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Daylight

magazine



Afghanistan

Eren Aytuğ | Adam Broomberg & Oliver Chanarin | Teru Kuwayama & Balazs Gardi | Tim Hetherington | Aaron Huey | Yannis Kontos | Seamus Murphy | Moises Saman | Veronique de Viguerie | Farzana Wahidy | Beth Wald

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Founding Editors: Taj Forer & Michael Itkoff

Design: Ursula Damm

Website: Ethan Clauset

Copyeditor: Sally Robertson

DAYLIGHT MULTIMEDIA:

Multimedia Director: Rick Williamson | **Multimedia Producers:** Lauren Brenner, L. Driskell, Aaron Greenhood, Marco Gualtieri, Yusuf Sayman

DAYLIGHT DAILY BLOG CONTRIBUTORS:

Mিনny Lee, Bill Lowenburg, Inga Schneider, Victor Sira, Brian Ulrich, Emiliano Valdés, Chris Wiley

INTERNS:

William Matthew Harvey, Annalise Kohlberger, Alexandra Lethbridge, Nicholas Pollack, Nathanael Turner, Stephanie Tyler

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Front Cover

Photograph by Lana Šlezić. Malalai Kakar was the first policewoman in Kandahar. She was a pioneer for Afghan women in one of the most oppressive cities in the world. She was shot and killed by the Taliban outside her home in September 2008. She was the mother of six.

Inside Front Cover

Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin,

The Press Conference, June 9, 2008 (600cm X 76.2cm, Unique work, Detail)

Last year Broomberg and Chanarin were embedded with the British Army in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Instead of a camera they took with them 50 meters of photographic paper. The project functions as a critique of conflict photography in the age of embedded journalism, questioning what it means to be a professional witness and what we as consumers of images of conflict demand to see. www.choppedliver.info

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Back Cover

Seamus Murphy, Ghulam Ali, Parwan Province November 2001. From the book, *A Darkness Visible: Afghanistan* (Saqi Books, 2008). A young girl soon after dawn in the village of Ghulam Ali on the Shamali Plain. Fighting between the Northern Alliance and the Taliban, along with massive US airstrikes, made the plain a critically dangerous place to live.

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For this edition of Daylight we have focused on the visual depiction of Afghanistan as a supplement to news coverage from the region. It is our aim that collectively these portfolios will deepen our knowledge and understanding of the region's vast history, tenuous present, and uncertain future.

The landscape of Afghanistan has been fraught with conflict and unease throughout much of history, at times serving as the backdrop for conflicts not necessarily born on its soil. Unfortunately, with decades of war scarring the natural, cultural, and economic landscape, it has been the citizens of Afghanistan who have been affected most dramatically, despite remaining nearly invisible.

In the 1970s, the Cold War battle between Afghanistan's Islamist Mujahideen Resistance and the Soviet Russia-supported Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, led the US to arm and train the Taliban in an attempt to aid in toppling the Marxist government ruling Afghanistan at the time. As a result of this US military support and training, the Taliban now comprises the largest, most organized threat to regional stability. In addition to the situation in Afghanistan, recent land assimilation by Taliban warlords advancing their reach into central Pakistan has expanded the scope of the conflict beyond Afghan borders. For the past few years, military involvement in Pakistan has been based around reconnaissance and covert operations; however, these cursory military strategies are no longer producing results and may no longer be sufficient intervention.

The following photographs demonstrate the multifarious ways in which Afghanistan has recently been recorded and depicted. The many personal, subjective truths contained within this edition of Daylight are part historic record, part creative expression, and overall represent individual ways of understanding and finding meaning from life in this war-torn land.

—The Editors

Contributors

Eren Aytuğ specializes in editorial photography, both reportage and portrait work. He worked as a full-time photojournalist for many magazines and newspapers between 1998 and 2007. For the past two years he has worked for Turkish and foreign publications as well as pursuing numerous personal photography projects.

Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin are a photographic team based in London. *Ghetto* (2003), is a collection of their work as editors and principal photographers of *Colors* magazine, and they have published four other books that accompanied exhibitions: *Trust* (2000); *Mr. Mkhize's Portrait* (2004), which documented South Africa ten years after apartheid; *Chicago* (2006), an exploration of contemporary Israel; and *Fig.* (2007). They have received numerous awards, including the Vic Odden award from the Royal Photographic Society.

