

MAKING PICTURES IN AN UPTURNED WORLD:
An analysis of photojournalists' motivations for covering COVID-19

A Project Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
EMMALEE REED

April 2022

Jackie Bell, Chair

Brian Kratzer

Berkley Hudson

Dedication

This project is dedicated to my grandma, Karen Lee Reed, who was always my biggest cheerleader. Thanks for everything.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to first thank all the photographers I talked to for sharing their time and wisdom with me throughout this research process.

I also cannot thank enough the people who have helped me through this project and the past five years of journalism school. I wouldn't be here writing these acknowledgements without you.

I'd like to thank the members of my committee for their invaluable advice and support, and for reading my long, rambling emails. Thanks to Prof. Jackie Bell for guiding me through the photo program, from staff photo to capstone and this project. Thanks to Prof. Brian Kratzer, for supporting my visual ideas throughout undergrad and teaching me how to be a photo editor. I've learned new ways to see and think with your guidance. Thanks to Dr. Berkley Hudson, who has been my mentor since I stepped on campus as a wide-eyed freshman, for introducing me to the wonderful world of documentary photography and for interrupting your Possum Town bliss to help with this project.

To Lynden Steele, for being an essential member of this project team, for trusting me to include *POYi* in my work and for sharing your endless knowledge of photos.

To the visuals staff at the Columbia Missourian for listening to me talk about this project all spring and for being a constant source of inspiration and laughs over the years. I am so thankful for the time I had with you these past seven semesters.

To my family, whom I am nothing without. To Dad, for teaching me the importance of hard work and for supplying me with your constant, unique brand of support when I need it. I don't think anyone else has been told to "kick it's ass" when working on a master's project before. To Mom, for always listening to my ideas and being the best person to brainstorm with. I

am proud to add two MU degrees to my tally of ways we are alike. To Oakley and Sophie, for being the best siblings and always rooting me on.

And to my friends, who made life my life special the past few years. To Camille and Christina, thank you for being great roommates and friends to go through school with. To Madison, for the great conversation and companionship in obscure Honors classes. To Emily and Kaleigh, for being my rocks while I've worked on this project. To Bennett, Nick, Liam and Peter, for being excellent Missouri beat partners and friends. To Margo, for being the best coffee date and partner in crime in the newsroom. And to Andy, for being by my side through it all.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....2

Acknowledgements3

Main Text

- 1. Introduction6
- 2. Literature Review9
- 3. Analysis19
- 4. Professional Component30
- 5. Self-Evaluation31

Appendix

- 1. Interviewee Biographies 34
- 2. Interview Transcripts 38
- 3. Weekly Field Notes 70
- 4. References 80

Chapter 1: Introduction

I've been in love with documentary photography since before I knew what it was. When I was 12, I was gifted a photo book of all the LIFE staff photographers. Looking through the book, I was struck by the countless historical moments captured by the photographers, moments that would have otherwise gone unseen without their presence and documentary forethought. Those photographers captured the moments that mattered and preserved them for future generations to see and learn.

My photographic work since has been consumed by this documentary impulse to bear witness, to capture a moment, story or person and preserve its memory in photography. I worked with Dr. Berkley Hudson on his book showcasing the photos of Otis Noel Pruitt, who documented Mississippi during the Jim Crow era. My biggest photo project to date was a photo essay about my family and our 106-year-old farm. Now, my academic journey ends with this project, which focuses on COVID-19 pandemic photography.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, it quickly became the story of the year. The pandemic touched everyone, everywhere. When I found myself locked down in my apartment with my roommates, I didn't know what to do. I knew the pandemic was a huge story and I wanted to document it somehow, but I felt it was unsafe and irresponsible for me to break lockdown and photograph outside. I made a lot of pictures in my apartment, focusing on myself and my roommates. I made time lapses of us in our makeshift work-from-home spaces. I noticed the way light highlighted the character of our 100-year-old residence. I started a photo essay of scenes in my apartment I noticed after spending all my time inside.

Journalists around the world likewise felt this impulse to document and record. Despite the safety concerns and stress that came with the pandemic, journalists kept going to work and

some even experienced positive effects from working through the pandemic. In a survey of working journalists, 61% expressed an increased commitment to journalism because of the pandemic (Posetti et al., 2020). News sites and pages burst with stories about COVID-19 and its effects, all to help people understand the virus. Personal photo essays became increasingly common, and international photojournalism competitions College Photographer of the Year (CPOY), Pictures of the Year International (POY*i*), Pictures of the Year Asia and Pictures of the Year Latam all introduced COVID-19 categories into competition to organize and judge the mass of documentary pandemic photography.

When it came time to propose my graduate project, I knew I wanted to investigate this impulse to document felt by myself and so many other photographers. My professional analysis focuses on influences that drove photographers to cover the pandemic. Some may have felt a need to document the crisis while others might have been simply assigned to pandemic coverage. These influences are important to study because they directly affect the photographers' work. They can impact photographers' routines, opinions, biases and news values, among other factors, all of which can seep into coverage. To explore these influences, I conducted seven in-depth interviews with photographers who documented the pandemic, either in news photography or personal expressive work. Shoemaker and Reese's (2014) Hierarchy of Influences theory guided my analysis of the photographers' experiences. The interviews and analysis give photographers, photo editors and others in the photojournalism community insight into what pushes photographers to cover the stories they do. It also illuminates the ways in which the pandemic affected their photography.

The professional skills portion of this project included editing and designing a book of COVID-19 photographs. I have experience in daily newspaper photo editing but hadn't worked

on many larger projects up until this point. The book includes photographs from POY*i*, POY Asia, POY Latam and CPOY that documented the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Working on this book was important to me in further developing my photo editing skills. The experience also allowed me to work with documentary photography, the kind that drew me to photojournalism in the first place. This book showcases some of the best documentary and expressive photography of the pandemic and establishes a tangible visual record of the virus that affected us all.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Studies about journalism during the COVID-19 pandemic agree that it is important to study media during a pandemic because “there is an urgent need for interventions, effective communication and cooperation” (Rodelo, 2021). Additionally, news media can influence the attitudes and behaviors of audiences. Most of these studies focus on the content produced during the pandemic and its effects on audiences, not on how it is created.

Rodelo (2021) analyzed the news frames in media coverage in Mexico. She found frames related to the attribution of responsibility, human interest and politics dominated the coverage of the pandemic during the stage of increasing community transmission (Rodelo, 2021). Rodelo’s study also suggested that there are patterns of frame-building specific to public health crisis settings.

Wasserman et al. (2021) also focused on the content of pandemic news and conducted a content analysis of the tone of 681 front-page, pandemic stories in South Africa. Nearly half of the stories used an alarmist narrative, and more than half had a negative tone (Wasserman et al., 2021). These focused on the impacts of the pandemic. The authors suggest the alarmist way South African newspapers framed the stories “could have implications for how society responds to the pandemic” and “feed into” anxieties without providing “guidance or reassurance” (Wasserman et al., 2021).

While both content analyses provide useful information about the news itself and how it may affect audiences, neither address the reasons why these frames or tones appeared in pandemic news. News isn’t created in a vacuum, but produced by real people with identities,

biases and influences all their own, which impact the news content they create and thus, the audience. This study will focus on the effect a person's motivation to cover the COVID-19 pandemic had on the photographs they produced. Understanding how journalists work, why they do the work they do and how personal influences affect content is essential to understanding the effect news has on audiences and larger society.

Influences on Media Production

Shoemaker and Reese (2014) present the Hierarchy of Influences Model, which suggests that media content is a social construction that can be influenced on several levels. Each level of influence provides a lens through which to investigate various effects on media production: social systems, social institutions, organizations, routines and individuals (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). This model allows for division and comparison among many different fields of influence on media production. The Hierarchy of Influences Model “helps move from the most common approach, simply comparing things, to comparing structures formed by things, processes within structures, and finally functions of seemingly different things, structures and processes” (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014).

This study investigates influences causing photographers to cover the COVID-19 pandemic and how these influences impacted their visual coverage. This research will likely be most concerned with the individual level of influence, the bottom-most level, because it is concerned with nuances in motivation to document the pandemic in each photojournalist. The individual level of influence is heavily impacted by identity and assumes that a person's background influences their judgement (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). Shoemaker and Reese

(2014) outline four factors within the individual level of influence: personal demographic characteristics, backgrounds and experiences; beliefs and attitudes; factors associated with the journalists' professional role; and "relative power of the communicator within the organization."

This level of influence is important to this study because it may be the most impactful and accessible level that affects photojournalists' coverage. Individual journalists would likely have the most insights on the individual level of influence because it involves factors personal to them. Additionally, this level of influence is more accessible to study in this research because it can be better excavated through interviews than other, broader and more nebulous levels of influence.

Though the most relevant level of influence in this study may be the individual level of influence, organizational and routine levels are important as well. These levels are steps above the individual level and focus on broader influences on media production (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). Organizations are the news publications and outlets that a photojournalist works for. This level of influence "allows us to investigate influences on content that cannot be attributed to individual workers or the routine practices of their work" (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). Organizational influences can include economic factors like budget, business model and ownership, or the organizational structure of a publication. Analysis of the organizational model illuminates broader influences on news content production. For example, a newsroom's financial situation during the pandemic could impact whether it could continue to employ a photographer or if it needed to shift photographers of their normal beats to COVID-19 coverage. Additionally, a news organizations' finances could impact freelance photographers. An organization could consider freelancers more cost-effective than staff photographers and provide them more

assignments during the pandemic. Alternatively, freelancers may have had a tougher time finding work as budgets tightened, driving them to pursue other opportunities or personal work.

Routines also heavily impact the content that is produced by journalists in the field. Many news routines take the shape of standard practices or tenets that are widely accepted by journalists. According to Shoemaker and Reese (2014), “routines represent a set of constraints on the individual worker and form the immediate context, both within and through which these individuals do their jobs.” Examples of routines include media focus on events, news values, interviewing, the inverted pyramid structure and objectivity (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). For photojournalists, routines can also include focuses on action, emotion and personal connection, as well as the need to produce visually well-composed and aesthetically pleasing images. These routines, generally accepted and expected by journalists, editors and others in the industry, influence how journalists produce content.

Thomson et al. (2016) analyzed how state-controlled and independent media covered the Pope’s 2015 visit to Cuba through photographs. Through an analysis of the images produced by photographers working for the Associated Press (AP), Reuters and Prensa Latina, the authors were able to find differences in themes and news values between the independent news agencies and the state-controlled publication. The images revealed that each media system had different news values. Thomson et al. found Reuters photographers were most concerned with showing how Cubans reacted to the Pope’s visit, while AP and Prensa Latina focused on the Pope himself. Prensa Latina, the state-controlled outlet, opted not to cover protests that broke out on the scene, while both independent outlets published photographs of the protests. Additionally, the authors found that AP and Reuters framed the visit as a religious event, focusing on the spiritual aspects of the visit despite the fact that “fewer than 10 percent of Cubans attend church

regularly” (Thomson et al., 2016). Prensa Latina, however, framed the visit as a diplomatic event, primarily showing the Pope meeting with politicians. While the authors did not interview the photographers to get their perspective, the study shows that organizations have different news values, audience loyalties and needs that affect news coverage. The photographers were all covering the same event but had different coverage because of their own individual influence in addition to the influence of the different news organizations.

Thomson et al.’s study (2016) illustrates the strong effect individual, routine and organizational influences have on photographic coverage. It shows how higher-level organizational influences had a significant impact on coverage. The photographers were heavily influenced by their assigning organizations, likely the primary reason why they photographed the Pope’s visit. Thomson et al.’s study, as a content analysis, does not investigate the motivations the photographers had in covering the event.

The Pandemic and Bearing Witness

While most of the world was isolated, photojournalists were among those who went to work. More so than text reporters, photojournalists rely on being at the scene of news. Photography isn’t something that can be done after the fact or remotely, as photojournalists’ jobs require them to be present at the right time to ensure the news moment is captured and documented. Bearing witness is a concept often discussed amongst photojournalists. There is an internal pressure to be out, documenting the news because it deserves—and needs—to be seen. Tait (2011) writes that the concept of bearing witness “implies that certain events require being borne witness to because they require some sort of public response.” While preservation of

historic moments is a valuable endeavor, the practice can be harmful. Bearing witness highlights the asymmetry between journalists and subjects, according to Tait (2011): “It ostensibly justifies intrusion into the suffering of others; of making demands of powerless subjects who are perhaps not in a position to consent to being represented.”

Friday (2000) describes a “demonic curiosity” associated with documentary photography. This curiosity, which is often the foundation of documentary photography, applies visual aesthetics to images of suffering or hardship (Friday, 2000). This prevailing theme in documentary photography drives photographers to scenes of hardship, as these scenes can appear more meaningful. Together with the need to bear witness, the same principle may apply to news photographs, as photographers are often the first on the scene of breaking news, looking to make an aesthetically pleasing image of an event of suffering. California-based photographer Justin Sullivan, who photographed the pandemic in the Bay Area, echoed this need to bear witness: "To be at the epicenter is important to me. It's important to the work that I do to be at the front line" (Mallonee, 2020).

While some photographers may have covered the pandemic out of an inherent need to document, some may have used photography to cope with trauma occurring personally and worldwide. When Pete Kiehart self-isolated after contracting the virus in March 2020, he used photography to "keep himself entertained" and feed "his instinct as a journalist" (Bogle, 2020). His girlfriend, Kasia Strek, also tested positive for the virus and decided to document her experience in photographs as a way to remember their difficult time together (Bogle, 2020). "I've been trying to express what I didn't know how to say, or I was scared to say, through the images," she said (Bogle, 2020). Reuters photographer David Ryder covered the COVID-19

outbreak at the Kirkland Life Center near Seattle and used his photographs to reflect and deal with his fears about the health of older people during the pandemic (Mallonee, 2020). "Sticking with the work gives me purpose," he said (Mallonee, 2020).

The Importance of Photo Competitions

POY*i* started as a photo contest founded in 1944 at the Missouri School of Journalism. Its purpose was “to pay tribute to those press photographers and newspapers which ... are doing a splendid job; to provide an opportunity for photographers of the nation to meet in open competition; and to compile and preserve ... a collection of the best in current, home-front press pictures” (POY, n.d.a). Magazine photographers were invited to participate in 1948 and the competition was merged with that of the National Press Photographers Association in 1957, creating the now commonly known Pictures of the Year competition. In 2001, the competition opened its doors to photographers all over the world when it became Pictures of the Year International. Off-shoots like POY Latam and POY Asia were established in 2011 and 2020, respectively, to further extend the competition to photographers working in Latin America and Asia.

POY*i* is regarded as one of the world’s pre-eminent photography competitions, on par with World Press Photo and Best of Photojournalism photo contest. Tens of thousands of images are submitted each year from professional photographers all over the world for judging, which is held every spring at the University of Missouri. Competition-winners are often well-known working photographers on staff at the world’s largest news organizations and agencies including

The New York Times, Bloomberg, Reuters, Getty Images, European Pressphoto Agency, *Washington Post* and *National Geographic* (POY, n.d.c).

The CPOY competition was established by Cliff and Vi Edom in 1945. The competition highlights student work, allowing more than 500 students from 120 colleges and universities to enter their photographs for judging (Bell & Reed, n.d.). Many CPOY winners go on to win at POY*i* later in their careers.

Each of the competitions underwent changes in 2020. All four competitions established one or more new categories for COVID-19 images and photo stories in 2020. The categories were created to gather photographs “to preserve these stories and memories of how we are collectively living through this historic timeline” (RJI Online, 2020). Every year POY*i* creates a new “IMPACT” category that features images from a notable news topic in the year, but this was the first year all four competitions introduced a new category for a news event. Additionally, three of the competitions introduced a category focusing on personal expression during the pandemic. While many photographers were isolated at home, some worked on personal projects to pass the time or document their experiences with the pandemic. POY*i*’s “COVID-19 Personal Expression” category was designed for “an interpretive project that reflects the personal experiences, feelings and thoughts related to COVID-19” (POY, n.d.b). While CPOY has had interpretive categories that allowed for pictures and projects that showcase “a photographer's distinctive perspective on the world” using “beauty, tension, harmony, chaos and other abstract concepts” since its 67th year in 2012, none of the competitions had established categories for personal expression related to one event before (CPOY, n.d.).

