

WE SEE







Photo by Rita de Sales
femLENS workshops 2023, Portugal



Photo by Romina Delia
femLENS workshops 2023, Malta

4 CAPTURING CHANGE: THE
IMPACT OF DOCUMENTARY
PHOTOGRAPHY ON SOCIAL
ADVOCACY

by Maria Vesselko

10 FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER:
NATALIA CAMPOS

by Maria Vesselko

20 INTERVIEW WITH FOTOESSA,
GREECE

21 YOUNG WAITRESSES OF THE
ATHENIAN RIVIERA
by Yannis and Aspasia Storytelling

28 PURGATORY
by Romina Delia

32 INTERVIEW WITH BOA
CARIACA, PORTUGAL

35 OUR SCHOOL. OUR STORIES
by Rita Sales

CAPTURING CHANGE: THE IMPACT OF DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY ON SOCIAL ADVOCACY

by Maria Vesselko

Documentary photography plays a crucial role in advocacy by harnessing the potency of visuals to convey messages and inspire action. Through compelling and evocative imagery, documentary photographers have the power to spotlight social issues, human rights violations, and environmental concerns, effectively drawing the attention and emotions of viewers. The visual impact of these photographs can evoke empathy, provoke thought, and drive individuals and communities to act.

Photographs have the unique ability to transcend language barriers and communicate universal emotions. They can convey the urgency of a situation, humanise complex issues, and provide a window into the lives of marginalised communities. By presenting authentic and unfiltered depictions of reality, documentary photography has the potential to challenge preconceptions, stimulate dialogue, and mobilise support for advocacy causes.

In a world dominated by visual media and social networking, the reach and influence of documentary photography have expanded exponentially. Images can quickly spread across

the globe, reaching diverse audiences, and sparking conversations on social media platforms, in news outlets, and through advocacy campaigns. This widespread dissemination can amplify the impact of documentary photography, fostering a collective consciousness and galvanising public engagement.

Documentary photography serves as a catalyst for change by compelling individuals, organisations, and policymakers to confront pressing issues and take meaningful action. Its ability to illustrate the essence of human experiences and societal challenges makes it a potent tool for advocacy, driving awareness, empathy, a positive transformation.

“Documentary photography can direct attention away from the suffering of individuals to the populations or ‘aggregates’ that they represent” (Johnson, J. (2011). The arithmetic of compassion’: Rethinking the politics of photography. *British Journal of Political Science*, 41(3), 621-43.). Visual representations can convey broader societal issues and contexts, making them accessible and relatable to audiences regardless of their cultural or linguistic backgrounds.



Photo by femLENS
AGENCY project workshop 2023



Fourteen year old spinner. Lewis Hine, 1913.

Lewis Hine, a New York City schoolteacher, and photographer believed that a picture could tell a powerful story. He travelled around the U.S. photographing (in public domain) the working conditions of children in all types of industries. He photographed children in coal mines, in meatpacking houses, in textile mills, and canneries. He took pictures of children working in the streets as shoe shiners, newsboys, and hawkers.

Hine believed that if people could see for themselves the abuses and injustice of child labour, they would demand laws to be changed. The National Child Labor Committee distributed the photos along with the captions taken by Lewis Hine to try and educate and convince the public that child labour should be illegal. They would put the photos in newspapers, progressive publications, circulars and stereopticon slide shows.

Hine's photographs documented child labour in the U.S., compelling the public and policymakers to confront the harsh realities faced by young workers. His images served as a catalyst for labour reforms and child protection laws.

In 1936, Dorothea Lange was among several photographers working on assignment for the United States government's Resettlement Administration or RA (which would later become the Farm Security Administration or FSA) to document the hardship of migrant farm workers. (Dust Bowl photos are public domain)

Between 1935 and 1944, she and other FSA photographers took almost 80,000 images for the agency, raising public awareness of the difficult situation faced by thousands of people forced to flee the Dust Bowl, an area devastated by drought.

This underscores the profound emotional resonance of visual imagery in driving empathy, understanding, and action.

Images and pictures are often easier to understand compared to data graphs or plain text. Visual representations, such as pictures, provide immediate and intuitive understanding, as they can convey information without the need for complex interpretation. On the other hand, data graphs and conceptual graphs may require some level of familiarity with the specific type of graph and the underlying concepts being represented.

In comparison to written or statistical information, images can transcend intellectual analysis and directly engage the viewer's emotions. They can evoke empathy, provoke introspection, and foster a sense of shared humanity, making complex issues more tangible and immediate. This universal emotional resonance enables images to bridge cultural divides and foster connections based on shared human experiences.

While documentary photography is a powerful tool, it comes with ethical responsibilities. Photographers must navigate the delicate balance between raising awareness and respecting the dignity of those they document. In the pursuit of truth, it is crucial to obtain informed consent whenever possible and avoid exploiting vulnerable subjects.

Photographers like Kevin Carter, whose haunting image of a starving child and vulture won a Pulitzer Prize, faced ethical criticism for not intervening to help the child. This raises important questions about the responsibility of photographers to balance their role as observers and potential advocates.

Documentary photographers often find themselves in the role of advocates for marginalised communities, using their craft to amplify the voices of those often overlooked or unheard.

