

My work is not journalistic

Geoffrey James – Clip 9

I'm not sure that whether being a journalist has in any way affected my photography. I mean I studied history for that. That was probably as good a background to do photography as anything, history. The journalism was something I was really very happy to give up. It's a sort of grinding profession for young people and staying up all night and smoking too many cigarettes, all that stuff, I'm very happy not to be doing. In fact, in my photography, I try to flee the journalistic. When I did the photographs of the Mexican border I remember talking to a museum director, a photography museum director in San Diego. He said, "what do you think you can do, I mean there've been so many people photographing us down here". So I went down with a big view camera and I didn't do anything that was journalistic. I just photographed the background which would have been in all the pictures that no one looked at...A bit like the way I look at the backgrounds in Italian paintings. And when the show opened he said no one has done this before. So in a way I'm anti-journalistic.