Tim Hetherington is a photographer and filmmaker. He creates visual communication in a diverse range of forms, from digital projections at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London to fly-poster exhibitions in Lagos to handheld device downloads. His book about Liberia, *Long Story Bit By Bit*, was published by Umbrage Editions in May 2009 and his film about the war in Afghanistan will be released in 2010.

Aaron Huey makes photographs for *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, *Harper's*, and other publications. He is also known for his 3,500-mile solo walk across America. He is working on a book and feature-length documentary film about the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Two years ago, he married his wife Kristin on a rusting Russian tank on the edge of Kabul. They now live in Seattle.

Yannis Kontos was born in Greece. He is a freelance photographer represented by the American agency Polaris Images. Over the last decade, Kontos has documented the wars in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. He has won 20 international awards for his work and his photographs have been published and exhibited internationally.

Teru Kuwayama & Balazs Gardi are co-directors of November Eleven, an organization dedicated to independent arts and media, crisis reporting, and humanitarian assistance. November Eleven operates www.lightstalkers.org and produced Battlespace Project, a traveling exhibition of photographs from Iraq and Afghanistan. Gardi received the Prix Bayeux War Correspondents Award, the PX3 Photographer of the Year award, and awards from World Press Photo, POYi, and Getty Images. He is working on a project about the global water crisis. Kuwayama has received awards and fellowships from the Eugene Smith Fund, the Alicia Patterson Foundation, the New York Foundation for the Arts, and the South Asian Journalists

Association. He is a 2009-2010 Knight Stanford fellow, focusing on conflict reporting in South Asia.

Seamus Murphy began photographing Afghanistan in 1994. His book *A Darkness Visible: Afghanistan* (Saqi Books, 2008) focuses on the rise of the Taliban and the impact of the US invasion. For two decades, he has worked extensively in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and most recently America. His accolades include six World Press Photo Awards.

Moises Saman (b. 1974, Lima, Peru) is a freelance photographer based in Brooklyn, New York. He is a regular contributor to *The New York Times*, where he has published projects from Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, and Gaza among others. In 2007, Saman published *Afghanistan: Broken Promise* (Charta), representing six years of work in the region.

Lana Šlezic (Toronto, Canada), born to Croatian parents in 1973, took part in the 2005 World Press Joop Swart Masterclass in Amsterdam. In 2007 she won the Luis Valtuena Special Prize for Humanitarian Photography and a World Press Photo Award for her work on Afghan women. Her book *Forsaken* was chosen as one of the "Top Ten Photo Books of the Year" by American Photo Magazine in 2008. She lives in New Delhi with her husband and son.

Veronique de Viguerie, 31, is a French photo reporter represented by Getty Images who lived for three years in Afghanistan. In 2005, she published *Afghanistan, Regards Croisés* (Hachette). In 2006, she received the Canon Prize and the Lagardere Award. In 2008, she photographed insurgents who killed French soldiers in Afghanistan and introduced herself to the Somali pirates. In 2009, she received a World Press Photo Award.

Farzana Wahidy was born in Kandahar, Afghanistan in 1984 and attended school during the Afghan civil war. When the Taliban took over she secretly continued to attend school. When the Taliban were defeated in 2002 she completed high school and enrolled in a program sponsored by the AINA Photojournalism Institute. In 2004 she began working as a photojournalist for Agence-France Presse and the Associated Press. In 2008, she received a Merit Award from the All Roads Photography Program sponsored by National Geographic and a gold award in the portrait category of the College Photographer of the Year competition at the University of Missouri.

Beth Wald combines a lifelong love of the natural environment and a fascination with the world's diverse cultures into a wide-ranging visual exploration of how humanity interacts with nature. Most recently, she has worked to document cultures and landscapes at risk, including the people and environment of Afghanistan. She received the 2006 Rowell Award.

Though nine years have passed since the US-led occupation, "security" has not been achieved in Afghanistan. Civilian reform, reconstruction, and economic development are not yet complete. Security, education, health, housing, electricity, transportation, and domestic water are the most pressing matters to be dealt with. Despite these obstacles, life goes on in Kabul's streets. With the partial lifting of the Taliban regime's restrictions, football games are once again being held, people are enjoying the freedom of watching TV, and some of the young women are wearing scarves instead of the traditional burqa. This new conjuncture suggests that existing uncertainty could be interpreted as hope for a new start.



