

Kai Wiedenhöfer
Grant Recipient, September 2005

Winning Project: Sharon's Wall: Holy Land, Divided Land

The remaining part of the Berlin Wall which stands today serves as a constant reminder of the political conflict that separated Germany for more than 25 years. A message scribed in graffiti on the wall reads, "Wall of shame stands now in Israel." The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a focal point of the crisis between the West and Islam. The Israeli government's solution to this unrest is to build a wall that is much bigger than the one in Berlin. At the end of 2005, the structure's construction is planned to be finished, demolishing whatever stands in its way, stretching over 400 miles (650 kilometers). By building the wall, the Israeli government is violating a number of United Nations resolutions, the Hague Regulations and the Fourth Geneva Convention regarding international standards of treatment of people under occupation.

With the benefit of the Getty Images grant, Wiedenhöfer will document the construction of the wall, along with the related repercussions which could intensify the tensions between the two peoples. Having worked in the region extensively for more than a decade, his experience and intimate knowledge will enable him to depict that walls cannot be a solution to political problems, as we have seen in German history.

Biography

Kai Wiedenhöfer was born in the south of Germany in 1966. As a high-school graduate in 1986, an interest in the politics of the Middle East combined with photography, naturally led him to the pursuit of photojournalism. Prior to graduating from the University of Essen in October 1995, Wiedenhöfer studied Arabic in Damascus, Syria and traveled extensively throughout the Middle East to document the changes brought about by the autonomy agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Over the years, Wiedenhöfer has been recognized as an accomplished photojournalist and received numerous awards including the International Prize for Young Photojournalists of Agfa and Bilderberg, the Hansel-Mieth Prize, the W. Eugene Smith Grant for Humanistic Photography, the Leica Medal of Excellence, the Alexia Grant, World Press Photo Awards and 'Joop Swart Masterclass' among others. In 2005, Wiedenhöfer was the winner of the Fuji Euro Press Award in the Architecture category.

A subject-matter specialist of Israeli-occupied territories, Wiedenhöfer published *Perfect Peace* with Steidl in 2002, featuring more than ten years of his work capturing the hopes and disappointments of people in the Palestine region.



*Portfolio Images
Courtesy of Kai
Wiedenhöfer*