

# ZEKE

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THE MAGAZINE OF GLOBAL DOCUMENTARY

## FEATURED ARTICLES

### THE POSITIVE COMMUNITY

A POSITIVE FUTURE FOR PEOPLE  
LIVING WITH AIDS

Photographs by John Rae

### VIETNAM RECONSIDERED

Photographs by Catherine Karnow,  
Monia Lippi, Sascha Richter, Astrid  
Schulz, Mick Stetson

### ISIS

THE IDEOLOGY OF TERROR &  
THE BATTLE FOR MOSUL

Photographs by Younes Mohammad  
and Gabriel Romero



# Social Documentary Network

A Global Network for Documentary Photography

## SDN is not just for photographers

SDN is also for editors, curators, students, journalists, and others who look to SDN as a showcase for talent and a source of visual information about a complex and continually changing world.



## SDN is more than a website

Above, Artist and educator Shanee Epstein talks with New York City public school students about SDN's LiveZEKE exhibition at Photoville, September 2016, Brooklyn, NY.

Today we have grown beyond the boundaries of a computer screen and are engaged in exhibitions, educational programs, publications, call for entries, and providing opportunities for photographers.

Michael Kamber (left), director of the Bronx Documentary Center, and Glenn Ruga (right) SDN director, at opening reception for SDN exhibition at the Bronx Documentary Center.



2015 SDN Exhibition at the Bronx Documentary Center on the theme of Visual Stories Exploring Global Themes.



Photograph by Nikki Denholm from *Mothers of Basaso Maternal Health in Somalia* on SDN.

**Exhibits:** SDN has presented exhibitions showcasing the work of dozens of photographers in New York, Chicago, Boston, Portland, Maine, Milan and other cities across the world.

**Spotlight:** Our monthly email Spotlight reaches more than 9,000 global contacts that include editors, curators, photographers, educators, students, and journalists.

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# ZEKE

THE MAGAZINE OF GLOBAL DOCUMENTARY

Published by Social Documentary Network

Dear ZEKE readers:

There is no greater concern today within the photography and journalism community than the value, or devaluation, of content. From 1839 to 2000, photographers were able to find a fair market value for their labor and talent, particularly if they had enough of the latter. It is no longer the case. As Ed Kashi, an SDN advisor and one of the world's leading photography talents, has often said, he now works twice as hard for half the pay.

The greatest cause is the advent of digital equipment, making it fairly easy to take a reasonably good picture. In the past, even to do that took some training and talent. Today, even those who take extraordinary photographs find it hard to create value.

There is, of course, another force at work—the concentration of wealth. While those at the upper 1% continue to make fantastic sums, working people of all stripes, including photographers, find it harder to earn a decent living.

And finally, the advent of digital publishing has created an implosion of the media industry, resulting in falling ad revenues and vastly smaller budgets, putting even greater pressure on photographers.

For ZEKE, we have our own struggles to develop a sustainable model to present meaningful photography in a challenging industry—print publishing. Revenue from subscriptions and single issue sales accounts for less than half of what it takes to publish the magazine. To assure the future of ZEKE, we have launched **The Campaign for ZEKE**, partnering with Talking Eyes Media, a nonprofit media organization that will accept tax-deductible donations on our behalf. We hope you can support us! To find out more about this campaign and how to make a donation, visit: [www.zekemagazine.com/campaignforzeke](http://www.zekemagazine.com/campaignforzeke).

As I write this letter, it is only two weeks after Hurricane Harvey devastated Houston and only days after Hurricane Irma tore through Florida and the Caribbean leaving a wake of destruction. One thing we have seen over and over is that the most important possessions survivors take with them, or seek upon returning to their damaged homes, are family photos—invaluable, irreplaceable, and a testament to the enduring power of the photographic image.

In closing, I would like to congratulate John Rae, the winner of our last Call for Entries for his project on The Positive Community, featured in this issue of ZEKE. I would also like to thank all the photographers and writers who have made this and every issue of ZEKE possible.

Glenn Ruga  
Executive Editor

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Cover photo by Gabriel Romero from *Liberation and Longing: The Battle for Mosul*. A Peshmerga soldier in the Yazidi town of Bashiqa, Iraq.

Transsexual sex workers in El Salvador work with PLWA community to help each other.

The  
**POSITIVE**  
**COMMUNITY**

A POSITIVE FUTURE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH AIDS

Photographs by John Rae

Text by Emma Brown



This sex worker in southern India is a peer educator for her area and works to keep her two young girls in school and out of the trade. Each night she sits in a wooden stall on a dimly lit street and brings clients back to this room.

John Rae has spent the last 15 years documenting the HIV/AIDS pandemic in developing countries throughout the world. He started his career as a commercial industrial photographer in NYC but found the work vacuous.

"I began to understand how photos and stories change the world," Rae says. "I wanted in."

For a decade and a half, Rae has been partnering with both NGOs and global partnerships such as The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria to promote their messages and raise funds for the fight against HIV/AIDS. He has seen "big strides" in efforts to combat stigma and discrimination, and has watched HIV evolve from a death sentence to a manageable disease. He is inspired by the sacrifices of the people he has met through this work, and he calls these people his heroes. Says Rae: "My heroes do not assault mighty castles, or slay evil enemies. They do not amass mighty fortunes. They work on the front lines of health, education, and poverty to make each day a little better."

Today, Rae is based in Montague, Massachusetts. However, his assignments often find him working in international locations with local activists and NGOs. While Rae claims that he is "not a photojournalist," he does consider himself incredibly fortunate to do the work that he loves.

"I am an advocate for the causes I believe in," he says. "It has been one of the greatest privileges of my life to walk among some of the bravest people who work on the front lines of the HIV/AIDS pandemic."

Rae is the winner of ZEKE's recent Call for Entries. He has received prizes in over 55 international photography contests.



Laotian sex workers learning how to apply condoms with their mouths. Men often demand to have sex without a condom, putting these women at greater risk of infection. This seminar also included mental health services, lessons on negotiation, and education on how to prevent HIV infection.



This AIDS orphan outside of Kigali, Rwanda is supported through a program that helps pay for his food, lodging, and education. He lives in a community house with other orphans who support each other.

This mother is an ex-sex worker in Cambodia and HIV positive. She passed her infection to her first child. However, once she joined the PLWA club in her neighborhood, she learned how to protect her daughter from infection. The young girl (pictured) is negative.





In prison, HIV positive, and pregnant. This Moldovan woman volunteered to enter the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission program after a peer educator counseled her.



Gay men's clubs are illegal in China. Underground communities are especially at risk for HIV infection. Often the only way to effectively reach these communities is through peer educators.

ment. According to the World Health Organization, nearly one in every 25 adults in sub-Saharan Africa is living with HIV. This population alone accounts for two-thirds of the world's PLWA.

In Mozambique, 13.2% of people aged 15-49 are HIV-positive. Rute Dos Santos, the Health and HIV Program Manager for Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), works with PLWA in Manica and Maputo. Her organization helps equip communities with the knowledge and skills they need to lead healthy and productive lives. Part of this work is ensuring that their clients always have access to ART. "The drugs

**"We need to change our way of thinking and addressing PLWA and be able to explain to the communities what this disease is, what causes it, how it is transmitted, and prove that we can live positively with HIV."**

— Rute Dos Santos

Health and HIV Program Manager for Voluntary Service Overseas

scientists have developed new drugs to target HIV-negative individuals who may be at high risk of becoming infected. One such preventative medication is Truvada for PrEP, which has been shown to reduce transmission rates when used in combination with safe sex practices. Rodney Lofton, Deputy Director of Diversity Richmond, an organization that provides services and programming for the local LGBTQ community in Richmond, Virginia, has spent the past two decades educating communities about HIV. "As much as we talk about how many people are on PrEP, we need to increase accessibility to it. If we know that this is a drug that is going to dramatically decrease transmission rates, we need to make it more affordable and accessible to communities who may not be able to access it."

In addition to poverty, stigma plays a major role in hindering prevention efforts and continues to influence who is more likely to become infected. Although HIV/AIDS affects people of all races, genders, sexualities, socioeconomic statuses, and geographic locations, it has been proven that disease risk does discriminate, and those at highest risk of becoming infected with HIV are often society's most marginalized — the LGBTQ community, people of color, sex workers, and intravenous drug users. In 2015, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that of the 32,000 new HIV diagnoses in the United States, 26,375 of them were acquired from male-to-male sexual contact. The CDC also estimates that one out of every two gay black men will become HIV-positive over the course of his lifetime.

In contrast, on a global scale, the face of HIV/AIDS is female. The majority (51%) of PLWA around the world are women. In low and middle-income countries, AIDS is the leading cause of death for women of childbearing age. Limited access to proper reproductive healthcare and a lack of education about safe sex practices are directly cor-



These women are learning how to cook for a large group of AIDS orphans in Zambia. These skills can be transferred to jobs in the private sector.

related to increased transmission rates.