Despite isolation and stay at home orders limiting field work, POY*i* had a record-breaking year for entries in 2020, its 78th year. Entrants submitted more than 40,000 images

(Nelson-Pallikkathayil, 2021). There were 200 stories entered into POY*i*'s new "COVID-19 Personal Expression" category (Nelson-Pallikkathayil, 2021).

With the large influx of entries, particularly those into new COVID-19 categories, the photography competitions have created a de facto international archive of the best images and stories of the pandemic. Yung Soo Kim (2012), who used POY*i* images in a content analysis, argues that the images in the competition "might be different from what the public usually sees in printed media" because the photographs, submitted by photographers themselves, lack the influence of "diverse gatekeepers including photo editors, managing editors and publishers of their publications." Without the influence of outside gatekeepers, the competition archives provide a wealth of COVID-19 images straight from the photographers, creating a pool from which to source photographers to interview for this project, which focuses on influences on the creation of COVID-19 images.

Some researchers have used photographs submitted to POY*i* for content analyses. Kim (2012) used the images submitted to the competition to study the framing of photographs from the September 11 terrorist attacks. He found that most of the images submitted to the competition reinforced patriotic unity. Dianne Hagaman's (1993) analysis of sports feature photographs illuminated the conventionalization of news imagery. Keith Greenwood and Zoe Smith (2009) expanded on Hagaman's analysis and investigated the themes photographers used to tell stories effectively. Greenwood and Smith (2009) found that the feature photographs, those that aren't news or sports, with the highest number of awards depicted children, animals or humorous content. According to the authors, the conventionalization of feature photographs "says something about the photographers who have entered them and the judges who have selected them," illuminating the influence photographers and judges have in the creation and awarding of

images (Greenwood & Smith, 2009). While Greenwood and Smith reference influences in the production of photographs, this portion of the paper is minimal and can be further investigated.

Chapter 3: Analysis

Rarely does a story break that encompasses the whole world, but the COVID-19 pandemic did just that when it began in 2020. Months of lockdowns, isolation and sickness ensued in the pandemic that would touch every corner of the planet. At least 3.3 million people died COVID-related deaths in 2020, according to the [World Health Organization](#).

Photographers around the world documented the pandemic, pushed by one reason or another to take photographs of their experience, their community or a different facet of life affected by COVID-19. Some went out into the world to photograph while others turned their lenses on themselves in lockdown. The pandemic story, which affected so many, provides an opportunity to investigate what draws photographers to take pictures.

To explore the influences that pushed photographers to document the pandemic and how those influences impacted their work, I sought out seven photographers whose work was awarded in the COVID categories of the POY-family photojournalism competitions, including Pictures of the Year, College Photographer of the Year, Pictures of the Year Asia and Pictures of the Year Latam: Eitan Abramovich, Shafkat Anowar, Amit Chakravarty, Lauren DeCicca, Rosem Morton, Colton Rothwell and Elisabetta Zavoli. Through semi-structured phone interviews, this article attempts to determine in what ways photographers adapted to the pandemic and why they kept working during this difficult time. Studying these influences on photographers is important because they illuminate why photojournalists covered the pandemic, which can help us better understand their work.

Documenting the Pandemic

Some photographers interviewed said that they photographed the pandemic because it was a big story and a historical moment that needed to be documented. Both photographers that did news and personal work expressed a drive to photograph the pandemic because it felt important.

“This huge story came, and I was thinking to myself, ‘What the f*** am I doing sitting in the desk?’” Eitan Abramovich said. “I need to go out and take pictures. The office closed, we all started to work virtually, and I started thinking ‘I need to do something. I need to document this story that is going on.’”

Abramovich, a photo editor for Agence France-Presse, turned his lens on his family and documented their experience during lockdown in Uruguay. His project, “[Pandemic Through my Family](#),” placed second in POY Latam’s La Pandemia en Iberoamérica category.

An impulse to document also affected Shafkat Anowar, who was a student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa at the start of the pandemic. He said he and other student photographers wanted to go out and photograph their community but were advised by professionals to not take the risk and to stay home. After months of not taking any photos, Anowar went to photograph a COVID testing site.

“Everybody went,” Anowar said. “Like AP, AFP, freelancers. So it was like this big thing.”

[One of his photos taken at the testing site](#) earned an Award of Excellence in CPOY’s COVID category. After his initial pandemic shoot, Anowar began documenting his community and how it dealt with the pandemic. When other photographers traveled to cover Black Lives Matter protests in other places, Anowar stayed in Hawaii and kept doing his community-based photography.

“I’m like ‘I’m not going because that is not my story to tell,’” he said. “Instead, I will just stay here, back in my house, and try to find something here,’ because I needed to show what underprivileged societies and communities looked like.”

Colton Rothwell, a student at the University of Montana, felt a similar need to document when working his project about isolation, “[321 Kensington Ave](#),” which earned an Award of Excellence in CPOY’s COVID Experience category. He said he felt a strong call to document because the pandemic was something he hadn’t experienced before.

“From a historical standpoint, I feel like my work is important,” Rothwell said. “It’s not breaking news. It definitely has more of an aesthetic sensibility. But I’m imagining looking back on this work in 30 years, it’ll be really intriguing.”

The pandemic quickly became the story of the year. Photographers expressed how quickly everything became a story. It was easy to make COVID-19 photographs because the pandemic touched everything.

“Social distancing on the train was suddenly a story, or the park closing was suddenly a story, people wearing masks was a story,” Lauren DeCicca, a freelance photographer based in Thailand, said. “So it was like, every little thing. Like a grocery store, the toilet paper aisle was a story. And it just became so weird. I was so busy shooting my daily life.”

DeCicca’s [photo of a Thai elementary school student](#) sitting at a desk with a social distancing screen placed third in POY Asia’s COVID-19 category.

“Sometimes it was depressive, scary,” Abramovich said. “But for a photographer, it was like a mine of gold, you know, everything was part of the story.”

Photography as Therapy

While most participants covered the pandemic because it was a big story, an equal number said they made photos during the pandemic as a coping mechanism. Photographers making expressive work as well as those that did more traditional photojournalism described photography as therapeutic.

This was the primary motivation behind freelance photographer Elisabetta Zavoli's project, "[And in Darkness You Find Colors](#)," which won first place in POYi's COVID-19 Personal Expression category. Zavoli collaborated with her two young sons to design intricate sets, light them with colored lights and photograph them at night. The scene construction and picture making, Zavoli said, helped them cope during two and a half months of strict lockdown in Italy. Zavoli's main purpose in taking photos was to help her children process their emotions about the pandemic.

"At the beginning, it was more like a way to play and to distract my sons from being too much overwhelmed or too much afraid of the situation," she said.

Only later did Zavoli compile the photos into a photo essay. Photographing without an end-goal was common among the photographers interviewed. Amit Chakravarty, a staff photographer for the Indian Express in Mumbai, photographed his father while he was in the hospital being treated for COVID-19 as a way to process his fear.

"Photographing is very instinctive, you know, and that also triggered me to be like 'Maybe this is it, so why not do something?'" Chakravarty said. "Maybe something in terms of my fear. I don't know what happened at that point of time. I started shooting. Random. I didn't have anything on my mind."

Chakravarty later scrolled through the photos on his phone and realized he might have a project. Chakravarty's "[When War Comes Home](#)" placed second in POY Asia's Covid Expressions category.

Some photographers viewed their photo projects as distractions from the pandemic, even while their work was closely tied to their pandemic experience.

Rosem Morton, a documentary photographer and nurse in Baltimore, said that even though she was feeling the effects of working a lot during the pandemic, the time she spent photographing was valuable. Her project, "[Donning and Doffing](#)," was a finalist in POYi's COVID-19 Personal Expression category.

"It's like a perfect distraction for this time to continue to contribute what you can," Morton said.

Abramovich said photographing his family was therapeutic, though his life felt "24 hours a day COVID."

"In a way, taking pictures of my family, seeing my children—they didn't really care what was going on, for them it was kind of a party—it cheered me up," Abramovich said. "After seeing all the madness and sadness, I moved my head and I have a party happening next to me. So it was a way I could manage to balance my duties."

For other photographers, just the process of making something during the pandemic was beneficial to their mental health. While jobs were cancelled and lockdown set in, photography was a way to keep going.

Rothwell said he made pictures of himself and his friends during lockdown to "make sense of what was going on," to "pass the time" and "keep [himself] sane."

Anowar remained isolated at home for much of the beginning of the pandemic after losing his job as an event manager.

“Starting up the pandemic, I did not photograph anything,” Anowar said, “and when you are not creating anything as an artist, you are questioning yourself. A lot of depression and anxiety comes in. And then at one point I became a little bit frustrated, because I feel like it was more than six months that I did not create any work. I needed to create something.”

Anowar’s passion is political photography, but he shifted into a more documentary focus to start his freelance career in Hawaii. He said the compromise was worth it to keep working and described being happy to photograph a woman wearing a mask and praying on the beach.

“Those were some of the very small moments, intangible moments, that really kept me going,” Anowar said. “And I needed those.”

Community Photography and Public Understanding

The desire to inform the public about COVID-19 was another influence on photographers’ motivation to cover the pandemic. Many photographers said that showing how their family or community was affected by the pandemic was important. They also expressed the value of shared stories and creating work that other people could relate to.

Morton said that her primary purpose in photography is to connect with people and share stories so people can find similarities. Her nine and a half years as a nurse provided experience that she felt vital to her photographic work.

“When the pandemic hit, I knew that I was uniquely positioned to tell the stories and also be working in the field, to really have this on the ground knowledge,” Morton said.

Her project, “Donning and Doffing,” documents her experience as a frontline health care worker. Morton’s partner also works as a nurse and was featured in the project.

“I feel like both of us going through this experience offers a unique point of view, to really offer public understanding on what it’s like during the early days of the pandemic when there were so many unknowns,” she said.

Abramovich and Rothwell were both bolstered by the desire to share work that is relatable to others. Abramovich said he wasn’t sure about sharing his project about his family because of the intimacy of the photos. When he posted some of the photos on Instagram, however, he received support from people who were impressed and encouraged him to continue.

“I said to myself, ‘Well, you have a different point of view of the pandemic,’” Abramovich said. “I thought millions of parents or families are passing through the same, so that’s a good story to tell.”

Similarly, Rothwell felt his isolation project was important because it was a story that other people could relate to.

“The majority of that body of work is about relationships,” he said. “I think that’s something a lot of people experienced during the pandemic. Changing relationships, tension on relationships, maybe relationships getting stronger. That fluidity, I think, is really important that people can see in my work and relate to and feel comfort in.”

Job Impacts

Employment and organizational influences were often an important factor in photographers’ pandemic experience. Some photographers began photographing the pandemic as

a normal news story because it was their job. Staff photographer Chakravarty said his first COVID-19 photos were of people wearing masks on the train. One day, there were more people wearing masks than previous days.

“I just shot a few pictures and went to the office, and they printed it for the next day,” he said.

DeCicca said her COVID experience happened “really quick.” Her first pandemic assignment was photographing her arrival on the first temperature-scanned flight to Thailand. The same flight contained the first case of COVID-19 from abroad found in Thailand. She said the pandemic was weird to cover because everything became important to the story.

When the main story in Thailand shifted from lockdown to the economic effects of border closures, DeCicca shifted her focus, following the important news. DeCicca was busier than ever during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, she was the main stringer for Getty in Thailand and freelanced for other publications on stories around Southeast Asia. When the pandemic hit, she said the market was saturated with many photographers stuck in Thailand, so everyone had one main client. During the pandemic, she worked almost exclusively for Getty on assignment.

While DeCicca and Chakravarty secured assignments or remained employed, others were pushed to do change courses and work on projects they normally wouldn't.

Zavoli, who lives in rural Italy, didn't have any freelance assignments during the pandemic because of work restrictions. She said a work permit was needed to leave lockdown and most assignments were going to photographers already living in big cities to avoid excess travel.

“I remember the first thing I thought when the lockdown started was, ‘Okay, I will change my job,’ because I couldn’t find any work,” Zavoli said.

In lockdown, Zavoli felt free of editorial pressure and was able to work on a project just for herself and her sons.

“It was a surprise because I was really enjoying photography,” she said. “It was many years that I couldn’t do something just for touching my soul like in this project.”

Abramovich recently switched from being a photographer to a photo editor. His new role prevented him from photographing COVID-19 as a news photojournalist would, so he focused instead on his family.

“Suddenly I realized that the story was inside my house, my family, and I started to just document it for myself,” he said.

Pandemic Effects on Photography

Most of the photographers expressed changes to their work during the pandemic. Many, including Morton, Abramovich and Zavoli, shifted their lens from a news focus to themselves and their personal experience. Anowar also shifted his focus from hard news photojournalism to documentary, community-based photography when he decided to stay at home and document his community. This was his first experience with documentary photography, a “drastic change,” he said.

DeCicca noted her photography grew stronger when her focus shifted from a more regional outlook to one that was Thailand-specific. When she couldn’t travel outside of Thailand, she focused on the stories in her area.

“I don’t think I realized how scattered I was beforehand, you know, trying to jump from story to story, from country to country and not really diving deep and finding out what’s happening,” DeCicca said. “I think my photography has benefitted from staying in one place.”

Other photographers saw stark visual changes in the style of their photography. Most of these changes were due to the impulsive, instinctive and expressive nature of the projects. When the impulse to document struck while accompanying his father in the hospital, Chakravarty took photos on his cell phone. He didn’t have his usual camera with him. Later, when looking through the photos, Chakravarty realized that he wanted to talk about certain things that happened, or his father felt during that time that were unable to be shown visually. He “started scribbling” in a notebook and superimposed those thoughts onto the images.

The pandemic forced Rothwell to reinvent himself and use the equipment and subjects he had on hand to document his experience. He said his project, “321 Kensington Ave,” was unlike any of the work he made previously. Rothwell, who was used to using natural light and working with medium format film, had several strobes with him when lockdown began.

“I think [lockdown] just made me really think about my process about spaces differently,” he said. “Like being able to open a whole world of possibilities because I didn’t have to wait for natural light. I was able to just explore my process in a new way that was really neat.”

Conclusion

Reasons for documenting the pandemic were varied and unique to each photographer, but a few themes arose through these interviews. One of the most common reasons that photographers documented the pandemic was because it historical and important. Photographers

took photos of their experience during COVID because the pandemic, to them, was an event that needed to be documented. Similarly, some also expressed an impulse to photograph the pandemic because they felt they needed to inform the public. Some wanted to share their experience in the hopes other people could relate and others photographed the pandemic simply because it was their job. Many took photos to keep creating and give themselves a method to cope with the stress and sadness of the pandemic.

The influences that drove photographers to cover the pandemic had tangible, visible impacts on both the photographers and the work they made. Despite the difficulties of the pandemic, many of the photographers described success and growth. Anowar's freelance career flourished after his shift to documentary photography. Morton said the pandemic "solidified the kind of work," she was creating. Zavoli made a project with her sons that she said expanded her soul. DeCicca said the pandemic made the photography community closer.

"It's of course made things harder, but I think, hopefully, it's made us all a little bit better as well," DeCicca said.

Chapter 4: Professional Component

Please refer to a PDF file *Picturing COVID-19* to view the final draft of the photo book.

Chapter 5: Self-Evaluation

The professional component of my master's project included the editing and designing a book of COVID-19 photographs. The book ended up being 177 pages with 202 photos from the four POY family photo competitions. I printed it through Lulu.com to have copies at the POYi/CPOY Awards on April 22.