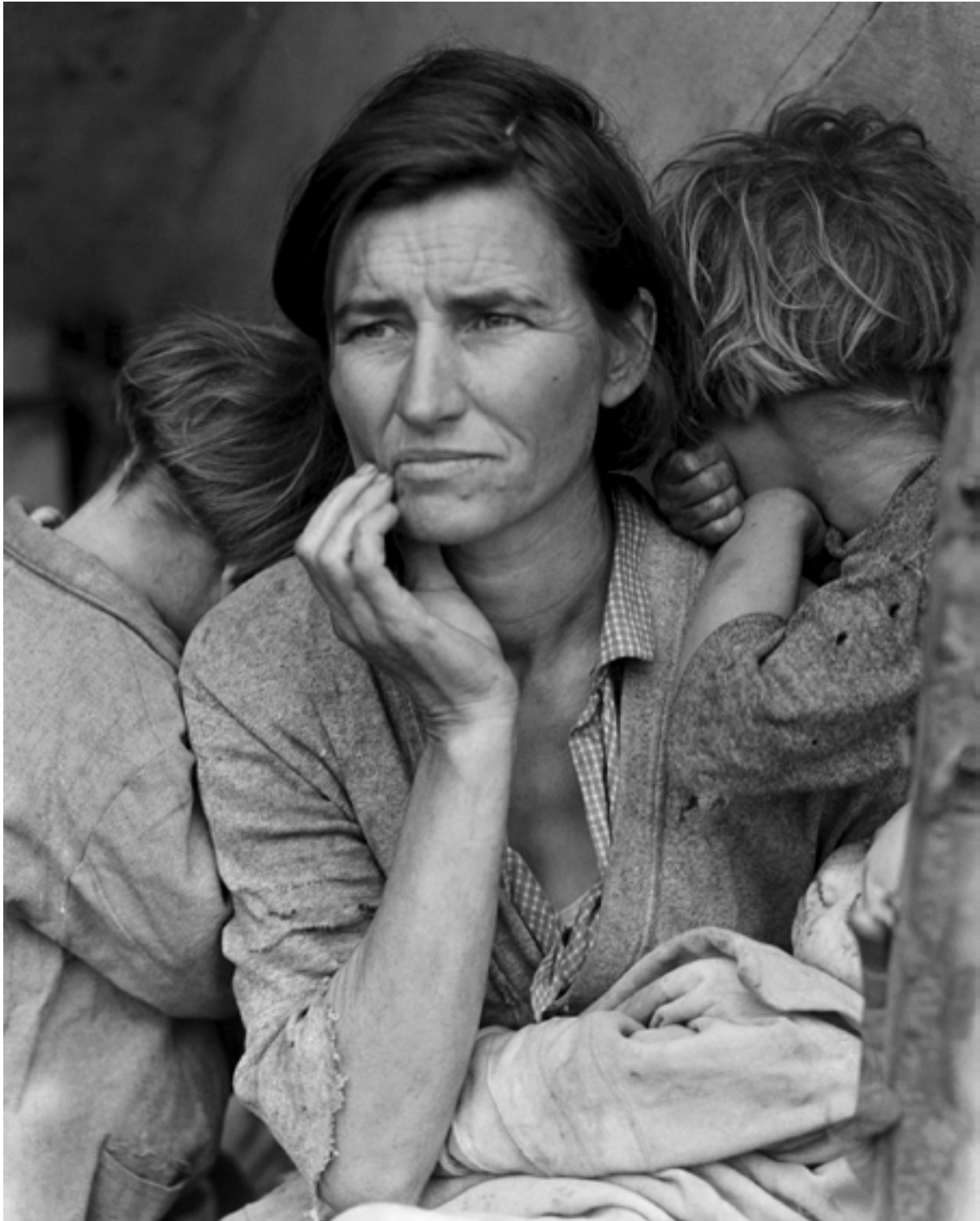
One powerful aspect of this advocacy is the decision to photograph one's own community—a choice that brings authenticity, connection, and a deeper understanding of the social issues at play. Tish Murtha, a British documentary photographer is an example of the impact and importance of documenting the narratives of one's own community.

Murtha's work, including the series "Youth Unemployment," illustrates the struggles, joys, and everyday realities of the people in her hometown. By intimately understanding the nuances, Murtha was able to depict the human experience in a way that resonated deeply with her subjects and viewers alike.

Photographing one's own community brings a level of authenticity and trust that might be challenging to achieve as an outsider. Murtha's images not only documented the challenges faced by marginalised communities but also served as a testament to the strength, resilience, and humanity within them. By presenting an insider's perspective, photographers can break down stereotypes and challenge preconceived notions, fostering a more accurate understanding of the people they document.

Advocacy through documentary photography comes with a great responsibility—the responsibility to truthfully represent the stories of those being documented. Inaccurate or sensationalised images can perpetuate stereotypes and contribute to misperceptions.

Accuracy in representation goes beyond photographing a single moment; it involves understanding the broader context and complexities of the issues at hand. It requires building relationships with people, listening to their stories, and presenting a comprehensive narrative that goes beyond superficial impressions. By doing so, photographers can contribute to a more informed and empathetic public discourse.