In the global fight against HIV/AIDS, there are disparities in access to preventative care, education, and treatment, and the burden of the disease and its effects falls most heavily on the marginalized. Koek understands that to fight HIV/AIDS, it is imperative for agencies like USAID "to keep those who are most vulnerable at the center of our work." To address these disparities, VSO in Mozambique often focuses its programming on young women and girls, encouraging youth to make healthy choices that will reduce their risk of early marriage, teen pregnancy, HIV, and STIs.

Dos Santos from VSO believes that education is imperative in preventing the spread and combating the stigmas of HIV/AIDS.

"We need to change our way of thinking and addressing PLWA and be able to explain to the communities what this disease is, what causes it, how it is transmitted, and prove that we can live positively with HIV."

Much of this educational work is done by volunteers, activists, and PLWA themselves. Those who are affected or infected with HIV partner

with local organizations to raise awareness and spread messages of prevention. They also participate in other important activities like peer support groups, where they can share experiences, improve self-esteem and coping skills, and support one another's medication adherence and plans of care. Despite the challenges brought on by poverty and discrimination, Dos Santos is hopeful about the future of PLWA in Mozambique and around the world.

"PLWA in Mozambique are resilient to the challenges," she says, and she trusts that those who are well-informed will continue to support others by providing information about HIV and improving access to necessary services.

# A NEW FUTURE FOR PLWA\*

## \*PEOPLE LIVING WITH AIDS

Today, with access to proper healthcare, an HIV-positive diagnosis is no longer a death sentence.

Text by Emma Brown

Photographs by John Rae

There are approximately 37 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide (PLWA). That number has been steadily increasing over the past decade due to successful life-saving treatment for those affected. Today, with access to proper healthcare, an HIV-positive diagnosis is no longer a death sentence. Antiretroviral treatment (ART) can prevent the onset of AIDS and the transmission of HIV. When taken daily, HIV-positive individuals can expect to live just as long as their HIV-negative counterparts.

In the United States, ART is covered by most health insurance policies. But, around the world, access to these drugs can be limited and the cost can be prohibitive. Fortunately, there are many global orga-

nizations working tirelessly to provide communities with the resources they need to treat HIV/AIDS. Eleven of the 19.5 million people currently receiving treatment for HIV are doing so through programs supported by The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. And, in 2003, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) began implementing PEPFAR, the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

"PEPFAR is the largest commitment by any nation to address a single disease in history," says Irene Koek, USAID's Acting Assistant Administrator for Global Health. Its efforts are primarily focused on saving lives and preventing the spread of the disease on the African conti-

are free," says Dos Santos, "and rarely out of stock." However, the real challenge is keeping HIV-positive individuals on the medication. About a third of Mozambique's infected population quits ART within the first year. Poverty is often to blame; Dos Santos explains that to challenge ART's side effects, one has to have at least three meals a day and some patients need to travel more than 10 kilometers on foot to reach the nearest health facility.

The international response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic has been successful in saving lives and improving the quality of life for those affected. However, prevention efforts have yet to achieve similar progress. In 2016, there were more than two million new HIV infections around the globe. To curb the spread of the disease,



An HIV positive father greets his HIV negative daughter after a day at work in rural Kenya.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria  
[www.theglobalfund.org](http://www.theglobalfund.org)

Diversity Richmond  
[www.diversityrichmond.org](http://www.diversityrichmond.org)

United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief  
[www.pepfar.gov](http://www.pepfar.gov)

Voluntary Service Overseas  
[www.vsointernational.org](http://www.vsointernational.org)

# VIETNAM

## RECONSIDERED

Photographs by:  
Catherine Karnow  
Monia Lippi  
Sascha Richter  
Astrid Schulz  
Mick Stetson

Text by:  
William Thatcher  
Dowell

Photograph by Astrid Schulz  
From *100 Faces of Vietnam*

Nguyen Thi Nhu Hue (33) is working as an art teacher. She lives with her mother and just moved from a small rented house in the citadel to a newly built two story building on the outskirts of Hue. Hue is passionate about fashion; she loves bargain hunting at a local second hand market. She has a good eye for details and many of her collected items cost less than one dollar.





**Photograph by Catherine Karnow**  
**From *Agent Orange: A Terrible Legacy***

Both Nguyen Thi Ly, 9, and her mother, Le Thi Thu, 39, are afflicted with diseases associated with Agent Orange, passed down from Le Thi Thu's father, who was a soldier in the Vietnam War. Danang, Vietnam.

**F**or many Americans, the Vietnam War is remembered as a costly lesson in the limits of global power. In contrast, most Vietnamese see the end of the war as a definitive finale to more than a century of colonial occupation. For the first time since the middle of the 19th century, Vietnam was on its own again and responsible for defining its own destiny. Despite the domino theory that incorrectly predicted an eventual Chinese Communist or Soviet takeover of Southeast Asia, Vietnam has jealously guarded its independence, and it is emerging today as a dynamically independent force in Southeast Asia and a potential ally of the United States. After an admittedly rocky start, the country has largely abandoned the more impractical notions of Marxism-Leninism, and adopted a largely free market approach to the global economy, albeit with socialist restrictions.

In this issue of ZEKE, five adventurous photographers take a look at Vietnam as it appears now. Catherine Karnow bears witness to the terrible legacy of Agent Orange. Monia Lippi looks at the inventive fashions of Vietnam's myriad scooter drivers desperate to maintain a light complexion despite a merciless sun. Mick Stetson offers us a "Portrait of the Enemy," former fighters who have returned to ordinary lives. Sascha Richter shows us the colorful indigenous tribes and the harsh but beautiful landscapes of Vietnam's northwest mountains, and Astrid Schulz introduces us to Vietnam's newly emerging middle class, caught between tradition and modernity.

Far from dwelling on the past, an increasingly forward-looking Vietnam, today, has focused its energy on a future in which anything seems possible.

—William Thatcher Dowell



**Photograph by Monia Lippi  
From *White Skin***

The Vietnamese love to keep their white skin, and even in the humid tropical heat, they wear many layers to keep out the sun. This cult of whiteness for the youngest generations has given rise to exciting, colorful, and modern expressions of scooter fashion "cover-up style", a mix of Japanese Hello Kitty accessories, hipster Western jeans and sweatshirts on which any logo is welcome.



**Photograph by Mick Stetson  
From *Portrait of the Enemy***

In 1966, the provincial fishing village Cam Thanh was evacuated and destroyed. Trần Thị Bé (pictured here), went to Hanoi to live. She had begged her fiancé, Trần Văn Chông, to come with her, but he told her that first he had to help remove the enemy from his country. When the war ended, she returned to her village and married Trần.



**Photograph by Mick Stetson  
From *Portrait of the Enemy***

Coconut Grove is no longer an immense swamp as it was during the Vietnam War; much of it was destroyed during the war and later when a bridge was constructed. However, local people still forage food from the canals that run through it, as their ancestors have done for centuries.



**Photograph by Sascha Richter**

A girl near Meo Vac in Ha Giang province bordering China is taking a break from working in her family's field.

**Photographs by Sascha Richter**

Left: Portrait of a woman in her traditional clothes, worn by Dao people.

Right: Portrait of a Hmong woman.





**Photograph by Sascha Richter**

In the mountainous areas of northern Vietnam, markets are held every Sunday. They are important for selling and buying local agricultural products, household utensils, medicine, and an occasion for social and cultural exchanges among people of different ethnic groups.



Chau Pham is a fine art painter and designer and has a small studio inside his apartment located in Ba Dinh District. Occasionally Chau Pham sells his paintings through a gallery. However, it is difficult to make a living from art alone and he supplements his income by teaching art at a local school.

The Vietnam War ended 42 years ago, indelibly marking one of the most divisive periods in American history. Several recent books and documentaries, including an 18-hour PBS epic by Ken Burns, which premieres this fall, have tried to explain what happened. But, for the most part, the focus remains resolutely fixed on the impact the war had on Americans, with relatively little effort to see Vietnam as it exists today. The oversight is not hard to understand. The war left more than 58,000 Americans killed or missing in action. More than 1.1 million Viet Cong and North

Vietnamese troops died, as did an estimated two million civilians. The most lasting damage from the war resulted from 12 million gallons of Agent Orange that introduced poisonous dioxin into the Vietnamese food chain, causing cancer and hideous birth defects affecting multiple generations.

