

## “In-Conversation”

December 2007

*Featuring*

**Mr John Isaac**

Professional Photographer

*Interview conducted by*

Steven Yee Pui Chung



### ABOUT JOHN ISAAC

From 1969 to 1998, John Isaac worked for the United Nations as a chief of photography in the Department of Public Information. During that time he traveled to more than 100 countries as a photojournalist capturing the struggles and triumphs of our changing world.

His numerous awards include winner of Photokina International Photo Contest, Best Photograph of the Year from Graphis magazine, Professional Photographer of the Year from Photo Imaging Manufacturers and Distributors Association (PMDA), and Lifetime Achievement Award from International Photographic Council, to name a few.

John has authored many books including a series called “Children in Crisis”. He co-authored “Endangered Peoples” for Sierra Club and “Coorg, Land of the Kodavas” with his wife Jeannette. Besides his work with the United Nations, John provided coverage for UNICEF, working closely with the late actress Audrey Hepburn. He worked for Luciano Pavorotti’s foundation, Pavorotti and Friends and covered Michael Jackson’s concerts and was asked to provide exclusive coverage of Michael’s first baby, Prince.

### Questions:

1. How did you get your start in photography?
2. What made you choose photography as a career? Why Photojournalism?
3. Which is your first assignment? Any special thoughts?

4. **What was your first big break in your career?**
  
5. **What do you want people to see in your photograph?**
  
6. **How do you interact with the people in your photographs?**
  
7. **What is your most interesting experience during your photo shoot (when you were the chief photographer of UN) which you would like to share?**
  
8. **How do you get inspirations for your works, especially a series or project?**
  
9. **There was a moment when you had an emotional breakdown and find it hard to produce works. You had a long road to recovery and you were eventually “saved by a butterfly”? Would you like to provide some insight on this? This is certainly one of the painful issues that photojournalists face after years of exposure to sights of famine, hardship etc.**
  
10. **How has this experience affect your outlook of life?**
  
11. **Which is your favourite photograph? Any special reason?**
  
12. **Which photographer inspired you most? What did you learn from him?**
  
13. **How does photography enrich your life?**

14. What would you say is the new challenge for photography as a whole?

15. As an advice to beginners, how can they improve in their path in photography?

### Works





