

M  
O  
Z  
A  
ï  
K

*Volume 13*

JANVIER/FÉVRIER/MARS 2024

**INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE  
OF THE INDIAN OCEAN**

MAGAZINE TRIMESTRIEL GRATUIT  
FREE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

ARTS - CULTURES - LIFESTYLE - NATURE

# SOUL EXPLORERS



Crossroads of women photographers across  
the world's cultures

AGA SZYDLIK  
BILJANA JURUKOVSKI  
CAROL FOOTE  
NANCY SAVAGE

## Introduction ..... Na Hassi

**I**n this vast world, the more we travel, the more unknown lands we have left to discover. Our steps forward only serve to push the boundaries further. In the work of these four women, the expression "to meet the other" has never been so meaningful. Because it's not just about photographs, but about a genuine dialogue between cultures and countries. In their approach, they have returned to the essentials: respect and trust. One

does not go without the other. By respecting these tribes, their culture, and their identity, they have earned their trust. Since a picture is worth a thousand words, let each of them reveal to us the full power of a gaze, a posture, an angle, a landscape. Every moment is filled with emotions, symbols, and messages. Explore new horizons with our soul explorers.

**D**ans ce vaste monde, plus on voyage, plus il nous reste des terres inconnues à découvrir. Nos pas qui avancent font davantage repousser les frontières. Dans le travail de ces quatre femmes, jamais l'expression « aller à la rencontre de l'autre » n'a été aussi porteuse de sens. Parce qu'il ne s'agit pas de simples photographies, mais d'un véritable dialogue entre les cultures et les pays. Dans leur démarche, elles sont revenues à l'es-

sentiel : le respect et la confiance. L'un ne va pas sans l'autre. En respectant ces tribus, leur culture et leur identité, elles ont gagné leur confiance. Puisqu'une image vaut mille mots, laissons chacune d'elles nous révéler toute la puissance d'un regard, d'une posture, d'un angle, d'un paysage. Chaque instant est chargé d'émotions, de symboles et de messages. Parcourez d'autres horizons en compagnie de nos exploratrices de l'âme.

## SUMMARY

p.320 .....	Aga SZYDLIK
p.338 .....	Biljana JURUKOVSKI
p.362 .....	Carol FOOTE
p.380 .....	Nancy SAVAGE



MOZAIK



# AGA SZYDLIK

« Cultural and Environmental Photographer »

A

ga is a photographer based in the USA, and her work focuses mainly on documentary photography, conservation, and preservation of heritage sites, indigenous tribes, and their rituals. In addition, she actively supports human rights and conservation efforts.

Aga's professional journey began with travel and sports photography while she lived in Thailand. Muay Thai was one of her many passions, and when she was presented with the opportunity to document Muay Thai fights, she didn't think twice about it and had the best time of her life doing it. Aga traveled extensively during her life in SE Asia, had many adventures, and met many fascinating people. Eventually, a few years later, her journey took her to Indonesia and South Africa.

Aga's passion for photography and travel is shared with her love for science, as she spends most of her time trying to cure people and the planet. Aga actively supports human rights movements, environmental protection, and conservation efforts.

Aga's assignments involve both freelance work and collaborations with various NGOs. In addition, she aims to portray the people she photographs in the most powerful and meaningful way one can achieve while making a difference in the communities she meets.

En savoir plus

[www.agalphotography.com](http://www.agalphotography.com)

[@aga\\_szydluk](https://www.instagram.com/aga_szydluk)

# QUESTIONS TO THE ARTIST

**“What event or inspiration led you to embrace photography, particularly in the cultural and documentary field?”**

Growing up, I used an old Zenith film camera to capture moments—primarily people. I also grew up being an avid reader. I was always fascinated by stories about explorers traveling into far corners of the earth and discovering new cultures. I wanted to be like the heroes I was reading about. My career is in science, and my soul is in humanities, which also translates into my photography. Through my work, I want to empower other women - those in STEM and those bound by tribal traditions. Both photography and science are tightly intertwined. I find inspiration in my daily life, a city that I love, the travel I take, and the people I interact with.

**Could you describe an intense emotional experience you've had while documenting a culture through your photographs? How have these encounters enriched your worldview?**

I'm always in awe when people from indigenous cultures surround me. It's like traveling in time or being in a cultural time capsule. Witnessing the daily life of a tribe allows me to reflect on human nature, our behaviors, and the similarities between our seemingly opposite ways of life. My worldview has been enriched beyond words, as indigenous tribes are the Stuarts of our ecosystems, guarding what is left of our natural resources.

I'm naturally very eco-conscious. I commute by bicycle or walking, recycle feverishly, and support sustainability in daily life. Climate change significantly impacts indigenous cultures, and our Western socie-

ties are the main contributors; I try to be part of the solution rather than a problem.

**How do you navigate the process of selecting subjects for your photographs, especially when dealing with lesser-known or disappearing cultures?**

So many destinations are on my travel list, more than I will ever have time to explore. I'm a reader and frequently segway into multiple directions, so when the opportunity arises and the thrill of traveling sets in, I do a deep dive into cultures, people and their stories, and social or ecological issues. Then, I assess logistics and safety before drafting my project plans.

**At what point do you decide to use color or black and white in your photographs?**

I love black-and-white photography, as the lack of color focuses the viewer's attention on the subject and storyline. I chose the format that best highlights the topic of my work. It's a challenging choice, which I make during the post-production stage.

**As a photographer committed to humanitarian and environmental causes, how do you incorporate these values into your photographic work?**

I placed the well-being of the people I work with ahead of my project; I would never want to be perceived as exploiting tribes and their cultures for my benefit. I'm not too fond of transactional relationships. Outside of very obvious consent, I focus on building

a relationship with those I work with; it's about my curiosity and bringing out stories we could share with our readers. It's about building trust into collaboration and being very sensible on the topic of a reportage.