It would be natural to expect the Vietnamese to be bitter, but it is surprisingly difficult to see any resentment in Vietnam now. More than half of Vietnam's population today was born after the war ended. The population has ballooned from 32 million to more than 90 million people. The dominant impression is of an energetic, upbeat new generation. The Russian-influenced flirtation with Stalinism that characterized the mid-1980s is long gone. Although Saigon is officially renamed Ho Chi Minh City, most people still

use its old name in ordinary conversation. It remains the pulsing go-for-broke business center of the country.

Vietnam's current economic approach, known as *Đổi Mới* (renewal), can best be summed up as a "free market economy with social values."

The effects of the change are visible everywhere. High rise buildings increasingly dominate downtown Saigon, Hanoi, and Danang. Construction is nearing completion for Saigon's first subway. McDonald's and Starbucks proliferate in all three cities. Uber is active in Hanoi and Saigon. Women can even use a mobile phone app to summon a motor scooter with a female driver.

### ANYTHING GOES

Vietnam also has an 'anything goes' attitude towards social media. Google, YouTube and Facebook are all accessible. More than 45 million Vietnamese now use the Internet and at least 30 million have smart phones. 3G telephone cards costs as little as \$3. That's not to say that free speech isn't still risky. A 37-year-old popular blogger, Mother Mushroom, was recently sentenced to 10 years in prison for criticizing the government. Her alleged crime—speaking a bit too sharply concerning the government's land confiscation, police brutality, and recent crackdowns limiting free speech. The trial was widely reported, but instead of silencing newspapers, government-friendly news media simply hyped a competing scandal, which effectively diverted attention.

No one denies that Vietnam has plenty of problems, but that does not prevent it from being an extremely interesting

**"Make no mistake, this is still a communist state. But it's the most charming police state in the world."**

Thomas Bo Pedersen  
Danish factory owner in Vietnam

place to visit. Jason Lusk, who runs a marketing communications company in Hanoi, notes that while tourism is booming across Southeast Asia at a growth rate of around 5% a year, Vietnam's tourist industry is accelerating at nearly twice that rate. Lusk expects the industry to be worth \$20 billion by 2020. The attraction: some of the world's best beaches combined with excellent cuisine and a marvelously relaxed atmosphere.

A growing number of American and European companies are also discovering that Vietnam has advantages when it comes to quality offshore manufacturing. Thomas Bo Pedersen, a Danish citizen who runs three factories producing high-end industrial clothing, rates the Vietnamese

work ethic and the readiness of employees to learn new techniques as the country's biggest assets, although he admits that doing business in Vietnam still has marked differences from Europe or the US.

### THE MOST CHARMING POLICE STATE IN THE WORLD

"Make no mistake," says Pedersen. "This is still a communist state. But it's the most charming police state in the world." Nevertheless, as long as you avoid provoking the system, Bo Pedersen says, the country is full of possibilities. Yet to a surprising extent, Vietnam has escaped the brain drain common in most developing countries. Returning overseas Vietnamese are particularly valued for language and management skills. More than 21,000 Vietnamese students are currently enrolled overseas at American universities and colleges. Hau Ly, a 26-year-old Vietnamese who did her



Pham Thuy Lien is 24 years old and lives in Da Nang. She is working for the government as a researcher and shares a flat with two friends in the city center. Lien dreams to have a different career with more time for a social life. However, for nine years, she will be tied to working for the government after receiving a scholarship for studying abroad.

graduate studies in Michigan and Japan, says that most are anxious to return. "The older generation values stability," she says, "The younger generation sees Vietnam as full of new opportunities." That includes a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit. Starting salaries range from \$250 to \$300 a month. "You don't have much to lose," Ly says, "if you want to take a chance and start your own business." Despite low starting salaries, a top Vietnamese manager can earn \$6,000 a month.

**"I see young people making a difference. It is an amazing time to be in Vietnam."**

Hau Ly

26-year old Vietnamese who studied in the US and Michigan

None of that is to say that Vietnam doesn't have its share of growing pains. Inadequate city planning and damage to the environment has long been a serious problem. A major driving force behind the current Saigon/Ho Chi Minh City subway project is the urgent need to relieve the pressure from the millions of motor scooters and cars clogging the city's streets. Growing inequality between the booming cities and the rural regions is a constant concern. "Once you are out of the cities," says Jason Lusk, "much of the countryside is pretty much the way it has always been."

"I could talk for hours about the problems," Bo Pedersen says. "But the bottom line is that in the end, it all works out fine."

Hau Ly puts it more succinctly. "I see young people making a difference," she says. "It is an amazing time to be in Vietnam."

# VIETNAM RECONSIDERED

FROM WAR-TORN BATTLEFIELD TO BOOMING ECONOMY

Text by William Thatcher Dowell

Photographs by Astrid Schulz

More than 45 million Vietnamese now use the Internet and at least 30 million have smart phones.



Ho Quy Phuong studied Western medicine in Australia to be a pharmacist. He now works for the Hospital for Traditional Medicine and wishes to combine the two different types of medicine. He is hoping the government will pay more attention to traditional medicine and will support the hospital financially. Everything is made by hand and in small quantities, often to the specific needs of individual patients.

# AWARD WINNERS

## HONORABLE MENTIONS

FROM SDN'S CALL FOR ENTRIES ON  
CELEBRATING THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY



### Giorgio Bianchi

#### *Donbass Stories: Spartaco and Liza*

Right after the outbreak of the conflict in Donbass, Ukraine, Spartaco left his job and the house where he was living with his mother to enlist as a volunteer in the ranks of the pro-Russian militias. Convinced he had nothing to lose, ideologically very motivated and relying on his previous military training, Spartaco decided to join the separatist cause, finally abandoning his life in Italy that disheartened and depressed him. Through Facebook Spartaco met Liza.

### Aleksandra Dynas

#### *Children of God*

In Kampala, Uganda, there are more than 10,000 children living on the streets. To get money for food, they work in building demolition, unloading trucks or helping to sell food. The youngest children work collecting plastic bottles or metal scrap. Street children often lack access to clean water, food, medical attention, shelter, education, and protection. They are exposed to all forms of exploitation and abuse. Many children are exposed to violence, rape, beatings, drugs, robberies, or being arrested.



ZEKE presents these four honorable mention winners from SDN's Call for Entries on Celebrating the Global Community. The jurors selected John Rae as first place winner (see *The Positive Community*, page 3), and the four honorable mentions presented here.



### Saud A. Faisal

#### *Water Prisoners*

Bangladesh is the worst casualty of global climate change, hence a huge population faces floods every year. People move to the nearest highland to take temporary shelter, leaving their home behind in the flash floods. Until the water reaches above their knees, they try to remain in their homes hoping the water will go down. They are the Water Prisoners of Bangladesh. These are the people least responsible for the climate change, but they are the most affected.

### Sara B. May

#### *After the Crisis*

With its insidious onset in May 2014, the Ebola epidemic proceeded to ravage Sierra Leone for nearly two years, leading to the deaths of nearly 4,000 people. In December 2014, Francis Yorpoi lost both parents within two weeks of each other. He was adopted by his paternal aunt and uncle who already had three sons of their own. Even before Francis' arrival, they lived hand to mouth and his uncle was struggling to find work in the depressed economy. With the arrival of Francis, things didn't get easier.





## Interview

WITH FARZANA WAHIDY

by Caterina Clerici

*Farzana Wahidy is an award-winning Afghan documentary photographer and photojournalist. Born in 1984 in Kandahar, Farzana has been based in Afghanistan most of her life, primarily focusing on documenting the lives of women and girls in the country. Formerly a photographer for AFP and AP, her work appeared in the Sunday Times, ABC-TV, Le Monde 2, Polka Magazine, The Guardian, among others. She was a 2009 Open Society Institute grantee with her documentary project on Afghan women.*

**Caterina Clerici:** How did you get started in photography?

**Farzana Wahidy:** At the time I started the photography training, I didn't know much about photography — I didn't know much at all, actually. The life I had under the Taliban regime as a young girl was very tough. Education was forbidden for women, so we had to take a huge risk to attend classes in underground [secret] schools. It was a lot of pressure and I wanted to find a way to let my feelings out.

I studied photography because I thought it would help me learn how to write better too. But, as I was learning, I started falling in love with it. Most of the people in my country can't read or write, so photography can be used as a great format to communicate and share information. It has become the best way to express myself as a woman here, and also try to help other women in my community.

**CC:** When and why did you start focusing on women?

**FW:** I started around 2004 and I've been photographing Afghan women ever since. Sometimes, being a woman in this country means dealing with a lot of pressure, a lot of pain, and this forces me to take pictures. I find photography to be the only way to let it out and feel a little relieved. Especially these days, with so much going on in my country [the interview was conducted right after the May 31, 2017 attack in Kabul, that killed over 150 people], the only thing that gives me hope to continue my life here is photography.

