

DOUG MENEUEZ

I'm a New Yorker. Although not born here, my heart belongs to New York and has since I arrived from Chicago at age eight. Even after decades in California, I never felt I was anything other than a transplanted New Yorker — I love its sense of common cause amid a mix of subcultures. But it was my earliest years on the South side of Chicago as the son of a community organizer where I learned about what it takes to tirelessly stand up for something, to help people define problems and issues, to want to try to change the world for the better. It is this belief that in order to survive, human beings must somehow find this common connection that is the fuel for the stories I tell about our lives.

After attending the San Francisco Art Institute and getting a degree in photojournalism at San Francisco State University, I was accepted for a coveted internship at the Washington Post. It was where I learned about being ready for absolutely anything, and that to make a photograph that has a point of view, you had to completely invest everything you had to give. There were risks, but to make an image that could stand the test of time was worth everything. I also learned about what was real and what makes something manufactured and contrived, about moments that fail to resonate or have a sense of gravitas.

Over time I have witnessed social injustice, anti-war demonstrations, gender inequality, and racial violence. I have been to the North Pole, crossed the Sahara and spent a few years documenting a young Steve Jobs in his prime for my book "Fearless Genius" — and through it all, my driving beliefs are to continue to show up and to document the realities of the human condition in the context of culture. History matters and we have to look to it for answers as a way of inspiring change.

I am also intrigued by what's coming, what's next for me - from giving talks about my time as a witness to the digital revolution, to exploring more filmmaking. I am also intrigued by the next generation of advertising creatives and tech entrepreneurs and curious who will be my next Fearless Genius. I also want to continue to explore the topics that speak to our shared fates - complex and sensitive topics such as birth and mortality but also the ones that show us the richness of the in-between — the emotions, the aspirations and the conflicts.

Ultimately at the heart of my work is a burning curiosity about the human experience and what we all have in common. As a visual storyteller I believe my role is to witness, but also to be a messenger. Whether it's street photography, shooting a global ad campaign or documenting corporate culture, I want my Images to have an impact - on culture, on our emotions or on our collective conscience; images that catch those milliseconds of reality that maybe nobody else will notice, but I do.