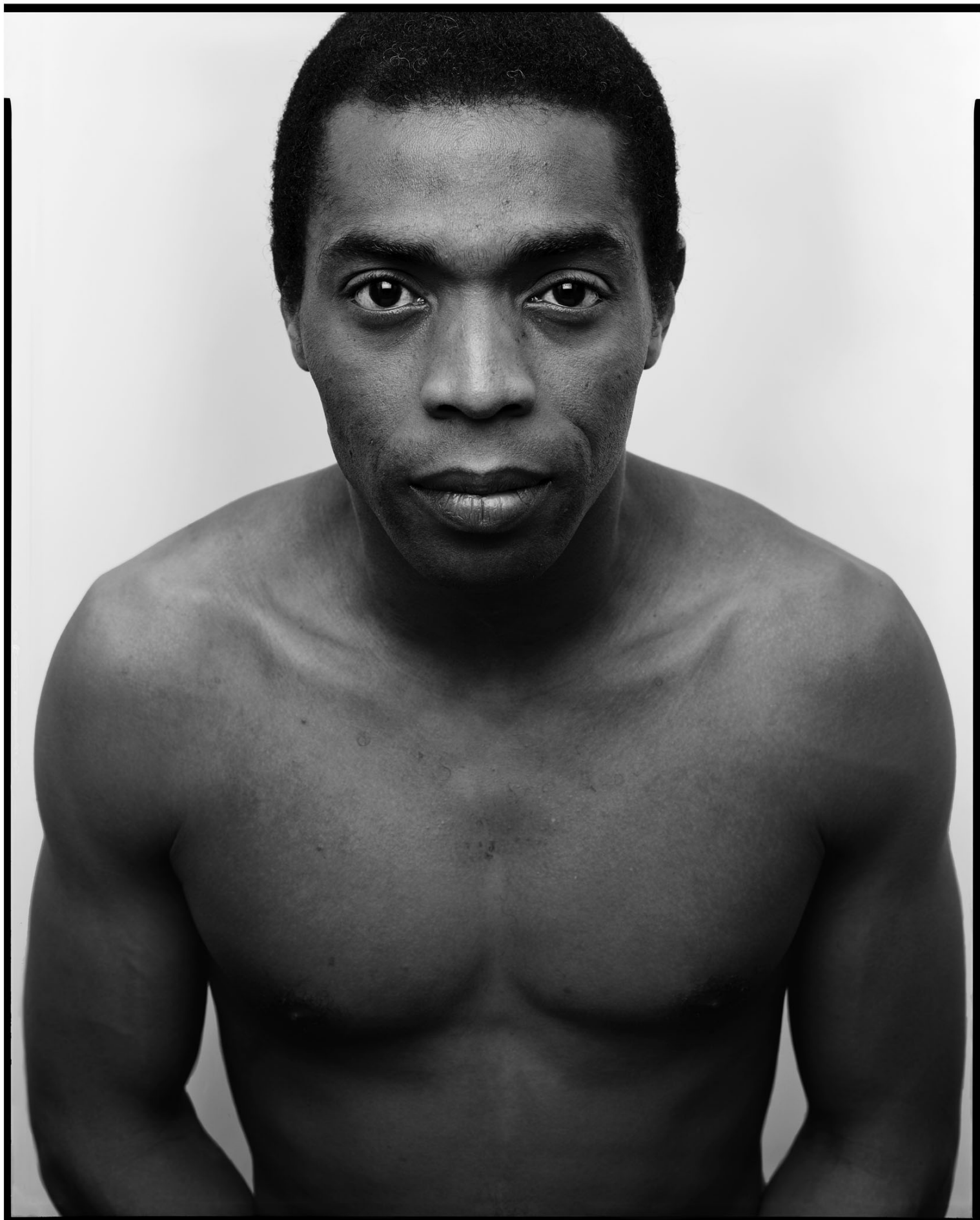
# CHEKEBA HACHEMI

BORN 20 MAY 1974, KABUL.

