



lens culture international exposure awards

the best in global photography 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Winners Announced: Lens Culture International Exposure Awards 2009

Global photography competition attracted more than 6,000 photo submissions from 48 countries in the Award's first year

Paris – 15 October 2009 – **Marco Vernaschi**, an Italian photojournalist based in Buenos Aires, has been awarded the Grand Prize in the Lens Culture International Exposure Awards for his hard-hitting portfolio on the consequences of cocaine trafficking in the small West African country of Guinea-Bissau.

Brad Moore, Stella Johnson and Laura Pannack won the Single Image prizes. The international jury selected a further 25 photographers to receive Honorable Mention Awards. This year's competition featured more than 6,000 entries from photographers in 48 countries around the world. Altogether, the winners represent work from 14 countries.

Mr. Vernaschi's long-term project *West Africa's New Achilles' Heel*, documents the major illegal activities behind terrorism, including cocaine trafficking. The project, supported by the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, shows the effects of cocaine trafficking in West Africa, including how criminal networks led by Latin American drug cartels and the Lebanese Islamist group Hezbollah destroyed a whole country, Guinea Bissau, in just a few years.

"I'm thrilled and honored to have won such a prestigious award. Thank you for believing in my work," said Mr. Vernaschi, Grand Prize winner of Lens Culture International Exposure Awards 2009.

"Mr. Vernaschi's powerful and disturbing work captured the attention and praise of every single juror on our stellar international panel of judges," said Jim Casper, publisher of Lens Culture. "Our hope is that this story will attract widespread attention—and encourage others to help spread awareness—in an effort to find solutions to these deep-rooted social problems."

ABOUT THE AWARDS

The Lens Culture International Exposure Awards aim to bring important photography from around the world to broad distribution and global exposure. The competition is open to both established professional and emerging photographers, and to all genres of photography, from hard-hitting photojournalism, to fine art, and from street photography to the poetic, personal, abstract and human.

The annual Lens Culture International Exposure Awards is organized by lensculture.com, one of the world's most popular online magazines about contemporary photography. Prizes for the winners are sponsored by creative publishing platform **Blurb.com**, and custom-photography website design company **liveBooks.com**. Cash prizes are sponsored by Lens Culture.



ABOUT THE WINNERS

The prize winners are listed below. Further details can be found on www.lensculture.com/awards-2009-winners.

- » **Portfolio Award Grand Prize**
Marco Vernaschi, *West Africa's New Achilles' Heel*
- » **Single Image Award, First Prize**
Brad Moore, *Korean Methodist, Fullerton, California*
- » **Single Image Award, Second Prize**
Stella Johnson, *Mytilene, Greece*
- » **Single Image Award, Third Prize:**
Laura Pannack, *Graham, teenage anorexic*
- » **Honorable Mentions**
Edmund Clark, (Great Britain); Sylvain Deleu, (Great Britain); Julie Denesha (US); Peter DiCampo (US); Johan Ensing (Netherlands); Kate Geraghty (Australia); Leah Giesler (US); Jan Grarup (Denmark); Colin Gray (Great Britain); Jessica Hines (US); Elin Hoyland (Norway); Priya Kambli (US); Mischa Keijser (Netherlands); Rania Matar (US); Sarbil Olivier (Thailand); Adam Panczuk (Poland); Zubin Pastakia (India); Paolo Patrizi (Japan); Alexis Pike (US); Michelle Sank (Great Britain); Mahesh Shantaram (India); Yisook Sohn (Korea); Daniel Traub (US); Raina Vaskovska (Bulgaria); Danielle Voirin (France)

THE JURY FOR 2009

The jury for the 2009 Awards was comprised of photography experts from all over the world: Stefanie Braun, (UK), curator at the Photographers' Gallery, London; Xavier Canonne, (BE), director of the Musée de la Photographie, in Charleroi, Belgium; Jim Casper, (FR), editor and publisher of Lens Culture; Stephen Mayes, (US), director of VII Photo in New York; Christopher Rauschenberg, (US), photographer, curator, and co-founder of Blue SKy Gallery, Gallery Nine, and Photolucida in Portland, Oregon; Sujong Song, (Korea), curator and festival director in Seoul, Korea; and Mary Virginia Swanson, (US), expert on photography and fine art marketing.

ABOUT LENS CULTURE

Lens Culture is one of the most popular and influential online magazines about contemporary photography today. The site attracts 8,000 – 10,000+ unique visitors every day, from more than 50 countries (over 3 million visits each year). The audience includes photography collectors, photo editors, book publishers, museum curators, art gallery owners, agents, critics, journalists, festival directors, and other passionate lovers of photography. Several photographers who have gained attention as a result of their feature in Lens Culture have won publishing contracts, solo and group art gallery shows, museum exhibitions, editorial assignments, participation in international photography festivals, and commissions from around the world.

For more information, contact:

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Portfolio Award Winner

Selected images and captions © Marco Vernaschi



Local drug traffickers have successfully organized a strong criminal network in Bissau. Over the last two years, abductions, murders and threats have gradually become normal practice. In this picture, an account is settled between drug dealers.



The team of soldiers who executed the President, photographed seven hours after they accomplished their task, in the Military Headquarters in Bissau.



Besides the violence and corruption, drug trafficking also brought marginalization among locals. Crack addiction, a consequence of the drug trade, increased prostitution and caused an unseen wave of HIV and AIDS in the capital, Bissau.



Crack was an unknown drug in Bissau until 2007, when drug traffickers started their business in Guinea-Bissau. The drug issue is so new that there is no data available, making it impossible to say how many people are lost in crack addiction. Worse, there is no consciousness among the people about the long-term effects of this plague. The drug situation in Bissau is particularly sad. There is no prevention, no rehabilitation.

Single Image Award Winners



1st Prize: Korean Methodist, Fullerton, California © Brad Moore



2nd Prize: Mytilene, Greece © Stella Johnson



3rd Prize: Graham - teenage anorexic © Laura Pannack