The Dust Bowl and drought devastated some farm families in the early 1930's, such as this 32 year old mother of seven. "Migrant Mother", black and white photograph by Dorothea Lange, Nipomo, California, February, 1936. (Library of Congress)



Red Cross volunteers wearing dust masks, Liberal, Kansas. (Kansas State Historical Society)

Visual narratives in advocacy, particularly through documentary photography, possess a unique power that transcends traditional modes of communication. They can evoke emotions, create empathy, and tell stories that resonate deeply with audiences. The appealing nature of images can be a potent tool for social change.

As for the advocacy, a balanced approach is crucial. While emotional impact is a driving force, combining it with factual information ensures a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. Documentary photography has the capacity to bring statistics and data to life, offering a human perspective to complex problems. This fusion of emotional storytelling with concrete facts fosters a more profound connection between the audience and the advocacy message.

Recognising the potential for change within the frames of compelling visuals is essential. When organisations leverage imagery in their work, they are not merely presenting pictures but creating a powerful narrative that has the potential to influence perceptions and inspire action. Each frame tells a story, and within those stories lie the seeds of awareness, understanding, and a call to make a difference.

Your support matters! Support initiatives who contribute to the amplification of voices that

might otherwise go unheard. Share their work on social media, engage with their campaigns, and spread the word about the powerful stories they tell. Your digital footprint has the potential to reach far and wide, creating a ripple effect of awareness and understanding.

Consider donating to these organisations or participating in their programs. Financial support enables them to continue their vital work, creating a lasting impact on the issues they address. Whether it's gender equality, human rights, environmental sustainability, or any other cause close to your heart, your contribution helps sustain the visual narratives that drive change.

Engage in conversations inspired by these visual stories. Share your thoughts, insights, and experiences related to the issues they highlight. By fostering dialogue, you contribute to a collective understanding and inspire others to join the conversation.

Lastly, explore ways to integrate visual storytelling into your own advocacy efforts. Whether through sharing impactful visuals, creating your narratives, or supporting local photographers, you become a storyteller for change. Your voice, combined with others, forms a chorus that resonates louder and farther, making a real difference in the world.

A CONVERSATION ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY WITH NATALIA CAMPOS

by Maria Vesselko

City/Country

Dublin, Ireland.

What do you enjoy most about photography?

I love photography on many levels, from the moment I'm actually behind the camera composing and looking for pictures and feeling the adrenaline and thrill that we get when we're making photographs to the more solid and empowering positive aspects that photography offers.

Like the way it helps me understand more about the world in which we live and all the people who inhabit it. Photography can teach us more empathy and tolerance, but I also believe that is a choice, because photography is a language and a tool, and one can choose how to use it.

Some photographers, such as Mary Ellen Mark, have taught me empathy through their work; she knew how to portray all people in a dignified way; when we look at her photographs, it feels as if we have actually met the people in them, which makes me want to understand people's stories and circumstances rather than judge.

I love how photography inspires me, keeps me curious, and gives me a sense of purpose even when I'm not taking pictures. It has also changed the way I view life; before my passion for photography began, I felt as if I was living through filters. Now, I can see reality, injustices, and both the beauty and the pain of the world; I will always be grateful for that because it makes me feel alive.

Was there anything that inspired you to start making photos?

Yes, the first time I decided to take a real picture was

when I attended a Brazilian protest in Dublin in 2018. I was by myself and the protest was against former President Jair Bolsonaro, and I was feeling very impassioned by the cause and the people around me chanting and marching, so it felt natural to start taking pictures, which is what I did.

Prior to that, a close friend who is also a very passionate photographer introduced me to it and showed me some of the most important work ever done in photography.

When I was a child my dream was to make films as I thought it was the best way to tell stories and I was really drawn to that, so around five years ago when I learned the power of a photograph and how it communicates ideas and stories to the public, it made me feel connected with my childhood dream.

What is your favourite object/subject/topic to photograph?

People are by far my favourite subject to photograph; at the moment, I mainly do photojournalism, which takes me to action moments where people are projecting intense emotions, which I undeniably am very drawn to, but my intention is to also try to go into a more documentary path where I can make more intimate photographs, have a deeper connection with the subject, and work on long-term projects, which is what I most admire in photography.

My topic of focus are human conditions, social and political issues, conflict and its consequences and culture.

Do you feel it is important to share your vision on social media?

Yes, I think it's essential to offer my views on life and



A group of women performed “Un violador en tu camino”, “A rapist in your path”, on International Women’s Day for the 8M strike of 2020. The performance also known as “The Rapist is you” was created by the feminist collective called Las Tesis from Valparaíso, Chile. Dublin, Ireland. March, 2020.

on the world on social media, especially in light of the amount of misinformation being spread about current events and people suffering as a result of it.

Who do you think is your audience?

My aimed audience at the moment is not specific, they are people from different backgrounds and nationalities that are looking to be informed and have followed me because of my ongoing photojournalism work that I share on social media. Although their nationalities are varied the vast majority lives in Ireland and in Brazil.

Do you like working on stories at home/in your local community? If yes/no – why?

Yes, I enjoy working on stories in my local community as I feel very welcomed by the people I’m photographing and they feel comfortable while I’m there photographing.

