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Nobel Peace Center
Nobels Fredssenter

PRESS RELEASE

"One day our grandchildren will go to museums to see what poverty was like."
—Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize laureate 2006

"Poverty reduction and upgrading of informal settlements will not be possible unless cities are productive and efficient and capable of providing the poor with economic opportunities to build their assets and incomes."
—Nelson Mandela, Nobel Peace Prize laureate 1993

"This is how we live; a billion of us in a billion different ways. These photographs have surmounted the most debilitating aspect of how we perceive poverty, the vocabulary of grinding sameness by which lives of little means are conventionally described."
—Philip Gourevitch

"This is an exhibition made for reflection. Jonas Bendiksen highlights people's pride in their homes, and that speaks directly to our hearts. At the same time the visitor gets to feel and understand how urbanisation, poverty, and population growth are among the world's biggest challenges."
— Bente Erichsen, Director, Nobel Peace Center

"Over the last three years of visiting slums I'm simply awestruck by people's capacity to create normalcy and dignity out of the most challenging circumstances."
— Jonas Bendiksen



THE PLACES WE LIVE

Photo exhibition by Jonas Bendiksen
Nobel Peace Center, Oslo, Norway
From June 6, 2008, through January 2009

THE PLACES WE LIVE

Photographs by Jonas Bendiksen
Introduction by Philip Gourevitch
Published by Aperture, August 2008

In a unique photo exhibition and an extraordinary book, Jonas Bendiksen gives us powerful stories of slum life today.

The year 2008 has witnessed a major shift in the way people across the world live: for the first time in human history more people live in cities than in rural areas. One third of city dwellers, more than a billion people, live in slums.

***The Places We Live* exhibition at the Nobel Peace Center** is a multimedia installation that challenges viewers to reflect on what it means to live in a city in the 21st century. From 2005 to 2007, Jonas Bendiksen documented life in 20 homes in the slums of four different cities: Nairobi, Kenya; Mumbai, India; Jakarta, Indonesia; and Caracas, Venezuela. The visitors are invited into rooms where they are surrounded by colorful photographs virtually representing each slum home, all the while hearing stories told by the people living there.

“Tell me about life here” Bendiksen would ask; what followed was a glimpse into a world that he describes in *The Places We Live*. His intimate and colorful images, and the stories told by the slum dwellers themselves are filled with hope and pride and show lives full of challenges and hard work.

The Places We Live is a traveling exhibition shown for the first time at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway. It is co-produced by Magnum Photos and the Nobel Peace Center. Canon is the technical partner, and the exhibition is supported by Hydro.

***The Places We Live* book from Aperture** includes twenty double-gatefold images, each representing an individual home and its denizen’s story. Through its innovative design and experiential approach, *The Places We Live* brings the modern-day Dickensian reality of these individuals into sharp focus.

With over sixty-five lush and rich images, this new monograph brings a compelling perspective to a significant subject matter, the slums of the world. Bendiksen’s lyrical images capture the diversity of personal histories and outlooks found in these dense neighborhoods that, despite commonly held assumptions, are not simply places of poverty and misery. Yet, slum residents continuously face enormous challenges, such as the lack of health care, sanitation, and electricity.

A member of Magnum Photos, **JONAS BENDIKSEN** (born in Tønsberg, Norway, 1977) has received numerous awards, including the 2003 Infinity Award from the International Center of Photography, and first prize in the Pictures of the Year International Awards. His photographs have appeared in *National Geographic*, *GEO*, *Newsweek*, and the *Sunday Times Magazine*, among other publications. His bestselling first book, *Satellites: Photographs from the Fringes of the Former Soviet Union*, was published in 2006 by Aperture. In 2007, the *Paris Review* received a National Magazine Award for Bendiksen’s project *The Places We Live*. He is the most recent winner of the National Geographic Photography Grant, and is the first Norwegian photographer to become a member of MAGNUM Photos.

PHILIP GOUREVITCH (book introduction) is editor of the *Paris Review*, author of *Standard Operating Procedure* (a collaboration with Errol Morris), and *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*.

The Nobel Peace Center presents the Nobel Peace Prize laureates and their committed, groundbreaking efforts. Permanent and temporary exhibitions provide an insight into topics such as war, peace, and conflict resolution. Guided tours, films, and seminars invite you to reflect debate and get involved. The Nobel Peace Center opened June 11, 2005, is open year round, and continually welcomes young and old visitors from all over the world.

Aperture—a not-for-profit foundation dedicated to advancing photography in all its forms—was founded in 1952 by six gifted individuals: photographers Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, Barbara Morgan, and Minor White; historian Beaumont Newhall; and writer/curator Nancy Newhall. With scant resources, these visionary artists created a new periodical, *Aperture* magazine, to serve photographers and photography enthusiasts worldwide. As the medium flourished, so too did Aperture Foundation, expanding to include the subsequent publication of books (over four hundred to date); limited-edition photographs and portfolios; artist lectures and symposia; and a traveling exhibitions program that since its inception has presented over one hundred exhibitions at major venues throughout the United States and abroad.

Review copies, artwork, and press tours of the exhibition are available upon request. For interviews with Jonas Bendiksen, contact the Nobel Peace Center.

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