I am really happy with how the book turned out. It was definitely a roller-coaster making it, but it ended up better than I'd imagined. The weekly schedule I laid out in my proposal was ambitious and I didn't end up following it exactly. I had planned on spending four weeks photo editing and four weeks designing. Sequencing the photos in the book took much more time than I thought. I made six different edits of the book, with smaller revisions in between. For the first three edits, I focused on the photo sequencing alone. I started with prints of all the photos and made cuts and sequences on my living room floor. Those first edits helped me narrow down which photos I wanted to use and what I wanted the book to be like. The first edit was centered on visuals while the next was entirely too content focused, and the pictures didn't look good together. The third was closer to what I needed for the book, a sequence that made sense and was also visually pleasing. The next sequences I made in InDesign so I could better visualize the book. Switching mediums helped me understand what needed to be fixed to make the sequence flow. I was also stubborn most of the semester about not wanting the book to have sections, but my committee recommended adding them, which I did in the end. Sectioning the book made the edit easier and added clarity to the book.

The interviews were interesting and were better than I thought. I enjoyed talking with the photographers about their work and they seemed eager to share. It was fascinating to learn about their experiences during the pandemic and compare them to my own. Zavoli in rural Italy was

fully locked down in her home and DeCicca in Thailand experienced a year effectively untouched by COVID-19. I planned on completing twelve interviews, but I only ended up doing seven. I had a bit of trouble getting ahold of photographers and came to a point where I needed to stop interviewing and start writing the analysis before I ran out of time. Luckily, seven interviews were all I needed to answer my research questions:

RQ1: *How did the individual, routine and organizational levels of influence impact photojournalists' choice to cover the COVID-19 pandemic?*

RQ2: *In what ways did different motivators for COVID-19 coverage affect the photographers' work and the images they produced?*

My interview questions, which I wrote and workshopped with my committee months ago, guided the conversations well enough to answer my research questions. While interviewing, I was worried that the research questions weren't being answered because I wasn't asking them outright, but after annotating the transcripts, I found that they were answered. Photographers were impacted by all above-mentioned levels of influence. The individual level of influence is most evident where photographers said they made photographs of the pandemic to make sense of it, to help themselves feel better and to push through the difficult time. Routine influences like news values pushed photographers to recognize that the pandemic was a big story and something worth covering. Organizational influences were found in the photographers' discussion of how the pandemic affected their ability to work and receive assignments. In response to RQ2, all of the photographers expressed changes to their work, including visual changes because of the pandemic. These changes were closely tied to their motivations for beginning pandemic coverage. Many of the photographers who created personal expression projects did so for the first time, suddenly forced to photograph themselves in order to cope or because there were no

other subjects available during lockdown. Several experimented with new mediums, like cell phone photography, artificial light and writing text on photos, as they searched for news ways to communicate their experience. Other photographers shifted their focus entirely, trying artistic or documentary photography, when they were unable to get assignments to fund the work they were doing pre-pandemic.

Overall, I am happy with how my photo book and research turned out. More than helping me finish my degree, I think both the book and the research are useful to the photojournalism community. The book was displayed at the POY*i*/CPOY Awards in April for people to look at while touring a gallery of winning images from the past competitions. It showcases the photojournalists' work and creates a physical photographic record of how people experienced the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Lynden Steele from POY*i* said he would like to look into publishing the book. The project has also sparked ideas about future books for POY*i* and CPOY. The research investigates why photojournalists chose to cover COVID-19, which scratches the surface of why photographers are motivated to do the work that they do. It helps photographers, editors and others in the industry better understand the conditions in which COVID-19 photographs were made and how that affected the images. I am pursuing publishing this research in RJI Online and have submitted the abstract for possible inclusion in the Visual Communication Conference this summer, both of which would help my research be a bigger benefit to the photojournalism profession.

Appendix: Interviewee Biographies

All of the following biographies use information from the photographers' portfolio websites or the competition in which they placed, which have all been linked and edited for clarity.

Eitan Abramovich

Eitan Abramovich is a photo editor for Agence France-Presse and is based in Montevideo, Uruguay. He was previously a photographer in Buenos Aires, Bogota, Guatemala City, Jerusalem and Lima. Abramovich's project, "[Pandemic Through my Family](#)," placed second in POY Latam's La Pandemia en Iberoamérica category.

[Shafkat Anowar](#)

Shafkat Anowar is a visual journalist at the Dallas Morning News. He was previously a photo intern with the Associated Press in Chicago and for the Deseret News in Salt Lake City, Utah. He studied Media Communications & Business at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa and graduated in 2021. Anowar's [photo of a child getting tested for COVID-19 in Hawai'i](#) earned an Award of Excellence in CPOY's COVID category. <https://www.shafkatanowar.com>.

Amit Chakravarty

Amit Chakravarty is a visual journalist based in Mumbai. He is formally trained in Information Management and started working in his formative years in the tech group of an Indian multinational bank. He shifted his career to editorial photography in 2006 and worked as a photo-coordinator with Hindustan Times Newspaper in Mumbai and later as a Senior Photographer with Timeout magazine. Currently, he is working with the Indian Express

Newspaper in Mumbai, shooting news, feature photo and video interviews for Express. He has also written small articles which have appeared in IE from time to time. Chakravarty's project, "[When War Comes Home,](#)" placed second in POY Asia's Covid Expressions category.

Lauren DeCicca

Lauren DeCicca is a documentary photographer from New York who is now based in Bangkok, Thailand. Prior to moving to Thailand, Lauren spent three years (2013 – 2016) based in Yangon, Myanmar documenting the country at the beginning of its transition to democracy. She's met people dealing with PTSD, drug addiction, displacement and disease, and is struck by the similarity in spirit between these people, despite the obvious divides. It has been a goal of hers to realize and mend this schism through photography, be it mental, physical or geographical in nature. Documenting the lives of people around the world will help those who have no access to such situations understand that the subjects of her photographs could easily be their parent, sibling or partner. Despite differences in language, skin color, religion or way of life, everyone has the same basic needs for empathy, understanding and acceptance.

DeCicca's [photo of a Thai elementary school student](#) sitting at a desk with a social distancing screen placed third in POY Asia's COVID-19 category.

Rosem Morton

Rosem Morton, born and raised in the Philippines, is a documentary photographer and nurse based in Baltimore, Maryland. She is a National Geographic Explorer, an International Women's Media Foundation Fellow and a We, Women Photo Artist. Her storytelling focuses on everyday life amidst gender, health, and racial adversity. Her work has been recognized by the

Pictures of the Year International, the World Press Photo 6x6 Global Talent and Visa pour l'Image.

Morton's project, "[Donning and Doffing](#)," was a finalist in POYi's COVID-19 Personal Expression category.

Colton Rothwell

Colton Rothwell is a photographer and artist based in Missoula, Montana. He is currently attending the University of Montana in pursuit of a BFA in studio arts.

Raised in rural Idaho, his work is heavily influenced by his Western upbringing and the cultural and physical landscapes he called home as a closeted queer youth. He began taking photographs at the age of 14 as an outlet to help him understand the constructed binary world of sexuality and gender.

With experience in both the fields of journalism and the visual arts, Rothwell explores the truth of photography and considers the way history, personal identities, and place affect the way images are understood.

Rothwell's isolation project, "[321 Kensington Ave](#)," earned an Award of Excellence in CPOY's COVID Experience category. His work also earned a [Bronze award in CPOY's COVID category](#), an [Award of Excellence in Interpretive Eye](#) and [Silver in Illustration](#).

Elisabetta Zavoli

Elisabetta Zavoli is a documentary photographer born in Rimini, Italy. She graduated in Environmental Sciences at University of Bologna in 2001 and earned a master's degree in chemistry for Waste Management in 2007. She was working as a chemist from 2001 until 2009

before quitting her job and earning a master's in photojournalism at the Contrasto Agency in Milan.

In 2009, Zavoli started her career as photojournalist and, for three years, she lived in Algiers where she documented the condition of women in the Algerian society. For 6 years (2012-2018), she was based in Jakarta. The main subjects of her photographic research are long term documentary projects on environmental issues and the relationship between human beings and the environment, and on gender issues. With more than 10 years working on documentary projects she developed the ability of being easily accepted by diverse communities especially thanks to my empathic approach and openness to understand the others' points of view. I'm greatly interested in investigating communities out of the mainstream narratives thus contributing to enrich the global discussion on various topics by telling diverse approaches. In September 2020, Zavoli co-founded [Radar Magazine](#) together with other seven dedicated science journalists to tell stories and produce investigations on environment, nature, geography and culture.

Her project, "[And in Darkness You Find Colors](#)," won first place in POYi's COVID-19 Personal Expression category.

Appendix: Interview Transcripts

1. Eitan Abramovich

Emmalee Reed

Yeah. Sweet. So we can go ahead and just get started with the questions then, if that's all right with you? Okay. So first can you describe the work you were doing before the pandemic began in 2020?

Eitan Abramovich

Oh, well, yes. Well I was a wire photographer worked for the French news. [Zoom froze]

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, I think I froze.

Eitan Abramovich

You want me to answer again?

Emmalee Reed

Yes, please.

Eitan Abramovich

Okay, no problem. I'm a wire photographer. Most of my career was working as a photographer for the French news, AFP. But before the pandemic, I moved to the desk to the Latin American desk in Montevideo. So for the last three years, I've been working mostly as a photo editor. Sometimes I get some assignments, but most of the time I'm a photo editor.

Emmalee Reed

Okay, cool. And then what do you feel is like, the primary purpose of your work?

Eitan Abramovich

Sorry?

Emmalee Reed

What do you feel is like the primary purpose of your work?

Eitan Abramovich

The word, I don't get the words.

Emmalee Reed

Why do you do the photo work that you do?

Eitan Abramovich

I don't know. It's like I think that photography takes me to places that I wouldn't go if I wasn't a photographer, you know. It's a way I found that I can express something. It's an

anode. If it's inside myself. I like to create something that can impact someone else, you know. I like to impress people with my images. Mostly that. It's challenging, because I'm like, I don't know, it's like, an obsession I have, you know. Like, all the time. I'm thinking about light, composition. It's like the way I see the world now. It's like, if I will have a camera inside my head all the time.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, I get that. That's cool. And did you feel like this is like motivation to do your work, did that change at all during the pandemic?

Eitan Abramovich

When the pandemic arrived, I felt so frustrated because I recently changed my role, you know, like, I was always in the street. So this huge story came and I was thinking to myself, what the fuck am I doing--Sorry for the words--sitting in the desk, you know? I need to go out and take pictures. So well, the desk, the office closed, we all started to work virtually. And I started thinking, I don't know, I need to do something. I need to document this story that is going on. And suddenly I realized that the story was inside my house, my family, you know, and I started to just document it for myself because at the beginning, I didn't realize I was doing a story or an essay. I was just thinking, well, I'm not getting any assignment. I'm not going to hospitals or whatever. I just gonna register this for me and my family. And at the same time, I didn't know it that I could consider it documentary photography or photojournalism because it's my family, you know? And I didn't know if I wanted to show my private life. But I started to share some stuff on Instagram, like everyone else was doing. Suddenly, one person saw my pictures and edited it like a project. And I saw that and I said to myself, Wow, I am starting to tell something, you know, and it created impact. So I just move on and it was like, a kind of obsession, like, documenting everything going around my family. And then when I started to go more out of the house and seen life outside my inner circle, I thought, wow, everything is pandemic now. Like, it's really easy to take pictures, let's say like, everything is new, everything is different. Everyone is a passing through the same stuff. So I think it was a fascinating period for a photographer, you know. With a mix of motions. Sometimes the depressive, scary, but for a photographer, it was like a mine of gold, you know, everything, everything was a part of the story.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, for sure. Before this project, did you ever photograph your family extensively? Or was this the first time?

Eitan Abramovich

No, no, no, no, it's like, it's my time off, you know, like, I don't want to carry my camera with them. My oldest child, he hates me take picture of him. Like, no. I did take their pictures a lot when they were born. You know, like when they were growing. But daily life, I never did before.

Emmalee Reed

That's interesting. So what was that decision like? When you're like, "Okay, I'm gonna take pictures of my family now--" What kind of caused that, in your mind?

Eitan Abramovich

First, the impact I was receiving from my Instagram account. A lot of people was like impressed and encouraged me to continue. And I realized I wasn't going able to do what all the wire photographers or press photographers were doing. So I said to myself, well, you have a different point of view of the pandemic. I thought millions of parents or family are passing through the same, so that's a good story to tell, you know. And it was like, therapeutic for me as well, like, not to be worried all the time. 'Oh man, we are under this pandemic, what's going to happen?' I can stay with my family, you know, how you say, in quarantine anymore. So it was fun.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that would be I think that would be fun. And then, during this time, you're still photo editing as your job right? You're still working as a photo editor at this time?

Eitan Abramovich

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Emmalee Reed

What was it like? I guess just getting all those images in and then working on your own stuff. What was that like to be a photo editor during that time? I feel like that must have been crazy.

Eitan Abramovich

It was crazy. But I think it was crazy for everyone that had children and had to work at home and they had to check that they were doing their homework, you know. Life had to move on. And the thing I had my characters with me all the time, you know, it's like the dream of photojournalism journalist or documentary photographer, like, be able to be 24 hours with your subject, you know.

Emmalee Reed

Is there anything else you would like to talk about related to this?

Eitan Abramovich

No, well, something that I think is important I was editing, like, all the time COVID pictures, you know. I was in front of a computer editing patients and ECUs, funerals, you know. My life was 24 hours per day COVID. In a way, taking pictures of my family, seeing my children, they didn't really care what was going on, you know, for them it was like, kind of party or whatever, was really... it cheered me up. Like, after seeing all the madness and sadness, I moved my head and I have like, a party happening next to me. So it was a way I could manage to balance my duties, you know?

2. Shafkat Anowar

Emmalee Reed

Okay, well, I guess we can go ahead and get started. I just have a few questions. Can you describe like the photo work you were doing before the pandemic began?

Shafkat Anowar

Before? So I was in Hawaii all throughout the pandemic season, of course, before pandemic as well, so, and I was solidly kind of new in a way that I was born and raised in Bangladesh, a separate country. And Hawaii was kind of like my port of entry to the United States. So when I started college, I had no idea that I was going to be a photojournalist, but like, it sort of came into my mind when I started working as a newspaper photojournalist in the college. And it was very chill. But like, in sophomore year. I mean, back in my high school days, I already had an idea that, maybe, but I was always into White House press pool, what the President does, and then the capital politics and all those things. I grew up watching those stuff. So in the back of my mind, I always loved presidential journalism, political photography, and all those things. I'm a huge, huge fan of the White House press pool. So Obama was like, like President at a time, and then his house was in Hawaii, until 2016, which was the year Trump was elected. So when I learned it was Obama's last year, I got to be at the local press pool during Obama's last visit, while he was a president, so that's when I actually like fell in love. I'm like, okay, maybe I would try to do something in this job. And then that doing something became something vital. And in sophomore year, I became very passionate about working in Native Hawaiian issues, you know. And then not everybody got to do those stuff as a photojournalist, because that's really mundane if you work as a photographer and didn't want to portray native Hawaiian issues, but if you're a writer, that's like a whole lot of thing, like a whole nother thing to write about. But like I started following up with different stories, how Native Hawaiians are kind of struggling with keeping up with their own native lens. I don't know if you know Hawaii is divided into five different islands, which have their own significance and all those things. So yeah, that's one of the things that I got really passionate into. Sports was always there. College volleyball and basketball. Football was never my thing. But now maybe it could be a thing. But like, so I think that was my key thing. That's in freshman, sophomore, and junior year. So I think the junior year was when the pandemic came in. So that's a different chapter to talk about. But like, I hope I answered your question.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, no, that's helpful. And so where did you do that work? Was it at the university newspaper or a different newspaper in Hawaii?

Shafkat Anowar

Oh, it's a student newspaper at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Emmalee Reed

Cool. Thank you. Can you tell me how you started like photographing the pandemic? And like, what brought you into COVID coverage?

