Faces of courage and resilience

A photographer captures the strength of women in strife-torn areas, presenting their stories to the world

By Pete Kalm

A young award-winning French Italian photographer Matilde Gattoni has used her lens to capture the courage of thousands of women ranging from war-torn areas to drought-ridden regions, presenting their stories to the world. Gattoni, whose work has been featured in leading newspapers and magazines around the globe, has captured the stories of the women along with the stories of the strife-torn areas.

Gattoni, who began her career in 2000, is now in the 15th year of her work. Her latest exhibition in Dubai, called ‘Unbreakable’, is being displayed in four continents to cover the consequences of war and the ecological and natural disasters that have affected the world, especially in countries that are continuously affected by war.

In the last 15 years she has travelled to 35 countries across four continents to document and capture photographs that have been published in magazines and newspapers around the world. Gattoni, who is a graduate of the University of Strasbourg, France, and also attended the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna at the beginning of her career, is known for her innate capacity to travel and document and create awareness about the subjects.

Matilde Gattoni’s work is a part of reportage that she began with her pictures published somewhere in 2002. Since then she has received an e-mail from a reader who has been an advocate of her work and has helped her in her mission. She has also met women who have always wanted to tell their stories and to pose for her. Together with this reader we raised over Dh12,353 in just a few weeks for an exhibition that will be held in Dubai. Similarly, we were able to raise over Dh3,673 for her to travel to Eritrea and Tajikistan.

‘Each picture in the show is accompanied by a detailed caption that allows the viewer to understand the detail of these stories. The subjects know their stories and want to share it with the world. They are the fearless, and our pictures are just a part of it. From the middle ages, women were used in slave trade and in wars. The 21st century is the time of women. They are the backbone of families and communities. All these women share an innate capacity of resilience and courage, no matter how difficult their circumstances are. They are the heroes of their own society. For example, in the story of an earthquake survivor in Nepal that helped create awareness about the subject. This exhibition is a tribute to their resilience and how they struggle to save their children with the difficult task of providing, feeding and taking care of them. This work with light is a reminder to us how we should be more ethical in using our light as a tool to create awareness and educate people. ‘

Lunar Eclipse

Lunar Eclipse 12, (Dhs250 and 375 per piece)

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Artist using light to present media and technology in ways that seem to disrupt the established systems and challenge our sense of reality and time

An artist uses light to present media and technology in ways that seem to challenge established technological systems and challenge our sense of reality and time. This attempt by the artist is to present technology in a new way that seems to be a part of our reality. This attempt by the artist is to present technology in a new way that seems to be a part of our reality.

Blossoming talent

The talented artists of Mawabah from Beautiful People — an art studio for arts and crafts — are presenting their stories to the world in a series of multimedia exhibitions. The talented artists of Mawabah from Beautiful People — an art studio for arts and crafts — are presenting their stories to the world in a series of multimedia exhibitions.