

**AGENDA NEWS**

## Chechnya blues

**Carmignac Gestion's annual Photojournalism Award finances the production of an original body of work. This year, VII Photo's Davide Monteleone is its recipient for his Chechnya project**

Davide Monteleone has won the 2012 edition of Carmignac Gestion Photojournalism Award, which comes with a €50,000 grant for the production of a new body of work about Chechnya. The VII Photo member was selected in September 2012, but his name was kept under wraps for security reasons until after he left Chechnya this April.

The grant will also be used to finance the production of a book and exhibition of Monteleone's work, which will be officially unveiled in October in Paris.

"Today Chechnya is an autonomous republic in the Russian Federation," say the award's organisers. "Monteleone went there very briefly for the first time in 2003 on a press visit, and then again in 2007. He saw how much the country had changed during these years, thanks to the billions invested by Moscow in rebuilding skyscrapers [and]

parks... New centres of power sprang up and exiles gradually returned home - though not all.

"Subdued and pacified by force, Chechnya was depicted as a winner in official Russian rhetoric, held up as a model of virtue and an example for the neighbouring republics in the Caucasus. At the same time, democracy was abolished, the opposition crushed, all dissent silenced and there was a sort of freeze on social progress, or even an outright return to the Middle Ages.

"For his latest project, between January and April 2013, the photojournalist wanted to go back to investigate Chechen identity today. Above all, he wanted to know whether Chechnya or Russia had emerged victorious from the conflict. The answer is undeniably Russia. But if you look at it from a different standpoint, the answer is perhaps not so clear cut."

Nathalie Gallon, director of the Carmignac Gestion Photojournalism Award, says: "Monteleone's rigorously conceived photos have captured the experience of that country, using diffuse black-and-white images to offer a ray of light and make space appear open, as if in a last bid for resistance." *BJP*  
[www.fondation-carmignac.com](http://www.fondation-carmignac.com)



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