Shafkat Anowar

So I think the start off pandemic, everybody, as student photographers, everybody was like, should we go out and photograph our community? But then the pro people are like, do you actually want to put your family into a risk? if you go out? Make sure that juice is worth the squeeze if you do go out. So those times I used to listen to a lot of NPPA and those webinars, because that's when I think Zoom became a thing as well. So everybody was hosting things. So I used to like work - as I lost my job, I used to be like an event manager. So I lost my job during the pandemic, because there was no events, so everything was canceled. So I started working as a janitor, because I need the money to pay my bills. You know, the drill, I guess. Being a photographer wasn't paying anything. Being a janitor was paying my bills and my tuition. So I had to like work on an eight hour janitor shift, and then just play NPPA webinars stuff in my phone, so I could listen to all those pro people who are telling this. So basically, starting up pandemic, I did not photograph anything. And when you are not creating anything, as an artist, you are like questioning yourself. A lot of depression, anxiety comes in. And then at one point, I became a little bit frustrated, because I feel like it was over like, more than six months that I did not create any work. I needed to create something.

And then I think it took a little bit of time when the COVID testing came into Hawaii. And I remember, it was like the first time COVID testing came into the capital of Hawaii - Honolulu and everybody went. Like AP, AFP, freelancers. So like it was a big thing. And then a loads of cars kind of piled up just to get tested. So I'm okay, maybe I'll just go and do a visit. So like, I went that day. Nothing happened. But like the second day I went, well, it was kind of late, that I went like at two o'clock. That's when I got the picture that you're talking about, the little girl being swabbed. So it was just really neat chilling with just one camera walking in at two o'clock it just like I was at the right time at the right place. So yes, that picture it is it is showing a girl being swabbed. And she's struggling with it. It's clearly talks about it. And then there are some ethical reasons as well. But also, this is what happened, right? That that was what the reality was. It shows. So I kind of had a lot of people talking about this stuff. Like I got a lot of backlash. I think that was like my start of my pandemic photography. And I started documenting my neighborhood in a way that is kind of not risky for my family. So when PPE and all those things came, I used to wear it all the time, every day. And then I would not go anywhere other than my neighborhood. So I just wanted to see what the neighborhood is like, like literally community-based work like literally. Then like how the small businesses are operating, you know, and then how high schools are operating and all things, restaurants. Everybody was doing takeout so like maybe what the restaurants are doing while they're operating in a small business. So like these things came up slowly. Fast forward some time, I think 2020 November when Thanksgiving came, they had a drive-through Christmas show. And I thought maybe I would go in and see how people are enjoying it because like, there's literally nobody even thought of having a drive-through Christmas show in Hawaii. So that's when I went in. And then I'm like, Okay, this is something cool. So like, that's one of the things.

I forgot to mention, I also saw how Hawaii's tourism was kind of struggling at the time. Nobody worked there. Like, you know, nobody was allowed to fly in. If they fly in they had to quarantine for two weeks. So basically, the tourism business was dead. So I think

that's when I also did a freelance job for the Wall Street Journal. That year, I started my career as a freelancer as well. So it kind of blossomed at one point.

So like, yeah, back to that Christmas show thing. I just took a walk. And then I met with Santa Claus. And then he started talking and then I started talking. And then I'm like, Okay, you seem really cool. You seem like an interesting character. I want to document you. So I started documenting him every day. Like then everyday became two days a week, I went to his house, I went to a church, he went to. He played drums in a church. I saw him drumming, and all those things. So like, I think that's my first time doing documentary work. And I fell in love with it. And then that was my biggest break in the pandemic era, where I got to document Santa Claus who was always having gigs in the past years, but now he doesn't have and then the kids were away from him all the time. I know it is a very common topic to document on but also, you've got to see where I was, like a similar story did not come out at the time from that place, or like from the island I was at. So it was a good break.

And also, I was a part of this nonprofit. Have you heard of Boyd's Station? A nonprofit that supervises photographers every summer as an intern. Like Boyd's Station and what was that thing called? Shoot I forgot. American Reportage. Okay, that was the name it. And it was those two nonprofit organizations, they combined, they launched this initiative, where they will have you as a contributing photojournalist and where you will bring out photos and stories from the back of your house, basically, from your backyard. So I was our contributor over there. And now I'm talking about like August in 2020. So that thing happened. So that's what I met like some big names like Stephen Crowley from the New York Times press pool in the White House, back in the days, Jack Gruber. From USA Today. So I made some awesome friends because I needed that thing. So I became a contributor. They gave me a huge break. So they also portrayed my Santa Claus Story, which was a big thing. So that is one chapter. Then in 2020, I also got I was in the first virtual Edie Adams workshop. So yeah, I got I got really lucky getting into it. I feel if it was in person I would not have. So like, 2020 in a way. I know that has been like a hard time on the whole world. But I just got lucky. I was fortunate enough. I'm really grateful about it, that it wasn't so hard on me. In a way I got to showcase how my community has been struggling And that's how I got to also start my career as a freelancer, number one, and then people came to know me a little bit. I got to participate in the Eddie Adams workshop. And also, my internship got cancelled. I was supposed to intern at the AP in 2020 summer, along with some other ones. That one got canceled, but then I was recalled in 2021 February. So yeah, so that's how my year 2020 sums up.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that's a good year it sounds like. I think it's interesting how you talked about just focusing on the community that you're within. Did you feel like that your news values shifted at all, like when you began covering the pandemic?

Shafkat Anwar

My news values?

Emmalee Reed

Yes. So, like, the things that you determine newsworthy, or consider newsworthy.

Shafkat Anowar

Well, I don't know. Like, it's different, because like, you're actually shifting your gears at the time. I always wanted to work for the wire. And that's, I'm saying this, like, from way way back, working for the wire in a White House press pool has been the dream. So like, when you're covering the community, you're not actually like doing anything newsy, you know, like, newsy. It was just like, pure documentary work. Something that would be needed in a local newspaper, perhaps, but not for the wire. So like, in that way, you have to compromise, you know. But like, also, it was like a fuel that you need to keep up with the flow. Otherwise, you'd just be dead. Because me working as a janitor, yes, it was paying my bill, but was I happy? No. I was like logging in eight hours a day. Was it happy? Absolutely not. But like, if I made a good picture of a woman wearing masks on the beach, that made me really happy. I'm like, Okay, that's a good photo. Because how many times a year would you see a woman wearing a mask and praying the beach, you know. So those were some of like, the very small moments, intangible moments, that really kept me going. And I needed those, like some photos that I never thought I would take in my whole life, like reflections on windows things, in some way became really vital. And like I remember, taking a photo of closed surf shop, like a souvenir shop, in a place called Waikiki. And that is like, if you go any time of the year, that's like hustling and bustling with tourists, but now being dead, the storefront was closed. I'm like, that makes me really sad. So I took a picture of like, some Wasp T shirts on a closed storefront, and then the reflection of the beach, empty beach, palm trees and all those things. So that photo sums up the whole, like tourism industry in a way. And then Wall Street Journal was like, wow, that's a good photo. And the editor was like I would really appreciate if you find a store again, and take a similar photo for us to indicate. They really appreciate. Those subtle moments kind of became very vital at one point. I hope I answered your question.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, no, that's really helpful. Yeah. And I think this is my last question. But did you notice any, like visual change in your photography, just because of the pandemic at all?

Shafkat Anowar

Yeah, definitely. Because before, I think it was very newsy. Protests, like where everything is staged for you. So you just go in and you take pictures. And yeah, you have to make your own photo, but also, like, if it's a protest, you're just going in and taking photos and talking to people. But now you're actually like finding the opportunity. I think Black Lives Matter protests also happened in Minneapolis at that same time. So everybody was going to Minnesota at the time, like the people I knew. I'm like, I'm not going because that's not that's not my story to tell. Instead, I will just stay in here, back in my house and try to find something there because I needed to show what underprivileged societies and communities looked like. How Native Hawaiians are also doing stuff during the pandemic. I remember doing a Fourth of July story at the time. Native Hawaiians, they do not celebrate Fourth of July a lot. So like, where America goes goes crazy. This is

the only state that does not. They celebrate, but like the native people do not. So I started interviewing people, like, maybe I chose to become a photographer, but I also became a writer at the time. So I, I wrote the story. And it was a good one, it was a really good one, I learned a lot. And so that that kind of took me out of my comfort zone at one point that year, that's when I figured out I'm like, 'Oh, wow, I can write. And I can do photos at the same time.' I'm international student here. And at the time, President Trump also wanted to, I think, pass a bill where international students cannot stay in the country during the pandemic, unless they have in-person classes. All my classes online, so there was a chance of me going back to my country, I'm like, 'Okay, this is very depressing.' So at the time, I also wrote an article. So that was really helpful in a way to showcase what I think. And then my visual style, that was a drastic change, because I was actually doing documentary work. I think that was my first stepping stone towards documentary work. Like, I didn't go to photo school in my college. And then the nonprofit I mentioned, they taught me how take different approaches for certain stories. So that's that's also it. I hope that is a good answer.

Emmalee Reed

Yes. No, that's, that is really helpful. It's interesting to just hear about your progress through it all. So thank you.

Shafkat Anowar

Yeah, yeah. I think starting from mid 2020, I was exactly at the right place at the right time. Like, I didn't even desire for anything. I don't know if it's the universe or anybody else. I got the right opportunity at the same time. I'm just very grateful about it.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that makes sense. Thank you. Well, thank you so much. I appreciate you talking with me.

Shafkat Anowar

Yeah, no problem. I am glad that you included me for your piece.

3. Amit Chakravarty

Emmalee Reed

I have like a few questions just about your work during the pandemic. We can go ahead and get started. Can you describe the photo work that you were doing before the pandemic started?

Amit Chakravarty

Okay, so what happened is, like, you know, I work with a newspaper office in India. It's a national newspaper office called Indian Express. So, when the pandemic started, what I started doing is- I stay in Mumbai, India- and so, I started going out. At the very initial stages, I still remember the local trains, they started wearing masks. One day, you know, it was on the first or second day, I think, so, I was traveling in the local train, back to my office after work. And I saw people, maybe like, you know, if there are like 10 people,

there will be one person who will be wearing a mask or something like that, that day, it was like, you know, all wearing a mask, except me. So, I just shot a few pictures and went to the office, and you know, and they printed it for the next day, and slowly slowly, the whole pandemic started, people started fleeing the city, you know, from Bombay city, from the main city, to their hometowns and stuff like that, because once the lockdown started, people started going back to their hometowns. So then what happened is the border areas of the state, you know, they were like lots of crowds crossing over and the other states were not allowing them to cross over to that state. So, I for the first time, I went to the cross border state between Gujarat and Bombay and covered that whole scenario, you know, the people are on both the sides, cops are handling the situation is a lot of crowd and stuff like that. So, that was the first thing I saw, like people just giving up walking all the way home, you know, especially the laborers, you know, who used to work in different small scale sectors in and around Bombay city. So, that was my first experience as per the pandemic. Then slowly, slowly, the fear started creeping in, because people everyday you can see the toll, you know, that this many people have died, that many people have died, so many people are getting sick, and stuff like that. So, what I did was, luckily, I have a separate room at my place, which is a very difficult thing in in Bombay, because it's like cramped of space and it's quite expensive. So, you know, I'm lucky enough to have separate space for myself. So, I cocooned myself in that room. Even I did whatever little bit of interaction I had with my family members was like, that I need some extra food or I need this and that and, you know. So you go out, you do your job in the morning, go down to test centers, you can shoot that go to the hospital, shoot that come back and be in your room. So that was like, basically cocooning myself into that room was the most difficult part I think. I did it for a month because my parents, who stay with me, they are like, one is 85 and one is almost touching 80. So, I was afraid, you know, because of this whole scenario. And there was like lack of the medical facilities at that point of time because nobody was prepared for this. So I was bit scared for them, not for me actually, but more for them because they are old. So it is very foolish to think about yourself that you are invincible, kind of.

I'm getting into situations where, you know, I'm getting into ICUs and stuff like that, where I know that there are chances that I'm getting infected, but I'm trying to, take my proper intakes of vitamin C and stuff like that, which I don't know how much it helped. But especially the food part, the breathing exercise parts, I started doing all that and started working and then after like, a week or so, at the initial stages, I was sent all across the state of Maharashtra wherein, you know, to see what is the state of affairs in various small cities in and around Bombay. So, it was an experience because I have traveled extensively in Maharashtra, but I have not seen like places where you don't have even a bottle of water, everything is closed. I got that experience. And then after that, what happened was, while I was coming back from one of those trips, the news came that around 30 or 40, I mean, sorry, around 15 or 16, photojournalists, friends of mine from various organizations, they got COVID. You know, they got tested, and they were declared their COVID. And they were being taken to a quarantine center and all that. So then actually the fear gripped in, you know, okay, this is not the thing, so you should also be fearful, it can happen to you. So anyways, but still the work went on. So I think after a month or so, my dad fell ill and then he has a bit of Parkinson's. You know, if you have

Parkinson's, what happens is, if you have some other problems, some issues, health issues, that Parkinson's only helps to make that problem more. So I thought, like, you know, there must be like fever and stuff that has happened. And you know, because of the Parkinson's, things have escalated. But by midnight, things worsen for him. So in the morning, we took him to the hospital, but still that point of time, I didn't know that whether he was COVID positive or not. So we took him to the hospital. Obviously, any hospital, they were testing people first, then they are being allowed into different places as per their ailments. And my dad's blood sugar levels, skyrocketed to over 450, and stuff like that. And s they started treating him and they isolated him. And I was still there, because he was not detected by that time. So yeah, we took him in the night only. And next day mornings, we were told that we have to get get ourselves tested. So we did the tests over there, and my dad was positive.

So I think this work is much more instinctive. At the initial stages, to be very frank with you, I thought I may have lost the battle, because the number of patients who are dying all around at this point of time. I'm talking about the first wave of pandemic in India. It's all we saw. Drugs were changed every five days, nobody knew what was the actual day of treatment, stuff like that. So I thought, like, it's time like, you know, it's, I don't know whether he will come out of this or not. And photographing was very instinctive, you know, and that also triggered me like, maybe this is it, so, why not do something? Maybe something in terms of my fear. Fear also maybe. I don't know what happened in that point of time. I started shooting. Random, I didn't have anything in my mind. So I started shooting.

And then he slowly started showing signs of recovery from day two. So then in the night, I was just laying next to him on a separate bed. And in the night I couldn't sleep. And then I slowly started to figure out, you know, I was scrolling through the pictures on my phone, because I didn't carry anything but my phone and stuff like that. So I was scrolling through and I thought, like, there's a pattern happening. And then the whole idea started of, 'I have been shooting pandemic, I've been going to families and hospitals and situations, why don't I also shoot this as a personal project?' So I started shooting. And then on day three, what happened was, the doctor said that you since it is a pandemic, and he has COVID and you are COVID negative, you can't be allowed to stay with your dad. I was bit heartbroken at that point of time. You know, it's like I've seen it through. Now, when he's recovering, I have to leave. So anyways, it was a government protocol. So then what happened was since I was not there, and he needs some special attention, so he was shifted to the ICU. It was not that his situation was really bad at that point of time, he was shifted to the ICU and I came back home. And we waited, waited waited after I think after seven or eight days they told that he has recovered, and it is high time that you take him home. But there are certain quarantine rules you need to follow. So what happened was I came back home. And by the time we had this 21 days of quarantining, so obviously, I stay at a rented place in Bombay. So I'm not the owner of this place. So what happened was, obviously, everybody got scared. People who stays next to mine, my family, were scared. Nobody knew exactly what is happening and how things were turning out to be. And so I faced the song definitely, at that point of time. A lot of issues in terms of people coming in, and especially with government officials coming in, testing

out people's stuff like that, putting signboards and stuff like that. So that means, apart from my father who was in the hospital, we have to run ourselves, right? We didn't have the groceries and stuff like that, we didn't know. So obviously, some of my friends helped. They brought the stuff, the daily needs and left it at our doorstep and stuff like that. So it helps you know that way. And so luckily, after that, we got Dad home. And actually the real quarantine started from there. We were told since we all were not detected as COVID positive, he had to be only isolated in one. So that was a challenge. Since I was going out and doing stuff like that, I volunteered for this, that I will do the necessary things to help him out. So that's how this whole thing started, the whole project started and I started shooting bits and pieces and stuff like that and going back and forth. And I thought like this can be one picture, Okay, you shift it to your archival folder kind of thing. So that's how I it this whole project happened.

