Suspended by cables, artists swung from the ceiling and dived in the debris of the ground to tell the story of Forced Labour. Ojalá Producciones, an Argentine theatrical troupe, soared 40 feet above the audience in a breathtaking combination of circus and performance art. The performance was part of the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour in Buenos Aires in November 2017.

The Global Conference brought together more than 3800 participants from more than 100 countries, among whom were the Human Rights Activist and 2014 Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Kailash Satyarthi and the 50 for Freedom campaign supporters – the American humanitarian photographer Lisa Kristine and the director of the award-winning movie "The Boss: Anatomy of a Crime" Sebastián Schindel.

“There are still 152 million children victims of child labour, that is, almost one in 10 in the world. Of those, almost half are in hazardous work.”

Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General
The American humanitarian photographer Lisa Kristine, who took part in the Conference, has been documenting for over 30 years indigenous cultures and social causes, such as modern slavery, and is an active supporter of the 50FF campaign and the SDG Alliance 8.7 for eradicating modern slavery.

**John Dombkins:** Why did you decide to shine a light on modern slavery and child labour?

**Lisa Kristine:** I’ve been documenting humanity around the world with a notion of dignity and beauty for more than thirty years in hundred plus countries on six continents. In 2009, I was at the World Peace Conference with His Holiness Dalai Lama and other Nobel laureates and it was there that it was presented to me within a conversation that slavery existed. I was so struck by it, especially because my entire occupation is on observing others and yet I had not seen it. I think the one thing about child labour and slavery is that it can often be hidden in plain sight. So I decided to take on documenting it in order to shine a light, so people around the world could really see that it exists. Because seeing is believing. Once we see it, we can actually choose to do something about it.

**JD:** When we look at your work on modern slavery and child labour we feel a connection to the people on the photos. What do you feel when you meet those people who often are suffering very harsh conditions? Is it hard for you to walk away once you’ve captured it?

**LK:** When I come into the presence of other persons who are in such a difficult position, I have a very little time to work, and so I feel like I just open my heart and in those moments to be present with them. What I know is that no matter how difficult their experience is, their house is dignity and that’s what I am interested in photographing. It is hard to walk away and yet we all have our skills and talent. When I took on this project in fact I was under restrictions, what I could and couldn’t do. I was there to do what I do best, which is documenting people. I had to trust the fine abolitionists on the ground to do what they do best, which is liberating people.

**JD:** You’ve been supporting the 50FF campaign and the Sustainable Development Goals Alliance 8.7 by providing your photos and being an advocate. Why is it important to be part of these activities?

**LK:** I am very shocked by what I see. Sometimes I see very atrocious and heartfelt desperate things and when I arrive into that situation I sort of let all my fear fall away because I just really want to help those people and be some sort of beacon to share their story. So it is shocking but on another hand, I have to do it. I don’t ever feel that it is a choice. It feels like a calling that if I weren’t doing it, I would find it hard to sleep.

**JD:** Are you shocked by the images you capture sometimes?

“**You cannot achieve education goals without ending child labour, and you cannot end child labour without free and quality education.**”

Kailash Satyarthi at the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, Buenos Aires 2017
LK: The beauty of 8.7 and 50FF is that they have their power to do a lot to change things in the world regarding modern slavery and child labour. The reason that I made these photos is to usher up help and to collaborate with people that are strong, in the endeavour of ending these atrocities. I am all game and I can’t think of a finer thing. It means a lot to me.

JD: It’s inspirational. How do you think artists can contribute to eradicating slavery?

LK: I tend to believe that everybody can offer something within their group of talents to help with modern slavery. Certainly for any artist to share work that would create conversation around slavery or urge somebody to learn more, or perhaps propel somebody to do something, that’s a great thing.

JD: What would you say to people who still believe that slavery is a thing of the past, something that doesn’t happen nowadays?

LK: Again, I think that seeing is believing when it comes to believing that slavery actually does exist today. I always bring it back to my own experience. I didn’t know that modern slavery existed. I thought we were done with that in the eighteen hundreds and perhaps there was a little bit of trafficking but that’s all. Once I started delving into learning, it made a difference to me very instantly. That’s what I hope my photographs will do for others.

JD: What sort of camera and lenses do you like to use?

LK: Interestingly the larger body of my work is made almost exclusively with a 19th-century view camera, a field camera, wherein I have a big large piece of transparency film that I have to put in just to make one exposure. When I took on this work of documenting modern slavery I had to downsize, to be agile and spontaneous, and be able to work quickly, so I worked with 35mm. It was a different experience but with a wonderful outcome.

JD: Would you ever consider using a drone?

LK: Who knows, that’s more motion photography. Yes, absolutely! I love the work of drones and it’s beautiful stuff.

**ArtWorks** is the artists’ engagement programme of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations agency for the world of work. It brings together artists to raise awareness, promote fundamental rights and advocate for social change on world of work issues. If you would like to donate your talent to support our campaigns, please contact:

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Sign up to end modern slavery
www.50forfreedom.org

More on ArtWorks
https://bit.ly/2k4mYae
From the previous issue

She took part in a panel discussion at Gallup headquarters in Washington, along with ILO Director-General, Guy Ryder; CEO of Gallup, Jim Clifton; CEO of Care.com, Sheila Lirio Marcelo, and Princeton Professor Emeritus and 2015 Nobel laureate, Sir Angus Deaton.

Longoria was also interviewed by international journalist, Femi Oke in a Facebook live conversation after the event. They talked about the results of the ILO/Gallup report, as well as Longoria’s personal commitment to gender issues.

“The great thing about this study is that it is a collection of all of these voices throughout the world. They give you the real story, the human story behind the statistics,” she said.

THE HORROR OF MODERN SLAVERY ON SCREEN

50 for Freedom advocate and actor, Joaquin Furriel, was special guest of the International Labour Organization at a screening in Geneva of the award-winning movie, ‘The Boss: Anatomy of a crime.’

Highlighting the tragic human cost of modern slavery, the movie tells the real-life story of an illiterate man, called Hermógenes, from the Argentinian countryside who finds himself trapped in forced labour after he goes to work in a butcher’s shop in the capital, Buenos Aires.

“The story really moved me. It’s a story that we have to tell and to know so that we can talk about the problem.”

EVA LONGORIA PROMOTES GENDER EQUALITY AT WORK


Eva Longoria joined forces with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the polling organization, Gallup, to mark the launch of a ground-breaking ‘Women at Work’ report, providing a global snapshot of women’s and men’s attitudes about women and work.

“The great thing about this study is that it is a collection of all of these voices throughout the world. They give you the real story, the human story behind the statistics,” she said.

In an interview with the 50FF team during his visit to Geneva, Furriel, who plays the main role, explained why the role was important to him.

Furriel and the Director of the film Sebastián Schindel took part in the launch of the 50 for Freedom campaign in Argentina in 2015. Since then, Argentina has ratified the Forced Labour Protocol, which aims to eradicate forced labour in all its forms.

One of the main aims of the campaign is to encourage at least 50 governments to ratify the Protocol by the end of 2018.