GIDEON MENDEL BIOGRAPHY

Recognized as one of the world’s leading contemporary photographers, Mendel’s intimate style of image-making and long-term commitment to socially engaged projects has earned him international acclaim. Born in Johannesburg in 1959, he studied Psychology and African History at the University of Cape Town. He began photographing in the 1980s, during the final years of apartheid. It was this work as a “struggle photographer” that first brought his work to global attention.

In the early 1990s he moved to London, continuing to respond to global social issues, with a major focus on HIV/AIDS, particularly in Africa but expanding worldwide during the last twenty years. The concluding chapter, *Through Positive Eyes*, is a collaborative project where Mendel’s role shifts from photographer to enabler, passing the camera to HIV-positive people.

Mendel has worked for many leading magazines, including *National Geographic, Geo*, and *The Guardian Weekend Magazine*. His first book, *A Broken Landscape: HIV & AIDS in Africa,* was published in 2001. Since then he has produced a number of photographic advocacy projects, working with prominent NGOs, including The Global Fund, Médecins Sans Frontières, Treatment Action Campaign, Action Aid, the Terrene Higgins Trust, UNICEF, Christian Aid, and Concern Worldwide.

Mendel’s earliest work from South Africa was highlighted in the *Rise and Fall of Apartheid* touring exhibition, curated by Okwui Enwezor. His recent project, entitled *Dzhangal,* an‘anti-photographic’ response to the global refugee crisis was shown at Autograph in London and the book is published by GOSTBooks.

Since 2007, Mendel has been working on *Drowning World*, his long-term art and advocacy project about flooding that is a personal response to climate change. Solo shows of *Drowning World* have been shown at many galleries and public installations around the word, including *Les Recontres de la Photographie* in Arles. In 2018 Drowning World was exhibited in nine different venues around the world.

Amongst many accolades, Mendel has won the Eugene Smith Award for Humanistic Photography, six World Press Photo Awards, first prize in the Pictures of the Year competition, a POY Canon Photo Essayist Award, and the Amnesty International Media Award for Photojournalism. In 2015 he was shortlisted for the Prix Pictet Award (Disorder) for *Drowning World*. In 2016 he was the first recipient of The Pollock-Krasner Foundation’s “Pollock Prize for Creativity” and also received the Jury Prize of the 2016 Greenpeace Photo Award.

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