

Exhibition: **José Cendón. Fear in the Great Lakes.**

Institut Valencia d'Art Modern (IVAM)
19 November – 3 January

Curator: Raúl Celda
General Director of the *Fundación por la Justicia*

Organizes: Fundación por la Justicia
Institut Valencia d'Art Modern (IVAM)

The ***Fundación por la Justicia*** (Foundation for Justice) presents: “**Fear in the Great Lakes**”, by **José Cendón**.

José Cendón's photographic exhibition “Fear in the Great Lakes” emerges from the collaboration between the *Fundación por la Justicia* and the IVAM. It gathers 46 photographs that show the work of this Galician photographer in psychiatric hospitals in the African Great Lakes region.

José Cendón tries to show to society the consequences of war in civil population by means of these photographs. He obtained the World Press Photo 2007 Award (category of Contemporary Issues) and the Pictures of the Year Awards. The exhibition will remain opened until the 3 January.

“Fear in the Great Lakes” portrays the difficult helping circumstances in developing countries, discussing the mental illness as the theme. These snapshots depict stories of solitude and suffering, and catch our attention towards the lives lived by those patients somewhere around the world.

Photojournalism but also 'photo protest' which would never run the risk of becoming sensationalist images, but being in clearly support of the portrayed patient driving the attention of the international community to these practices.

The Great Lakes region has been deeply marked by a history of ethnic conflicts due to a large extent to the colonial heritage and the natural wealth a country situated in the heart of Africa possesses: Democratic Republic of the Congo. Western companies mostly and countries like the Rwanda of Paul Kagame stock up illegally of any kind of minerals such as gold, diamonds, cassiterite, coltan (essential for the manufacture of computers and cell phones), etc. in the former Zaire without leaving any profit to their inhabitants. On the contrary, this unmerciful practice has rekindled a conflict whose effects are 38,000 deaths a month transforming the former domain of Mobutu Sese Seko in the country with the largest number of deaths because of war.

Despite the bleak numbers the Great Lakes region shows, there are no statistics about the number of people who could be mentally affected as a consequence of those conflicts. Only a Belgian catholic congregation, "Brothers of Charity", regularly treats mental patients in Rwanda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of the Congo. Their hospitals receive former soldiers and rebels, also men, women and children victims of the war. 'That's why I chose these institutions for the photographic work, as a metaphor of the collective insanity that has devastated this region during the last decades, also reflected in the patients' eyes. I took these photos in 2006. Nevertheless, I still can smell the foul, infected and unbreathable smell.' Cendón relates.

José Cendón is a freelance photojournalist. Nowadays he lives in Ethiopia and he has just published the book: . He has worked in Colombia, Venezuela, Israel, Palestine, Darfur and from 2005 until 2009 he has been working as a freelance photographer for the AFP (Professional Photographers Association in Spain) and other international media mainly in East Africa.