

'I want people to be shocked by these photographs'

The photographer Kay Chernush depicted for Blinn, the stories of the victims of human traffickers. 'The trafficker abused her in such a way that she lost all hearing in her left ear.'*

The American photographer Kay Chernusch portrayed the experiences of twenty victims of human traffickers in an abstract manner for an exhibition organised by Blinn. Blinn offers support to victims of human traffickers. Blinn tries to make people aware of the existence of trafficking and at the same time lends a voice to the victims. On Sunday, October 18th, the European Day against trafficking, the exhibition was opened by the president of the FNV (Dutch trade union) Agnes Jongerius. The exhibition which was shown at The Square in The Hague ran until November 22nd.

A bond of trust

Chernush came into contact with Blinn through a friend. Before she started making abstract photographs she made traditional photographs of the victims. She developed these pictures only for them. "During these sessions a bond of trust was built. Then I interviewed them and based on their experiences I made the final photographs."

Be aware that trafficking occurs, watch out for the signals, sometimes things are not what they seem.

The photograph in the article 'Lucy's left ear' shows a woman who trained as a nurse in Nigeria. Chernush describes how she was brought to Europe with the promise of a good job and the chance of furthering her education. "The trafficker abused her in such a way that she lost all hearing in her left ear. She managed to escape, she is a survivor, and now has two children and a job."

Slavery

The photographer chose abstract photographs because they are a new way to attract attention. "We have become immune for images from the Congo, Dafur and human trafficking. They touch us for a moment and then we move on. I want people to be shocked by these pictures. I

want them to realise what it is like to be a victim of human traffickers."

Improve living conditions

She was deeply touched by the pride of the women, men and children involved.

"It is about people who want to improve their standard of living, and that is admirable. The root causes of trafficking are putting trust in the wrong people and desiring to improve your standard of living. That is something human that we all want."

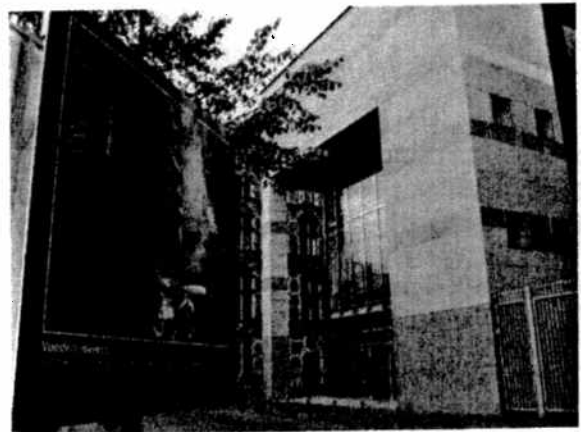
Kay hopes that her pictures will lead to more people getting involved in the issue. "We need lawyers who will assist people free of charge. Advertisement makers and teachers need to pay more attention to the topic. I hope that everybody will look at their own role and ask themselves how they can help.

Be aware that trafficking occurs, watch out for the signals, sometimes things are not what they seem. It can happen anywhere, even at your neighbours."

Source: www.human.nl, October 2009

* *Blinn: Bonded Labour in the Netherlands*

The photographs can be seen at: www.kaychernush.com



Exhibition in front of the Dutch parliament.
Photo: Ivonne van de Kar

Red Light Campaign fights Human Trafficking in Southern Africa

The Red Light Campaign is a group of organizations working together to combat human trafficking exploitation and abuse of women and children in Southern Africa.

Their goal is to prevent the violation of the rights of women and children through human trafficking, exploitation and abuse.

By working with partners in all fourteen (14) countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region they are asking go-

vernments to take measures to combat trafficking, to put in place policies and laws to protect women and children, and strengthen the government institutions responsible for putting these laws and policies into practice.



While the campaign momentarily references the FIFA 2010 World Cup,

the issue of human trafficking extends beyond that event, and therefore, the efforts will aim to tackle policy issues surrounding human trafficking and sexual exploitation after the final game of the World Cup.

This lasting change will have an important impact on the region, and will safeguard the lives of those who would otherwise fall to this terrible vice.

www.redlight2010campaign.org