**Can you tell us about your transition from being a fight photographer in Thailand (Muay Thai) to exploring cultures around the world?**

I was privileged to have an opportunity to pursue my passion for cultural photography in parallel to working on assignments and covering the fight scene in Thailand. My travel photography preceded fight photography.

So, when traveling on assignment, I bracket the trip, allowing myself to pursue my topics of interest.

**How do you balance your scientific career with your passion for photography?**

I am very fortunate to work for an organization that emphasizes life-work balance. In addition, my manager and teammates are very supportive of my work and travel on photography assignments. When not traveling, I focus on my scientific career, an essential part of my life. While working in the field, I disconnect from the office and go completely off the grid to immerse myself in the country and culture surrounding me. Having a singular focus helps a lot. That being said, I feel overwhelmed when juggling too many deadlines for submissions and publications. Regular yoga practice helps me to be more centered and understand that I'm doing my best.

**Are there any photographers who inspire you or have influenced your style?**

Yes, absolutely. I'm drawn to the powerful and very sensible at the same time work by Sebastião Salgado. I love work by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Joey L (Lawrence), a master of light in the field. I love Nick Brandt's focus on the rapidly disappearing natural world due to environmental destruction, climate change, and human actions. Visual storytelling and travel photography, one can't miss the work by one and only - Steve McCurry.

**Could you shed light on your choice of photographic equipment and how you adapt it to different shooting situations?**

I embrace the discomfort and the unknown. I'm an ultra-light packer, as my destinations are challenging to reach, and I carry my gear. I embrace "less is more" and travel with lean equipment (camera body + 2 lenses and a lume cube light, power source) and an excellent backcountry hybrid backpack. I get creative and work with what I have; working with a trusted guide to scout the locations ahead of time helps a lot. I love natural light and used Lume Cube to enhance it. I avoid the direct flash as it startles and can hurt older people's eyes.

**How does practicing yoga impact your life and your work as a photographer?**

Yoga practice is an integral part of my daily routine, indeed the fabric of my life. As an A-type personality, I am a perfectionist. When I haven't accomplished what I set out to, I can lean on yogic philosophy, knowing that I'm where I need to be, that I should focus on NOW, and that everything will be fine. Yoga centers me personally and professionally, placing gratitude as one of the most essential core values.

**Could you share insights into your process for authentically and profoundly capturing the essence of the people you photograph?**

Because of my sheer curiosity, lack of judgment, and not trying to change or influence other people's cultures, my focus is on people being open and comfortable around me. Allowing others to share what's important to them rather than focusing on what I have imagined the story will be about.

**What are your future projects or aspirations in the field of photography that you're looking forward to realizing?**

I would love to travel to South Sudan; however, given the current situation, I'm morally and emotionally conflicted about pursuing the project. Like every cultural photographer, I dream of Papua and the diversity of the tribes inhabiting the island. I would love to see my work positively impact viewers and readers, as daily actions matter. One can always be better to the environment and be more aware of other people's struggles. I would love to be able to publish an anthology telling stories of the cultures I had the privilege to discover and document.



## Himba Tribe | Namibia

### *Life, Culture and Rituals of the Iconic Himba Tribe*

Himba tribe is indigenous to Kunene Region (formerly Kaokoland) in northern Namibia and southern Angola. Himba tribe is perhaps best known for coloring their hair and bodies

with a red color paste (otjize), which is considered a sign of beauty. The otjize mixture is beautiful, scented with aromatic resins, deep in orange color symbolizing the earth's red color and blood—the essence of life.







*Himba Tribe / The Origins*

Around the 16th century, Himba people crossed to Namibia from Angola, settling in Kaokoland (Kunene) as part of the Herero tribe. Impoverished by disease and Nama cattle raiders,

Himba were left without livestock, forced to rely on the land for their survival. Driven by hunger, many Himba fled to Angola, where they were called Ova-Himba, meaning 'beggars' in the Otjiherero language.



Proud and exquisite, Himba women are said to be one of the most beautiful in the world. Fiercely proud of their traditional hairstyles and clothes, taking several hours each morning for their beauty care, sleeping on the wooden pillows not to ruin

their hairstyle. Both men and women take great care in wearing their traditional attire, clothes, hairstyle, and jewelry are all of particular significance to the Himba and are part of their tradition and culture..



*Himba Tribe / Culture, Life and Braids*

Himba homes are simple huts, made from a mixture of earth and cattle dung and contain little beyond a bed and collection of useful implements such as kitchen tools. Both woman and men wear their traditional dress, loincloths, and sandals for a man, often with foot soles made from old car tires, women dress in goat skinned skirts and jewelry. From the time a Himba girl is born, her hairstyle will identify her place in society, indicating the age, clan, and marital status of a woman.

A young girl typically has two plaits of braided hair (ozondato), the form of which is decided by the clan she descended on her father's side. A young girl who hasn't reached puberty yet will display two braids at the front of her head, if a girl is a twin, she will wear only one single braid, indicating she is only one-half of a pair of twins.

At puberty, the girl will wear braids up front covering her face, letting males know that she isn't ready to marry.



When a young woman is ready to marry, the same locks will be braided toward the back of the head, allowing potential suitors to see her face. First, the hair is lengthened with a straw woven together with the hair extensions to create dreadlocks, which are subsequently covered in otjize and finished with goat hair, added to give the distinct pom-pom look. When a woman has been married for a year or has had a child, she will wear the erembe headdress on top of her head.



### Deadvlei Trees | Sossusvlei

#### *Sossusvlei Clay Pan*

Sossusvlei is located in the southern part of the Namib Desert,

in the Namib-Naukluft National Park of Namibia. The name "Sossusvlei" is often used in an extended meaning to refer to the surrounding area, including other neighboring vleis such as Deadvlei and other high dunes in Namibia (Wikipedia).