For example, when I photographed the Brazilian elections in Dublin last year, it was very rewarding and inspiring to spend the time celebrating with my own people while documenting the moment, it just felt natural.

Do you think photography could change someone’s life? In what way?

Absolutely, as I mentioned before, photography changed my life completely, I am much more aware of the reality of the world, which made me more empathetic and understanding, less indifferent and judgmental; but of course besides changing the life of a photographer, a photograph can definitely change people’s life in a more direct way by raising awareness and calling for help when exposing a situation or in a more indirect way inspiring and educating people.

What role does photography plays in advocacy?

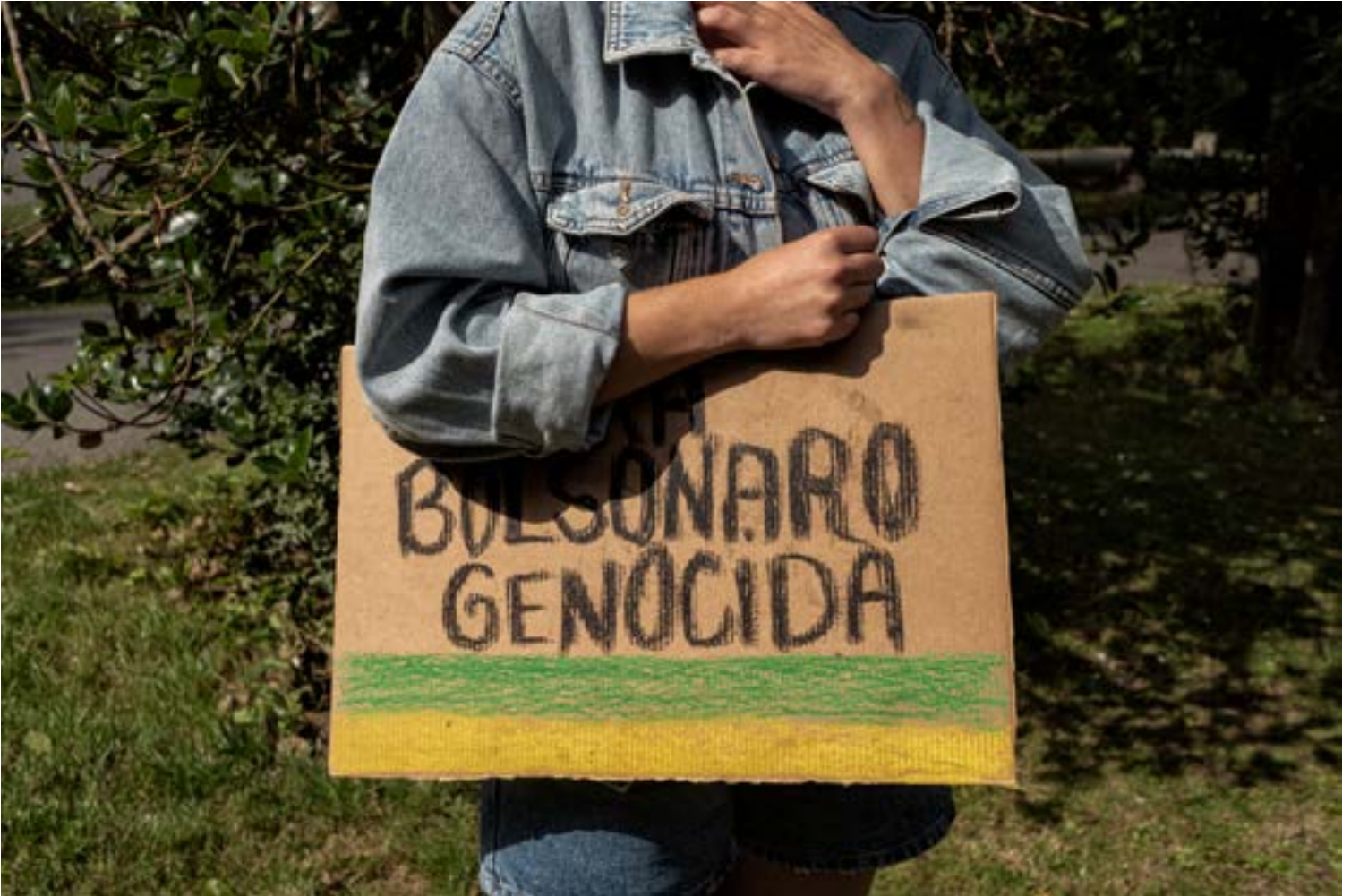
An extremely important role, a photograph can demand an action when it exposes the gravity of a situation as is the case right now as we witness the atrocities of the genocide in Gaza through pictures. A photograph is also able to convey the demands and requests of individuals protesting for a certain cause to the public eye in the hope that the demands will be met, to help to enhance the noise that the protestors are working to create, to be seen internationally, and to help to pressure the rulers.



A Georgian protester begs to the Georgian police authorities during a heated demonstration against Russian Occupation of Georgia after a Russian lawmaker's, Sergei Gavrilov made a speech inside the Georgian Parliament. Tbilisi, Georgia. June, 2019.



Young women protesting at the International Women's Day for the 8M strike of 2020. Dublin, Ireland. March, 2020.



