

## Gideon Mendel: *Fire / Flood* Soho Photography Quarter, The Photographers' Gallery 25 NOVEMBER 2022 – MAY 2023

*Fire / Flood* by Gideon Mendel opens this November in the Soho Photography Quarter, right outside The Photographers' Gallery. Works from his *Drowning World* and *Burning World* series of photographs, alongside a newly commissioned film, will be on show in this free outdoor exhibition showcasing Mendel's personal response to the global climate crisis.

### ***Drowning World***

Since 2007, South African photographer Mendel has made twenty trips to document floods in thirteen countries, witnessing a shared human experience of climate catastrophe that transcends geographical, cultural and economic divides.

Shown for the first time in the UK, Mendel's most recent portraits were shot in Bayelsa State, Nigeria and in Sindh Province, Pakistan. Since August 2022, both regions experienced unprecedented rain and were devastated by the worst floods in living memory. Countless structures and buildings were destroyed and millions left homeless. Visiting these communities months after the initial flooding Mendel found that the water levels remained high, still filling people's homes. Even as the waters recede, the damage to people's lives is immense. Mendel's images record this in a deeply intimate and graphically precise way.

### ***Burning World***

The *Burning World* series is Mendel's response to the unprecedented increase in the extremity of wildfires around the world, as global temperatures rise. Since the start of 2020 he has documented the aftermath of fires that have destroyed homes, killed numerous people and burnt millions of acres of land.

Mendel chooses not to document the burning flames, but rather seeks out their aftermath, the traces left behind on lives and landscapes. Made across different communities around the world, the people in his *Portraits in Ashes* series are framed by the skeletons of their burnt homes and invite us to engage with the scorched world that surrounds them.

Mendel said "My subjects have taken the time – in a situation of great distress – to engage the camera, looking out at us from their inundated homes and devastated surroundings. They are showing the world the calamity that has befallen them. They are not victims in this exchange: the camera records their dignity and resilience. They bear witness to the brutal reality that the poorest people on the planet almost always suffer the most from climate change."

The presentation of Mendel's images in Soho Photography Quarter (SPQ) includes a 40m-long frieze of images and large-scale over-street banners, as well as a projection of the new film from dusk every day.

Launched in Summer 2022, SPQ extends The Photographers' Gallery's acclaimed exhibitions programme beyond the walls of the building and completes the development of its site in Soho as a leading centre of international photography. Alongside large-scale, changing artworks, SPQ presents an engaging free

The Photographers' Gallery  
16–18 Ramillies Street  
London W1F 7LW

+44(0)20 7087 9300  
info@tpg.org.uk  
tpg.org.uk

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programme of activities and resources, from live events, artist talks and presentations, to specially commissioned digital projects.

***Gideon Mendel will talk about his work and introduce *Fire / Flood* at the special TPG Late on Friday 25 November, when *The Photographers' Gallery* is free from 5pm and open until 9pm.***

-ENDS-

#### Press Contacts

For further press information and image requests please contact:

Jodie Lewis at Margaret on [jodie@margaretlondon.com](mailto:jodie@margaretlondon.com)

For general information and enquiries about The Photographers' Gallery, including the archive, Print Sales Gallery or Bookshop contact: [press@tpg.org.uk](mailto:press@tpg.org.uk)

#### Notes for Editors

##### **Gideon Mendel**

Working with both stills and video, Gideon Mendel's intimate style of image-making and long-term commitment to socially engaged projects has earned international recognition. Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1959, he began photographing in the 1980s, during the final years of apartheid. This experience as a "struggle photographer", documenting the brutality of the South African state's response to peaceful protest, marked him on some level and for much of his subsequent career his focus has been on responding to the key global issues facing his generation. For the *Drowning World* and *Burning World* series, he worked in the UK, India, Haiti, Pakistan, Australia, Thailand, Nigeria, Germany, The Philippines, Brazil, Bangladesh, the USA, France, Australia, Greece and Canada. Mendel has won the Eugene Smith Award for Humanistic Photography, the Amnesty International Media Award, the Greenpeace Photo Award and he has been shortlisted for the Prix Pictet in 2015 (Disorder) and 2019 (Hope). In 2016 he was the first recipient of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation's "Pollock Prize for Creativity".

Mendel's recent flood response journeys were made with the support of UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs).

[gideonmendel.com](http://gideonmendel.com)

[instagram.com/gideonmendel](https://www.instagram.com/gideonmendel)

##### **The Photographers' Gallery**

The Photographers' Gallery (TPG) champions photography for everyone. Located in the heart of central London and home to an international community of photographers, the Gallery explores photography in all its forms, with a diverse and critically acclaimed programme of exhibitions, events and courses. The UK's first independent gallery devoted to photography, TPG was first to exhibit many key names in international photography, including Juergen Teller, Helen Levitt, Rinko Kawauchi, Gordon Parks, Sebastião Salgado and Andreas Gursky. The Gallery has also been instrumental in establishing contemporary British photographers, including Martin Parr and Corinne Day. Over the past five decades TPG has helped to establish photography as a recognised art form, introducing new audiences to photography and celebrating its place at the heart of visual culture.

##### **Soho Photography Quarter**

Right outside The Photographers' Gallery, Soho Photography Quarter (SPQ) is an exciting new permanent outdoor cultural space, presenting the very best of contemporary photography for free, day and night.

[tpg.org.uk](http://tpg.org.uk)

**Visitor information – Soho Photography Quarter**

*Fire / Flood* by Gideon Mendel will be on show in the Soho Photography Quarter for free, 24 hours a day, from 25 November 2022 to May 2023.

**Special TPG Friday Late** - including a talk by Gideon Mendel - Friday 25 November, free from 5pm, open until 9pm.

**Visitor information – The Photographers' Gallery**

Mon – Weds 10am – 6pm

Thurs & Fri 10am – 8pm (Friday free from 5pm)

Sat 10am – 6pm

Sun 11am – 6pm

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**Social media**

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