Sossusvlei translates to “dead-end marsh”, as it is the place where the dunes come together preventing the Tsauchab River to flow any further, some 60km east of the Atlantic Ocean. However, due to the dry conditions in the Namib Desert the River seldom flows this far and the pan remains bone-dry most years. (Wikipedia)



*Deadvlei / Ancient Acacia Trees*

Deadvlei is another clay pan, about 2 km from Sossusvlei. A notable feature of Deadvlei is that it used to be an oasis with several acacia trees; afterward, the river that watered the oasis changed its course. The pan is thus punctuated by blackened, dead acacia trees, in vivid contrast to the shiny white of the

salty floor of the pan and the intense orange of the dunes.

When the rivers dried out and the pan was cut from the nourishing moisture, the air became too dry for the trees to decompose. Blackened by the sun, the 10,000-year-old petrified acacia trees are one of the oldest trees on Earth.





### Oldest Desert and Highest Dunes

The dunes surrounding a large, white, salt and clay pan of Sossusvlei are some of the highest in the world. The highest rea-

ching 300–400 meters (350m on average, named “Big Daddy” or “Crazy Dune”), which rest on a sandstone terrace.



### Lesotho | Kingdom in the Sky

The Lesotho Kingdom is an enclaved country in southern Africa and the only independent state in the world that lies entirely

above 1,000 metres (3,281 ft) in elevation. Its lowest point of 1,400 metres (4,593 ft) is thus the highest in the world. Over 80 percent of the country lies above 1,800 metres (5,906 ft).



### *Young Shepherds of Lesotho*

The Basotho are a Bantu ethnic group whose ancestors have lived in southern Africa since around the fifth century. The Basotho nation emerged from the accomplished diplomacy of Moshoeshe I who gathered together disparate clans of Sotho-

Tswana origin that had dispersed across southern Africa in the early 19th century. Most Basotho today live in South Africa, as the area of the Orange Free State was originally part of Moshoeshe's nation (now Lesotho). (Wikipedia)







MOZAÏK



# BILJANA JURUKOVSKI

« Preserve the resilience of cultures amidst rapid change,  
akin to a digital time capsule »

**B**iljana, an acclaimed Macedonian Australian photographer, explores humanity through poignant portraits, particularly of isolated African tribes. Her award-winning work, exhibited globally, breaks boundaries and inspires empathy across cultures.

Biljana's photographs have graced the pages of esteemed magazines and newspapers, including the Australian photography magazine, The Guardian, Silvershotz Magazine, Lens Magazine, Sydney Morning Herald, La Fotografia, and many more. Her captivating portraits have not only adorned the pages of publications but have also been showcased in galleries in New York, Berlin, Barcelona, Macedonia, and France, leaving an indelible mark on the global art scene.

One of her most recent and remarkable achievements is her inclusion in the Sent Into Space project. This groundbreaking endeavor launched a framed screen exhibiting 200 shortlisted images from a prestigious competition, including one of Biljana's captivating photos. These chosen images were projected over 111,000 feet into the stratosphere, giving the featured photographers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness their work against the breathtaking backdrop of space.

En savoir plus

[www.biljanajurukovski.com](http://www.biljanajurukovski.com)

[f](#) biljana.jurukovski [@](#) biljana.jurukovski.photography

# QUESTIONS TO THE ARTIST

**How did your journey in photography begin, and what motivated you to pursue it as a career?**

I have always been a keen photographer but after joining a local camera club I became interested in pursuing photography, not just as a hobby, but as a total creative endeavour.

**Could you share your experience of studying at the Queensland College of Art and how it shaped your approach to photography?**

For me, the best part of studying was being totally immersed in the world of photography. Its history, its masters, its use in advertising, its role in documenting our lives etc. etc. You are also surrounded by like-minded people who stimulate, inspire and also offer critique to your work.

**What inspired your transition from working in photography departments and medical photography to focusing on street and travel photography?**

Whilst I enjoyed working in government departments, the work could not be regarded as creative. In my free time I enjoyed working on my own projects which included street photography and taking minimalist graphic images of architecture in my area. After retiring and having the opportunity to travel I had the desire to document people from cultures different to my own and learn more about their way of life and traditions.

**What draws you to street photography, and how has your focus shifted towards travel photography over the past decade?**

I love the work of Cartier-Bresson and Elliot Erwitt for example – photographs that capture spontaneous and amusing aspects of daily life. But I have also become interested in capturing indigenous people who maintain their traditions and culture despite the influence of the modern world.

**Can you describe the allure of exploring unique cultures and traditions, particularly in countries like India, Bhutan, Tibet, and Nepal, through your lens?**

I like to be taken out of my «comfort zone». To be in environments where everything is different and «foreign». For example, In 2019 I went to the Kumb Mela in Allahabad – the world's largest Hindu bathing festival which is attended by millions of worshippers and thousands of naked Naga Sadhus. I was also lucky enough to be in Dharamshala on the occasion of the Dalai Lama's 87th birthday celebration which featured performances of traditional Tibetan dancing.

**How do you approach photographing people from diverse cultures, and what challenges or rewards come with capturing their stories?**

I enjoy wondering the streets and soaking in the atmosphere of the places I visit. Often, I'll just watch the passing parade and wait for someone interesting to pass by. Sometimes people welcome me into their lives and homes for a cup of tea and show me around their home.



### **What role do interactions with people play in your photography, and how do these encounters influence your work?**

The key to taking a meaningful portrait is to create an authentic interaction with your subject. It's important to develop a rapport, to not just shove a camera in someone's face. I've met people who live in difficult circumstances but have a wonderful sense of community and pride in their culture and way of life.

