

## Alan Catlin

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### **This Is Not Art: an assemblage**

“The Americans call photography an art. They have galleries, institutions, exhibitions. But what I’m doing is not art.” -- Don McCullin

Cholera victim. Eyes rolled back into her head.  
Cradled in arms of her husband as an offering to  
Death.

Shabby woman of no particular age. Standing in  
her, three-rungs-below-hell, dwelling. “Rats the  
size of cats,” her son says. Whoring is a way of  
life here. You have to eat. So do the boy with no-future  
eyes.

An American soldier in Hue city. During the offensive.  
Throwing a grenade amid the ruins toward an unseen  
enemy. Seconds before his arm is blown off  
by a sniper’s bullet. Before another soldier takes his  
place. Throws a grenade. Is shot. Before another  
man is ordered forward.

Three heavily armed, cocky young American soldiers  
in South East Asia. Their captive forced to his  
knees, arms trussed behind his back, rope around his  
neck like a leash. Eyes blindfolded with a dirty once-  
white rag. The village behind them about to burn.

Three blind black women fast walking in bare  
feet past heavily armed guerrilla force on the last  
days of the Smith regime in Rhodesia.

American army chaplain lifting an confused, dazed old woman from bombing raid rubble.

A face only portrait of a starving boy in Biafra.

The ordered and the disordered.

Humanity.

## **Painter's Wife, circa 1926**

After photo by August Sander

Grosz might have used her  
as a life study for his degenerate  
Art.

Was someone Isherwood  
would have met and been at home  
with in Berlin between the two  
world wars.

Was the kind who danced  
too-close with other women  
while dressed in men's clothes  
and who knew all the words to  
"Falling in Love Again", a song  
she felt as only a woman could.

She might marry but she will  
never have children.

**Alan Catlin** has been publishing for five decades. His latest full length book is *Wild Beauty* from Future Cycle Press which also published his book, *American Odyssey*. He is the poetry editor of the online journal *Misfit Magazine*.