Emmalee Reed

That's really interesting. Before this, had you done any other personal projects?

Amit Chakravarty

Yeah. So this is also a continuation of a self ethnographic kind of a project for myself. I came to Bombay post my degrees. I actually am from another place in India, called Calcutta, I'm from Calcutta. So I came to Bombay with a job and I shifted my base. But my parents were still in Calcutta. And they were obviously aged, you know, they need that kind of support. So finally, at one point of time, in 2009, what we did is we just uprooted us themselves from their place of their known place and known surroundings, and I brought them to my city, it was getting very difficult for me to really keep a check on their health and stuff while traveling from Bombay to Calcutta and back. So we got them here. So then that whole project, which I called "Inner Circle," it started. Of shooting them, how they are coping with this whole change, uprooting their whole lives from the place of their birth to a completely different place. And a completely foreign land, actually, to be very fair. The culture is completely different. It's more cosmopolitan, they're mixing with lots of different people, you know, from different parts of the country, because there's some mishmash of culture in Bombay, rather than the cocooned state of like, being a Bengali surrounded by Bengalis at their hometown. So that's how this whole process started, you know, and slowly what happened at that point of time, this first senior photo festival happened called Delhi Photo Festival. And what I did was, I applied with that portfolio and luckily, I got selected, it was screened over, that whole work was screened over there. And from then on, I started shooting my family, especially my father and mother. And it has been it is going on. So also think, you know, the back of my mind, when I was in that situation and the hospital, I thought that may have triggered to do this whole other project on COVID, on my family.

So ideally speaking for a newspaper photographer, what happens is, you tend to only scratched the surface, you don't go, you don't get that time to actually do digging too deep into a story and really do it because time is very limited. The whole cycle is 24 hours. So it becomes very difficult to really, really concentrate. Hardly like for any stories, maybe I'm lucky enough to do stories were I was given a time for a week or so. But in general, that whole concept of photo essays and stuff like that's already gone. Nowadays,

especially with online, social media and stuff, like the immediacy of a project is what is more important than really doing a long term. So, in newspaper industries, currently, I don't know about much of the West, at your place, how things are.

Over here, it's like more about the immediacy. So we don't get to really digging deep into a story to do a long term, long term project, though, we try to do certain things. But still. And you know, what happens is, it is very difficult in terms of my time schedules. because I don't know, since I'm talking with you, after this, I may have to go to the airport, because Indian students from Ukraine are coming back. So maybe I will be at the airport, I don't know yet. But I know that something is happening, and that's at midnight at the airport. So, it becomes very difficult also the time management part. So what happens, if you invest your time on on a certain project, I think you have to really live, eat, breathe, whatever you say, you know, with that subject. That also helps me in. Basically, my family, my father and my mother, became kind of a bridge, you know. Thousands of families like this, I think all over the world, where where they had to, you know uproot themselves, it's more of a story of migration. So I thought they can be a vehicle kind of a bridge to talk about that story. I mean the cultural mishmash you know, the cultural mishmash. How they operate themselves, how they mix themselves. If for example, at my place, though I stay in Maharashtra in Bombay, my parents watch whatever the news is happening in Calcutta more than what is happening at this place. They are so much attached still. So, I thought this is something- maybe my presumption- but I think this is some somewhere especially the oldies are connected to their roots. So, in some way, they will try to find out some sort of a connection to their roots. So, that's how my father and mother especially, became a vehicle for me to do a long term project. So I have been doing it from 2009 that ethnographic stuff. But this is from the first pandemic it started. So I did that. And unfortunately, what happened is, when the second wave came, the war really came to mind because everyone was COVID positive. So everyone was COVID positive. The doctors jokingly said that you don't need to wear mask, at least at your home because you're all positive. But luckily, it was a very mild, symptoms were very mild. So you know, we survived.

Emmalee Reed

That is wild. You said when the pandemic hit, you stayed at home in a separate room for a month, right? Did you ever consider-

Amit Chakravarty

More than a month.

Emmalee Reed

Okay. What was making that decision to stay home, like? To stay separated to continue working?

Amit Chakravarty

Basically, the whole thing was like, I'm going out by dresses are contaminated. My equipments are contaminated. My bags are contaminated. And also, I have pets at home, I have two dogs, so if I don't keep myself isolated, I didn't want them jumping on me and

then going down to my papa's room and contaminating that place. So this is something which triggered me to quarantine myself from the very first day, when I went out to the Gujarat border, to shoot the migrant laborers leaving Bombay. And from that day onwards, actually, I started doing that. At least you- Even you won't believe we did a hot zone at my home. So if something comes out- Say, for example, milk, bread and stuff, which comes in to our home, I put into that basket and then after a couple of hours, we pick it up so that at least there's some sort of a safety then. Then obviously, the sanitization blah, blah, blah, everything happened. And the most important part is my dad didn't go out anywhere. My dad didn't go out. I was always out. But he got it. After all, this so I don't know. Must be me. It must be me only who has brought this home? Which I don't know how, after taking so much precautions.

So you saw the work that was- the award which I got?

Emmalee Reed

Yes, yes.

Amit Chakravarty

I think you wrote something about what I have written, what I have scribbled on the picture?

Emmalee Reed

Yes, yeah, that was interesting.

Amit Chakravarty

So, first and foremost, there are a lot of things which I have gone through, which I can't show in the picture, right? So, I think in this project, I thought the words go hand in hand with the picture. That is the reason I did that. You can see that the first time I have tried something like that, it is more of an experiment for me to see how it looks, how it feels, how people take it. And luckily, I did it, I created that whole body of work. There are like, more than 20 pictures, actually. So when this POY Asia happened, and they had this section, luckily, I thought, 'Okay, if this is the thing, I may try out and see how it pans out.' You know, I didn't have any expectations at all. I didn't have any expectations at all. So I just thought like, 'Okay, let me try it out.' So it hurt to actually cut down from that many numbers to that, that many numbers. So there are like a lot of these interesting stuff, which I needed to change a little bit to accommodate the words which I've written on on those photographs. Maybe they were like one liners on a lot of these photographs, which I have incorporated in that batch. So that's how it all started. It's just basically an experiment. It was also an experimentation in terms of mobile phone photography. I have not done anything like that before you know. I've not done anything like that before, it was more of a spontaneous thing because I didn't have anything and I had a very cheap, it was a very cheap Chinese phone, it's not nothing like an iPhone or something like that. So the whole process started and I just started shooting. Then, obviously I was feeling a bit down and alone. Stuff like that. So I started scrolling those pictures. And then I found that there is some sort of a sequence. God knows, I have no idea at that point of time. And I found kind of a sequence and I started shooting. But the whole idea, very frankly,

once we were out of that period, that whole confinement period, and things settled down for us, then this whole thing took the formation. Before that it was just random. It was completely random shoot. Not that okay, yeah, I have this picture so I'll go down and do something, which will have something in relation to my earlier picture. It was not absolutely. It was very much random shooting, rather, the sequencing thing, and everything happened once I settled down. You know, and I have not added anything later. So what was shot at that point of time was shot at that time. Rather, rather, when we had COVID, the second part, I have shot ourselves at home, especially my dad and my mom, at that point of time. I would rather say that was less of spontaneity, less of spontaneity than a lot of things because already I had a sequence at that point of time. So I think, in the back of your mind, as a photographer, it works: 'Okay, this picture may work, this picture may not work.' But when I started off, it was never the one to which I thought to try. It was completely spontaneous. The whole sequencing and everything came, even written words, came later because I thought, like, 'Okay.' I had an off day, so I was just sitting at home, and I just thought, 'Okay, these are the pictures I've shot.'

If I want to talk about certain things that have happened, or my dad has said, or my dad has felt, or I have felt, how do I show that in that picture? You know, why don't I add words? So I started scribbling on a notebook. Yeah, that's why you'll see, there are like a lot of these grammatical mistakes. And a lot of these stuffs that has happened. It was just simple scribbling. And then I thought, like, 'Okay, if I've scribbled, maybe this, this picture, or in this sequence, this thing comes, so I'll put this.' That was the afterthought that happened, but when I was shooting at the time, I was not in that mental state to even think like this.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, I get that. I think sometimes you just zone out completely.

Amit Chakravarty

Yeah I was really zoned out at that point of time. And I would I would rather say that, you know, I don't know what made me start shooting. It is very difficult for me. Maybe I was emotionally down also, because things were not happening. And I was seeing Papa was there. And people were dying all around. So you know, obviously, I think the back of my mind, played in a certain way. So that is, that's how the process happened. And that's the story about this whole thing.

4. Lauren DeCicca

Emmalee Reed

We can just get started. Can you describe the photo work that you're doing before the pandemic started?

Lauren DeCicca

Sure. Um, so the work I was doing before was obviously different. Man, it's been a long two years, it's hard to even think of pre-pandemic times. But basically, I'll just jump into my story in Southeast Asia. I moved here in 2013. And I moved to Myanmar almost

immediately. I lived there for three and a half years focusing on the country's transition to democracy, the country opening up and kind of daily life and stories about humanitarian and social issues in Myanmar, for about three years while I was living there, and then continued to go back quite regularly until 2020. My last reporting trip outside of Thailand was to Myanmar in January and February of 2020. And that was where my primary focus was. But after moving to Thailand in 2016, I was covering the region a lot, so it was out of Thailand for about two weeks of every month on assignments, that took me on a variety of different stories. So mostly, I was just covering news stories for Getty, The New York Times a few other publications. My primary focus in my own work, and the work that I'm most connected to, is kind of found families and found communities. So for example, for NatGeo, I worked on a story about a women's wheelchair basketball team who kind of found a community and hope through basketball, and I know nothing about sports, but it was just lovely to see these women's lives change. And similarly in Thailand, you know, following like the LGBTQ communities, because while Thailand looks like it's a very accepting place to people from abroad, the rules and laws here are quite restrictive. So yeah, found families and found communities has kind of been my focus and where my heart is at. A lot of time outside of Thailand. Most of my time outside of Thailand.

Emmalee Reed

Got it. And so when the pandemic started what did you do? Like, what was your work like then?

Lauren DeCicca

So I actually consider myself to be quite lucky. Thailand was not hit by the pandemic in 2020, the way that most of the world was honestly, like, I think the deaths from the pandemic, I think they were under 100 in the first year. I was actually, I was in the US when I first found out about the pandemic in early January. And then I flew through Wuhan on my way back to Thailand. And I just had a long layover, like a 24 hour layover in Wuhan. So my first pandemic shoot was photographing my arrival into Thailand on like the first temperature-scanned flight into Thailand. And on my flight was actually the first case of COVID found abroad found in Thailand. And it was the first case sequenced by a Thai researcher. So it's interesting, my whole COVID experience kind of happened really quick. The first local transmission of COVID, was also in Thailand. So like the first Thai person who hadn't traveled, like the first person, I think globally who hadn't traveled to China who caught COVID, was a Thai taxi driver. And I photographed him after he recovered. But it was very odd in the beginning, because we didn't really know what was happening. Thankfully, in Thailand, most people were wearing masks and social distancing and being like, careful. Immediately, I found that to be the case in most of Southeast Asia, just because they were hit quite hard by the SARS epidemic. In the beginning, it was just kind of weird to cover it, because like anything was suddenly a story, you know, like, social distancing on the train was suddenly a story, or like the park closing was suddenly a story, people wearing masks was a story. So it was like, every little thing, you know, like a grocery store, the toilet paper aisle was a story. And it just became so weird. And I was so busy shooting, basically my daily life, just walking to my grocery store, bringing my camera shopping for groceries. Like my partner is a

photographer too. And he actually had an assignment like, photograph your groceries. And that was it. It was just a very bizarre time. And then of course, once we got to like sit with it for a while, and Thailand wasn't having the infections that the rest of the world was having, we started to notice that the economic effect of border closures was destroying the tourism industry in Thailand, like people didn't know what to do. So the fear of the virus spreading kind of changed to fear of unemployment, and fear of homelessness. And that's when my focus shifted to that. Because every day at 11 o'clock, you would find volunteers with food for people, the government wasn't doing much at all, especially for freelance workers, like taxi drivers and food vendors. Anyone who works in a market who isn't like officially employed got no benefits. And so volunteer organizations would come out daily, and provide meals. So we photographed that, we photographed people and just talked to them about what their fears were. And honestly, like, that hasn't changed. And then of course, in 2021, the virus finally got to Thailand. And we're currently struggling of course, with an Omicron wave. But yeah, it was it was weird at first and then I was very lucky.

Emmalee Reed

It's interesting to hear how Thailand was affected, because other photographers I've talked to have been talking about how they were in complete lockdown, like couldn't work at all. And so it's really interesting to hear about how busy you are.

Lauren DeCicca

Yeah, like talking to colleagues in the US and Europe, like, people were turning down work because of safety concerns or people's work were like getting canceled, or they weren't getting any work. And I was busier than I've ever been. Because Thailand was relatively safe. Yeah, yeah, it was really interesting. And then we didn't have- I think we're averaging like one case a day from like June until December of 2020. Or like, not more than like 15 a day in the country. Yeah. And then there was, I remember it was like, right before Christmas, there was an outbreak in a Burmese migrant community south of Bangkok. And I thought the number was wrong because it was 500 found in one day, and the whole country panicked. Meanwhile, we're panicking over 500 a day and one community, meanwhile it's nowhere else in the country. And, you know, I talked to my friends in New York, and they're like, 'Oh, like 500 people in my neighborhood have it right now. Like 500 people in my building.'

Emmalee Reed

That is wild. I remember at one point our university had like 1000 people that were sick, I think it was. That's so interesting to hear.

Lauren DeCicca

Yeah. No, it was like 500 in the country and the country went, like we locked down after that. But we never fully locked down like other like other countries did. There was a while where you couldn't really travel- well, you couldn't travel internationally, like Thailand locked its international borders. And I think that's what kept COVID out. Because there was up until until November of last year, you had to do between 14 and

seven days quarantine with like, three tests before you were allowed to like mix with the population.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that makes sense.

Lauren DeCicca

Yeah, but in terms of lockdown in Bangkok, there was curfew for a while. Anywhere from like 9 or 10 p.m. until like, 4 in the morning. But that was about it. And some, like interprovincial travel restrictions, but it was pretty relaxed if you had a test.

Emmalee Reed

It's interesting.

Lauren DeCicca

I know, we expected to be hit really hard, because Thailand gets more Chinese tourists than a lot of other places in the world and it was Chinese New Year when COVID hit. And somehow Thailand didn't get COVID.

Emmalee Reed

Wow. That's good. So you said that you had been really busier than ever when working during the pandemic. Were these freelance assignments? And what kind of assignments were they?

Lauren DeCicca

So the biggest difference, assignment-wise, pre-pandemic and post-, well, during the pandemic, I was working for a lot of clients before the pandemic, traveling to many different countries, you know, like I am the main stringer for Getty in Thailand and have been for a couple years. But I didn't just work for Getty. When when the pandemic hit, I mean Thailand's a hub for media, and everyone was suddenly stuck in Thailand. So everyone kind of had one client during the pandemic. So I worked almost exclusively for Getty, on assignment. And my editor team at Getty is fantastic for Southeast Asia, and they're very supportive and, you know, checked in with safety issues and everything. And yeah, so I worked for them almost exclusively. And it turned from pandemic coverage to Thai protest coverage. Because the Thai protests kicked off in August of 2020 and basically were on and off until about October of 2021. And when Thailand didn't have COVID, I mean, it was like 70,000 people out on the streets protesting. So it was wild to see that and then hear about people covering COVID in other countries. Meanwhile, I was surrounded by 70,000 people not worried.