### **Could you share a memorable experience or encounter that has left a lasting impression on you during your travels and street photography?**

There have been many, but one experience remains in my memory- it happened early on in my travels. I was in a very crowded Mosque, the only European present. Suddenly, a door opened next to me and a most intimidating man appeared. He looked as if he'd stepped right out of the Bible, big black beard, flowing robes and huge turban. I desperately wanted his photo, but I was too scared to ask. But I plucked up all my courage, and to my surprise, he accepted. It is still one of my favourite photos and the experience taught me to not be intimidated.

### **How do you navigate the fear of rejection when photographing strangers on the streets, and what strategies do you use to build rapport and trust with your subjects?**

As I pointed out previously, it can be challenging approaching strangers, especially if there is a language barrier. It's all about respect. If they refuse,

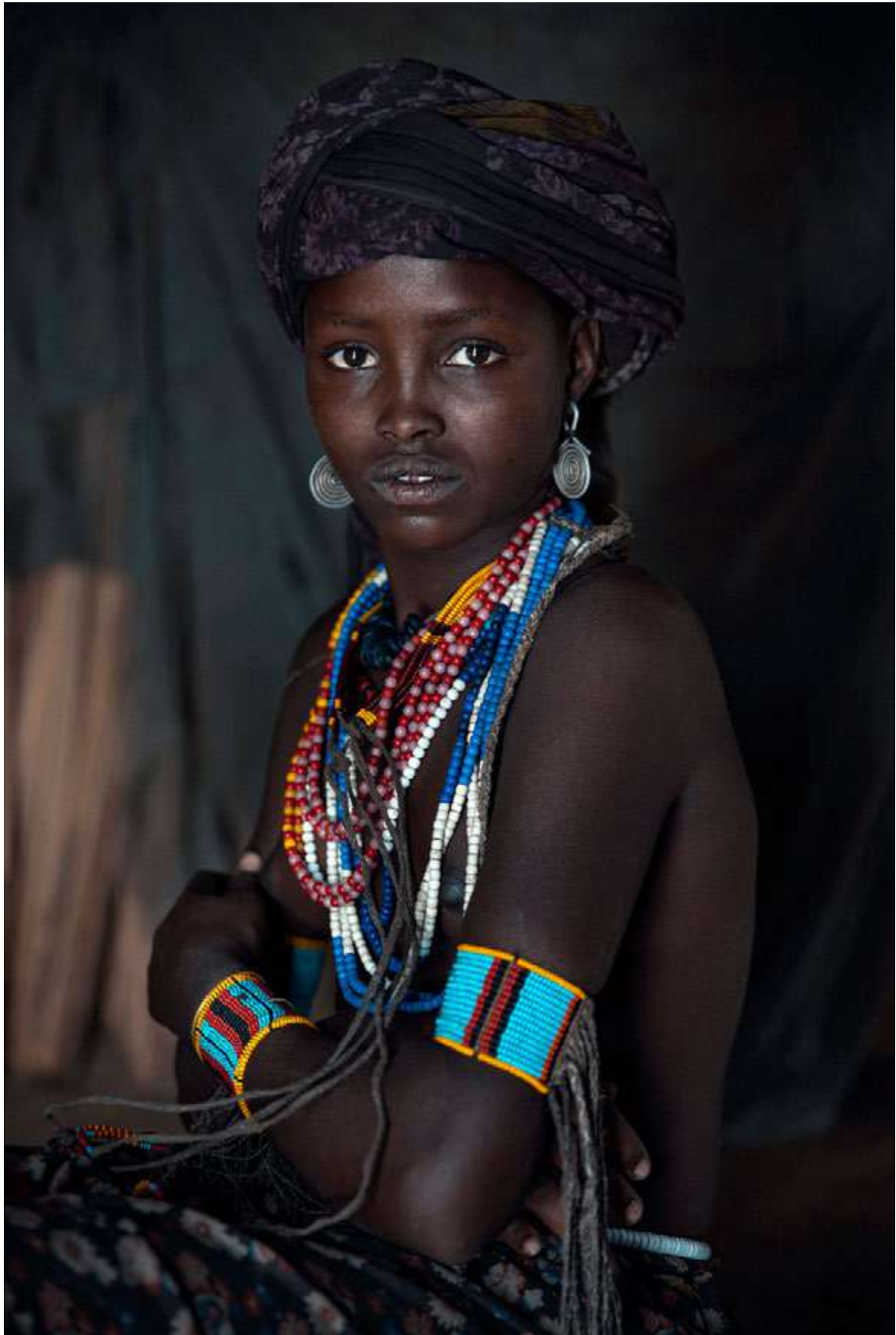
accept and move on. But I have found that most people are amiable and often want their photo taken with me! It's important to be very friendly, maybe compliment them on their dress, jewellery or appearance in general – even if you can't speak the language, sign language can work wonders!

### **What do you find most rewarding about street photography, particularly in terms of capturing the unexpected moments and encounters that stay with you?**

I have now taken thousands of pictures of completely diverse people who have enriched my life in so many ways. When I look back at my photos I can usually remember exactly where I was and what interaction took place – my photos are an archive of unique and special experiences through which I've learnt a lot about humanity.