NATURALIZED AS A FRENCH CITIZEN WHEN STILL A CHILD, CHEKEBA HACHEMI RETURNED TO AFGHANISTAN TO MEET WITH THE LATE COMMANDANT MASSOUD, SEEKING HIS SUPPORT FOR REBUILDING SCHOOLS IN THE PANJSHIR VALLEY. AS THE FOUNDER OF THE HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION AFGHANISTAN LIBRE SHE WORKS TOGETHER WITH LOCAL PEOPLE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN. THE FIRST FEMALE DIPLOMAT OF THE INTERIM AFGHAN GOVERNMENT, IN 2002 SHE WAS MADE SECRETARY OF THE AFGHANISTAN EMBASSY TO THE EUROPEAN UNION IN BRUSSELS AND SHE NOW WORKS FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF HER COUNTRY.

“ Since 1996 Chekeba Hachemi has been stirring consciences over the difficult living conditions facing Afghan women. She has pleaded their cause at the European Parliament, the UN and many other international institutions. A woman of action with firsthand experience, she has turned her outspokenness into a highly effective weapon. A woman of exceptional generosity and solidarity towards her compatriots, she continues to fight on behalf of Afghan women, taking up the challenge of Afghanistan.”

Nicole Fontaine,  
former President of the European Parliament



FEMI ANIKULAPO KUTI

# FEMI ANIKULAPO KUTI

**BORN 16 JUNE 1962, LONDON.**

**SON OF FELA KUTI, PIONEER AFROBEAT MUSICIAN AND OPPONENT OF THE REGIME IN NIGERIA. AT THE AGE OF 15 HE JOINED HIS FATHER IN AFRICA, PLAYING THE SAXOPHONE. IN 1986 HE STARTED HIS OWN BAND, THE POSITIVE FORCE, WHICH SOON BECAME A HIT BOTH IN AFRICA AND INTERNATIONALLY. IN 1998 IN LAGOS HE SET UP MASS (THE MOVEMENT AGAINST SECOND SLAVERY).**

“ Femi Kuti could have settled down in comfortable exile as part of the world music diaspora. Instead he chose Lagos and the fight to create the post-modern melting pot of Sub-Saharan Africa. Playing nights at the Afrikan Shrine, the legendary Afrobeat club founded by his father, Femi Kuti’s sax blares out an exorcism of the old demons of neo-colonialism and the violence of globalization. And the dawn signals the rebirth of Africa. “

Jean-Christophe Servant,  
journalist with Le Monde diplomatique





AHMAD SHAH MASSOUD

# AHMAD SHAH MASSOUD

BORN 1953, JANGALAK (PANJSHIR VALLEY, AFGHANISTAN).

MASSOUD BROKE OFF HIS ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES AT UNIVERSITY TO JOIN THE ANTI-SOVIET INSURRECTION. HIS FIFTEEN YEARS OF CEASELESS COMBAT AS A RESISTANCE LEADER EARNED HIM THE SOBRIQUET "THE LION OF PANJSHIR" AND WERE CRUCIAL TO BRINGING DOWN THE SOVIET REGIME IN 1992. AS A MINISTER OF DEFENSE OF THE NEWLY-LIBERATED COUNTRY, HE REJECTED POLITICAL ISLAMISM AND FOUGHT TO DEFEND THE ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF HIS LAND. THE BITTER FEUDS BETWEEN RIVAL FACTIONS DESTROYED ANY HOPE OF PEACE, HOWEVER, AND THE TALIBAN TOOK CONTROL OF KABUL. MASSOUD, NOW ISOLATED, WAS AGAIN FORCED TO BECOME A RESISTANCE FIGHTER. AS AN EXCEPTIONAL AND FAR-SIGHTED STRATEGIST, HE CONSTANTLY ALERTED THE WORLD POWERS TO THE DANGERS OF EXTREMIST TERRORISM. ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2001 HE WAS KILLED IN A SUICIDE BOMB ATTACK.