Protester holding a plaque saying: 'Bolsonaro Genocida' that translates 'Bolsonaro Genocidal' at the protest against the Brazilian government during the pandemic. Dublin, Ireland. July, 2021.



CATU members and housing activists protesting in support of residents who had been evicted and subjected to the violence in Prussia street. Dublin, Ireland. October, 2021.



Victims' families, locals, supporters, and politicians attended to the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Derry, Dublin, Ireland. January, 2022.



Protesters marching to demonstrate against the rising cost of living in Ireland. Dublin, Ireland. September, 2022.



People at a protest in support of refugees, migrants and immigrants, in the anti-racist "Ireland for all" march. Participants were protesting against discrimination, hatred, disinformation, and also against the recent far-right demonstrations in Dublin over the past few months. Dublin, Ireland. February, 2023.



Delivery workers marched through the streets of Dublin calling for more safety at work. Dublin, Ireland. July, 2023.

Thousands of people gathered and marched through the streets of Dublin City in support of Palestinians. Protesters demanded an immediate cease-fire, the expulsion of Israel's ambassador in Dublin, a boycott of Israeli-supporting products and organisations and action from the Irish government. Dublin, Ireland. October, 2023.





INTERVIEW WITH FOTOESSA, GREECE

The Center for Education, Research and Action FOTOESSA is an interdisciplinary initiative that aims to bridge the gap between academic research and civil society practices. Fotoessa in ancient Greek means “full of light”.

In September 2023, FOTOESSA took part in the femLENS Ethical Storytelling workshops supported by the Anna Lindh Foundation.

by Yannis and Aspasia Storytelling

Please briefly introduce the organisation you are working with.

The Center for Education, Research and Action, FOTOESSA, is an interdisciplinary initiative that aims to bridge the gap between academic research and civil society practices and it is based in a coastal southern suburb of Athens, in Greece, called Anavyssos. Through experiential programs, collaborations and initiatives, at local, national and transnational level, we encourage intercultural dialogue, social and creative entrepreneurship, support vulnerable social groups and promote non-formal education and lifelong learning. At Fotoessa we contribute to the effort for more resilient, inclusive societies, for communities with active citizens who empower the human rights and the sustainability of our planet - home every day. We try to inspire children and young people to highlight their special, transformative powers by creating new, better individual and common perspectives. We encourage self-awareness and personal growth as integral parts of collective well-being and we strive to fearlessly build bridges from the inside out, from “Me” to “We”, in order to establish more firmly our common humanity.

Does your organisation leverage photography as a tool for advocacy? If yes, how does your organisation currently leverage visual advocacy, specifically through the use of photography, to communicate its mission and goals. If no, please explain.

As we say in intercultural education, “any action is a reaction”, which means that we consider photography a strong tool of advocacy for any of the issues we tackle. We use photography threefold: 1. as a mean to communicate and promote our projects, 2. as an integral educational tool in our intercultural workshops and trainings in order to encourage self-awareness, critical thinking and empathy, to suspend judgment and address stereotypes, and 3. as a direct advocacy tool through storytelling and other art projects. (e.g. our participation in the BeMyVoice program for freedom of expression).

How do you think photography has the power to impact or bring change to our society?

“A picture is a thousand words” and in our societies, where visual messages are dominant, photography is a most powerful tool to educate and sensitise while crossing barriers, such as language, space and time.

Would you like to see more ethical photography that represents a community you are working with?

We would definitively like to see -and produce- more ethical photography representing communities we are working with, such as our local community in Athens Riviera, a multicultural area with old Greek refugees from Asia Minor - Turkey, refugees and immigrants from Albania, Middle East, Asia and Africa, local inhabitants descending from old rural populations, relocated people from the city of Athens and tourists.

YOUNG WAITRESSES OF THE ATHENIAN RIVIERA



A typical beach bar of the Athens Riviera, summer 2023.

Despite the idyllic view, 850.000 Greeks and foreign tourists are pouring in to the 515 beaches of the Attica region every weekend and 180.000 daily, during high season.



More than 78.000 people work in these beach bars, 47% of which are women. They are paid around 4 Euros per hour for 8 hour shifts. Especially young waitresses that work on the sand are subjected to very harsh working conditions, facing sunburns, sun strokes, exhaustion, discrimination and harassment.



"I am a university student, as many of the girls working in the beach bars in my small coastal community, in the south of Attica. No one enjoys this job but we need to support our winter expenses. After the lockdown, conditions were even harder, having to wear a mask in the heat."



Young women working in the beach bars, frequently suffer from gender abuse. Some beach bars have security, but, still, non physical harassment is within a day's job.

"We are expected to be pleasant and polite. I can feel people staring at me in an offensive way, even making sleazy remarks, but I try not to pay attention and concentrate on my paycheck."



Young waitresses are expected to exceed their job description requirements, for example, by cleaning toilets and carrying heavy loads. When they brake or spill something, they usually have to pay for it.



One man's leisure, other man's struggle: sunburned, wet from sweat, completely exhausted, just crashing on the sofa, still in the work uniform.



By the end of the high season, young waitresses find it difficult not to lose their direction in life, their dreams and future aspirations. Waitressing may help to survive but also consumes valuable creative time.