Arbore married woman



Arbore unmarried woman



Bodi or Meen tribal woman



Bodi tribal girl



Hamar tribe unmarried girl



Hamar tribe woman



Karo tribe chil





Karo tribe woman



Mursi child



Mursi woman



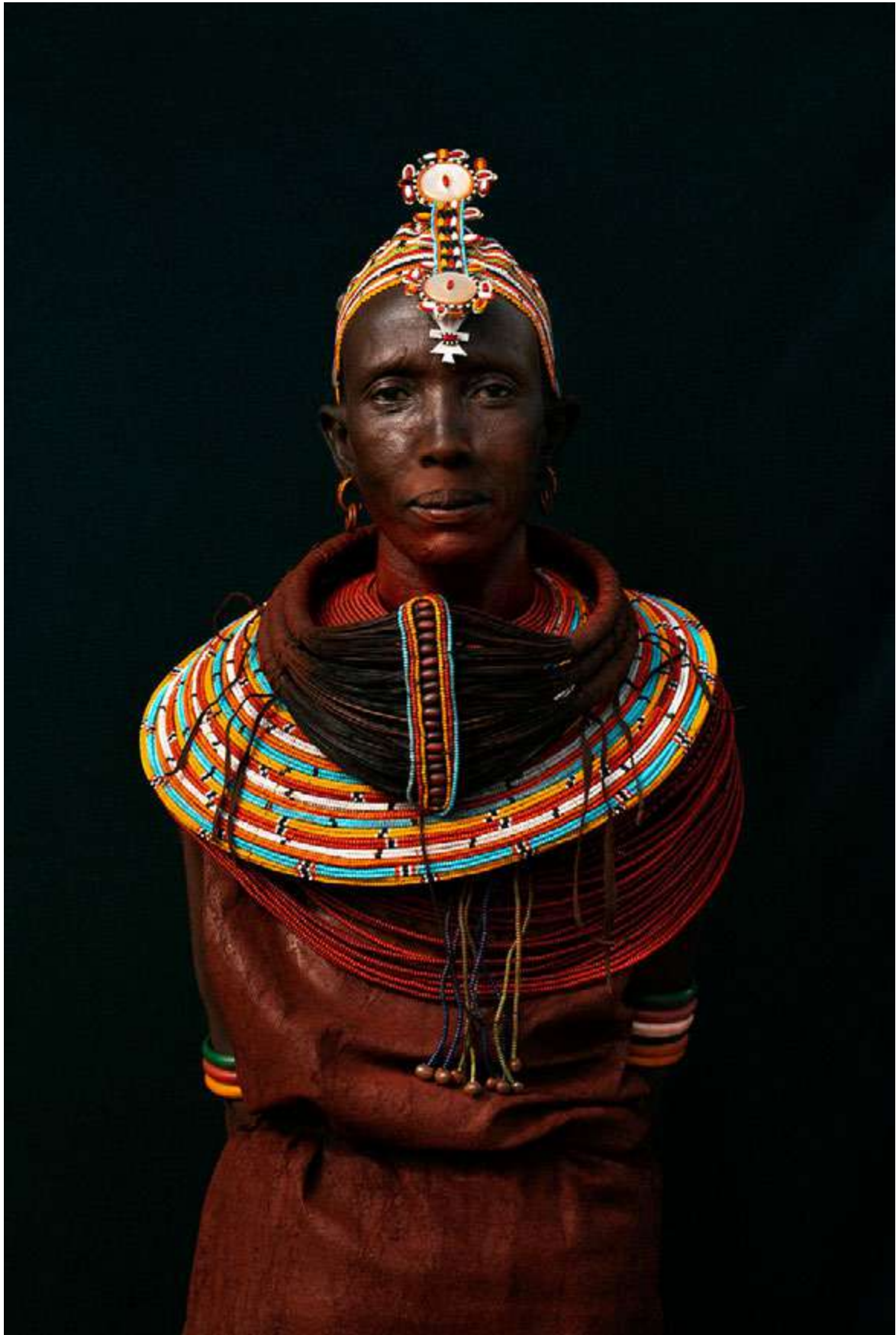
Pokot married woman



Pokot tribe unmarried girl



Samburu girl



Samburu woman



Suri boy Ethiopia

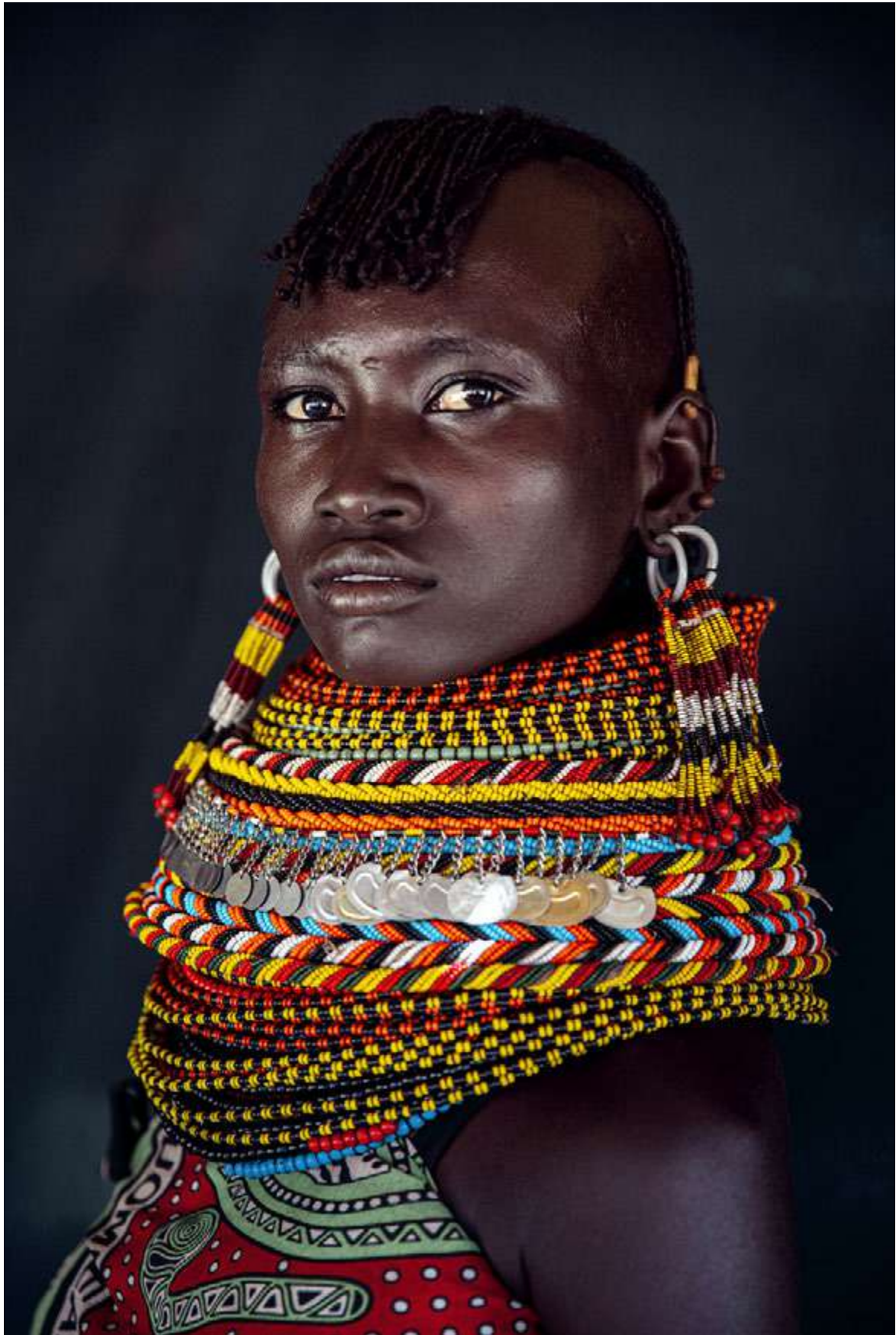




Suri Ethiopia



Suri tribal girl Ethiopia



Turkana tribe girl



Rendile tribe morans



Samburu Moran





# CAROL FOOTE

« Cultural and Environmental Photographer »

**C**arol Foote began her journey in photography through a local camera club before furthering her education at the Queensland College of Art, where she earned an Associate Diploma of Arts in Applied Photography. Following graduation, she gained valuable experience in photography departments at the Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland Library, and as a medical photographer at the Brisbane Royal Hospital. Her passion for street photography has transitioned into a focus on travel photography, fueled by her fascination with diverse cultures, particularly in countries like India, Bhutan, Tibet, and Nepal.

While capturing famous landmarks is thrilling, it's the people she encounters during her travels that leave a lasting impression. Each portrait serves as a powerful memory of the interaction, often resulting in rewarding experiences. Overcoming the fear of rejection in street photography has taught her the value of approaching subjects with respect and a smile, sometimes leading to lasting friendships. What excites her most about street photography is the element of surprise; she never knows who she'll meet, and oftentimes, it's those encounters that stay etched in memory forever.

En savoir plus

[www.carolfoote-photographer.com](http://www.carolfoote-photographer.com)

[f @FootePrintz](#) [@carolfoote\\_photographer](#)

# QUESTIONS TO THE ARTIST

**How did your journey in photography begin, and what motivated you to pursue it as a career?**

I have always been a keen photographer but after joining a local camera club I became interested in pursuing photography, not just as a hobby, but as a total creative endeavour.

**Could you share your experience of studying at the Queensland College of Art and how it shaped your approach to photography?**

For me, the best part of studying was being totally immersed in the world of photography. Its history, its masters, its use in advertising, its role in documenting our lives etc. etc. You are also surrounded by like-minded people who stimulate, inspire and also offer critique to your work.