" I first met Ahmad Shah Massoud in the High Panjshir Valley in 1984. At the height of the fighting against the Soviet troops we shared moments of joy and moments of tragedy. Only as the days went by, however, did I discover the man himself: his profound humanity, his love for poetry and his absolute determination to lead his country to peace and freedom. For me he was a brother. Today we are all called upon to find an ever greater place of honor for his memory. To forget him would make us his murderers a second time over. "

Dr. Abdullah Abdullah,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



# THE STORY OF A PHOTOGRAPH

(press cutting: FRENCH, issue 1, Fall-Winter 2002-2003, Alain Weiss)



## At Rest

**In view of his forthcoming exhibition and book *Portrait(s) du monde*, Jonathan Zabriskie took a portrait of Commandant Massoud. For the first time, the "Lion of Panjshir" agreed to pose for a photograph taken out of context. For the first time, that picture is published here. The story of an extraordinary photograph.**

Wednesday 4 April 2001: Massoud was in Paris. Jonathan Zabriskie saw it on the one o'clock news. He couldn't believe his eyes. For two weeks he had been getting ready for a trip to Afghanistan, to do a reportage which he had accepted only on condition that he could take a portrait of Massoud. Zabriskie had been a top photo journalist, working in various theaters of war. But he quit, after three years close to death in a hospital bed.

At the time he was working on one huge long-term project: a series of portraits of major world figures for an exhibition, to be accompanied by a book (code name: *Portrait(s) of the World*). There were to be a hundred portraits in all. A white background, an 8x10 camera; framed in a corner, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama and some twenty other personalities of like stature had already been in front of his lens.

And now the "Lion of Panjshir" was here, so the TV said: during his stay Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, Vice-President of the legitimate government of Afghanistan and the main leader of the armed resistance against the Taliban regime, would be received by France's Foreign Affairs Minister Hubert Védrine and visit the European Parliament in Strasbourg. But at that exact moment the military head of the Northern Alliance was speaking to the National Assembly. And Jonathan Zabriskie was already laying siege to the commander's entourage at the Palais Bourbon, leaving a dossier for the attention of Massoud with the portraits of the personalities he had already photographed. In the early hours of the following morning Zabriskie called the embassy, harassing office after office. "By the end of the day they knew who was calling before they answered - they all went 'Hello, Jonathan' when they picked up the phone!". He explained that his equipment was cumbersome, he needed time to set it up, and if Commander Massoud accepted, as he surely would, then he, Jonathan, would need to be ready and waiting, so could he come over with his camera? Worn down by attrition, the embassy staff told him to come the next day. "I was at the embassy at dawn. A brief moment of turmoil: 'Just what is this, camera equipment? Ok, you sit in a corner, you don't set up anything'. I started hunting for a room where I could set up the studio. It was rather weird, they were all in a different world, occupied with something else: the boss was in town, so I was pretty much left to myself". Zabriskie found a large office on the first floor, 'ok, ok, go in there, whatever you say'. Hardly had he begun setting up for the session when the Commander himself came in, looked over his gear and went out again. "There he was, and I wasn't ready. Two minutes later another guy came in raging, 'Who the hell are you? Who authorized you to come in here? In my office!!' It was the ambassador. He pointed to the plugs I'd pulled and the furniture I'd moved: 'What is this all about, who gave you pictures?' 'What pictures? Oh, yes, I saw the pictures but I didn't look at them,'

he shouted - and stormed off." The next day, Zabriskie was back at the embassy, dossier in hand. It was Sunday, the last day of Massoud's French visit. The ambassador agreed to see the photographer. He had calmed down but was still worried - what was the point of a photograph? There were plenty of photographs of Massoud. 'Correct,' said Zabriskie, 'as many as there are cameras in the world. But not one portrait, not one posed picture taken out of context.'

They rang up at four o'clock: "Ok, you're on for the photograph". Complete with bullet proof car, security services and body guards, Massoud arrived at the embassy four hours later: "he sat down in the studio which he'd seen me setting up. We shook hands. I showed him the portraits, he looked at them for a bit. I gently touched his hair and his beard, stroked his face. Around us, everybody was highly alert: 'what does this photographer think he's doing?'. Massoud just let me go on, saying nothing. I did two or three pictures, an immense aura emanated from him. The fourth time round I told him, 'tradition has it that the model now photographs the photographer'. The people with us were getting very nervous: 'what's with this shit?'. I posed in front of the camera and Massoud stuck his head under the black cloth. I heard him say, 'But it's upside down!' His training as an architect enabled him to grasp my explanation straight away. And I saw the child in him come out: for five minutes, I know Massoud forgot about Afghanistan, about political infighting and about the war. He was totally taken up with the frame and directing me: "No, lift your head, look prouder!". He took the picture and I said, 'let's get back to it'. He nodded and this time I suggested he close his eyes. Under the cloth he had seen things the way I saw them. That changed everything. He could visualize. You have to remember that there were several million dollars on his head at that time, payable to his assassin. The fact that he could shut his eyes and show his face so calm and restful made it, for me, a moment of extraordinary fullness. Some time later he received the photos from the session, he was very proud of the one he took."

