

The Camera is Mightier than the Sword

The Camera is Mightier than the Sword

How can you use photography as a tool for empowerment and positive social change?"

The saying, 'The pen is mightier than the sword' is a saying that was coined by English author Edward Bulwer-Lytton in 1839. The original context was from his play 'The Conspiracy':

True, This! — Beneath the rule of men entirely great
The pen is mightier than the sword. Behold
The arch-enchanters wand! — itself is nothing! —
But taking sorcery from the master-hand
To paralyse the Cæsars, and to strike
The loud earth breathless! — Take away the sword —
States can be saved without it!

The sad thing is that I think a lot of people in modern society (especially educated academics) are very pessimistic. They have little hope, optimism, and positivity. They just see doom and gloom (perpetuated by mass media), and fail to see progress, hope, and joy.

This also happens a lot in photography: we forget the power of photography; the power of photography to change the hearts and minds of others.

There are some pessimists who say that photography doesn't have any power anymore; but I beg to disagree.

Photography (or the camera) is mightier than the sword.

For example, I've been studying the work of Philip Jones Griffiths, who made 'Vietnam Inc': and his work had a huge influence on the American public; shifting the perspective of America's involvement in the Vietnamese War. Essentially, Philip Jones Griffith's photos influenced the American public to question the war-- and sparked more Anti-War sentiment in Vietnam.

I am the eternal optimist; I do believe that photography has this phenomenal power to change the hearts, souls, and attitudes of others.

Unfortunately in modern society, with Facebook, Instagram, and silly 'lifestyle' culture, photography is just being used to sell stuff-- to sell a certain lifestyle, to sell expensive luxury goods, sell expensive cars, homes, etc.

But I do believe that we have the power as photographers to promote more 'positive' values, to show many different things. For example:

1. To promote joy, gratitude, and love with our photos by photographing our loved ones (personal photography)
2. To promote open-mindedness to foreign cultures and other places in the world via street photography and travel photography.
3. To use photography as a tool to uncover injustice in the world.

--

So friend, just ask yourself:

"How can I use photography as a tool for empowerment and positive social change?"

ERIC