**What inspired your transition from working in photography departments and medical photography to focusing on street and travel photography?**

Whilst I enjoyed working in government departments, the work could not be regarded as creative. In my free time I enjoyed working on my own projects which included street photography and taking minimalist graphic images of architecture in my area. After retiring and having the opportunity to travel I had the desire to document people from cultures different to my own and learn more about their way of life and traditions.

**What draws you to street photography, and how has your focus shifted towards travel photography over the past decade?**

I love the work of Cartier-Bresson and Elliot Erwitt for example – photographs that capture spontaneous and amusing aspects of daily life. But I have also become interested in capturing indigenous people who maintain their traditions and culture despite the influence of the modern world.

**Can you describe the allure of exploring unique cultures and traditions, particularly in countries like India, Bhutan, Tibet, and Nepal, through your lens?**

I like to be taken out of my «comfort zone». To be in environments where everything is different and «foreign». For example, In 2019 I went to the Kumb Mela in Allahabad – the world's largest Hindu bathing festival which is attended by millions of worshippers and thousands of naked Naga Sadhus. I was also lucky enough to be in Dharamshala on the occasion of the Dalai Lama's 87th birthday celebration which featured performances of traditional Tibetan dancing.

**How do you approach photographing people from diverse cultures, and what challenges or rewards come with capturing their stories?**

I enjoy wondering the streets and soaking in the atmosphere of the places I visit. Often, I'll just watch the passing parade and wait for someone interesting to pass by. Sometimes people welcome me into their lives and homes for a cup of tea and show me around their home.



**What role do interactions with people play in your photography, and how do these encounters influence your work?**

The key to taking a meaningful portrait is to create an authentic interaction with your subject. It's important to develop a rapport, to not just shove a camera in someone's face. I've met people who live in difficult circumstances but have a wonderful sense of community and pride in their culture and way of life.

**Could you share a memorable experience or encounter that has left a lasting impression on you during your travels and street photography?**

There have been many, but one experience remains in my memory- it happened early on in my travels. I was in a very crowded Mosque, the only European present. Suddenly, a door opened next to me and a most intimidating man appeared. He looked as if he'd stepped right out of the Bible, big black beard, flowing robes and huge turban. I desperately wanted his photo, but I was too scared to ask. But I plucked up all my courage, and to my surprise, he accepted. It is still one of my favourite photos and the experience taught me to not be intimidated.