**CC:** How was it to start working as a woman photographer in your country?

**FW:** At the beginning, it wasn't easy. In 2002/03, there weren't many women photographers in my country and a few crazy things happened, like people throwing stones at me. That's because Afghanistan had always been photographed by foreigners prior to then, and most of the photojournalists seen there were foreigners, even the female ones, so it was very new for Afghan women to be seen holding cameras and taking pictures. It slowly became a bit more common, and now we have a lot of young girls who take pictures.

When I started though, since women photographers were not that common in Afghanistan, there was a very high demand for us. I started working with AFP and then I got a job at AP. At that time, in



**Photo by Farzana Wahidy.** A woman washes her dishes before preparing tea for a visitor while her husband weaves a rug in their home in Kabul, Afghanistan. 2008

**Everyone in Afghanistan thinks that to bring about change they have to become politicians, and I think that's wrong. No matter what you do, if you do it well you can bring change.**

— Farzana Wahidy

2009/10, I was also covering the news, but my main focus and personal projects were on women.

**CC:** You decided to stop covering news to do more documentary and personal work. What made you change direction?

**FW:** One time, I think it was in 2010, there was an attack in Kabul. I went to the site of the attack and then to a hospital, and then I thought, "Oh my God, I want to leave. I don't want to cover this anymore." It was reminding me a lot of my childhood, growing up during the war in Afghanistan. I couldn't eat for several days, couldn't get rid of the smell of explosions. So I stopped.

Another reason was that a lot of photographers were covering the news, so I thought I should just focus on women in Afghanistan. In countries where a war is going on, the media always focuses on the war. And then women often get forgotten. I'm not saying completely, but they are affected a lot by it and are not as reported on as they should be. I think I felt responsible for them, and I still do.



**Photo by Farzana Wahidy.** Through the eye-hole webbing of a burqa veil in front of a clothing store in Kabul, Afghanistan. Thursday, May 3, 2007. (AP Photo/Farzana Wahidy)

**CC:** What are some examples of women being "forgotten" by the media?

**FW:** My last experience was two days after the attack that happened last Wednesday (May 31), during the demonstration that took place at the bomb site. I went there because I'm photographing a lot of women who are very politically active in Kabul and I knew they were going too. There was a group of women protesting during the demonstration, but because the protest got violent and there were casualties, no one talked about the women. I'm not saying the violence and deaths were not important, it should all be covered, but that's not the only story that should come out.

**CC:** What are the main challenges and goals for you as an Afghan woman photographer?

**FW:** When I studied in Canada [Farzana received a scholarship to attend the two year photojournalism program at Loyalist University in 2007], I realized how photography in Afghanistan was behind, and how much we — Afghan photographers — still had to learn. So I decided to come back to Afghanistan and try to teach. I created a project and for the first time there was research on photography in Afghanistan. We realized that everything in Afghanistan had been photographed by foreign photographers, and only in a small part by Afghan male photographers. When you come from outside, you

see things differently from someone who has been raised and living in a culture. I thought, "If I see things differently, I should show it."

I think the life of Afghan women hasn't been photographed or recorded as it should have been. If you study the history of Afghanistan at school, you only read about women from a very long time ago. But if you want to find a female role model among the women of our generation, it's very difficult. As an Afghan woman photographer, I feel responsible to do some-

thing about it. Before, my goal was just to photograph a different image of Afghan women's lives for foreigners. Now, I know that with photography I can do something for Afghanistan too: I have to record the lives of Afghan women at this sensitive time. I decided I will photograph Afghan women, not only in Afghanistan but also around the world, to bring a deeper understanding to the world of Afghan women. Women who have done something, who are recognized, but also who have a normal life, who are refugees. I want to record their lives so future generations have examples to look at. I want to make them part of our history.

**CC:** Do you think that photography can help bring change?

**FW:** Absolutely. Everyone in Afghanistan thinks that to bring about change they have to become politicians, and I think that's wrong. No matter what you do, if you do it well you can bring change. If you go to a school in Afghanistan and ask girls 'what do you want to be when you grow up?', they'll tell you either a doctor or a teacher. And you know why? Because they don't have role models; they don't know they can become a lawyer, a judge, a photographer. With my work, I want to give them other examples so they can make decisions about their lives in the future — if they're actually allowed.



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# ISIS THE IDEOLOGY OF TERROR & THE BATTLE FOR MOSUL

Photographs by  
Younes Mohammad and  
Gabriel Romero

Text by Anne Sahler

Photograph by Gabriel Romero  
From *Liberation and Longing: Inside  
the Battle for Mosul*

ISIS fighter Hassan Falah is captured by Iraqi  
forces in the Al Thawra neighborhood, West  
Mosul, Iraq. April 19, 2017.



In June 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, head of the Salafi jihadist militant group Islamic State (ISIS), declared his caliphate in the al-Nuri mosque in Mosul. Three years later, Iraqi military forces captured that mosque, celebrating victory over ISIS. But during those three years, Mosul's population had to endure physical and psychological oppression under ISIS, with thousands of civilians killed and displaced. The photographers presented here took risks to capture intense moments during the battle for Mosul in order to give a voice to the silenced.

Younes Mohammad is a Kurdish freelance photojournalist whose work focuses on areas of conflict. Born in Dohuk, Iraq, and now based in Erbil after 24 years as a refugee in Iran, he mainly works for national and international newspapers and magazines. In this photo series, Younes shows the suffering that civilians had to endure during the fight between coalition forces and ISIS in Mosul. "In the past two years, I got injured two times by shrapnel, but danger is part of my job. It was my destiny to document what happened. I felt it was an opportunity to document my past and my family's past." Younes' work has been internationally published and recognized.

The photos that Gabriel Romero, a freelance photojournalist based in Los Angeles, California, took in Mosul do not merely document the battle for the city against ISIS. His photos are a testament to the dignity, strength, and resilience of the people of Mosul. "I see photojournalism as an agent for change, that you can do something for the lives of others, something that is bigger than yourself." Gabriel's work specializes in areas of conflict, including environmental and humanitarian issues, and has been published internationally.



**Photograph by Gabriel Romero  
From *Liberation and Longing: Inside  
the Battle for Mosul***

Civilians are evacuated from a house in the Al-Thawra neighborhood by Iraqi forces. West Mosul, Iraq. April 19, 2017



**Photograph by Gabriel Romero**  
**From *Liberation and Longing: Inside the Battle for Mosul***

People in the besieged neighborhood of Albakir receive food aid from the Iraqi army. East Mosul, Iraq. November 30, 2016.



**Photograph by Gabriel Romero**  
**From *Liberation and Longing: Inside the Battle for Mosul***

A firefighter from Kirkuk pauses to rest. They claim that they don't do it for the money, but for their country. Qayyarah, Iraq. November 23, 2016.



**Photograph by Younes Mohammad**  
**From *In the Name of Religion***

Family members of martyr Hwzan Direk are mourning over his coffin at his funeral. Hwzan and his seven comrades were killed by suicide bombers attacking the frontline. November 8, 2015, Romilan, Al-Hasakah, Syria.



**Photograph by Younes Mohammad  
From *In the Name of Religion***

A Peshmerga woman holding a baby. His family escaped from Haweja and has just arrived at the Peshmerga frontline at Batewa Hills, south of Kirkuk. August 18, 2016, Batewa, Kirkuk, Iraq.



**Photograph by Younes Mohammad**  
**From *In the Name of Religion***

A Kurdish Yazidi family, after surviving eight days being surrounded by ISIS and walking more than 22 miles in Syrian territory, arrived at the border between Syria and Iraq where they found an abandoned building to live. People welcomed the refugees by distributing food and water. They were among more than 40,000 Kurdish Yazidis who were surrounded by ISIS for eight days during the hottest days of summer without water and food. August 18, 2014. Sohaila, Dohuk, Iraq.



**Photograph by Younes Mohammad**  
**From *In Less than an Hour***

A man from the Ghadesiya neighborhood was wounded during the battle for Mosul by a suicide ISIS car bomb. He was rescued and treated by medics of the Iraqi army in a field clinic. November 12, 2016. Mosul, Iraq.

# ISIS

By Anne Sahler

## & FIGHTING THE IDEOLOGY OF TERROR

Below: Members of the Iraqi Special Operations Force clear a house in the Khadra housing complex that was suspected of harboring ISIS fighters. Mosul, Iraq. November 26, 2016. Photograph by Gabriel Romero ©2016



On Sunday, July 10, 2017, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared the army's victory over the Islamic State (ISIS) terrorist group in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, which the jihadists had controlled since June, 2014. The recapture of the city was the biggest defeat to date for ISIS. As conflicting reports surfaced about the killing of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (also known as Kalif Ibrahim) in the fight over Mosul, Iraq's leader celebrated it as a major victory, simultaneously announcing the end of the Islamic State. But is it really the beginning of the end of the world's most dangerous terrorist organization?

