

International Solidarity Week

exhibition by Reza: *DroitS à l'essentiel*



As a young schoolboy in my native Iran, I discovered the verses of Sa'adi Shirazi, a 13th-century Persian poet and great traveller. I understood then that the message he left us was truly a timeless one, one which eventually became a blueprint for the United Nations. His message was that the actions of each being can be harmful, or create a virtuous cycle on a global scale:

بنی آدم اعضای یکدیگرند که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند
چو عضوی به درد آورد روزگار دگر عضوها را نماند قرار
تو کز محنت دیگران بی غمی شاید که نامت نهند آدمی

*Human beings are members of a whole,
In creation of one essence and soul.
If one member is afflicted with pain,
Other members uneasy will remain.
If you have no sympathy for human pain,
The name of human you cannot retain.*

Consequently, governments alone cannot justly manage societies. Their mandate since their creation can be reduced to one major prerogative: crowd control. Over the last few decades, pockets of resistance, whether individual or in groups, have appeared here and there, thrusting the issue of solidarity to the forefront of public debate. This is why I felt that it was vital for me to support International Solidarity Week.

This year, I have the honour of presiding over the sixteenth annual celebration of this event and of meeting the major actors in our struggles for the seven essential rights. In each of these people I have seen the reflections of the silent heroes of my photographs, those whose destinies crossed mine on roads taken throughout the world. Here and there, I learned the conviction that altruism and consciousness about the other are the foundations of our humanity. Each and every one of us has the responsibility to spread this message until each week is a week of international solidarity.

Exhibition DroitS à l'essentiel by REZA

Square of the Hôtel de Ville, Paris

Metro Hôtel de Ville

November 15-20, 2013

Free Entrance

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