Kabul National Stadium. Amateur Football League started for the first time in 2006. March 2006. Kabul



Indian film and music stars postcards are best-sellers. March 2006. Kabul



In Kabul, where watching TV in houses is not common, young men watch TV and eat ice cream in cafes on Friday holidays. March 2006. Kabul



Kabul University. March 2006. Kabul



Bazaar. March 2006. Kabul

Moises Saman

Broken Promise

This series represents a personal journey of discovery and disenchantment with what I found in Afghanistan. I first arrived in Afghanistan shortly after the attacks on September 11th. Like the hundreds of other young photojournalists who descended on this far-off land, I was eager to photograph war at an exceptional time in history. It was a confusing time that, eight years later, after Iraq, Lebanon, Gaza, Colombia, and countless other experiences, seems far removed in my memory.

The Afghanistan I know is a land of clashing contrasts and raw beauty, its landscape scarred by centuries of wars fought against foreign armies and with and against itself. Since 2001 I have returned over and over again, with the hope of documenting the promise of peace and prosperity

made by the latest invading powers. I soon realized the fragility of this promise and found Afghanistan staring at a precipice, its free-fall toward anarchy gaining strength throughout the country, no longer confined to the Pashto-speaking provinces where the Taliban was born and remains entrenched.

It is evident all around me on each subsequent visit. Yet another road that is no longer safe to travel on, a labyrinth of blast walls surrounding Kabul, the hostile stare of an innocent child. For the local population, peace and stability have become a fleeting dream, not a sustainable promise in which their sense of hope finds refuge.

Still, I continue to find myself drawn to this remarkable place and its people, to their unmatched sense of pride in being Afghan, and to the dignity that remains despite their battered existence.



KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN. OCTOBER 8, 2004.

An Afghan boy covers his eyes as a dust storm sweeps over the southern Afghan city of Kandahar.



KABUL, AFGHANISTAN. MAY 8, 2005.
Two Afghan women wearing traditional burqas walk past a destroyed government building damaged during Afghanistan's civil war in the early 1990s.



ZABUL PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN. MAY 28, 2006.
An Afghan soldier kneels next to the body of an Afghan translator who was working with US troops and was killed in an accident during a night patrol near Qalat, Zabul Province.



PANSJER VALLEY, AFGHANISTAN. OCTOBER 31, 2004.

An Afghan coal miner washes up after finishing a shift working inside a mine in the northern Pansjer Valley. Coal remains one of the main sources of energy in Afghanistan.



RABBOT, AFGHANISTAN. OCTOBER 22, 2001.

American bombing of Taliban front-line positions near Bagram airport.

Veronique de Viguerie

On the Taliban Side

I have always had a strong interest in Middle Eastern and Islamic culture. After two years working for a local newspaper in England, I decided to launch my career as a freelance photo reporter. It was time for me to live the life I always dreamed of. Therefore, in 2004, I purchased a one-way ticket to Kabul. After a year spent in the field observing different faces of the country, the war, and the population, and hearing a lot about the Taliban in the media, I had only one desire: to meet them. I wanted to see who those men, the Taliban, really were. This is my testimony.

Photographs courtesy of Getty Images.



A Taliban insurgent serving under Mullah Najib's command in Andar district, Ghazni province. Mullah Najib receives his orders directly from Mullah Omar in Quetta, Pakistan. Altogether there are eight groups of Taliban here in Ghazni province, each of between thirty to seventy-eight men. The local villagers feel disappointed by the government, Karzai and the international community, so have chosen to trust the Taliban instead. They gave the insurgents protection, places to hide, and weapons. Ghazni, Afghanistan, July 2006.



A Taliban insurgent serving under Mullah Momin. Afghanistan, 2007.



Taliban insurgents serving under Mullah Najib's command in Andar district, Ghazni province, discuss strategy for an operation against the coalition forces and Afghan police. Ghazni, Afghanistan, November 2006.



Taliban insurgents serving under Mullah Najib's command in Andar district. Ghazni, Afghanistan, July 2006.



Taliban insurgents serving under Mullah Najib's command in Andar district. Ghazni, Afghanistan, January 2007.

Tim Hetherington

Sleeping Soldiers

“We sleep safe in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm.”

—George Orwell

In 2007 and 2008, I followed the deployment of a group of US soldiers stationed in the remote Korengal valley in northeastern Afghanistan. I ended up spending between four and five months living with the men of second platoon, Battle Company of the 173rd Airborne Combat Brigade. I had no sense when I first went to the valley that it was fast becoming an epicenter of fierce fighting against Islamic insurgents, but during 2007, nearly 18% of all fighting in Afghanistan took place in this six-mile-long valley. In response, of all US munitions used in Afghanistan, 75% were dropped in this valley.