Emmalee Reed

That is wild. Interesting. And then did you feel like that your news values shifted at all while you're working during the pandemic?

Lauren DeCicca

What do you what do you mean?

Emmalee Reed

Like in terms of the things that you found newsworthy. Like, did those become different?

Lauren DeCicca

Um, I think a bit. So like I said, before, the pandemic, I wasn't covering Thailand much. And then during the pandemic, I really learned a lot about Thailand, like I've been here, and I've covered stories here. And of course, you find little stories that typically you wouldn't think twice about, but because you can't travel outside of the country, you can't hop over to a neighboring country when a big story there breaks out, you're looking for things here. So I think it did shift and I think I just learned more about the inner workings of Thai culture and kind of just sunk my teeth into what was happening in Thailand instead of looking regionally like I was before.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that makes sense.

Lauren DeCicca

Yeah. Yeah, because of course, people in the US that I speak to- the US is a big country. And it's kind of it's like, almost every state has a story and you could still travel between states during the pandemic. But once you're like locked into a pretty small country, you really have to dig deep, and find out what's happening and what's on people's mind and how it connects to the world on a global scale. So, you know, you find these little stories, you know, like, families that could be anywhere in the world, but they happen to be in Thailand. But still trying to relate everything to what's happening globally.

Emmalee Reed

That makes sense. And then did you feel like your photography changed, visually at all during the pandemic? I know some people had to, like, use longer lenses or keep away, but maybe you didn't as much.

Lauren DeCicca

We didn't really have to do that. But like I said, I was working more. And I was working more consistently on one story, the Thailand story, which I think made my photography better. I don't think I realized how scattered I was beforehand, you know, trying to jump from story to story from country to country and not really digging deep and finding out what's happening. Yeah, I think my photography has benefited from staying in one country and photographing one country and learning one country in the last year. So like, physically, it hasn't changed. You know, no long lenses had to be used. Of course, having to wear PPE, because of course, there were situations where I did get close to COVID in covering like hospitals and crematoriums and stuff like that. And of course, having to-taking pictures was sometimes the easiest part of the assignment, you know, rather than like- There was one point where I was climbing up a mountain in full PPE, chasing bats with the doctor who sequenced the first COVID strain in Thailand. So those were more of the challenges, like things I never expected. I never expected to have to wear like PPE on

most assignments, and like the masks, and it's like 117 degrees here in April and wearing full PPE at that time was just awful.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that was hard, I'm sure. That's really interesting.

Lauren DeCicca

And of course, making sure people were comfortable in a way that I hadn't before. I think like, you know, like, we haven't had COVID here. But it's partially because people in Southeast Asia and people in Thailand have been very careful. I talked about 70,000 people on the street, they were all wearing masks the entire time. Like there were 15 cases a day in the country, most found in quarantine. And everyone was still wearing a mask and hand sanitizing every five seconds. I think people here were more afraid than people in the US, to an extent, or more careful than people in the US to an extent and it just wasn't here. So yeah, there were a lot of differences in the way that I interacted with people, you know, like, I would come up to them, show them all of my masks. Like for portrait assignments, a lot of people didn't want me coming into their homes, which was something different. So I would rent an Airbnb. At some point, offices were closed and there was work from home, so people didn't want to go to the office, they didn't want to travel. So I would rent an Airbnb with a garden, like near their house, so they didn't have to travel very far. So that when we finally got there, they can take their mask off for the portrait if they felt comfortable. And they weren't worried about me being in their personal space.

Emmalee Reed

That is interesting. That's a lot to think about on top of your normal assignments to have to add all of that.

Lauren DeCicca

Yeah. I mean, as a photographer, you're always aware that you're in people's personal space all the time. And you know, like, after so many years of doing it, you're just like, 'Oh, this is just part of the job,' and usually, especially in Southeast Asia, people are so welcoming and then this happens, then people are all of a sudden very concerned about letting you into their home. And in the beginning of the pandemic, when, of course, you know, the US had a major outbreak and New York in particular was going through really bad wave. You know, people would ask me where I was from. When I said the US, they would jump back. Like, I'm not like breathing with Coronavirus. But it took a different skill set to make people comfortable. Like even on a trip that I just went on, we flew from Bangkok to Eastern Thailand, which is one of the poorer parts of the country. And, of course, the first thing they want to do is like, offer us food and everything. And I had an N 95 mask on, so did the writers, so did the translator. And we unfortunately had to just be like, I'm sorry, we can't take our masks off and eat with you. This village had never had a case of COVID. And grandma, who was like 87 years old, hadn't gotten vaccinated. And we were like, the last thing that we- We had taken two tests a day, for like a week, but we were like, 'We can't risk giving COVID to Grandma.' You want the story, but not

at the expense of someone's personal health. And I think that just became very brought to the forefront in the last two years.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, for sure. Were there any assignments that you declined for safety reasons at all? I guess maybe not because of the situation.

Lauren DeCicca

No. Thankfully. COVID didn't really hit Thailand until May of 2021. And at that point, people in the US could get vaccinated, like my age group could get vaccinated. So I flew back to the US to get vaccinated as soon as it looked like Thailand was going to be hit pretty hard. And because I know I work around a lot of people at the time, I flew back, got vaccinated, then came back. And was able to get a booster here. So I haven't been too concerned. My biggest concerns would be giving COVID to someone and also getting COVID myself, I would be, you know, quarantined for two weeks. I can't take photos room for two weeks. So not being able to work or passing COVID on to someone would be my biggest concerns. But no, I didn't turn down any assignments.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that makes sense. Yeah. That's all the questions I had for you. Is there anything else that you want to talk about? Or like, say on the topic of working during the pandemic or your work?

Lauren DeCicca

Well, it'll be interesting seeing how things go moving forward. I have my first international assignment planned for May. So it'll be really interesting to see. I'm going to cover the the election in the Philippines. Which, yeah, it should be really interesting. It should be- Well, it should be an interesting time in the Philippines. I'm trying to brush up more and more, following my colleagues advice. But yeah, it should be interesting, but it's definitely changed the entire way that I work. Even even though we weren't really hit by COVID, it's just completely changed. I don't see a time in the future where I will go back to bouncing around the region as frequently as I was before. One of the best things I think, to come out of the pandemic for photographers is that editors have had to find photographers in different places, new photographers that they didn't know before. So before, when, you know, people were sending me to Nepal or Cambodia or Malaysia, like I absolutely loved it, and I would 100% do it again. But it's been amazing to see some local photographers get the recognition and the assignments that they deserve because they've been covering these places, their communities, for years and not having to compete with people who fly in for assignments has been amazing to see and I hope that really, days after international travel comes back, because there should be more diversity in photography. So I think that's a bright side of the pandemic. It's brought a lot of new talent to the photojournalism world.

Emmalee Reed

I could definitely see that.

Lauren DeCicca

Yeah. And I think it's also, in a way brought people closer, you know, we used to rely on meeting in person so much. And now, I feel like communities have formed. You know, women photograph has done some mini projects, like the journal where they put people in different countries, who didn't know each other, together to work on COVID projects. And we would just meet up weekly and discuss our time. It's been really nice to be able to connect to people, virtually, especially as someone on the other side of the world, it's made me feel a little bit closer to everyone else.

Emmalee Reed

It's just kind of opened up a new way of communication.

Lauren DeCicca

Yeah, yeah, it has. And another interesting project I worked on. So like I said, I photographed people who were having economic struggles during the pandemic. And I worked with ART WORKS Projects in Chicago. They typically do in person exhibitions, and artist talks about documentary projects that they fund. And for my project that I worked on with my friend who's a writer and producer, Rin, here in Thailand. They did an online exhibition and an online artist talk, which I thought was really nice. And it's just so much more accessible, because again, as someone who's been based in Southeast Asia for the last like nine years, I very rarely get to see exhibitions and go to artist talks. But I feel like it's really been accommodating for people, whether you're on the other side of the world, or whether you just don't feel like leaving your house that night, like it's been a really great way to include more people in the photojournalism community. And workshops as well. You know, like the Eddie Adams workshop, I've had friends who were able to attend the Eddie Adams workshop last year, who wouldn't have been able to before. Like friends who live internationally. The expense to get there is too much for some people. And it's been amazing that this has opened up to them. So not just my personal experience, but like my view of what the pandemic has done in a good sense for photojournalism. It's of course made things harder, but I think it's hopefully made us all a little bit better as well.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, I agree. I think there's definitely a lot more community. Ok cool. Thank you so much for talking with me.

5. Rosem Morton**Emmalee Reed**

Okay, so I just have a few questions just about your work, as you know. Can you describe the photo work you're doing before the pandemic began?

Rosem Morton

I do a lot of assignment work. So like daily work around Baltimore, and a couple of areas in driving distance to Baltimore. And I do a lot of personal projects. So I guess I would describe that as like documentary photography work. I've done a couple of projects on

health, culture. Like I've covered Filipino culture, Filipino indigenous groups in the Philippines. I've covered like health: home births in Michigan. And then I've also like, done a larger personal project on myself covering, I guess, trauma and life after trauma.

Emmalee Reed

Cool. So your assignment work, was that mostly freelance?

Rosem Morton

Mhm.

Emmalee Reed

Cool. And then what do you feel is like the primary purpose of your work? Just a big question.

Rosem Morton

That's a big question. I have not been asked that in so long, so hold on. I think the primary purpose of my work is to connect with people, I think, on an individual level. I love connecting with other people and learning their stories. And I hope that the work itself, the body of work itself, connects with a greater audience so that we, as a society, will see a lot of similarities with each other and find empathy in all of our diverse experiences.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that makes sense. Do you think that your purpose changed at all during the pandemic, or has just been like the same mostly throughout your career?

Rosem Morton

I guess it kind of solidified what kind of work I was doing, in some ways. I didn't expect I was going to do more kind of autobiographical or personal work. I guess it is established that I was willing to photograph myself or other people for the story. So whatever story speaks to me, that I feel is worth pursuing, I will kind of do whatever medium or whatever way to really share that story. I will just utilize photography in that way.

Emmalee Reed

So the pandemic just, like, opened your eyes to more like personal expressive work in addition to like, your documentary stuff?

Rosem Morton

Yes.

Emmalee Reed

Okay, cool. And then can you tell me like how you started photographing the pandemic, and like what brought you into, I guess, the project? The Donning and Doffing project.

Rosem Morton

So my background is in nursing. I've been a nurse for like nine and a half years. So when the pandemic hit, I knew that I was uniquely positioned to tell the stories and also be working in the field, to really have this on the ground knowledge. I wasn't quite sure in the beginning what kind of stories I was going to do. But because journalists were heavily censored and access was really limited, it kind of became natural for me to just transition a lot of work on myself, on what's happening as a frontline health care worker. And at the time, my partner also worked in the hospital. So he was an intensive care nurse. So I feel like both of us going through this experience offers a unique point of view, to really offer public understanding on what it's like during the early days of the pandemic, when there were so many unknowns. So that kind of started that project. Yeah, and then the other work, and then I kind of really branched off from there where I did a lot of work on healthcare workers. So I photographed different health care workers in my hospital as they reflect on their hardest moments. I've photographed Filipino healthcare workers in New York, kind of reflecting on what that experience is like when the the first surge in New York happened. And then it also brought me to doing another project on the Filipino nurses specifically, when I learned that our community was dying disproportionately during the pandemic, so 4% of nurses in the US are Filipino, but during the early days, I believe about 35% was the death rate. I believe now it's around 24, I think 24% of Filipino nurses have died out of the US number of nurses. So like, I think the pandemic really just showed me, you know, what stories I'm really passionate about telling. And, and I was, you know, able to, to pursue it.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah. Had you done a lot of insider health care centered work before that?

Rosem Morton

Um, no, not really. No, I have not. I just knew I was interested in health, but I have not really pursued work on with health care workers. Yeah.

Emmalee Reed

What was it like to balance your actual nursing work with your photo work? I feel like that would have been super all-encompassing?

Rosem Morton

I think it was a lot. I think on on one end, it was really fulfilling, like, I knew I was doing, I was in two careers that were really helpful to society during this time. So that kind of fueled a lot of energy. But then at the same time, like it was a lot to carry, two really heavy careers at the same time. So yeah, I think it's -- I mean, I definitely am feeling the effects of working so much during during this time, and I definitely am not glorifying overworking at all. But it happens, because it's like a perfect distraction for this time to like, continue to contribute what you can. Yeah.

Emmalee Reed

That makes sense. After you kind of did your your personal project and then branched off into other like health care centered stories, was that work that you pitched to publications? Or was it still really personal like, private work, if that makes sense?

Rosem Morton

I guess most of the stuff I do is like personal projects, where I try to get grant funding for it. So I get a lot of creative control and like just time to really slow down and be able to do the work. I think the only assignment work. And then I then I later on published at work, I think the only assignment work that I had was really, when I photographed, I guess there's two of them. One is when I photographed healthcare workers on their worst days in the hospital, and this was early March of the pandemic, and I think I realized how hard it was to kind of have other people working on a project I was passionate about, like, just compromising some of your vision with other people was kind of harder. So I think I was really fortunate when I did see the story with New York frontline health care workers. I got a lot of creative power there, which was something I really made sure I would have when I pursue certain stories because I think I just learned from that experience that like I have a lot of healthcare knowledge and I can see with a certain perspective what I can add to the story. And that I guess I should trust that that vision and I think it worked out.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that makes sense. I definitely get that like wanting to have your own vision. Did you notice any visual change in your photographs during the dynamic, like as a result of access things or just wanting keep your space at all?

Rosem Morton

Um, there was definitely visual changes. When I did my personal project, "Donning and Doffing" specifically, like that project started in color. It started in color. I took photos inside the hospital. And then the second phase of that project was I couldn't take photos in the in the hospital anymore. So I kind of pivoted to home life and how does coping work and what is the mental health toll and all of those other aspects? And I think in pursuing that work, black and white really kind of resonated with me. And I felt that was an artistic choice also, because of how stressed out I was. So that whole project essentially had I transitioned it to, to black and white. So I think that photographically was a change for that project. I did other projects where I learned about the Filipino nursing diaspora. And also, what's happening in the present, I wanted to connect it to the past. So like, for the first time, I tried to look for archival images and infuse archival images to that project, which I haven't done. So I think. Yeah, I definitely experimented a lot more to see what would translate better for for audiences again.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that makes sense. I think that's all the questions I have for you. Thank you, it's been really helpful. Is there anything else you just wanted to say on the topic of your work during the pandemic?

Rosem Morton

I don't really have anything, but if anything comes up, if you're doing your stuff and want to ask me some more questions, you're definitely welcome to.

6. Colton Rothwell

Emmalee Reed

I guess we can get started. I have eight questions. Okay. Can you describe the photo work you were doing before the pandemic started?

Colton Rothwell

Yeah. I would say that my photo work before the pandemic was in transition a little bit. Um, I was doing a lot of traditional photojournalism work through school. Talking to a lot of people, doing a lot of portraits, going out and about. I was sort of transitioning into more of a fine art focused practice and then the pandemic happened. And of course, we were stuck at home. In a way, it forced me to reinvent myself. The confines I think really helped my creativity. Having like, limitations. Um, yeah.

Emmalee Reed

Thank you. That's helpful. The work that you did during COVID was more of a personal experience-based project, right?

Colton Rothwell

Mm hmm.

Emmalee Reed

What pushed you to do that sort of work over more newsy work?

Colton Rothwell

Yeah, I think for one, I'm very interested in photography, as a document, and thinking about it as a way of recording history. Um, and I've been really inspired by a lot of previous career photographers work, specifically Nan Goldin, who documented intimate portraits of herself and her friends, before AIDS. So with all of that in mind, I just felt that it was important for me to document what was around me, in a way, I think, to help me make sense of what was going on. But also, I felt this call to document and record what the experience was, like, firsthand. And I think I like working personally, because it frees me of a lot of the ethical guidelines of journalism. It's like, these are people that I know. I can work a little bit differently. I can focus more on aesthetics. Yeah.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that makes sense. You talked about a call to document your surroundings. Did you ever feel that when you're working pre-pandemic, or did that just come with this work recently?