PURGATORY

PURGATORIO
(Fraz. di Custonaci)

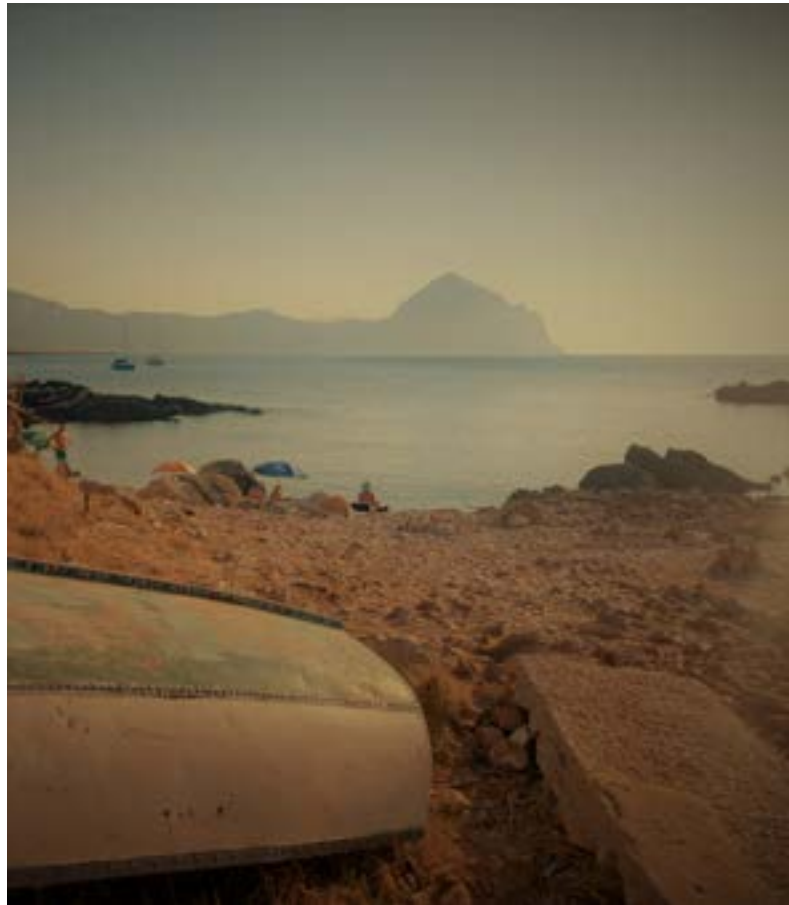


by Romina Delia

I am a Mediterranean woman who in mid-September 2023 spent a week travelling between two small islands on the back of a motorbike with my boyfriend (while Morocco had a deadly earthquake and devastation gripped Libya after catastrophic flooding). We travelled from Malta to Sicily - two islands in the Mediterranean, located in that in between state – between heaven and hell, the liminal space between Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Sicily and Malta are two small islands known for their Catholic beliefs, festas, processions, fireworks, cannoli, pizza, pasta and fresh fish. The Maltese call their God “Alla”. Some of the islanders are known to go to church every Sunday, spending their summer days vegetating on the beach, soaking up the sun or floating around aimlessly on their lilos, taking afternoon siestas and indulging in scrumptious lunches and dinners, drinking plenty of vino (some also like to party all night, living hedonistic lives, indulging in plenty of alcohol and drugs. They reputedly also excel in mafia and corruption according to the international press... but shhhh!!).

According to the local Tourism Authorities they have beautiful beaches and the most authentic neolithic temples and baroque churches (and cranes and ugly concrete high rises everywhere these days). That weekend in mid-September Malta also celebrated Europride; LGBTQ+ rights in Malta rank among the highest in the world (is it the same for Maltese/ Mediterranean women though?). “You haha who cares... let’s eat”







INTERVIEW WITH BOA CRIAÇÃO, PORTUGAL

boa CRIAÇÃO is a non-profit cooperative based in in Mértola, Portugal, dedicated to the development of cultural activities in the various artistic areas, which stimulate and promote contemporary creation, foster creativity, education and artistic training. It offers to communities services in the areas of education and training; consulting, mentoring and curating; cultural and creative tourism; local, environmental and sustainable development. It is also dedicated to the design, development and, the implementation and support of programmes and projects under Development Cooperation and Development Education, and, carrying out initiatives to promote active and global citizenship that stimulate the participation of people in social transformation.

In September 2023, boa CRIAÇÃO took part in the femLENS Ethical Storytelling workshops supported by the Anna Lindh Foundation.

by Rita Sales

Briefly introduce the organisation you are working in (where are you based, who do you work with, what is your mission, what are your actions?).

boa CRIAÇÃO, its a non-profit cultural cooperative, created in 2022, in a small rural village in the municipality of Mértola, located in the interior of Portugal. The cooperative comes as a result of the project De Boca em Boca - histórias a nutrir comunidades (Word of Mouth – Stories to Nurture Communities), started in 2020, that aims to reactivate community storytelling.

The cooperative is dedicated to the development of cultural and artistic activities in the community, in deep connection with local culture, nature and sustainability, citizen participation, and social transformation.

