

Basic Detail Report



Kuwait

Date

1991

Primary Maker

Sebastião Salgado

Medium

Gelatin silver print

Description

Sebastião Salgado, raised in Brazil and currently living in France, is a self-identified documentary photographer who became a

member of the Magnum Photos agency in 1979. Prior to his photographic career, Salgado had set out to earn a doctorate in agricultural economics. Much of his photography is socially concerned, dwelling on the plight of laborers and human suffering, and he has collaborated with a number of humanitarian organizations. The artist has said that the purpose of photography is “to have the strongest relation with a person, to go inside the intensity of a person.” Kuwait depicts two workers in the Greater Burgan oil field in southeastern Kuwait. This oil field—the second largest in the world—was set aflame by retreating Iraqi soldiers in 1991 during the first Gulf War. American firefighters struggled to extinguish the fires and repair the nearly six hundred damaged wells by hand. In the postures of the two men, associations can be drawn to religious figures in medieval and Renaissance works of art, which lend the composition a moral weight. Although Salgado did not pose the workers, he was very selective about which exposures to process and print. While in Kuwait, the photographer shot two hundred rolls of film with three Leica cameras fitted with 28-millimeter wide-angle, 35-millimeter, and 60-millimeter portrait lenses and, from each roll—which typically allow twenty-four exposures—printed an average of six photographs. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

Dimensions

Image: 11 3/4 × 17 5/8 in. (29.8 × 44.8 cm) Sheet: 13 9/16 × 19 5/8 in. (34.4 × 49.8 cm) Frame: 21 7/8 × 26 7/8 × 2 in. (55.6 × 68.3 × 5.1 cm)