Second Platoon was hit hard from the moment they landed. Four hours after reaching the valley, Specialist Timothy Vimoto was shot dead in an ambush, and a month later, their medic Juan Restrepo died of his wounds in Aliabad cemetery. Casualties continued to mount, and in an attempt to take the high ground from the insurgents, the platoon founded an outpost on a rocky mountain outcrop and called it “Restrepo.” They

were dropped by helicopter in the middle of the night and started digging. The next day they fought behind the makeshift defenses they had established, and they continued digging during the lulls in the fighting.

Despite no running water or electricity, they slowly made Restrepo their home. They slept out in the open on army cots behind rock-bag emplacements and shared the very real fear that they might be overrun in the night. During my time with them, 70% of the platoon was taking some kind of mood-enhancing or sleep-affecting medication.

When winter came they built basic plywood huts and had a small generator dropped by helicopter. There was no road up to the outpost, and it was an hour’s walk to the valley floor. Cut off and in an extreme situation, these men welcomed me into their lives. I worked, ate, and slept among them – slowly gaining their trust and access into their lives. These images are a result of that intimacy.



Specialist Ryan Lizama, Second Platoon, Battle Company, 173rd Airborne, Korengal Valley, Afghanistan, 2008



Sergeant Elliot Alcantara, Second Platoon, Battle Company, 173rd Airborne, Korengal Valley, Afghanistan, 2008



Specialist Ross Murphy, Second Platoon, Battle Company, 173rd Airborne, Korengal Valley, Afghanistan, 2008



Specialist Tad Donoho, Second Platoon, Battle Company, 173rd Airborne, Korengal Valley, Afghanistan, 2008



Specialist Steve Kim, Second Platoon, Battle Company, 173rd Airborne, Korengal Valley, Afghanistan, 2008

Aaron Huey

Afghanistan Drug War

I remember the first poppies that I saw in Afghanistan. They were in a small field, ten miles east of Jalalabad, and appeared to belong to two or three families. They were not yet producing, as they had yet to be scored with the tiny razor-tipped combs that would release the slow black drip of opium. The field was maybe five or six acres. Around the edges of the field old women were running around tearing the white flower petals off of the bulbs. They thought that the eradication team would miss some of them if they were not so clearly marked by the beautiful flowers. They hoped a few corners of their field would be spared so they would have enough of a harvest to not starve. The two dozen men from the Afghan Eradication Force (AEF) walked down the rows with long sticks or broom handles, lopping off the pregnant orbs that topped the waist-high plants. A woman ran into the field with a Koran in her hand. It was wrapped in a green cloth. She begged, in the name of God the Compassionate. A child stood frozen in place among the broken flowers, crying in a way that alternated between gasps and screams, panicked, as if her dog had just been run over. Someone in charge had mercy. He asked the foot soldiers to leave part of the field.

In Uruzgan province, the Taliban walk openly in the streets making deals with farmers to both harvest and protect their crops. Every inch of irrigated land in Uruzgan is growing poppies, a crop that helps to fund the Taliban insurgency. While we were investigating the eradication effort, it became clear that the fields of influential farmers, or of those who pay bribes, are left untouched. Through a series of *shuras* (meetings) with corrupt tribal elders and

corrupt officials, and diversions by corrupt police, eradication teams manage to chop down only small, inconsequential fields. Poppies that feed poor families are destroyed, but the ripe fields of powerful clans are left untouched.

In a field outside Tirin Kot, the provincial capital, a ten-year-old child scraped his thumb along the oozing bulb of a poppy plant, collecting the black-brown drip of raw opium. He collected it in a glass in his other hand, and combined it with the contents of other glasses in a large bowl held by his father. This family's modest field can feed their family of twenty people for a year. They grow it to survive. They will defend it if they have to.

The day we were ambushed I was wearing a 45-pound flak jacket but no helmet. It weighed me down as I ran through empty villages, choking on fear, far from the DynCorp mercenaries we came with. Major Khalil was screaming into his radio as we raced deeper into the battle with a captured Taliban prisoner. As I ran, the poppies coated my pants with the stains of raw opium. Later in the ambush, lying in a ditch with my writer and our translators, I prayed for an air strike. In that moment I stopped caring about collateral damage, I just wanted them to raze that village to the ground. And again, when I was crawling through a muddy field while AEF soldiers and Taliban fighters exchanged gunfire across the tops of the bleeding plants, I remember distinctly not giving a shit about my cameras or *The New Yorker*, or my career. Months later I could still see the black stains of opium on my clothes.



