

The PHOTOGRAPHERS Lecture Series
Moderator: Phillip S. Block
October 26, 2011

Didier Ruef
Recycle

Didier Ruef is a photojournalist and documentary photographer based in Lugano, Switzerland. Ruef has shot hundreds of reportages and assignments throughout all five continents, with a preference to working in Africa. His images concentrate on the human condition, people at work, the environment, and humanity's relationship to waste. Ruef's newest publication, *Recycle* (2011), includes images from 1991 through 2008, and traces his worldwide photography project on waste and recycling. These images highlight the face of humanity alongside the waste we produce, recycle and live in conjunction with.

Once I became a photographer, I brought together my passion for man and my interest in waste in my social and documentary photography. This approach stems from a long tradition in photography which, in the mid-20th century, was named "concerned photography", "photographie engagée" as it is sometimes called in French. Concerned Photography, as its English designation indicates, is concerned and preoccupied with the state of the world and humanity. It is critically engaged photography on the side of individuals, the camera held at the level of man as a testimony of humanity. A photography which confronts reality. My approach is also founded on another tradition of photography, that which documents man at work, the diversity of crafts and professions, the world of labour. - Didier Ruef, Recycle

Didier Ruef was born in 1961 in Geneva, Switzerland. He studied Economics at The University of Geneva, and then moved to New York City in 1985 where he studied photojournalism at the International Center of Photography. After graduating from ICP in 1987, he returned to Switzerland where he began working as a freelance documentary photographer and photojournalist. Ruef has worked on projects with many international organizations, including: Médecins Sans Frontières, the Global Fund and the Syngenta Foundation. His work has been exhibited in individual shows internationally at the Fotomuseum Winterthur, Völkerkundemuseum Zürich, Musée de l'Elysée, The Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Bibliothèque Municipale de Bordeaux, The Substation, and at 10th Shanghai International Photographic Art Exhibition. Ruef's images have been published in many major magazines and newspapers, among which are *Time*, *The Observer Magazine*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Le Monde*, *El Pais Semanal*, *Geo*, *Marie Claire*, *D La Republica*, *Der Spiegel*, *Die Zeit*, *Das Magazin*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, among others. Ruef has authored four books, including: *Paysans de nos montagnes* (1998), *Afrique Noire* (2005), *Enfants Prisonniers* (2007), and *Recycle* (2011). Didier Ruef is represented by Cosmos in France, Luz Photo in Italy and Visum in Germany.

LMc