**How do you navigate the fear of rejection when photographing strangers on the streets, and what strategies do you use to build rapport and trust with your subjects?**

As I pointed out previously, it can be challenging approaching strangers, especially if there is a language barrier. It's all about respect. If they refuse,

accept and move on. But I have found that most people are amiable and often want their photo taken with me! It's important to be very friendly, maybe compliment them on their dress, jewellery or appearance in general – even if you can't speak the language, sign language can work wonders!

**What do you find most rewarding about street photography, particularly in terms of capturing the unexpected moments and encounters that stay with you?**

I have now taken thousands of pictures of completely diverse people who have enriched my life in so many ways. When I look back at my photos I can usually remember exactly where I was and what interaction took place – my photos are an archive of unique and special experiences through which I've learnt a lot about humanity.



Beautiful eyes of mother & baby

*Minali, India  
2022*



Naga Sadhu smoking a chillum

*Varanasi, India  
2019*



Traditional dress of the Rai people

*Nepal  
2023*



Sadhu dressed in rudrashka beads

*India  
2019*



Woman in traditional dress

*Ladakh*  
202



Elderly Nihang Sikh

*Golden Temple in Amritsar, India  
2022*



Tibetan woman wearing a coral headdress

*Tibet  
2018*





Brokpa woman with traditional headdress

*Ladakh*  
2022



Boy dressed as the god Kali

*Pushkar, India  
2018*



Street portrait of partially blind woman

*Mcleodganj, India  
2022*



Street portrait

*Haridwar, India  
2022*



Young Jangam Priest

*Haridwar, India  
2022*



Jat tribal woman

*Kutch, India  
2018*



Tamang woman wearing traditional felt hat

*Nepal  
2023*



Culture

The disabled gain visibility as works of art

The New York Times

11-03-99  
DIOR

Opinion

Learning 2000 through oral history

disabled gain visibility as works of art

The final act of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Learning 2000 through oral history



MOZAIK



# NANCY SAVAGE

« Love to capturing the diverse essence of people »

**n**ancy has embraced creativity and art in her personal and professional life as long as she can remember. Her first career was owner and Designer of her own Interior Designer Firm for over twenty years. When she decided to retire from that business she felt a need to fill her creative void. Little did she know that her desire and affection for extensive world travel would be the beginning of her photography career. The past twenty plus years Nancy made a commitment to explore and photograph the far ends of the earth and everything in-between. She treasures the many unique and exclusive places she's been, but her true love is the diversity of people she's come to know along her journey. She is a Colorado native and her style as a photographer lies somewhere between lifestyle and documentary photography. Nancy documents the candid essence of people, capturing their natural character and emotion

More

[nancysavage.smugmug.com](http://nancysavage.smugmug.com)

[f @NancySavagePhotography](#) [@ savagen4231](#)

# QUESTIONS TO THE ARTIST

**“What made you move from owning and designing an Interior Design business, to pursuing a career in photography?”**

The transition from Interior Design to photography wasn't merely a shift in career; it was a journey of self-discovery—a realization that my gift for visualizing spaces transcended the confines of architecture and design. Photography became my new medium for artistic expression, allowing me to explore the world through a lens and capture moments frozen in time.

**Could you share some of the pivotal moments or experiences from your many travels. Who sparked your passion for photography?**

The genesis of my photographic career unfolded during a trip to Peru when, on a whim, I captured and submitted a photo of children in an elementary school to National Geographic YourShot Daily Dozen. The revelation came six months later, when I revisited YourShot site to submit another photo, only to discover that my Peruvian image had not only been selected, but had earned a coveted spot among the Daily Dozen. This pivotal recognition, chosen from millions of submissions, worldwide, ignited a spark within me to pursue photography as a career. This marked the beginning of a series of my photographs being selected by National Geographic YourShot, a thrilling journey that has seen my work featured in magazines, showcase in national and international exhibitions, and displayed in esteemed Galleries.

**How has your photography evolved over the last twenty years, particularly in terms of capturing the essence of various cultures?**

Over the past two decades, my photography has undergone a profound evolution, with a shift towards capturing the essence of various cultures through the lens of human experience. I've observed an emphasis on people and their unique customs and traditions. Photographing people became more than just capturing a moment; it became an avenue for forging connections and building trust with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Each click of the shutter became an opportunity to document uncommon lifestyles, cherished traditions, or simply a day in the life of the people I encountered. Through my photography, I aim not only to capture images but to celebrate the human spirit and honor the remarkable heritage and cultures that adorn our world.

I've had the privilege of capturing the diverse and vibrant cultures of indigenous peoples across the world. From the ancient tribes of Ethiopia and Kenya to the Maasai warriors of Tanzania, from the hill tribes of Vietnam and Thailand to the Quechua communities of Peru, and from the nomadic herders of Mongolia to the Andean villagers of Bolivia, to mention a few. Each encounter has been a profound journey of discovery. Through my photography, I strive to share the rich history of traditions, customs, and lifestyles that define these unique cultures, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the extraordinary diversity of our planet.

**Can you describe your approach to blending lifestyle photography and documentary photography in your work?**

Blending lifestyle photography with documentary photography offers a powerful opportunity to craft a narrative that resonates deeply with viewers. When integrating these two styles, it's essential to understand their fundamental differences. Lifestyle photography typically revolves around curated scenes, portraying specific lifestyles or moods, whereas documentary photography strives for authenticity, capturing unfiltered moments to convey a natural narrative and or environmental scenario.