We act in a territory characterised by desertification, where the population experiences isolation, ageing, social, cultural and digital exclusion and has low levels of literacy, in general. It is a land that seems to be made up of disappearances, of people who are gone, of empty places, of lost objects, but where people are still alive, with memory and a land with joy for sharing and conviviality.

The activities of boa CRIAÇÃO aim to facilitate the access to culture and education, with special emphasis to vulnerable people and groups, with less opportunities or in situations of social exclusion; seek to safeguard and promote the material and immaterial heritage; intend to produce and execute artistic work and cultural events in the interior of Portugal; to promote solidarity and the reinforcement of people's feeling of belonging in communities; to deepen the exercise of Social Rights, Human and

Fundamental Rights, Global Citizenship and the Goals for Sustainable Development.

Main Projects / Activities:

Contos ao Largo (Tales in the square) e Ora agora contas tu! (Now you count!)

Storytelling sessions where people are encouraged to tell and thus share their memory of oral tradition and life stories. It is also intended to contribute to the county's cultural dynamism and to the creation of positive collective memories.

Digital Resource Center

Online platform for disseminating the project, which provides the collection of the oral tradition carried out, as well as an area to receive contributions from the community.

Short Story Writing

Original texts based on listening to the life stories of the population of Mértola. Written by Pedro Faria Bravo who has dedicated himself for several years to writing the stories he hears told by ordinary people. Skilled in working with people's memory, he knows how to preserve the marks of oral language and ferment the genuineness of events, which he tempers with his intimate poetry.

Paper Photography

At each meeting or activity we photograph people and places, always taking care to respect each one's spaces. When we return to the same place, we look for people to give them their photograph on paper. We realise how important physical contact with their photographed image is for many people, in times when so much of the world becomes virtual and impalpable, therefore,

inaccessible to those who do not use digital media.

Path, Landscapes and People - a journey through the De Boca em Boca - histórias a nutrir comunidades (Word of Mouth – Stories to Nurture Communities)

This is at the same time a presentation of the work carried out, a storytelling session and a conversation where the participants will have the opportunity to get to know the route, actors and places of the De Boca em Boca - histórias a nutrir comunidades (Word of Mouth – Stories to Nurture Communities). Whoever joins us will be able to experience and reflect on the power of stories in communities and groups, be they neighbourhoods, villages, schools, families, and so on. And because oral narration contributes to promoting and reinforcing collective memory, this gigantic tale that, over time, spreads from mouth to mouth, will also be able to taste a little of its flavour in this session. By sharing the work process carried out within the framework of the De Boca em Boca (Word of Mouth) project, we believe we can contribute to increasing the number of people telling and listening, expanding the place given to imagination, creation and communion, in societies and in life.

The Gleaners of Stories

We challenge different groups of the community, namely families, schools and other institutions and organisations join us and seek for stories wherever they are. This action arises from the desire to expand the movement of telling and listening to different groups of the community, namely families, schools and other institutions and organisations. Inspired by Agnès Varda and her documentary *Gleaners and I* (Les glaneurs et la glaneuse), we claim to be story gleaners with the intention of keeping alive the tradition of storytellers, thus reinforcing the life and culture of our community.

Are there stories again today?

He come back to places where we have already been, to listen to people identified as oral heritage holders. The objective is to continue the cultural dynamism in the villages, by telling stories, listening better

and gathering through recordings and photographs.

Terra que Conta - as histórias de Mértola na rádio e em podcast (Land that Counts - Mértola's stories on radio and podcast)

It is a celebration of listening to stories from Mértola, its people and territory, based on collections carried out. It's a way of keeping alive the storytelling movement that is at the genesis of our work. Each program presents a listening path of a place, giving voice to the landscape, reinforcing its richness and value. We address the local listeners, whose voices we hear in the programs, making the importance of this culture audible, through the exercise of building narratives.

Grupo de Teatro Comunitário (Community Theater Group)

Group open to anyone who wishes to develop their artistic, expression and communication skills. It is a space for exploring the body, voice and creative potential, aimed at people of any age with or without previous theater experience. Participants have access to techniques of interpretation, improvisation, preparation and artistic creation, whether individually or in groups, as well as the possibility of participating in the public presentation of a collective creation.

Caminhos Contados - percursos pedestres performativos (Counted Paths - performative walking routes)

Performative walks that invite people to discover the territory, reconnecting with old paths that are now rarely trodden, proposing the design of a narrative cartography of the landscape and places. Led by a field guide and an actress, the paths are drawn based on experiencing the landscape and listening to local stories and call for everyone to participate: walking, listening and interacting with each other and with their surroundings; being an opportunity for a performative encounter with our oral tradition.

Conversas De Boca em Boca (Word of Mouth Conversations)

Cycle of talks about artistic and cultural practices of proximity, in the community and participatory. We start by presenting work experiences to follow the path of dialogue, encounter and perspective on the future. The

conversations are decentralised and carried out in partnership with recreational societies and parish councils in the municipality's villages.

Does your organisation leverage photography as a tool for advocacy? If yes, how does your organisation currently leverage visual advocacy, specifically through the use of photography, to communicate its mission and goals. If no, please explain.

