

Hendrick & Drieka



We asked Cape Town photographer Eric Miller to share with us one of his favourite pictures...

The picture chosen is unlike most that I shoot. It shows people in a simple, peaceful state of being. No drama, no war, no bloodshed. No major transformation of their social fabric. Just a tranquil moment in their ongoing life.

The couple are Hendrick and Drieka van Workum, the parents of close friends of mine in Holland. I met and photographed them in 1991 when I was still living in Holland.

Hendrick died about two years ago. They lived in the small rural village of Herveld for their entire lives and were married for over 50 years.

I met them only once but they made a deep impression on me. They reflected a fundamentally honest and pure way of life that I saw echoed in their children's lives.

Hendrick was quiet and solid, Drieka was the emotional heart of the family. The image reflects this, with Drieka being the one connected to the outside world via the phone.

It is a quiet and gentle picture. There are many pictures I like because they are made for a particular purpose and fit that purpose. This one is pleasing to me because I didn't have to take it. It was a reaction to the moment. The family were very pleased with it.

Eric Miller is a Cape Town-based freelance photojournalist. He works for several overseas publications and agencies on assignment in South Africa and around Africa. His work in South Africa in the 1980s focused on the struggle against apartheid, and now draws largely on the transformation processes that characterise the "new South Africa". The last few years have also seen him travelling widely and working in Rwanda, Liberia, Zaire, and a host of other African countries, as well as Denmark, Cuba, Vietnam and the US. He is co-owner of the i-Afrika Photo Agency in Cape Town which distributes photojournalists' work nationally and internationally.



Eric Miller in Rwanda at a UN supply base, 1994