

## **Giovanni Troilo explains his project:**

“It is above all a research, a realistic vision of the town by a photographer who knows it very well. I know it through my family who has been living there for 65 years. Charleroi is for me also a metaphor to talk about the European identity crisis. I believe this is definitely a "contemporary issue".

One part representing a greater whole ‘La Ville Noire’ (‘The Black City’), a town so close to Brussels, symbolizes the whole of Europe. This crossroad city houses many diverse populations, brought together under the same roof of working opportunities, only to be left with nothing to share, as the work dried up.

The more interesting episodes, upon which my work is concentrated, take place outside of the central ring and I went to various different communities that comprise Charleroi. I photographed roads, houses, people in the streets, in their houses and in supermarkets. I spoke to the workers, to the pensioners and to young people. The shots chosen for World Press Photo are just a small sample of the entire collection of images taken.

I have been to Charleroi many times in my life and I have nothing against the city or its inhabitants; that would mean taking against my own family and myself. Before, during and after the shooting I always checked and looked for confirmation in the press in order to check if my vision corresponded to reality. I always asked myself if my vision was partial or particular. Every time I checked, my perception was proved to be right. Besides this, I always gathered the opinion of the people.

Some scenes just happened in front of the camera (policemen, clinic, pills, and buildings) and I just found the way to be in the right place, but without any dialog between me and the subjects. In other scenes, like in the cage for example, the presence of the camera was declared, there was obviously a dialog necessary to setting up a proper portrait session. All of the photos were taken with the utmost transparency and correctness. In instances where the subjects are aware that they are being photographed, the original caption says so.

I have been swamped with messages from people who live outside Charleroi city center. They support my work, recognize themselves within it and say that the Charleroi depicted in my photographs is indeed the real Charleroi.”