

By Amund Trellevik

For the last couple of years Akash has travelled around in his home country Bangladesh, and surrounding countries, to document “the dark sides” of the communities.

Through his camera, there is particularly two things he tries to show, things that should be corrected, and things that should be appreciated.

“In 1998, I saw a photo exhibition on aids- victims, titled ‘positive lives’ at gallery in Dhaka in Bangladesh. And realized for the first time how images can influence social perceptions”, Akash says.

“My first reaction seeing the photographs exhibition was a complete subversion of my original perception of aids-patients. It stuck me how aids-victims are alienated and scorned by us because of social misconceptions, and I realized how I as a photographer could help dispel these misconceptions. I discovered the power that images have over us”, he added. Akash traveled through poverty and catastrophe, visiting brothels and sweatshops staffed by children, but he says he is only reflecting the society.

“I believe, that to portray a community or a way of life, you first need to understand it yourself, otherwise the images become superficial, and neither you, nor those who look at your photographs, will be touched or moved”, he says.

In his home country Bangladesh, some criticise his work, and says he’s only goal is to spread bad words about the country.

“Let me explain: If you have a son and he is going the wrong way, you have to be tough to him to show him the right way, because you love him. And I love my country a lot. My intension is to show the things that should be corrected”.

#### Award winner

In 2006 Akash recieved the world press photo award for his child labour image. At Lillehammer he will show samples from all of his work.

See a selection of his pictures overleaf.



# CHANGING PERCEPTIONS WITH A CAMERA

The Bangladesh photographer G.M.B. Akash was struck by the power of pictures after he saw an exhibition on aids-victims.