



INDUSTRIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

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THE INVISIBLE WORKERS

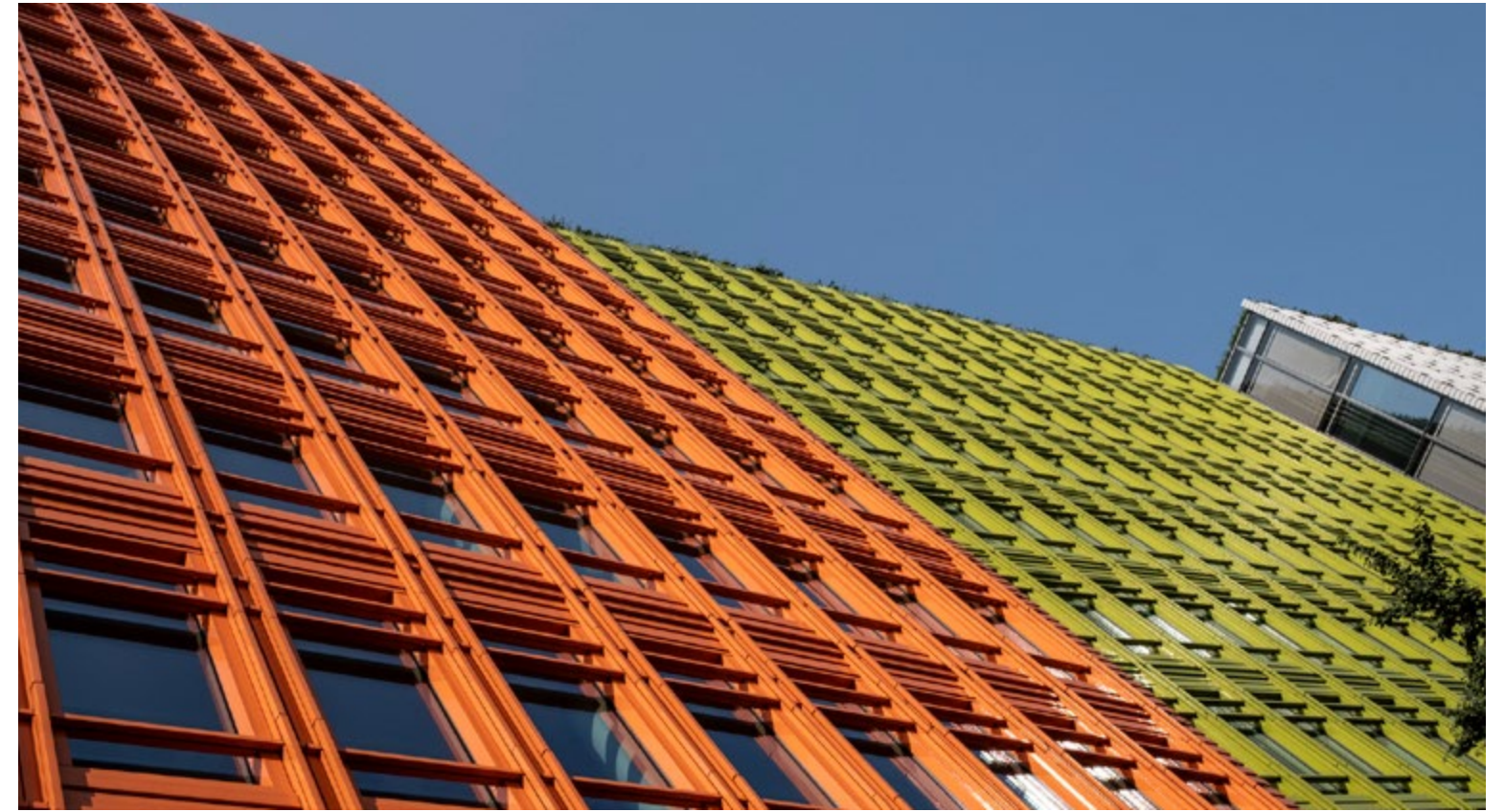
From 1986 to 1992 the Brazilian photographer, Sebastiao Salgado produced a body of work that he called, **Workers**.

Salgado documented men and women working on-the-ground, doing manual work, often in heavy industries, who are vital to the health of local, national and global economies.

Today's workers in similar industries are largely invisible to us. All too often we associate the word 'work' with images of smartly dressed people in offices who are sat behind desks, clicking away on laptop computers.

What we don't see are the millions of engineers, mechanics, farmers, construction workers, and machine operators who use their knowledge and experience to balance precision and craft with the push-and-pull of machinery and tools.

Social media, corporate websites and news feeds are littered with images of office workers huddled around flipcharts, smartly dressed people presenting to the room, and group shots from the team away day. Yet, we rarely see the farmer drenched by rain feeding their cattle, or the night workers who maintain the railway tracks, or the



construction workers wrestling with city traffic and regulations to create new office space or infrastructure. These are the workers who should be celebrated; after all, it's on their shoulders that progress is built.

We talk about society becoming detached from reality, there are numerous reports about the lack of interest in certain industrial professions leading to problems with recruitment, and of all this contributes to unrealistic expectations when it comes to the cost of services, products and produce.

To reverse these trends industry leaders can do more to engage the public, to celebrate the work of workers and to create interest in those sectors that are in danger of being forgotten.

INDUSTRIAL PHOTOGRAPHY - CELEBRATING WORKERS

Photographs are the most efficient method of communication. Studies show that people can read and image in just 13 milliseconds, meaning that a series of images presented as a photo-story can be read in seconds, faster than it would take to read a paragraph or watch a video clip; and research shows that images are more memorable. This is called the 'picture superiority effect'.

Industries should be visually documenting what they do and celebrating the workers who do it, which also means documenting the legacy of leaders and managers at a moment in time. These photo-stories should be shared, internally and externally, and then stored in a digital archive to become part of our collective social history.

- Is your industry under-appreciated?
- Do you struggle to recruit?
- Do your stakeholders really know what you do and how you do it?
- Do your people use manual skills, machinery and tools?
- Should your work and the workers be celebrated and documented as part of our social history?
- Are the skills in your industry changing?



VISUAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Having a visual communication strategy helps to engage audiences and make complex messages easier to understand and more memorable.

Business leaders use visual communication strategies to convey key messages using strong visual elements, such as photography. The objective is to engage target audiences, improve understanding, and reinforce key messages through the power of visual storytelling.



There are five steps to creating an effective visual communication strategy:

1. Define objectives - you may have one overarching objective or multiple objectives. We describe this as Know Feel Do, what you want people to Know, Feel and Do?
2. Identify audiences - knowing who audiences are and any preconceptions they may have will also inform objectives
3. Platform for delivery - identifying the most effective way to reach your target audiences will determine the format of the deliverable images
4. Brand guidelines - adhering to existing branding to ensure visual consistency
5. Storytelling approach – it's not just one hero shot; it's about telling a visual story that audiences can understand

If industry is going to be successful at attracting young talent, changing attitudes, and engaging stakeholders with the complexity of industrial work then we need more visual stories that celebrate work and the workers who are vital to our economies.



ABOUT ANDREW CAMERON

I started created visual stories for businesses in 1994. I started my own agency in 2000 specialising in visual communication to support change narratives.

Today, I use photography to help clients get their stories across.

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