We have a strong relationship with photography, which accompanies our day-to-day activities and we feel that it is a powerful way to relate to the world and express ideas in a particular way. We photograph and share images of our work process, the challenges and discoveries we have made. There is a strong relationship between the texts and images we create, which complement each other, improving the communication of the messages we want to convey to the outside world. We have not yet developed participatory photography actions, but we wish to expand work with the community around photography and visual culture. One of our biggest challenges is that we are few, which sometimes limits the possibility of deepening our work. We are aware, from the feedback we receive from the people who accompany us, that photography plays a fundamental role in building the identity of our cooperative, in transmitting our mission and values and sharing this with the community.

How do you think photography has the power to impact or bring change our society?

When people wish, even a small and simple act can have an impact on society, and photography has the power to capture, guide and broaden others' views on the importance of small and simple things. Through photography we can also communicate in an intuitive and abstract way, because, even between the lines of the real world, there is space for different narratives to emerge. Many areas of our being are highly sensitive to communicating through images, so when we do so we can summon internal reactions that become permeable to the messages we want to transmit. For the same reason, photography

can also be a powerful tool in the hands and eyes of people in situations of exclusion and vulnerability, who are now able to express what they think and feel through their eyes. Within us there are many stories, sometimes silenced, that can gain a voice when we have access to less conventional and more artistic means to tell them. Photography can thus contribute to documenting experiences, expressing opinions, protesting and demanding, sharing personal stories, to create positive narratives, giving people a voice. Ethical photography, in particular, contributes to strengthening the work of organisations like ours, which develop projects in the community and frequently question themselves about their principles and work processes, due to the values it advocates, but also due to the way it promotes closeness and people's participation.

Would you like to see more ethical photography that represents a community you are working with?

Yes, no doubt. Our community, being rural and of very impoverished origin, did not, in general, have regular access to photography throughout its life, which represents a challenge for us in the approach we would like to have. Also, as the population is older, it continues to have a distant relationship with photography which, nowadays, proliferates throughout the digital world. Sometimes they say that younger family members take their portraits but that they never see them, saying that they do not have access to paper photographs. It should be noted that we sometimes find the exploitation of representations of older people, with images that exaggerate and increase their wrinkles and expressions, without considering their opinion or consent. Reflecting on the intensive use of photography in today's society, we think it makes more and more sense to work on it, doing activism in favour of and promoting the values of ethical photography. Another situation where photography can make a difference is through the possibility it opens up for people's voices to be heard beyond the small family and neighbourhood circles, where they usually express their needs and discontent.

● OUR SCHOOL, ● OUR STORIES



The people of Corte da Velha have a lot to say about their school days, when as children they spent four, five or more years in this place whose mission was to educate them.

There was not always a school in the village, the first one operated in a house provided by a private individual and it was only in the 1960s that a building was built for that purpose, a project integrated into a national plan for the construction of public schools.

In those times, children, used to growing up outdoors and being educated by family, neighbours and friends, found themselves in front of a teacher, a symbol of respect and authority, closed in a room, sitting, listening to the teachings that were coming from programs


decided in Lisbon. Their stories rarely talk about these teachings, about school subjects, but rather they talk about themselves, what they felt, the relationship they had with other children, the use of authority by the teachers, and the relationship between this space and the outside world, their world.

With this project we set out to listen to the stories of people who were children at the Corte da Velha school, creating images that take us to the places of those stories, revisiting the memories of the population. The space, which we now return to inhabit with culture and conviviality, can therefore be a place for meeting and building new memories.

- mais o recreio da escola
 - na aldeia
 - as gameiras
 - de leitura
 - um cheiro para a vida silvestre
 - vir hotéis p/ insectos
 - as pessoas de casa, daqui do monte, para aqui
 - montar "uma" parede - juntos
 - saberes tradicionais
 -

- yoga / José
 - Ribeiro
 - ligação / uma qualidade
 - BAILES
 - TRAZER AS CRIANÇAS
 PARA O RECREIO E
 BRINCAR

- constr
 - CON CU
 - ofi
 - and
 - ofi
 - Da
 - Cri
 - M.
 - cade
 - Fa
 - ta
 - Fa
 - FA





Special thanks to the following organisations that have participated in or assisted/funded the workshops in 2023:

WCI-Donegal, Ireland

ALF Hands-On, Anna Lindh Foundation Capacity Enhancement Programme, Intercultural Dialogue, Management, Strategy

femLENS MTÜ is an Estonian non-profit association (registration number 80429622). Our vision is empowered women creating and sharing their own stories about their lives.

WE SEE is the magazine of femLENS.

Copyright © 2023, femLENS

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without written permission from femLENS.

Created in Narva, Estonia.

WE SEE

The femLENS magazine

Editor

femLENS

info@femlens.com

Publisher

Blurb.com

Contacts:

femlens.com

info@femlens.com

Instagram/Facebook: @femlens

Twitter @femlensphoto

Front cover photo by Natalia Campos, Dublin, Ireland, 2023.

Back cover photo by Rochelle Lazaro, femLENS photovoice training as part of the ENoMW project "AGENCY: Vote with her", 2023, Dublin, Ireland.



Photo by Amina Hadj Ameur
femLENS workshops 2023, Ireland



Photo by Orsolya Komlósi
femLENS workshops 2023,
Hungary



AY

AGENCY

Vote with her

