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## Interview to Giles Duley, a member of the GC Visual Contest 2017

Interview to Giles Duley, a documentary photographer and photojournalist. He is a member of the Global Campus Visual Contest 2017.

**Your photos have documented the effects of conflicts on civilians and the refugee crisis from Europe to the Middle-East. How this experience has changed your perception of the world and what have you learned about humanity?**

*It is a simple question with a very long answer. It does not matter where the people are from or which conflict they are in. They share the same dreams and desires: to protect their families, to look after their parents, to get medical support; those are the basic things driving people in their everyday life. That is what makes people strive to travel to new places through a conflict, it is the same reason in every single country, so what I'm focusing on are the things we can all relate to. The greatest thing I have learned is that the more I travel the more I realize we are the same, I just see that everybody has the same sense of humanity as me. It is my job to reflect it in photographs and yet, many filmmakers, many photographers they show how different we are because it's interesting, it's curious and it's important but it's also important to remind all of us that we are exactly the same. When some people bleed in any country, when somebody is scared in any country they feel the same, it does not matter where are you from.*

**Through your projects you brought stories of the strength and love of people even in dire conditions. Is one of your aim to create empathy and inspire for action?**

*For example, I think about the case of [Aya, a little girl who lived with her family in the refugee camp of the](#)*

[Bekkaa valley](#), she was paralyzed from waist down and she lived in a dirty life tent. You don't need me to tell you how much her life is hard, you should know that, it's pretty obvious. And actually what I found was incredible, doing things for her, playing with her sisters, I realised that this was the photograph I wanted to take and I thought that too often we try show people as victims so we can create sympathy. I don't want to create sympathy through a photograph, I want to create empathy. Sympathy is when you look down at somebody, it is when you look and feel sorry for him or her, empathy is when you look at somebody and you think that he/she could be me, that they could be my family.

### **How important has been your collaboration with UNHCR and Emergency to help war victims and refugees?**

*Early on when I started doing this work, my reason for doing it was that in some small way I wanted to help, I wanted to make the difference. For me there is no point in just going out there, coming back, and say to people how terrible is the situation in Syria, in Iraq, in South Sudan and then full stop. Yes, it is terrible but it is important to look at this people and at what can be done. Therefore, for me it's really important to always work with organisations that are trying to do something, they can't solve everything but at least they are trying to give people hope.*

*We are living in a time where people, especially the young generation, are very cynical about the future of the world and the possibility to solve any of these problems, but we have to keep believing that we can make the difference, we have to keep believing we can solve the issues of the world. Through my work I also want to show there are solutions or there are things you can do, and it's for each one of us to do something, we can't just give the responsibility to the governments or to organisations. Each one of us has the responsibility to help.*

### **Which advice you would like to give to young human rights activists willing to bring positive change?**

*Today the world has changed so much that I don't think we can just be photographers, we can't just be journalists, we can't just be filmmakers. I think all of us are becoming activists in our own way. And it's something we should do in order to be more heavily involved. There are so many young photographers that are committed to protect human rights and this is very positive and that should be encouraged and supported, and it's something we all have to do.*

*And in terms of what we can do, I believe each one of us has different abilities, each one of us has different skills and sometimes, when I'm working in a conflict area, I would give everything to be a doctor in order to help directly but I can't. So I discovered that what I can do is to tell and share stories. We are privileged, we follow a tradition of storytellers that started tens thousands years ago in campfires. It's the oldest tradition in humankind and we are part of that, and that's a huge honour, it's a huge undertaking but also a huge opportunity because stories, I believe, can change the world. One day at an exhibition a person asked me "Do you think you can change the world with your photographs?" I replied no, but I can inspire the people who can do it.*

**You can follow the visual contest** with the hashtag **#GlobalCampusVisualContest** on Facebook, Twitter, Google + and Instagram. **Website:** [www.globalcampusvisualcontest.org](http://www.globalcampusvisualcontest.org)

