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Umbrage Editions is pleased to announce the April 2002 publication of

ECLIPSE

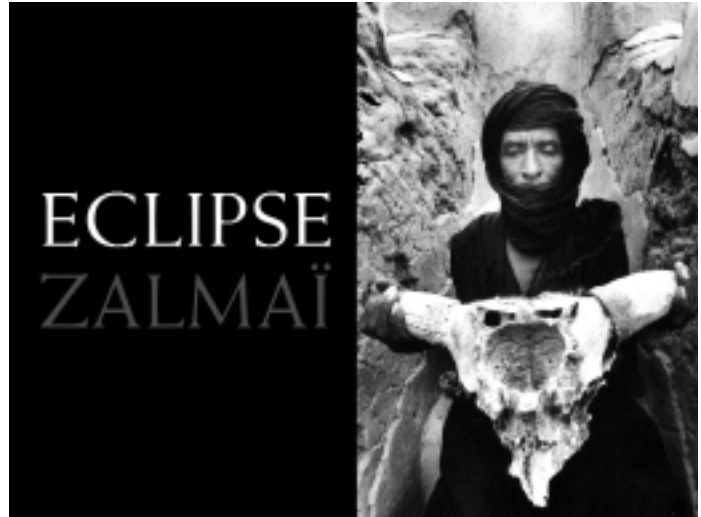
An Umbrage Editions Book

Photographs by Zalmai

With a preface by Atiq Rahimi

And a critical text by Daniel Girardin, Musée d'Elysee

Afghan photographer Zalmai's extraordinary and unforgettable photographs capture the slow, distressing drift of exile and dispossession: spectral figures against a stormy sky, a sheared row of peaks frame a figure like a sacred relic, horizons of men, both of this world and of some timeless land. This is a documentation of a journey through ambiguous territories—from Cuba to India, Mali to the Philippines, Indonesia to Egypt, and a return to Zalmai's native Afghanistan—wartorn once again—a search for place when one's own land has been destroyed.



The changing interplay of composition, light, and visages infuse the photographs in this book, which speaks of transformation and disenfranchisement, not just of place but of spirit. Most of all, his work is about the fragility of presence. Moving through space in time, standing still, a breathless, near-hallucinatory consciousness is felt in each frame. The present seems a fragile membrane enveloping the past, making a subtle statement about man's relation to the world he inhabits. This artist, born in Afghanistan and now carrying a Swiss passport, has lived life traveling lightly among different peoples, a citizen of the world in its largest sense. He has pursued the aesthetic of a landscape of faces and forms memorable for its poetic resonance. These are photographs that have been shaped over centuries by ideas carried in men's souls. The interiors of these photographs are tangled and jagged, meandering and menacing, of this earth even as they reach to the sky. In the aggregate, they sketch a fragmented story of dispossession, of a voyage of the spirit, of the complex emotions of return. Paris-based Afghan novelist, Atiq Rahimi, contributes an original essay, "The Memory of the Mirror." In *ECLIPSE*, these two voices offer insight into an Afghanistan lost, but not forgotten, and of the enduring legacy of exile.

An exhibition of the work will open at the Musée d'Elysee, Lausanne and the Musée de la Croix Rouge, Geneva, before traveling internationally. In the U.S., Zalmai's work will tour throughout 2004, beginning with the House of Documents at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival, and the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics.

Biography of the Photographer: Born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1964, Zalmai fled his homeland in 1980 to escape the occupation of the Soviet Army. He found a new home in Switzerland, where he studied at the School of Creative Photography, Lausanne; and at the Center of Professional Education in Photography, Yverdon. Since his first solo show at 16/25 Gallery, Lausanne, he has had numerous others at museums and galleries throughout Europe. More recently, Zalmai's exhibition *Afghanistan*, produced by the International Red Cross, toured Switzerland, Germany, and Austria. Zalmai has been a freelance photographer for publications such as the *New York Times*, *Outside Magazine*, the *Geneva Tribune*, *Le Temps*, *L'Hebdo*, and *Reflex Magazine*. He currently resides in New York.

Biography of the Author of the Preface, "The Memory of the Mirror": Born in 1962 in Kabul, Afghanistan, Atiq Rahimi lives and works today in Paris. He is a graduate of the Franco-Afghan Estiqlal of Kabul, but in 1984, he left Afghanistan for Pakistan before requesting and obtaining political asylum in France. Rahimi holds a Doctorate of Audio-Visual communication from the Sorbonne. His first book, *Terre et Cendre* was published in France (Editore POL, 2000) to great critical acclaim.

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Essay by Daniel Girardin, Musée d'Elysee

In interviews regarding ECLIPSE, Zalmai can discuss:

- His current trip to Afghanistan during the American bombing campaign, for which he produced a daily dispatch for the French Telejournal
- His own experiences emigrating from Afghanistan to Switzerland after the Soviet invasion
- Issues of migration and displacement for groups he has photographed, including Tibetan refugees in India, Sudanese refugees in the Central African Republic, and Native Americans in the U.S.
- The aftermath of landmines in Pakistan and Afghanistan, for which he did a reportage for the International Red Cross

From I HAVE SORE EYES, an essay by Zalmai:

Months of traveling followed. A route without images, a black hole. I needed an objective to escape it. Chance encounters gave me that. The discovery of the world through photography showed me that my lost expression was no longer alone. I had to set off again. But where to? The question did not present itself; where the dead speak nonsense, where misery spreads on beaches of silence. Wherever to, life overflows on itself, crude, nude. In Manila, on the steaming mountains of filth or in the swamps surrounding the shanty towns; in a refugee camp, lost in Central Africa, when children dance under the stars; among nomads of every color, of every ethnic group, these barefooted noblemen who ask of humanity when you touch its soul and its bones. Misinterpretations, I stand enraged, exultant, and possess the wild desire to open the eyes of those who have seen nothing.

From "THE MEMORY OF THE MIRROR" by Atiq Rahimi:

I read my mother's suffering in the eyes of this woman, crossing paths with the traveler close to the shore. Veiled like my mother, the woman looks with envy at these horses confiding to the wave the secret beneath their blanket.

I feel the burns of my brother's blistered hands in the hands of the driller who extracts the smile of black poison from the earth.

I discover the broken footprints of my sister's children in the desolation of the ruins and their innocence on the happy lips of that unknown child who washes away hatred, its arms wide open to the rain.

I discover the terror of my friend in the eye of the horse rearing up at the pyramids. The horse's eye reflects the terror of gods who buy their eternity by burying their ancestors under mountains of stone.

About Umbrage

Umbrage Editions, based in New York City, is a packager of high-quality visual books, traveling exhibitions, and multimedia projects. Founded in 1991 by Nan Richardson, former editor of Aperture, Umbrage Editions works on the creation of content-rich books, exhibitions, websites, theater productions, and CD-ROMs from their conception to development and final production. In the past, published works have varied in subject matter from pop culture to global human rights, from the closets of drag queens to the runways of fashion, from classic photojournalism to cutting-edge art. Umbrage has produced co-editions with numerous publishers, including Random House, Twin Palms, Bulfinch, Abrams, HarperCollins, Abu Michel, TeNues, and many more.

ECLIPSE PRESS IMAGES

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Photographs by Zalmai

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