**What are the most exclusive and remarkable places that you have encountered during your travels, and how have they influenced your photography?**

My first journey to the OMO Valley of Ethiopia in 2018, was filled with anticipation and awe. I ventured into the remote corners of the OMO Valley, some of which brushed against the South Sudan border. As I left civilization behind, I embraced the serenity of the wilderness. The first few days were an immersion into the life of the Suri people, a tribe that called this mystical land home. Our camp was nestled under the vast canopy of stars, an unbroken canvas that stretched from horizon to horizon. This journey took me to several different tribes, each with their own unique customs and traditions. It was a kaleidoscope of culture, a tapestry of humanity, where every village was a chapter in an ancient story. These tribal communities opened their hearts and homes to me, sharing their world with the humility and grace that only those who are in touch with nature possess. My journey to the OMO Valley had a tremendous influence on my photography. I discovered more than a destination; I found a connection to the past, a deep appreciation for the present, and a profound hope for the future. The journey through this otherworldly land had left an indelible mark on my soul, reminding me of the beauty that exists in the untouched corners of the world. As I returned to the familiar world, my heart carried the memories of the OMO Valley, a place where time seemed to stand still, where nature and culture were inextricably intertwined, and where humanity's essence shone brightly against the backdrop of an ancient and unspoiled land.

**You mentioned cherishing the diversity of people you came into contact with throughout your journey. Could you explain to us how these personal connections have impacted your photography?**

The personal connections established with individuals from diverse cultures have profoundly shaped my approach to photography. Each encounter offers a unique opportunity to delve deeper into the human experience, capturing not just faces, but stories, emotions, and the essence of a community. These connections infuse my photography with authenticity and depth, enabling me to portray the nuances and intricacies of different cultures with sincerity and respect. Through these relationships, I gain a deeper understanding of the people I photograph, allowing me to tell their stories in a way that resonates authentically with viewers. These personal connections infuse my work with empathy, fostering a greater appreciation for the rich tapestry of humanity that I am privileged to document.

**How do you approach storytelling through your photography, and what messages or stories do you want to transmit?**

Embarking on my photographic journey, I realized that the true essence of travel lay in the connections forged with people. Exploring deeper into their lives became not just easier, but infinitely more enriching. Immersing myself in the world of indigenous people, I found myself drawn to the intricacies of their daily existence, their families, and their traditions. Each encounter creating indelible memories, irreplaceable and unparalleled. It's a privilege to embed myself within isolated communities, to witness and document their uncommon lifestyles or age-old traditions. For me, the heart of this odyssey lies not just in portraiture, but in the kaleidoscope of humanity I've encountered along the way. From pitching tents in remote villages to sharing in their daily rituals under the vast expanse of the night sky, every moment has been transformative. Despite their modest means, these communities exemplify resilience and ingenuity, crafting solutions with remarkable simplicity. Through my lens, I strive to weave together their stories, offering a glimpse into worlds rarely seen, inviting readers to embark on this journey of discovery alongside me.

**Could you share a particularly memorable moment or encounter you had captured through your lens, and what makes it stand out to you?**

In the Suri village of Ethiopia, the concept of modernity was a distant echo. There was no electricity, just a few solar lights that charged during the day, meagerly illuminating the village at night. Fresh mountain water flowed through a simple nozzle attached to a hose, offering a lifeline to the community. A makeshift shower stall, a humble but refreshing oasis, allowed us to wash away the dust of our journey.

The Suri people live by the rhythm of nature, embracing the simplicity of life. They adhere to a diet of two meals a day. I even witnessed a goat being sacrificed and roasted, an age-old tradition that spoke of sustenance and gratitude. Their existence was organic, and the land provided them with crops and small animals that sustained their tight-knit community.

What truly captivated me was the Suri people's artistic spirit. They adorned themselves with vibrant body paint, each stroke telling a story, each hue revealing a part of their identity. The materials they used were as natural as the land around them, a mixture of water, minerals, clay, ground chalk, charcoal, and ash. These artful strokes painted a tapestry of culture and heritage and allowed me to photograph and document this remarkable environment and beautiful existence of these tribes.

**What advice would you give to budding photographers who are inspired by your journey and your job?**

To aspiring photographers captivated by the prospect of documenting unique cultures and tribes in remote corners of the globe, I offer this advice: cultivate a deep sense of respect and humility in your approach. Every interaction is an opportunity to learn and connect authentically with the communities you encounter. Embrace cultural sensitivity and immerse yourself in the local customs and traditions, allowing them to guide and enrich your work. Prioritize building trust and fostering genuine relationships with the people you photograph, for they are the heart and soul of your storytelling. Stay curious, adaptable, and open-minded, embracing the unexpected moments and challenges as integral parts of your journey. Most

importantly, let your passion for preserving and celebrating diverse cultures be your guiding light, driving you to capture their essence with integrity and reverence.

**Looking forward, what are your aspirations or goals for your photography in the future?**

Looking ahead, my aspirations for my photography are deeply intertwined with my passion for exploring and documenting the diverse cultures of the world's indigenous peoples and tribes. As an international photographer, my goal is to continue traversing remote corners of the globe, capturing the richness and authenticity of these communities through my lens. I aim to not only preserve their traditions and ways of life but also to raise awareness and foster appreciation for their cultural heritage.

Ultimately, I hope that my work serves as a bridge, connecting people across continents and generations, and inspiring greater understanding and empathy for the remarkable diversity of our shared human experience.



Hamar Tribe

2023



High Profile

*2023*



Head Strong

2023



Coal Carriers

2023



Rakher Upobash

2023





Heart and Soul

2023



Golden Child

2023



One Brick at a Time

2023





Circles of Life

2023



Family Portrait

2023



Beauty on a Back Street

2023



Off the Beaten Path

2023



Blending In

2023





*Thanks to*

AGA SZYDLIK  
BILJANA JURUKOVSKI  
CAROL FOOTE  
NANCY SAVAGE