Colton Rothwell

Um, I definitely didn't feel it as much before the pandemic, because- it's hard to remember what life was like before the pandemic and my work. It's been a while. Sorry, can you repeat the question?

Emmalee Reed

It's okay. Did you feel in your previous work that same call to document or did that just come with your pandemic work?

Colton Rothwell

I think it came a lot more with the pandemic work because of the historical circumstances, it was something none of us had ever experienced before. And I feel like before the pandemic, there was just so much out there, and so much going on, that it was almost overwhelming. And like I said, when my process and what I was able to do is constrained, I think it helped my creativity, focus and, and make use of what I had. So I don't think the call to document was as strong because I didn't feel the weight of the circumstances in which I was living, you know?

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that makes sense. You kind of touched on this already, but did you notice any, like, visual change in your work? Like was the style in which you're photographing different pre-pandemic compared to your pandemic work?

Colton Rothwell

Yeah. So, pre-pandemic, I was making a lot of work on medium format film, which is the majority of my process still. The body of work I made for CPOY and for this project was completely different. I'd never done anything like it before. And it was mostly because I had a bunch of strobes with me in my house. And that was something I was very excited about and wanted to try. And I think it just made me really think about my process about spaces differently. Like being able to kind of open a whole world of possibilities, because it's like, I don't have to wait for natural light. And I was able, to just like explore my process in a new way that was really neat. So it was completely different. And I didn't know how to feel about it. But it's really exciting.

Emmalee Reed

Have you carried any of that same process into your more recent work? Like, has that stuck with you?

Colton Rothwell

Yes, and no. I definitely think- So most of the images in that series were shot at night. And I think I've learned from that experience that I like shooting at night, because it allows me to control the light in the situation a lot better. And I definitely have taken some of this, some of these ideas and processes into my current work. But it was mostly kind of a one time thing. I've kind of gone back to the way I was shooting before a little bit. I don't know why that is. I think because I'm now going out and I'm seeing people and experiencing the world again. I don't feel this need as much. I don't feel as confined.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that's interesting. It sounds like the work you produce is very much influenced by the situation you're in and the materials at hand. Is that accurate?

Colton Rothwell

Exactly. Yeah, it was very much. 'This is what I have. This is what's around me.' And one, I need to pass the time to keep myself sane, but also, I feel like, it's very historical. In my mind, it was like, I want to show what it was like to be a college student during this time in Montana, in the United States, in the world. Yeah.

Emmalee Reed

I know that that story is important. But why do you feel that it is important to show that experience? Because you said it's important to show your expenses as a college student in Montana during the pandemic, but why?

Colton Rothwell

Like, why is why is it important to share?

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, just to show your experience.

Colton Rothwell

Hmm, that's a good question. I think, of course, when looking at artwork, there's a level of comfort. I think the work is obviously very relatable to a lot of people. And they could find comfort in that for sure. I think just generally, I mean, the majority of that body of work is about relationships. And I think that's something a lot of people experienced in the pandemic was changing relationships, tension on relationships, maybe relationships getting stronger. And that fluidity, I think, is really important to share, that people can see in my work, and relate to and feel comfort in. From a historical standpoint, I feel like my work is important. It's not breaking news. It definitely has more of an aesthetic sensibility. But I'm imagining, like looking back on this work in like 30 years, it'll be really intriguing. And that's something I love about photography is the way it ages. And how time is so influential on the medium and how our images, their meanings, completely change as time passes. So I think it's important in a comfort way now. Also just showing a different interpretive way to look at the pandemic, I think is really helpful. And I think that's why an artistic photography practice is just as important as a photojournalism one. But I also think the meaning has yet to reveal itself.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah for sure. That's interesting. I really appreciate that. That's all the questions I had for you. Do you have anything else you want to share? Just like on the topic of your work or the pandemic or anything?

Colton Rothwell

Um not really. I'm ready for it to be over.

7. Elisabetta Zavoli**Emmalee Reed**

Can you describe like the photo work you were doing before the pandemic began?

Elisabetta Zavoli

Okay. Before the pandemic was working as a photojournalist and documentary photographer. So basically, I was working mostly on assignments, and on long term personal projects. And I've been working abroad, out of Italy for 10 years, for four years in, in Algeria, and six years in Indonesia. And in both countries, I used to work, as I said, has a photojournalist and documentary photographers for international media outlets. And I came back to live in Italy at the end of 2018. So just before the pandemic started.

Emmalee Reed

So was that mostly like freelance work?

Elisabetta Zavoli

Yeah, absolutely. Totally freelance.

Emmalee Reed

Cool. And then what do you feel like is the primary purpose of your work?

Elisabetta Zavoli

Okay, so, this project in particular, or in general, my work?

Emmalee Reed

Just in general.

Elisabetta Zavoli

Oh, in general, okay. So, basically, I'm working in a journalism capacity. Usually I work on topics, because I do care a lot on topics regarding the environment, and the relationship between man and environment, especially on issues dealing with the local communities. But of course, I accept assignments also on specific other topics that can be social. Another area of interest for me is gender issues. But yes, most of my work is in the area of photojournalism and documentary photography, in the environment, dealing with the environment. That was before the COVID of course. I also started some collaborations with musicians, artistic collaboration, but always in the area of dealing with environmental issues. So for example, in 2019, I have won an artistic residency in Manaus, in Amazonia. Especially the dedicated to artists in different media, using different medium, to produce artistic projects inspired by the environment, the science behind the forestry or whatever. And so I was, let's say, starting to collaborate with this musician on an artistic projects about plants. And this is the only artistic project that I was doing before this COVID-19. And I think that "In Darkness You Find Colors" is something in between my journalistic approach and the artistic expression through the visuals.

Emmalee Reed

Why do you think you ended up taking a more artistic, expensive approach to this project compared to your other work?

Elisabetta Zavoli

You mean "In Darkness You Find Colors?"

Emmalee Reed

Yeah.

Elisabetta Zavoli

Okay, actually, this project was not born especially to start doing something on the COVID lockdown. At the beginning it was born more like a way to play and to distract my sons from being too much overwhelmed or too much afraid of the situation. See, so, we used to live in the countryside, we live in the countryside, we had access to a huge garden in the rural area. So, the nature was all around us. And we found that this time spent in nature really healing for our souls and for the situation itself. So, this project was really born as a game, as a play through photography among us three, and then by doing it and the ideas came out. And I realized that by re-enacting and by staging the dreams and situations that can convey certain feelings, it was a way really to going through these deep emotions in a way that is more acceptable for the young, for my sons, for the kids. And so, I say that this project is like in between the journalistic approach and the artistic one because, of course, it is related to the COVID pandemic and to this special situation that everyone in the world was living. So, the lock down, the force of solitude, the force of the stay away from other human beings. So, this project is deeply rooted in this experience. But the way in which we, me and my sons because I tell about this project as a participatory project, the way we shot it, it was really like working inside our dreams. We could put in the picture whatever we wanted, whatever connected with our inner life and with our imaginations, also suggested by stories that we read in books or by something that triggered emotions. In this way it was like to have a blank canvas, because night is a blank canvas and our own imaginations and stories connected with our inner world.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, that makes sense. That's really interesting. So, what was the process like coming up with those different scenes? How did you come up with the idea?

Elisabetta Zavoli

It was really like, we didn't plan anything from the beginning to the end. I mean, the very last picture we shot, it wasn't planned two months before, we just keep. Okay, the process was like this. We started to prepare the setting around late afternoon, a few hours before sunset, and then we went outside in the garden in the place we have chosen at sunset, then set the lights and start shooting. And this was the process of everyday, everyday routine became this one. For the two months and the half of the strict lockdown in Italy. The first one, the first lockdown was really strict in Italy, nobody can go outside their home. For example, we usually buy groceries online, and they deliver to us because it was really hard. Yeah, strict. And so we started, for example, with the [unintelligible]. I remember the first picture we shot was something about aliens or something outside the world coming and posing threats to the family. Because of course, was the first feeling,

the first approach to the idea of this COVID going around from nowhere and hitting hard the people. And then day by day, doing by doing this setup, new ideas came to our mind. But really, in a free way, like a free flow. For example, the editing that now you can see of this project on my website is not the chronological. It's a different editing from the chronological shootings. So for example, some pictures that became the first pictures of the editing, maybe were shot a little later, compared to others. So really, ideas came out by doing, by something that we also say to each other, or something we saw somewhere in the books we have read in the past, and maybe have stories about. I don't know, fairy tales or whatever. There are a lot of hints coming from our background in terms of stories.

Emmalee Reed

That's really interesting. It sounds like a really fun process.

Elisabetta Zavoli

If I show you the notebook I used to sketch the- because sometimes I mean, it's really easier if you have an idea to sketch it before doing the setting. It's kind of you know, it's a little bit similar to the process of making a movie, being a director of the movie, you know, you sketch what the feeling, the idea you have in your mind. So based on this sketch, you can search for the setting for the best location for the tools that you need or clothes, are really things that you needed to put in the set. And also especially for the lighting that was mostly my partner, for example for them, dressing up and the tool set. My sons were really helpful. I mean, they had a lot of ideas. And I took a care mostly of the lighting of the set. And we put all together and we discuss and they play. They play the part of the character.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah. Do you think that this project really helped you guys get through the pandemic? Or the lockdown?

Elisabetta Zavoli

I think so. I think so. First of all, it's a way of distracting themselves from the daily news, because the daily news were very terrible at the time. And so having this moment in which they really could go somewhere else, it was very important. And the second reason is that they could play also the darker part of themselves. For example, the fear, the monster. And by playing this dark part, they get used to accept it as something that in life, you could meet the the dark part of yourself or the dark part of the world in any any time of your life. And there's no solution. I mean, when you meet the the evil, when you meet the darker part, there's no a simple way to escape it. There's no simple way to turn around it. The only kind of solution that I hope they learned from this process is to always feel that they have connection with the with the people they love. And through this connection, they can pass the dark moment.

Emmalee Reed

Yeah, I'm sure that's really valuable. That makes sense. And then during this time, did you do any other photo work or freelance work? Or was it just focusing on this project?

Elisabetta Zavoli

Sorry, I didn't I couldn't understand the question.

Emmalee Reed

Um, during this part of lockdown, did you do any other photo work besides this? Or was this your main focus?

Elisabetta Zavoli

During the two months and the house of lockdown? I couldn't go out. I mean, the problem of the period was that our country had a strict regulation for that period, for the quarantine, for the lockdown. So nobody can leave the home. aside the people with the working permit. So in order to go out from home and work on reporting on something else, I should have an assignment. I should have a magazine or someone asking me to go there and to document the situation. But it was very hard and almost impossible to find assignments, to receive assignments, because the situation was very serious. And there were just a bunch of photographers working on assignments for international media in Italy and they shot all the topic for two months and a half. And since my home residence is in a small town, I used to commute between my hometown and Milan or Rome, Venice, the big cities where I receive assignments. But under this situation, magazines gave assignments just to very few photographers already based in in those big cities to avoid the people moving up and down Italy.

Emmalee Reed

Okay, yeah, I understand

Elisabetta Zavoli

So I was completely at home and cannot working on anything.

Emmalee Reed

I think that's all the questions I had for you. Is there anything else you want to talk about on the topic of your work during the pandemic?

Elisabetta Zavoli

During those two months and a half, no. This project, "And In Darkness You Find Colors," was the only project I did but as I said before came out the project a whole body of work just at the very end. I remember that the first thing I thought when the lockdown started was, 'Okay I will change my job,' because I couldn't work. I mean if the situation will go like this for many months, what can I do? I mean and I thought about you know, finding a different job but luckily the lockdown ended in two months and a half and yeah, this project was really purely- For me, as well, it was a surprise because it was really enjoying photography at the most like it was many years that I couldn't do something just for touching my soul like in this project. Because you know when you are under assignment or when you are reporting on a long term project, you are just very very focused on your topic, very focused and very engaged, also you feel like a little bit of pressure from magazines. Its job yeah. This project was kind of you know, expanding

your soul with the will thanks to photography and really doing something from connecting with with your soul and just doing it because you want to do it without any time pressure, without any pressure of any kind. And it was like a journey. Yeah, was like just picking up your backpack and just go. And just at the end that you you can see that you have actually walked on on a track. It was not like just going around like this, but you walk a street.

Appendix: Weekly Field Notes

1/16-1/22

Weekly highlights: what events occurred? how did you progress?

This week was the first week of my project. I did most of my work Monday and Tuesday because I was in the newsroom training the rest of the week.

I set up a Notion page for my project, which will be how I keep myself organized. I added my weekly schedule, proposal and calendar to the page as well as created other pages to track my interview progress and weekly reflections.

I also did lots of brainstorming and thought about my goal for the book, which is to illustrate diversity of COVID experience and interpretation through the lenses of contest photographers worldwide. I also want the book to have effective interplay of photos and good rhythm, which I will keep in mind during the editing process.

I determined what the important components for the book will be:

- intro text
- photos w captions + copy blocks
- quotes from photographers + contest organizers

I made folders on my hard drive to organize the images and acquired the winning CPOY photos.

Work issues: was there anything that stood out? anything tough you'd like to discuss?

At the beginning of this week I was pretty anxious just about starting the project. It just feels big and like I am already behind. Once I remember the leeway I built into my schedule I feel better.

I wrote a list of questions/thoughts I wanted to ask/address in this weekly reflection:

- How do I go about getting permissions from the photographers to use their photos? Should I? I think we said I technically wouldn't need to because they agreed to CPOY/POY related publication, but I feel like it would be strange to have your photos pop up in a book without your knowledge. Particularly a concern for professional photographers with agents or who work for places that own the photos.
- I need to figure out how to print the book. My timeline would align with the CPOY awards if it is the same day Jackie was considering last time we discussed it (Friday, April 8).
- Should I mention the book to the people I interview?
- What if the photographers don't like the edit? Who am I to decide that an award-winning photograph doesn't belong in the book. I can't include everything though.

Research progress

I organized my list of people to interview and wrote an email template for reaching out.

Goals for the upcoming week

- Email potential interviewees
- Make an initial edit of the CPOY photos
- Acquire POY photos and make contact with the POY Asia and POY Latam contest organizers

1/23-1/29

Weekly highlights: what events occurred? how did you progress?

This week I got in touch with Lynden (with Jackie's help) and he said I had permission from POY and POY Asia to use their photos in the book, which is a big success. He said he is still working on talking to POY Latam for access. Getting permission from the other competitions was my biggest source of worry, so I appreciate his help.

I marked selects in the CPOY winners.

I created design standards for the book, which I have attached to this email. I am open to feedback on those. I know that serif fonts are easier to read for large blocks of text like in body copy, but I wanted to keep the design in line with how POY/CPOY/POYAsia/POYLatam are presented, which is mostly in sans serif fonts.

I studied the MPW Cuba book and made notes on book elements and structure to include (POY history section, text about the project)

I took notes on book publishing/printing avenues, which are also attached to this email.

Work issues: was there anything that stood out? anything tough you'd like to discuss?

The only issue is that I am a little behind on the book editing. Lynden said I will receive an invitation from Pictet to access the POY and POY Asia images, but it hasn't come yet. And still waiting on permission from POY Latam. I will follow up next week with Lynden. I think it will be okay because I have blocks of days I don't have any responsibilities that I can use to edit. I am just not really on track with my weekly plan, but I think that is okay, especially if I can edit next week.

Research progress

I sent out emails requesting interviews and scheduled one.

Goals for the upcoming week Continue scheduling interviews.

I am waiting on photo access so other goals are contingent on photo acquisition progress:

- If I receive photos:
 - Make a book edit
- If I do not receive photos:
 - Determine size, other specs for book
 - Write text for book including section on POY history, about this project + introduction
 - Make sample page layouts to build off

1/30-2/5

Weekly highlights: what events occurred? how did you progress?

