

About VII

VII is a storied photo agency founded a few days before 9/11 to challenge the convergence in the photography business when the trend for giant companies swallowing smaller independent agencies started. VII went small and photographer-owned, believing in the power and energy of collective effort when everyone else seemed to be going big and corporate. VII remains a disruptive and innovative business unafraid to swim against the prevailing currents.

VII has turned its gaze far from the frontline of its foundation. It has earned a reputation for uncompromising photography immersed in the great issues of today. VII photographers and filmmakers are as likely to be found focusing on race, gender and identity as they are on migration or conflict. Amplifying local voices and addressing the complex political, environmental, and social questions facing families everywhere, VII places great value in the power of images to tell important stories. The members of VII are motivated by issues and are proud to elevate those issues above the cult of the image or the cult of the photographer

VII History

Founded in September 2001, VII was named for the number of its founding members, all leading photojournalists and documentarians emboldened and enabled by the ability to easily distribute their work in what was then the new digital age of photography.

Their first assignment was photographing 9/11. James Nachtwey, one of the founding members of VII was packing his bags to go on an assignment in the Caribbean. He looked out of his window near Wall St in New York and saw everyone in the street looking up at the sky. He saw flames coming out of the World Trade Center just a few blocks from his apartment. Nachtwey spent the next hours photographing as the Twin Towers collapsed killing thousands of civilians and over the following days he photographed the aftermath of despair. The other six founding members of the agency flew from Europe to the USA or to Afghanistan where they covered the fall of the Taliban, and unimaginable to them at the time, the beginning of America's longest war. VII focussed much of its energy in the ensuing years documenting the wars and violence that followed in the Middle East, wars that have killed hundreds of thousands of civilians.

Over the intervening years the agency has evolved into a multi-faceted institution, adding to its high-level journalism and documentary photography new business channels in publishing, film making, and education. Since its launch VII has been recognized as one of the world's preeminent photographer-owned photography and media agencies and has inspired many imitators