Having its origins in the 2000s, the Islamic State (IS, also known as Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, ISIS, or Islamic State of Iraq, ISI) is a Salafi-jihadist militant terror organization, born of remnants of the Iraqi army and the Iraqi offshoot of Al Qaeda, in Syria and Iraq. What are its goals? The establishment and expansion of a caliphate (state of god), based on an extreme 7th century interpretation of the Koran, and ultimately eliminating other belief systems from the world. ISIS considers Shiites to be apostates, while Sunni Muslims are judged to be the "true believers" of Islam. According to ISIS, nationalism, tribalism, Baathism, secularism and other beliefs and doctrines are a violation against Islam. ISIS argues that most Muslims practice a "soft Islam" and not the "true" one. The Islamic State orients its actions toward the historical tradition of the very first Muslims, a time that was characterized by wars of expansion. Its simple maxim: If the first Muslims did it that way back then, it can't be wrong today.

While the Islamic State calls itself an executor of the only true Islam, many other Muslim groups, including some linked to Al Qaeda, have found the group's interpretation of Islam too extreme and brutal, accusing ISIS of promoting a version of Islam that has nothing to do with the "proper" interpretation of the Koran. Kidnapping, military use of children, sexual exploitation of women, slavery, beheadings of captives, and mass executions have become trademarks of the Islamic State. ISIS also has drawn widespread condemnation for its destruction of cultural and religious sites, use of chemical weapons, and extreme application of Sharia law. Its cruelty is part and parcel of the extremists' strategy: By engaging in public executions in city squares or by uploading professionally produced videos of beheadings onto social media, ISIS looks to demoralize, humiliate, and provoke their enemies while at the same time intimidating and warning them.

### Social media as recruiting tool

Many have wondered how the promotion of horrific violence and a fundamentalist utopia has attracted followers from all over the world — even from non-Islamic countries. Through a sophisticated use of social media, the Islamic State's public relations machinery has succeeded in rebranding the jihadists' holy war, largely in videos which appeal specifically to young people with less stable family backgrounds and dim prospects for the future.

With the help of social media tools like Twitter and Facebook, the Islamic State's recruiting efforts, overseen by a cadre of operators on social media, have been enormously effective. The terrorist group maintains a 24-hour online

global recruiting operation, with sympathetic volunteers and supporters dedicated to disseminating its messages and ideology in multiple languages. Their recruitment videos are high quality and their online magazine, *Dabiq*, is in English and several European languages and includes articles on the establishment of the caliphate and its religious foundations, as well as battle-field updates.

ISIS recruiting efforts have been highly effective. According to a 2015 report by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), the estimated number of foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq exceeds 20,000. In July, 2017, a group of 20 female Islamic State supporters from Germany, Russia, Turkey, Canada, Libya and Syria — most of whom had been recruited through social media — barricaded themselves with guns and explosives in a tunnel underneath the ruins of Mosul's Old City, though they subsequently were captured by members of Iraq's federal police.

### Battling ISIS in Syria, Iraq and beyond

The human toll of the Islamic State's campaign of terror continues to grow. Even



Kurdish Yazidi family after surviving eight days of being surrounded by ISIS and walking more than 35 kilometers in Syrian territories, arrived at the Syrian-Iraqi border. People were welcoming refugees by distributing food and water. August 18, 2014, Sohaila, Dohuk, Iraq. Photograph by Younes Mohammad.

though the battle against the Islamic State for Mosul has ended, a profound humanitarian crisis persists, according to the United Nations. Since ISIS took over Mosul in June, 2014, nearly a million civilians have fled that city alone. Approximately 700,000 Mosul residents remain displaced, living in humanitarian camps for displaced persons. Many people are malnourished and dehydrated, along with being traumatized by the violence. Overall in Iraq, an estimated 3.3 million people have been displaced by the Islamic State. Hundreds of thousands of residents cannot return home as their houses have been destroyed or heavily damaged. These displaced Iraqis are in need of shelter, food, health-care, water, and sanitation.

While the battle for Mosul may have significant military implications, ISIS may not see the loss of Mosul as the devastating setback Iraq's leader described. According to Charlie Winter, a senior research fellow at The International Center for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, "The Islamic State gave up on Mosul months ago, possibly even years ago. Holding the city was always just a propaganda play for it, one that



A heavily bandaged civilian is evacuated from a house in the Al-Thawra neighborhood, West Mosul, Iraq. April 19, 2017. Photograph by Gabriel Romero.

will allow it in years to come to continue its utopian boast, even if it doesn't control it any more. The Islamic State isn't a 'normal' political movement working towards 'normal' political goals. More than territory, it wants to accommodate the world to its ideology and, if that means taking over massive amounts of territory only to lose it a few months further down the line, then so be it." In addition, the Iraqi army has more ISIS strongholds to take on as the terrorist group remains in control of several other towns in Iraq.

Neither the rumored death of ISIS leader al-Baghdadi, which US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis recently doubted in the *Washington Examiner*, nor the loss of territory in Iraq and Syria, are likely to bring a quick end to the terror group and its international reach. Recent attacks in Europe, including Barcelona, Paris, Brussels, Berlin and London, have shown that the Islamic State already has become a danger to civilians in Europe and elsewhere. As a result, analysts suggest a multi-pronged approach to countering the ISIS threat. "Local actors, regional states, and the international community should work to counter ISIS's financial strength, neutralize

its military mobility, target its leadership, and restrict its use of social media for recruitment and information operations," stresses Charles Lister, a former Brookings expert and senior fellow at the Middle East Institute. "Countering the [Islamic State] is a long process that is not simply done by using military power, but must be led by local actors." Even if the military operation against the Islamic State is successful, the battle against its ideology will take years to succeed.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**The Brookings Institution**  
[www.brookings.edu/research/profiling-the-islamic-state/](http://www.brookings.edu/research/profiling-the-islamic-state/)

**International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR)**  
<http://icsr.info/2017/03/icsr-insight-islamic-state-dealing-defeat-mosul/>

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**The Mapping Militants Project, Stanford University**  
<http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/1>

**United Nations**  
[www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57192#.WXXJDMZ7FE4](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57192#.WXXJDMZ7FE4)

**The Atlantic**  
[www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/)

# THE AMBIGUITY OF PRESSING THE SHUTTER

## ETHICS IN PHOTOJOURNALISM

By Allen Murabayashi

Originally published on the May 8, 2017 PhotoShelter Blog



◀ "I took almost a roll of Tri-x film of her then I saw her skin coming off and I stopped taking pictures. I didn't want her to die. I wanted to help her. I put my cameras down on the road." Nick Ut on photographing Kim Phuc and what became one of the most influential photos of the twentieth century. Courtesy The Associated Press.

### A Historical Perspective

On August 6, 1945, the US detonated the first atomic bomb over Hiroshima which indiscriminately killed approximately 145,000 people within four months (half those deaths occurred on the day of the bombing).

On the ground, photojournalist Yoshito Matsushige took the only known photos from the day.

In a 1986

interview for the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Matsushige said, "I saw [all this destruction] and I thought about taking pictures — so I got my camera ready — but I just couldn't do it. It was such a pitiful scene...But these children, any

moment they would start dying. It was so hard to take pictures of them." After twenty minutes, Matsushige mustered the courage to take two frames. "I felt like everyone's gaze was fixed on me. And they were thinking that I wasn't helping anyone, I was just taking pictures."

Upon hearing that biographer/photographer Howard Bingham refused to take a photo of friend Muhammad Ali after a devastating loss to Joe Frazier, legendary photojournalist David Burnett thought to himself "that is exactly when you HAVE to take a picture," but over time, he's come to believe that "the line gets fuzzy much more quickly than you'd expect."

**T**he myth goes that Crazy Horse refused to be photographed, believing the image would steal his soul. In truth, the apocryphal tale has no historical evidence. But taking photos is intrusive, and most people would agree upon some near universal norms regarding photography (e.g. taking photos of children in public).

For photojournalists the ethics of photography are part and parcel of the job, and when to take a photo is a major component of those ethics. The issue boiled over again with the controversy surrounding disgraced photojournalist Souvid Datta whose shoddy plagiarism of

◀ Photojournalist Yoshito Matsushige took the only known photographs of Hiroshima on the day of the bombing, August 6, 1945. From the collection of Robert Del Tredici.



Photojournalist Souvid Datta's plagiarism of a Mary Ellen Mark photo this past year caused the photography community to rightly focus on professional ethics.

a Mary Ellen Mark photo eclipsed a prior discussion of his photo of an alleged rape ("alleged" because we have no reason to believe the veracity of his captions or whether he staged a scene).