Jonathan Zabriskie has donated his pictures to Afghanistan: "it's their history, not mine." What happened next is sadly familiar: two days before the 9/11 suicide attack on the Twin Towers in 2001, Commander Massoud died from injuries received during a "suicide attack carried out by two Arab men posing as journalists, with a concealed bomb in their camera" (according to AFP).

One of the photographs taken by Jonathan Zabriskie has since become the official portrait used in Afghan embassies. It is also reproduced on a 45 foot high tarpaulin stretched across the road, now renamed Shah Massoud avenue, which connects the airport to downtown Kabul.

# POrTRAIT OF THE ARTIST



## **Describe yourself.**

I'm 38 years old, I'm a photographer. When I was a kid I wanted to be a doctor. At 23 I had a serious illness, a kind of cancer. I was told I did not have long to live. I bought a Leica and traveled to Romania. Ceaucescu was tottering, the country was torn by violence and bloodshed. I took pictures. When I came back my friends told me I should submit them for publication. Time Life bought a dozen – that gave me an incentive to go on another trip. Any psychiatrist would tell you that I was fighting the image of my own death by going to see other fighters die, in Bosnia, Georgia, Rwanda, Angola, Mozambique, Somalia. Until one day in 1996 when death nearly caught up with me, in Chechnya. A bomb. I was brought back in a coma. I opened my eyes five months later, in the U.S. Two years of rehabilitation. Still the desire to take pictures. But with a difference.

## **Where did the idea come from for this project to meet and take portraits of one hundred people who have an impact on the world?**

Through my work I had been in the presence of really exceptional people such as Ahmad Shah Massoud or Gorbachev. More recently, I came face to face with the Dalai Lama. I would like to meet Aung San Suu Kyi, Nelson Mandela. But also lower profile personalities such as Muhammad Yunus, the founder of the Grameen Bank, or dissident Korean poets who have never been photographed. Most of these people have been pictured in action, in the context of what they do in their lives. What I want to do is to focus on portraits, fairly close up, in the studio. I want their gaze.

## **Have you made your peace with life? Is that what drives you now?**

It wasn't really me who was upset, it was Life that kept turning away from me. There's a quotation from Rilke which expresses better than I ever could what I feel today: 'all art is the result of one's having faced danger, of having gone through an experience to the end, to the point where no human being can go further. The farther one pushes, the more honest, the more personal, the more unique a life becomes.'

## **Isn't that rather an extreme view of art?**

No. I believe that we are going through, that the world is going through, a disturbing, violent period in which extremes, terrorism and its repression, overshadow the human and the beautiful. Certain men and women, by their voices and their deeds, offer us a vision of reality which is more positive, more courageous and, to my mind, more true. That is what I would like to show by capturing their faces and allowing people to see them.

2 June 2002  
Jean-Paul Ribes is a journalist and writer.



# PO

## RTrait(S) OF THE WORLD

### THE FUTURE

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE JOINED ME IN MY WORK, IN PARTICULAR MARIE HOLZMAN, SERGE KLARSFELD, NICOLE FONTAINE, JEAN-CHRISTOPHE SERVANT, DR ABDULLAH ABDULLAH AND THE MANY OTHERS WHOSE SUPPORT IS INFINITELY PRECIOUS TO ME.

ALLOW ME TO SAY THIS ONE LAST TIME.

LIFE IS MADE UP OF ENCOUNTERS. SOME, MORE THAN OTHERS, TURN OUR CERTAINTIES UPSIDE DOWN AND OPEN UP NEW PATHWAYS FOR US. IN MANY RESPECTS, PORTRAIT(S) OF THE WORLD IS ABOUT ENCOUNTERS THAT SHAPE A LIFE, THAT MAKE IT SINGULAR, UNIQUE. TO BRING ABOUT SUCH ENCOUNTERS IS TO DREAM OF A WORLD THAT IS JUST, TRUE, COURAGEOUS AND FREE.

THIS IS THE DREAM I SHARE WITH YOU TODAY.

*\* jonathan zabriskie.*

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