I had a good week and I feel like I made lots of progress (or at least more tangible progress). On Monday I printed out all of the photos and contact sheets that I prepped over the weekend and began editing. Making cuts went quicker than I thought and now I am working on sequencing. It was really fun to just sit at home and edit. I sorted the photos/stories into rough groups by theme and am using those to help sequence. The themes I found included medicine/hospitals, isolation, death and adaptation. There were a few photos/stories that didn't fit into those themes. I am not organizing by theme but having them identified is useful. I think that a good photo edit should be like a story with a beginning, climax and resolution (or something like a resolution).

It starts off newsy/intense/to the point (introduces us to the topic), picks up pace/desperation/life/interpretive-ness in the middle (shows how the pandemic is affecting people in news + expressive ways) and ends on a note that is calmer and signals that we are still working through the pandemic. I think with the variety of photos included, the edit can be read straight through like this and also still work if someone just starts right in the middle.

I have also been thinking a lot about the third effect, which I discussed in meetings and my proposal and also Barthes' idea of studium and punctum. The story packages, especially, have a significance all together but also one image that stands out and appears to hold more meaning than the others, I think. It's interesting to think about. Sometimes, I'd like to treat that image from the story as a single. Is that okay? The caption would say something like "Image from Sally Jones's story, 'Love in the time of COVID', Gold in CPOY."

I planned on sending a digital version of my draft sequence in this email but I haven't been home much because I have been staying with my friend downtown because of the snow. I will send my first sequence draft as soon as I have it compiled.

I also got access to all of the hi-res photos I needed thanks to Lynden. He said he is still working on talking to POY Latam, but I have access to their Pictor already if they say yes and it should be easy to swap out their photos if they say no.

Work issues: was there anything that stood out? anything tough you'd like to discuss?

I was worried for a bit Tuesday because in my head I had decided I needed to finish the edit that day. I looked back at my semester schedule, though, and I am on track and still have next week to finish editing. So that issue is solved.

Research progress

This was a good research week, too. I scheduled two more interviews and completed one with Colton Rothwell, who won in CPOY. He was really nice to talk to and had interesting answers to the questions. He answered most of the questions I had in his answer to the first one, so I sort of skipped around to avoid re-asking a question. Is that okay? The interviews are supposed to be semi-structured but I am not sure how semi is okay, if that makes sense.

One of the people I wanted to interview just sent me a link to an article they thought would be helpful when I emailed them. I imagine this will happen a few times. I might follow up to ask again about an interview or reach out to someone new.

Goals for the upcoming week

- Finish scheduled interviews + schedule more
- Complete edit draft + send for review

2/6-2/12

Weekly highlights: what events occurred? how did you progress?

I finished the first draft of the photo edit + sequence and sent it via WeTransfer on Thursday morning for you to look at on your own time.

Work issues: was there anything that stood out? anything tough you'd like to discuss?

No notes here this week except that I am not certain about the beginning of the photo edit. It doesn't seem quite right yet. I like the end.

Research progress

I completed two more interviews.

Goals for the upcoming week

- Schedule more interviews
- Transcribe finished interviews
- Talk through photo edit

2/13-2/19

Weekly highlights: what events occurred? how did you progress?

This week I continued work on my edit. Jackie and I met on Zoom on Tuesday to go over my initial edit which was helpful. We talked about editing by content and not just visuals, which I had trouble with in the first edit. I am sorting the photos and packages into “buckets” by subject again and going to try again. I will keep working on that over the weekend.

Work issues: was there anything that stood out? anything tough you'd like to discuss?

I feel a little behind now that my first edit didn't quite work out the way I wanted (as in, make sense to anyone but myself 😞). But it was a rough draft for a reason and going through that initial process of sorting and thinking about the photos should make the second draft better.

Research progress

I contacted more people for interviews.

Goals for the upcoming week

- schedule more interviews
- meet with Jackie and Brian to go over edit in person
- finish photo edit by the end of the week

2/20-2/26

Weekly highlights: what events occurred? how did you progress?

Meet with Brian and Jackie to go over the edit. Now I have a better idea of the structure of it. Most of that detail I put in my mid-week update.

I planned on working on my edit more on Sunday. I will still do that I think because I don't think I have much to do at home to help. But I am a tad worried the photos will make me sad.

Work issues: was there anything that stood out? anything tough you'd like to discuss? No issues really except that I was waiting until I finished the edit to ask permission from the photographers and now several of them are in Ukraine. I don't think they have time to respond to me.

Research progress I scheduled two more interviews for next week.

Goals for the upcoming week

- Do the scheduled interviews
- Schedule more interviews
- Make new edit - it may come later than I planned

2/27-3/5

This week's update is pretty lackluster. I ended up needing to be more involved with the funeral planning than I thought and didn't have time to work on the book. I have this weekend free and plan on finishing another edit draft and I hope to get that done by Monday so I can send it for review (or show in person?). I will actually do it this time - I know I have been saying I will send a new draft for a week or so (sorry).

Research progress

I did complete two interviews! I talked to Lauren DeCicca in Thailand and Amit Chakravarty in India. They were pretty interesting. I have now finished five interviews.

Goals for the upcoming week

- schedule remaining interviews
- finish edit + review
- send draft permission email for review

3/6-3/12

I am back in the saddle this week and its been a busy one with much to do still. I plan on continuing work over the weekend and will send another email Saturday or Sunday with more progress notes and things to look at. Lynden, I am adding you to this email so you have a copy of my most recent edit and an update on the book progress. I'll also send you the new edit I make this weekend.

Weekly highlights: what events occurred? how did you progress?

This week I finished the second and third drafts of my edit. I met with Berkley on Tuesday, which I updated you all on in an email Tuesday night.

Main takeaways from that meeting include:

- Need to decide book specs/size/shape (will influence design)
- Need title
- Think about giving photos some space/breathing room

After that meeting I made new edit, which I am including again here for convenience. I started on laying out the book in InDesign per Jackie's advice on Wednesday.

I met with Jackie on Thursday night. We talked about how I needed to go back to the photo edit again and make sure the pairings make sense. My first edit was more visuals-driven and the more recent edits are content-driven; I need to make an edit that is strong visually and thematically.

She agreed I need to decide on a book format before I begin designing. I spent time in the J Library today looking at other photo books for inspiration and am going to think more about size/orientation tonight.

Work issues: was there anything that stood out? anything tough you'd like to discuss?

I feel like I have been spinning my wheels the past few weeks with the photo edit. I re-printed all the images (bigger this time) and am going to try again tonight with a new edit. I feel bad that I am behind but I think it will be okay if I make solid progress this weekend. I will send a new edit for review Saturday (I'll make a quick draft book layout with the edit so that it is easier to read than the PDFs I've been sending).

Research progress

I was focused on the book and did not make any research progress this week. Jackie and I talked about getting started on the components of my final project package (abstract, acknowledgements, analysis, dedication, evaluation, field notes, intro) when we met Thursday. I plan on starting on those Sunday.

Goals for the upcoming week

- Finish new edit over weekend + send for review
- Look @ more photo books + decide size/orientation of book
- Brainstorm title
- Schedule final interviews
- Transcribe + annotate completed interviews

3/13-3/19

Weekly highlights: what events occurred? how did you progress?

Last weekend was really productive. I spent around 12 hours I think working on the layout of the book. It is far from final, but working in InDesign was really helpful in honing the edit and structure. I separated the book into broad sections, which helped with clarity.

I also decided on the dimensions/format of the book and thought a lot about the purpose of the book/what my goals are with it.

Work issues: was there anything that stood out? anything tough you'd like to discuss?

I need to work more on the balance of contests and expression/news in the book. I was hoping to add in other contests' expression winners to fix both problems, but I have used almost all of the other contests' expression photos/projects, so would need to add more POY or cut some news to

balance it. I can also think about expanding some of the expression singles I included into spreads, which might help.

Research progress

I completed one interview (Shafkat Anowar) and am in the process of scheduling two more for next week.

I wrote drafts of my abstract, dedication and acknowledgements. I put these in the shared OneDrive folder for Jackie to look at when she gets the chance. I formatted the weekly memos I have already sent and will continue adding those as I write them.

Goals for the upcoming week

- Finish interviews
- Start drafting/outlining research analysis
- Meet with Jackie (others are also welcome) to review the book
- Draft intro text for the book that gives an overview of the contests and explains the purpose of the book

3/20-3/26

Weekly highlights: what events occurred? how did you progress?

This week I met with Jackie and Lynden to go through my book draft. We talked about adding section titles, making the opening sequence shorter and changing some of the photo choices/sequence to make them more impactful. I also am close to finishing the intro text for the book - I just need to figure out how to start it.

Work issues: was there anything that stood out? anything tough you'd like to discuss?

No work issues or things to note on that front this week.

Research progress

I interviewed Eitan Amramovich (POY Latam) and sent questions to Karim Mottaghi (POY Asia), who needed time to translate his thoughts into English.

I transcribed and annotated the interviews I have so far.

I finished my dedication and acknowledgements and edited my abstract to include the book. I also sent my introduction to Jackie and she gave some edits for me to make.

Goals for the upcoming week

- Finish a draft of the research analysis
- Make edits to research introduction
- Finish book intro text
- Make edits to the book and finish another draft

3/27-4/2

Weekly highlights: what events occurred? how did you progress?

I worked primarily on my research this week. Book-wise, I am adding sections and have thought of the titles of all but one section. Working in more distinct sections will help with the structure I think.

Work issues: was there anything that stood out? anything tough you'd like to discuss?

I planned on working on the book more this week, but focused on the research writing. Neeta Satam also called me and said that I should attend the Northern Short Course's virtual conference (happening now), so that is changed my weekly schedule. It has been interesting so far. She says hi.

I need to get moving on the book to have it printed in time for the CPOY awards April 22. I can have a new draft done by Tuesday I think.

Research progress

I wrote the first draft of my analysis and went through two rounds of edits with Jackie (I am putting a revised analysis in the OneDrive). It's nearly done! I also worked on the introduction and am close to finishing that.

Goals for the upcoming week

- Make + send revised book draft
- Finish introduction
- Write evaluation

4/3-4/9

Weekly highlights: what events occurred? how did you progress?

I finished designing a draft of the book and met with Jackie and Lynden, which was really helpful. We talked about editing the cover, swapping out a photo or two, fleshing out the design

more and changing the fonts. It was a really helpful meeting and now I am working on the design, which shouldn't take much longer.

Work issues: was there anything that stood out? anything tough you'd like to discuss?

No work issues!

Research progress

I made edits to my analysis, finished the introduction and wrote keywords.

Goals for the upcoming week

- Finish fully-designed book draft (will send Saturday or Sunday)
- Write evaluation

4/10-4/16

Weekly highlights: what events occurred? how did you progress?

It was a dramatic project finish this week. I finished a marathon designing session Sunday and sent my book draft for review. I made frantic edits after getting notes from Lynden and Jackie and sent the book print through Lulu.com on Wednesday. Their website says the book copies should be delivered to my apartment next Tuesday. Exciting!

Work issues: was there anything that stood out? anything tough you'd like to discuss?

No notes.

Research progress

I wrote my evaluation and sent it to Jackie, which completes my writing. I am compiling my project report doc now.

Goals for the upcoming week

- Finish project report compiling + send
- Schedule defense
- Get book in the mail
- Put book on a pedestal @ CPOY/POY awards

Appendix: References

- Bell, J., & Reed, R. (n.d.). *CPOY history*. CPOY. <https://cpoy.org/history>.
- Bogle, E. (2020, April 17). *Isolation diary: Photographers document their experience with COVID-19*. NPR.
<https://www.npr.org/sections/pictureshow/2020/04/17/834245538/isolation-diary-photographers-document-their-experience-with-covid-19>.
- Brennen, B. S. (2013). *Qualitative Research Methods for Media Studies* (pp. 26-58). Routledge.
- CPOY (n.d.). *CPOY 75 interpretive eye*. CPOY. <https://cpoy.org/winners-gallery/cpoy-75-winners/cpoy-75-interpretive-eye>
- Friday, J. (2000). Demonic curiosity and the aesthetics of documentary photography. *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 40(3), 356-375.
https://is.muni.cz/el/phil/podzim2015/ESB067/um/59376525/Jonathan_Friday_Demonic_Cuciosity_and_the_Aesthetics_of_Documentary_Photography.pdf.
- Greenwood, K., & Smith, Z. C. (2009). Conventionalization of feature photography. *Journalism Practice*, 3(2), 140-161. Routledge.
- Hagaman, D. (1993). The joy of victory, the agony of defeat: Stereotypes in newspaper sports feature photographs. *Visual Sociology*, 8(2), 48-66. Taylor & Francis.
- Kim, Y. S. (2012). News images of the terrorist attacks: Framing September 11th and its aftermath in the Pictures of the Year International competition. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 20, 158-184. Taylor & Francis.
- Mallonee, L. (2020, March 22). *How photojournalists are documenting the Coronavirus crisis*. WIRED. <https://www.wired.com/story/coronavirus-photojournalism/>.

- Nelson-Pallikkathayil, J. (2021, February 11). *Pictures of the Year competition judging kicks off Feb. 16 in record-breaking year*. RJI Online.
<https://rjionline.org/photojournalism/pictures-of-the-year-competition-judging-kicks-off-feb-16-in-record-breaking-year/>.
- Posetti, J., Bell, E., & Brown, P. (2020). *Journalism & the pandemic: A global snapshot of impacts*. International Center for Journalists. https://www.icfj.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Journalism%20and%20the%20Pandemic%20Project%20Report%201%202020_FINAL.pdf.
- POY. (n.d.a). *POY history*. POY. <https://poy.org/history.html>.
- POY. (n.d.b). *POY78 categories*. POY. <https://www.poy.org/78/categories.html>.
- POY. (n.d.c). *POY78 winners list*. POY. <https://www.poy.org/78/winners.html>.
- Quirke, C. (2012). *Eyes on labor: News photography and America's working class*. Oxford University Press.
- RJI Online. (2020, December 18). *Pictures of the Year Asia launch provides view into everyday life throughout the continent*. RJI Online. <https://rjionline.org/photojournalism/pictures-of-the-year-asia-launch-provides-view-into-everyday-life-throughout-the-continent-2/>.
- Rodelo, F. V. (2021). Framing of the Covid-19 pandemic and its organizational predictors. *Cuadernos. info*, (50), 91-112.
- Schellenberg, J. A. (1978). *Masters of social psychology: Freud, Mead, Lewin, and Skinner*. Oxford University Press.
- Sloshower, J. (2012). Capturing suffering: ethical considerations of bearing witness and the use of photography [Abstract]. *International Journal of the Image*, 3(2), 11-22.

- Shoemaker, P. J., & Reese, S. D. (2014). *Mediating the message in the 21st century: A media sociology perspective*. Routledge.
- Shoemaker, P., & Vos, T. (2008). Media gatekeeping. In D. W. Stacks & M. B. Salwen (Eds.), *An integrated approach to communication theory and research* (pp. 75-89). Routledge **
- Tait, S. (2011). Bearing witness, journalism and moral responsibility. *Media, Culture & Society*, 33(8), 1220-1235.
- Thomson, T.J., Perreault, G., & Duffy, M. (2018). Politicians, photographers, and a Pope. *Journalism Studies*, 19(9), 1313-1330. Doi:10.1080/1461670X.2016.1268929.
- Wasserman, H., Chuma, W., Bosch, T., Uzuegbunam, C. E., & Flynn, R. (2021). South African newspaper coverage of COVID-19: A content analysis. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 13(1), 333-350.
- World Health Organization. (2021). *The true death toll of COVID-19: Estimating global excess mortality*. World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/data/stories/the-true-death-toll-of-covid-19-estimating-global-excess-mortality>.
- Willman, D. (2020, April 23). *Covering the pandemic: Photographers on the frontlines*. State of the Planet. <https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2020/04/23/pandemic-photographers-frontlines/>.