

Home-Land

In my living room on the TV, I see everything. Peoples' fortunes, their lands and lives change. I am moved by some and numb to some. One that made a significant impact on me was what happened in the land where I came from. My homeland. A search for rights and homeland lead to a long drawn war that forced thousands, to a strip of land by the sea and lagoon in search of safety and hope of a rescue mission. But they died in their thousands. I keep returning to this event in my thoughts and feelings. Which land is this in a sense immaterial. Through this I see other events in other parts of the world. Perhaps not with the same intensity of sadness but with intense anger. This applies to many lands and many people and many homes all over the world. Some times it is war. Some times it is individual abuse. Domestic violence. Violence against groups and individuals. I watch. I feel.

At the start of this Crossing lines project 'Home' I was hoping to explore and build on the images I make of my home on an ongoing basis. Then one day a friend sent me a link to an article analysing Google Earth images of stranded people by the sea and the lagoon. A few days later another article arrived analysing pictures zoomed in further. Before and after images. Images of grave yards. In the after images the graveyards have expanded. Lands that had settlements now overgrown with trees and bushes. Images shown with a sliding viewer showed the before and after views of the same locations. The beach crowded with people and temporary shelters during the war were deserted a few days after the war. A year after the war ended I made a hand made book of homage to the victims of the war. I said it was to deal with the issue on a personal level. Now three years have passed and the issue is still alive. The pictures also keep emerging.

That strip of land by the beach which was the last hope for many perhaps keep alive a hope of equality, human rights, dignity and homeland. Some say that was the end to all hopes.

As there are thousands of powerful and compelling images on the internet I decided to use them for this project instead of making my own. I could not go pass those images. I used images from Google Earth of that land, shelters and dots of people. The image of the living room is mine.

I don't write poems any more but sometimes, I write lines inspired by what I am doing photographically. Here is the first from this project.

Transient Home

Home is a sanctuary.

A place of security and protection.

A place of comfort.

Memories of which one treasures for life.

When you are transient;

Fleeing from your home,

Where is home?

What is home?

In those temporary and transient places

By some luck

Some things

*Some people
Helped you to go on
Live on
Survive the traumas
Come out of them
To breath life again
To see light again.
Then they are homes.
Strips of land,
Refuges,
Friends' couches
Those things,
Those people,
The comforting words,
Kind embraces
That helped move on
Did what homes do.
Shelter, Protect, Cover,
Comfort, rejuvenate
Help breath for another day
Move me to A new day.*

*Missing all these,
If cruelty dealt its blow
In the transient moment
Where I fall
is my home as well as a resting place.*

When I looked at the google images of 16th of March and then 24th of May 2009 (the war ended on the 18th of May) I felt an intense sadness. The density of the shelters were overwhelming. These lines are in response to those Google earth pictures.

The Land

*There was war.
People were displaced.
There were shelters for them.
They died in them in their thousands.
Now the land cries.*

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