

"Iron Workers at Ground Zero" by Eli Reed, Magnum Photos.



9/11 FROM C1

Shared ordeal, shared strength best describes the exhibit

office. I was staying down in SoHo with Susan Meiselas. At about 10 in the morning on Tuesday, Susan stuck her head in the bedroom I was staying in and said, 'Two airplanes, suicide bombers, just smacked into the World Trade Center.' I raised my head from my pillow and said, 'Where's the World Trade Center?' 'I'd never been there; cities and buildings are not my subjects. She said, 'Follow the smoke, country boy.'"

Follow the smoke, indeed. As "New York, September 11" breathlessly illustrates, Magnum's task force was sweeping the city from the morning's fiery climax to the evening's poignant aftermath. Very rarely has a historical event been so carefully recorded by such stalwart talent.

As the Magnum group acknowledges, the photojournalistic irony of this day is that the training and discipline learned at hot zones in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe's Balkans and Central Africa came



"Double Check" by J. Seward Johnson, Jr. in Liberty Plaza Park near the World Trade Center" by Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photos

to use in this least likely of "ground zeros."

Each photograph captures New York City's incredulous coming to terms with insensible horror — effectively wartime conditions — and the emotional reckoning for lost family members and friends. And if a single quality emerges from

the photographs, it's the stoic steadfastness of policemen, firefighters, religious and community leaders coming to grips with this hitherto unimaginable horror.

As the exhibit's gallery statement accurately says, "While many photographers in the exhibition focused on the ac-

tual buildings under attack and other forms of destruction that occurred as a result, others chose to preserve the raw emotions of New Yorkers, providing the exhibition with a rich diversity under this centralized theme."

It's this "rich diversity" through shared ordeal and shared strength that best describes the exhibit. As seen through the practiced eyes of Magnum's photographers, New York City is seen bowed but ultimately unbroken with its heart tested by a crucible unlike any other event in recent American history. "New York, September 11" is the art of valor at its finest.

"New York, September 11 by Magnum Photographers" will continue through Oct. 11 at the Ann Arbor District Library, 343 S. Fifth Ave. Exhibit hours are 10 a.m. to 9 a.m., Monday; 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Tuesday-Friday; 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday, and noon to 6 p.m., Sunday. For information, call 734-327-4200.