But questions regarding the rape photo remains central to the discussion of ethics. National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) President Melissa Lytle wrote, "According to the NPPA Code of Ethics, visual journalists are supposed to treat subjects with dignity and respect and to give special consideration and compassion to vulnerable subjects. As human beings, we have a moral obligation to do no harm."

But the reality on the ground is often rife with ambiguity.

“According to the NPPA Code of Ethics, visual journalists are supposed to treat subjects with dignity and respect and to give special consideration and compassion to vulnerable subjects. As human beings, we have a moral obligation to do no harm.”

—Melissa Lyttle, NPPA President



Brussels Airport following a terrorist bombing on March 22, 2016. Photo by reporter Ketevan Kardava of Nidhi Chaphekar, a Jet Airways flight attendant.

The significance of his words shouldn't be taken lightly. Burnett was famously standing on the same dirt road as Nick Ut, when Ut took one of the most famous photos of all time — a nude child screaming from napalm burns. The Pulitzer Prize-winning photo of Kim Phuc shifted public sentiment despite its graphic and gruesome content, which was famously censored on Facebook because of their policy on child nudity. But even Ut put his cameras down telling *Vanity Fair*, “I took almost a roll of Tri-x film of her then I saw her skin coming off and I stopped taking pictures. I didn't want her to die. I wanted to help her. I put my cameras down on the road.”

Six months prior to the “Napalm Girl” photo, Burnett found himself unable to take a photo. While photographing the India-Pakistan war in December 1971, Burnett came across a Pakistani detainee in the town of Kulna whose fate was almost a certainty. “I walked across the room and took my camera up to photograph one of the prisoners. His expression melted into the most frightened face I had ever seen. He must have known exactly

what his situation was, and no doubt was hoping this foreigner — me — would be his savior. There was really nothing I could do. But at the same time, as we looked at each other, I lost whatever journalistic energy had propelled me to that moment. I couldn't take his picture.”

On March 22, 2016, a bomb ripped through the Brussels Airport. Reporter Ketevan Kardava photographed one of the victims — Nidhi Chaphekar, a Jet Airways flight attendant — in shock and with her clothing partially blown off her body. Critics pounced on the exploitative nature of the image. On the *Huffington Post*, Sandip Roy wrote, “Kardava is doing what is her job, to document a tragedy, possibly at risk to her own life. The media is doing what they think is their job — finding an image that drives home that tragedy. The only person who has no choice in this is the person in the photo splashed around the world.” Yet, the quick circulation of the image allowed Chaphekar's family to know she was alive.

More recently, Syrian activist and photographer Abd Alkader Habak put

down his camera to help victims of a bus convoy bombing. “The scene was horrible — especially seeing children wailing and dying in front of you,” Habak told CNN. “So I decided along with my colleagues that we'd put our cameras aside and start rescuing injured people.”

But at the same scene, photographer Muhammad Alrageb felt the compunction to take photos telling CNN, “I wanted to film everything to make sure there was accountability.”

## The Intricacies of Sex, Violence, and the Gaze of “Others”

Tim Matsui has covered child sex trafficking in America for many years with his “The Long Night” project, and has grappled with many of the issues that confronted Datta. “Since I mostly do slow stories, my metric is to ask, am I being exploitive?” Collaboration is crucial for Matsui, “In gaining access, I've had to fight a stereotype about the media's exploitive nature. The key, I feel, is to not exploit someone in a vulnerable situation. It's about helping them tell their story, not taking it from them for a better portfolio or clip.”



Syracuse Associate Professor of Newspaper & Online Journalism Seth Gitner agrees that photos need to advance a story, “There are other times when your journalistic senses kick in and tell you — wait, this has nothing to do with the story and has no journalistic meaning, so don't bother taking the photo — but of course when an editor who is on the sidelines hears about what you may have missed — they may think otherwise.”

Adjacent to the issue of when to take a photo, is who should be taking it? More than one female commentator has questioned whether men should be photographing sexual trafficking, abuse, and rape stories of women in the first place. One veteran photojournalist who wished to remain anonymous told me, “Compare Datta's work to Stephanie Sinclair's Child Brides, Yungchi Kim's Comfort Women, or Jodi Cobb's Geishas. I think a woman would have done [the Datta] story [with] a different approach.”

An outsider's point of view can potentially sensationalize rather than inform, and critics have bemoaned the imperialist gaze cast upon “exotic” cultures. In an interview with the *Huffington Post*, ESPN Senior Photo Editor Brent Lewis empha-

sized the importance of having black photographers photographing black stories. “We are often represented as being poor, as if being poor is a quality. When I was in Chillicothe, Ohio, lots of African Americans were middle class. It is nothing like Chicago. Every place is distinct. So I had to dive into the history of this place. Too many people are trying to tell our stories without understanding our stories, I feel it is like my duty to go out there and tell our story.”

## Rapport and Respect

Many photojournalists cite the importance of building a relationship between photographer and subject. Words like “dignity” and “respect” often accompany descriptions of how photographers should approach their subjects.

Pete Kiehart has photographed extensively in the Ukraine and France and explains that, “I also work best when my subjects understand why I'm photographing them and when they've consented to being photographed.” But Kiehart recognizes that breaking news doesn't always afford him that luxury.

When confronted with an ethically

◀ “The key, I feel, is to not exploit someone in a vulnerable situation. It's about helping them tell their story, not taking it from them for a better portfolio or clip.” Tim Matsui, director and cinematographer of “The Long Night” a film produced with Media Storm on child sex trafficking.

challenging scene, there are no guides to consult, and no online forums to query. Gitner says, “The relationship between photographer and subject is exactly that — between photographer and subject — only the photographer can be the one to make the decision ‘in the moment’ whether to shoot or not.”

## Empathy and the Photojournalist

Would more photos from Hiroshima help us understand the horrors of nuclear weapons? Should Burhan Ozbilici have put down his camera at the assassination of Andrey Karlov? Are we justifying photographing horrible events, or do the photos really help build an understanding of complex topics and stories? Burnett says, “I have always felt that pictures, especially good pictures, need a bit of soul and humanity to accompany technical talent. I think it is in that humanity that photographers try and find the balance. There is never a clear line, it's one you feel, and sometimes you're right, and sometimes — well — you're just a photographer.”

It's tragic that Datta's photo was the catalyst for the current round of ethics discussions. And it should raise alarms within the industry that it took two outsiders, Benjamin Chesterton and Shreya Bhat, to raise their hands and force a moment of introspection. But let's be clear, ethics isn't just a photographer problem. It took an industry of contest organizers, judges, photo editors, grant organizations, and publishers to allow questionable content and an ethically-challenged photographer to surface.

For every “obvious” scenario, there are dozens of ethically ambiguous situations. Do you preserve history at the expense of dignity? We will only gain clarity with an ongoing discussion — not a punctuated dialogue that waits for egregious activity and a backlash of moral outrage.

## CINES DE CUBA

By Carolina Sandretto

Essays by Carlos Garaicoa, Grettel Jimenez-Singer and Carolina Sandretto  
Skira, 2017  
394 pp./\$75.00



Carolina Sandretto's first book, the elegantly designed *Cines de Cuba* from Skira, is a glorious behemoth of an art book. Three hundred and ninety three pages that visually chronicle Cuba's 500+ plus movie theaters, both active and derelict, with classic square format, color film photography. Three enlightening essays by Sandretto, Carlos Garaicoa and Grettel Jiménez-Singer infuse the hundreds of pages of abandoned buildings with a dimension of longing and loss. These personal and emotive texts strike a balance between the scholarship inherent in such a specific theme, and the pleasure of seeing and remembering. There are more stories that could, and should, be told based on these contemporary pictures of Cuban culture in decay.

Sandretto's candid approach to Cuba's very diverse cinemas may be a challenge for non-cinephiles. The multiple pictures of Cuban theater exteriors are not like Hilla and Bernd Becher's formal, typological views of once functional architecture. Sandretto's photographs often include a slice of the street, with both people and automobiles. And they are created from whatever angle works best under Cuba's searing sun. As for interiors, Sandretto is attracted to mostly disheveled views

of empty rooms, sometimes with a dance class, performance, or rehearsal happening within. This is Cuba in transition and it is likely that these historic environments may soon disappear.

Sandretto has many praiseworthy projects in her portfolio, including expressive portraits on SDN of *Vivir Con... the Cuban Habitat*. These portraits are made inside old houses in which multiple families have settled in spite of government restrictions. In *Cines de Cuba*, Sandretto has deliberately stepped away from the visual intimacy of *Vivir Con* to illustrate how time and circumstance affects culture, politics, and the artist. *Cines de Cuba* is likely to become an important historical document. As Cubans embrace change and step into their future, this book is an evocative reminder to keep art alive.

—Frank Ward

## TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

By Michael Kolster

With an introduction by Alison Nordström and an essay by Matthew Klingle  
George F. Thompson Publishing  
240 pp./\$60.00

In his new work *Take Me to the River*, Michael Kolster explores the interplay between the natural and the man-made. Ironically, his black-and-white photographs of four major Atlantic rivers — the Androscoggin, Schuylkill, James, and Savannah — disrupt these traditional binaries that often divorce environment from industry, presenting these places as areas of human-nature interaction. But the project also dives headfirst into deeper theoretical questions about photography, photographers, and meaning-making. In the book's introduction, Kolster asks us, "Is a photograph art or evidence?"

Borrowing the conceptualization of the photograph as both a window and a mirror from John Szarkowski, Kolster illuminates his medium as subjective and objective, simultaneously reflecting the concerns of the artist and revealing the objective reality of a single moment in

Photo by Michael Kolster from *Take Me to the River*. Under the Frank J. Wood Bridge, Brunswick-Topsham, Maine, Androscoggin River, 2011.



time. By refusing dichotomy, Kolster brilliantly exposes the complicated relationships between photographers and their subjects, photographs and their onlookers, and these witnesses and the experiences that construct their perspectives.

When reading *Take Me to the River*, you will immediately notice that it is unlike other contemporary photography books. All of the photographs are ambrotypes, a wet-plate collodion process of making glass-plate positives that dates back to the mid-nineteenth century. This antebellum technique requires great attention to detail and a keen understanding of what it takes to get lighting, chemical reactions, and timing just right. It is labor intensive and time consuming, with one plate taking about 20 minutes to create.

Because it is such a highly variable process, each plate is different. But this unpredictability, and the personality imparted onto each image, is the missing ingredient Kolster sought to depict in these rivers and the consequences of our interactions with them. "Remarkably," he writes, "the collodion image, like invisible ink seen under a black light, reveals aspects of a scene not wholly perceptible to the human eye." Kolster likens the chemicals washing over the glass plate to a river flowing over a riverbed and the silvery impurities left behind to sediments. Beautifully, through this process, the glass plate becomes both a window and a mirror.

*Take Me to the River* is structured so that the book itself becomes part of the artwork. Pages unfold to reveal panoramas of river-cityscapes, and the stories flow north to south, beginning in Maine at the source of the Androscoggin River and ending in Georgia along the banks of the Savannah River's mouth. Backed on black paper, the images' edges get their

definition from the inevitable imperfections of the wet-plate process, an optical illusion that gives them a three-dimensional quality when digitized.

Kolster, who is a professor at Bowdoin College, presents the rivers in a historical, geographical, and social context. He takes an academic approach without sacrificing nuance and artistry. Flipping through *Take Me to the River* is a similar experience to walking through the halls of an art exhibit. Whether in a gallery or in print, this body of work stands out for its dynamic and sculptural qualities. The book accomplishes many things and belongs in the hands of curators and art students alike.

—Emma Brown

## KINGS AND QUEENS IN THEIR CASTLES

By Tom Atwood

Damiani, 2017

144 pp./\$45.00



American royalty may sound like an oxymoron, but for the subjects of Tom Atwood's project *Kings and Queens in Their Castles*, the description could not be more fitting. Atwood spent 15 years photographing intimate portraits of hundreds of remarkable LGBTQ figures at their homes across 30 US states. In the book's introduction, he says that the project's purpose is to provide "a contemplative photo series" of the LGBTQ community. Atwood beautifully shows that together, the influence of these movers, shakers, and caretakers extends to every nook and cranny of US society. His photo-

graphs convince us that the contributions this community makes to the greater fabric of American life are as ubiquitous as a monarch's rule.

*Kings and Queens in Their Castles* is a personal project. Atwood's goal was to create a series designed to "highlight our manifold personalities and backgrounds." To do so, he refused the restrictions of conventional portraiture by using wide-angle lenses that place equal emphasis on subject and environment, welcoming what he refers to as "idiosyncratic belongings, paraphernalia and detail" into his shots. The result of this artistic choice are vibrant, compelling, and honest depictions of his subjects and the homes and lives they have built.

From the first page to the last, *Kings and Queens in Their Castles* is an homage to both the diversity within the LGBTQ community and the "common LGBTQ sensibility" that Atwood acknowledges and celebrates. Many of the individuals photographed are artists or cultural figures, but there are also religious leaders, farmers, and nurses. Some of the homes are mansions that could be mistaken for museums, while others are humble, cluttered apartments. But thanks to his commitment to showcasing each individual as a whole, complex, and colorful person, no photograph — and no story — is less interesting than the next. And the stories, though representative of a broad spectrum of experiences, flow together seamlessly in a way that cannot adequately be described in words but can be felt while experiencing the photographs in the book.

The authenticity and intimacy necessary to create a body of work so powerful and unforgettable was made possible by Atwood's nuanced approach and the dignity with which he chose to portray his subjects. Atwood writes that ultimately, his hope for the project is that his photographs will "arouse in you as much delight and curiosity as they do in me." If you are someone who is moved and inspired by all things human, then they certainly will.

—Emma Brown

## THE FAMILY IMPRINT: A DAUGHTER'S PORTRAIT OF LOVE AND LOSS

By Nancy Borowick

Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2017

198 pp./\$40.00



I first saw Nancy Borowick's stunning black-and-white photographs of her parents, Howie and Laurel, and heard about their story — each dying almost a year apart from cancer — at Visa Pour L'image in Perpignan in 2015. This beautiful new collection in *The Family Imprint* fills in more of the details and delves deeper into the lives and love of the Borowick family, beyond the cancer. Reading it in one sitting from cover to cover, one finds this gut-wrenching and heartwarming elegy — which is part scrapbook and part family photo album — is a tribute to the enduring love of Howie and Laurel for each other and their family.

Gorgeous black-and-white spreads don't lie about the daily struggles of living with cancer — the side by side chemotherapy chairs, the hair loss, the hospital beds, the overflowing medicine cabinet, the setbacks. Laurel says, after her mastectomy, "I didn't feel like a feminine being. I didn't feel like I was a sexual being. I kind of felt like an 'it'." However, what makes *The Family Imprint* transcendent are actual handwritten cards bound into the book — not photographs of cards — from Howie to Laurel on Valentine's Day ("you are my hero") and from Laurel to Howie on Father's Day ("a uniquely wonderful father"). Nancy gives a full page to Laurel's handwritten to-do lists ("order a head-

stone," "what happened to the Girl Scout cookies?"), the yellow legal pad of handwritten "Parental Advice" from Laurel to the kids, the worn out scrawled recipe for Mama's Meatballs from Howie's mother; a photo of the family's hands eating fried chicken.

Amidst the hospital bed shots, there is a two-page spread of "I love you" handwritten on a Post-it note, collages of old color family snapshots from Howie and Laurel's wedding, the '70s big hair and mustaches, and the kids hamming for the camera throughout their youth. Nothing is left unturned in this intimate soliloquy to family and to lives well lived.

The book opens with a photo of a key found in the family home that to Nancy represents the unknown future and closes with Howie's cherished gold Star of David necklace. The book's inside jacket is the detail of the tapestry of the family photo album. It's hard to get through *The Family Imprint* without sobbing. You know this family like they are your own and you live through their fears, hopes, and dreams. It is a moving testament to mothers and fathers and daughters. You are rooting for them despite knowing how it is going to end. Howie wrote his own eulogy and requests that you "look for me in every sunset" and Laurel tells Nancy and her siblings to look to the night sky for them. It is a rare gift for a daughter to have this time to prepare for her parents' death.

Laurel overcame breast cancer in 2009, 2011 and 2013 and died in 2014; Howie had stage 4 pancreatic cancer in 2012 and died in 2013. But to Laurel, "my life had some meaning, I helped produce three remarkable human beings." "I never felt like it was a battle—I always felt like I was living and then just trying to manage the cancer." Lessons from Howie: "Don't waste time. You only have one life. Don't sit on your ass and watch TV. Go out and do things. Be with people and make good friends. Have experiences."

We can't escape cancer, it is one of the deadliest killers worldwide, but we can take the wisest advice from the Borowicks and this moving book—to live out loud.

—Barbara Ayotte



## ELEGY

By Justin Kimball  
Radius Books, 2016  
87 plates / \$55.00

**E**legy, by Justin Kimball, is an extraordinary body of work captured in small towns of New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Ohio that have fallen on hard times during the last recession and were passed over by the recovery as the centers of economic activity became grossly over-concentrated in New York, San Francisco, Boston, and other global urban centers. In its wake is left the texture of human and material decay that Kimball records with both impeccable technical precision and the empathy, wit, and the framing of an artist steeped in the history of photography, literature, the arts, and social awareness.

While decrepit old buildings in rural America is a common theme among photographers, Kimball reminds us how meaningful and rich these images can be when created by someone with his talent, training, and vision.

For instance, *Cliff Street* (plate 27, pictured above), shows a barefoot man on his front step looking downward, forlorn and contemplative (of what, we are only left to guess). The chipped paint, rusty mailbox, debris (possibly spent bags of heroin), stuffed beneath the stoop, all indicate that this is a neighborhood not on the upswing. The entire left side of the frame is a large window with shabby drapes, an American flag hanging from above, and a cat sitting on the window sill, also looking downward and as forlorn and contemplative as the man. The man and the cat are each residents of what is now flyover country with diminishing prospects of prosperity.

Looking through *Elegy* in 2017, one is painfully aware of how prescient this work is, created earlier in the decade and certainly before Donald Trump was elected

president by the residents of the communities photographed by Kimball. While the urban, educated, and tech-savvy residents of more affluent areas cannot fathom why the dispossessed would support a party and a man that will only make their lot worse, looking at these photographs makes us aware, and perhaps shameful, of the desperation that would allow for this, and perhaps our own complicity.

*Federal and Washington Street* (Plate 78), is one of many images layered in meaning. Crossing street signs for Federal St. and Washington St. are in the foreground. What is being commented on here is our federal system of government, gridlock in Washington, our inability to solve the most important national problems of poverty and the lack of opportunity. Behind these signs is a small nondescript building covered in mildew, grime, weeds, and graffiti. Affixed to the building is a pristine Re/Max "For Sale" real estate sign with the picture of a glowing and suited real estate agent forever optimistic about the future. One walks away feeling that much more is needed than the over-the-top showmanship of a man intent on making a deal.

While a more traditional documentary photographer may show us in greater and bolder detail the decay and lost hopes, Kimball does it more subtly and leaves us with a lingering, if not tactile sense of the existential problems. And while many documentary photographers may also be activists, working on issues of policy and politics as well as on their photography, Kimball is an educator returning to his students at Amherst College, who we hope will learn a moral lesson about their place of privilege and their role in the future of their country, from the work of their brilliant and talented teacher of photography.

—Glenn Ruga

Note: Additional book reviews are online at [www.zekemagazine.com/read](http://www.zekemagazine.com/read)

# WHAT'S HOT!

## TRENDING PHOTOGRAPHERS ON SDN

Of the hundreds of exhibits submitted to SDN each year, these four stand out as exemplary and deserving of further attention.



**Tom Martin:** *The Ex Child Soldiers of Leer, South Sudan.* Endemic conflict in South Sudan has created generations of child soldiers, many of whom are stolen from their families or displaced during the chaos of war. As these children grow older they often have no family to support them, no means to access education, and no way to make a living. It is no surprise that many of these ex child combatants are forced to return to the only lives they know, lives supported by violence.



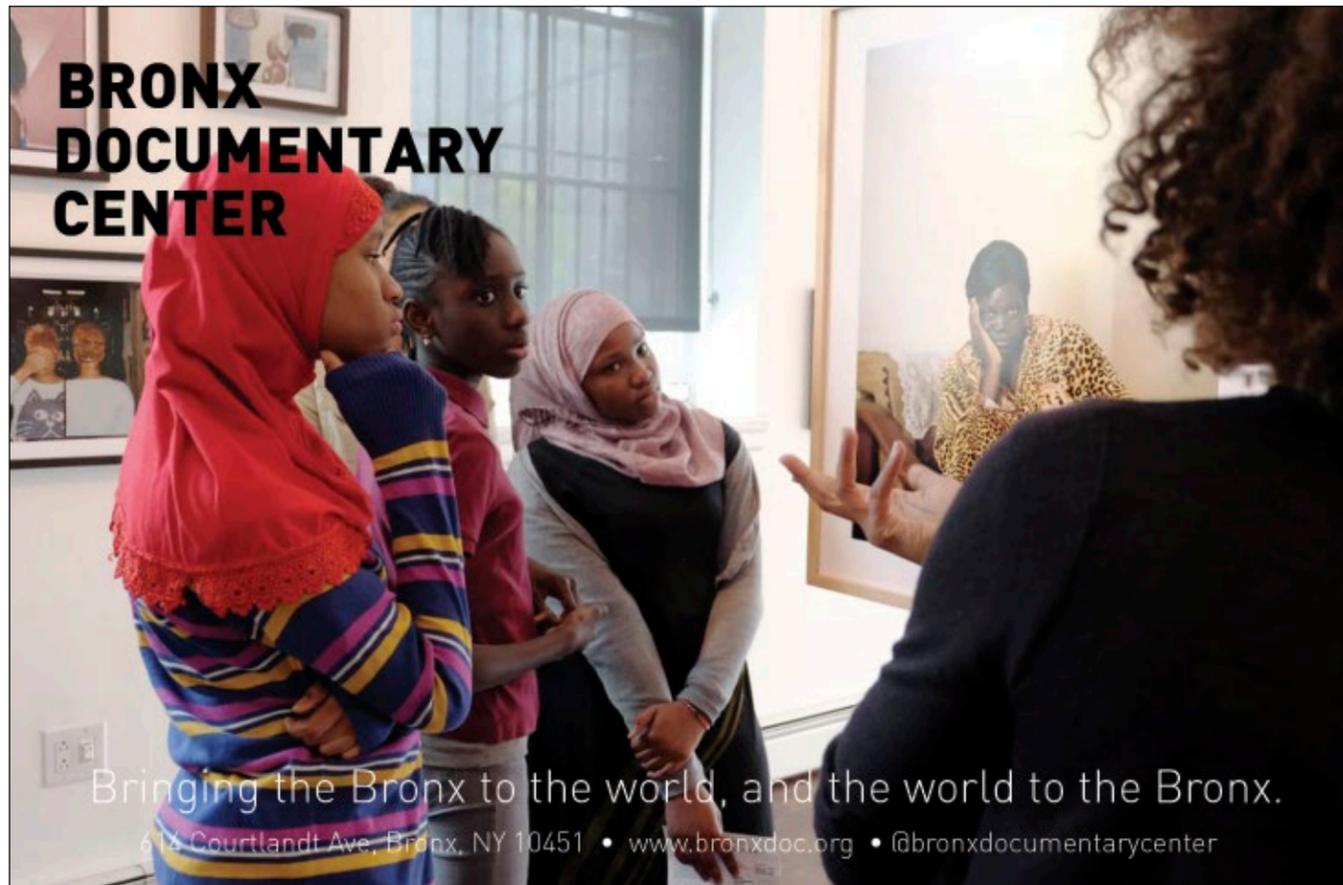
**Albertina d'Urso:** *Are You Ready, Puerto Rico.* 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of U.S. citizenship for residents of Puerto Rico. But it's a limited form of citizenship: Island residents pay Social Security and Medicare taxes, and thousands have served the U.S. Armed Forces, but they can't vote in the presidential election, don't have voting representation in Washington D.C., and receive fewer benefits than U.S. states.



**Christiano Burmester:** *Good Bad People: Invisibles — Memories of Daily Life.* This project portrays people in Brazil and Ecuador and their professions, especially those that are gradually disappearing due to technology, real estate valuation, or social and cultural transformation. Globalization has created huge transformations on how we work and the types of work that receive acknowledgement and the ones that become invisible to the eyes of society.



**Antoine Tardy:** *The Other One Percent.* This exhibition tells the stories of refugee students in Kenya who overcome all the bleak figures, odds, boundaries, and labels to take control of their lives and achieve success on their own terms. These are stories of those who have the chance to unlock their potential, who are translating their hardships into motivation. Ultimately, these are stories of self-realization in the face of adversity.



# ZEKE

THE MAGAZINE OF GLOBAL DOCUMENTARY  
Published by Social Documentary Network

## Photographers and writers featured in this issue of ZEKE

Barbara Ayotte, U.S.	Gabriel Romero, U.S.
Emma Brown, U.S.	Anne Sahler, Germany and Japan
Caterina Clerici, U.S. and Italy	Astrid Schulz, England
Catherine Karnow, U.S.	Mick Stetson, Japan
Monia Lippi, U.S.	William Thatcher Dowell, U.S.
Younes Mohammad, Iraq	Quan Tran, U.S.
John Rae, U.S.	Frank Ward, U.S.
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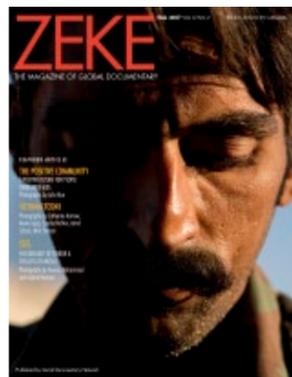
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Photograph by Mehdi Nazeri

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— Ed Kashi, Photographer



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