Heroin users shoot up in the ruins of the old city of Kabul. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that 92 percent of the world's heroin comes out of Afghanistan. Although the Afghan Health Ministry denies that Afghanistan has an AIDS problem, giving figures in the dozens of cases rather than the likely thousands, intravenous drug use among heroin addicts is spreading AIDS in Afghanistan.



Afghan Eradication Force (AEF) destroying poppy fields in Uruzgan.



Afghan Eradication Force captures a suspected Taliban fighter during fighting in a village above the fields. His claims of innocence were quickly disproved when they found that his gun was still hot from recent firing.



Poppy harvesters outside Tirin Kot collect raw opium with their fingers, then scrape it off into a glass jar.



Small jars of harvested opium are collected in a bowl. This family of twenty survives on the opium harvest from its modest field.

Wild Afghanistan—The Wakhan Corridor

While still a high school student in Minnesota, I bought a battered, used copy of *Caravans to Tartary*, a classic photo book by French photographers Roland and Sabrina Michaud chronicling their travels into the Afghan Pamirs in 1970. The desaturated, grainy color photographs of camel caravans and tiny encampments surrounded by bleak snowy landscapes, of fire-lit interiors with women cooking, of men bundled against impossible cold, fascinated me, and the images somehow stayed with me, helping foster a lifelong interest in distant mountain lands and cultures in Afghanistan. The book also helped set me on a wandering photographic career that has taken me around the world and finally, in 2002, to Afghanistan. When, in 2004, I traveled for the first time to the Wakhan Corridor for *National Geographic* to photograph an expedition surveying wildlife in the Pamirs, the journey felt inevitable and the landscapes and people strangely familiar and little changed from the faded images in the Michauds' book.

The Wakhan Corridor is a narrow strip of land squeezed between Tajikistan, China, and Pakistan, a wild, remote corner of Afghanistan where three mountain ranges — the Hindu Kush, the Greater Pamir, and the Karakoram — meet. On that first journey, traveling on foot, horse, and yak for two months in the roadless Pamirs, I became interested in photographing the two ethnic groups, the Wakhi and the Kyrgyz, and their connection to their environment and to each other.

The Wakhi, indigenous to the region, live and farm along the valleys, and graze their flocks in summer mountain pastures as they have done for thousands of years. The Kyrgyz, a Turkic/Mongol people and a living remnant of the tribes that used to move freely across the great grasslands

of Central Asia, follow ancient nomadic traditions with their herds of yaks, sheep, and camels on the high Pamir plateau above 12,000 feet, a homeland they call “Bam-I Dunya” or “roof of the world.” The two groups are dependent on one another. The Kyrgyz, who grow no crops, trade butter, cheese, and meat to the Wakhi for wheat and other grains; the Wakhi use some of the Kyrgyz pastures for their herds.

With no documentation of the remote region since the early 1970s, I hoped to explore how these cultures that had changed little in hundreds of years were entering the new millennium. I returned to the Wakhan in 2005 and 2008 to continue the work in different seasons and to photograph the problems — dire poverty, lack of education and medical care, high infant and maternal mortality, and rampant opium addiction — that threatened the continued survival of the Wakhi and especially the Kyrgyz in their mountain refuge.

To travel in Afghanistan as one travels in other mountain regions of the world, to move freely, to travel for many weeks hundreds of miles from any road, to pitch a tent next to clear mountain streams and perhaps catch sight of spectacular wildlife like Marco Polo sheep and ibex, have been rare and treasured experiences for me. To struggle through deep snow and howling wind into a nomad's camp of yurts and to be received with hot, salty milk tea and the warm hospitality of people who have so little has been a humbling gift. To have them open up their lives to me and my camera has been an inspiration and a huge responsibility. I only hope that my photographs capture a little of the struggle, dignity, and pride of the people of the Wakhan and the harsh beauty of their home on the roof of the world.



A group of Kyrgyz men on horseback play *buzkashi* — a traditional Central Asian polo-like game played with a goat or sheep carcass — with peaks of the Hindu Kush mountains as a backdrop, in the Little Pamir region, Wakhan Corridor, Afghanistan. The Kyrgyz are nomadic herders who spend the entire year moving with their flocks of sheep, goats, and yaks in the high and barren Pamir range near the borders with China, Pakistan, and Tajikistan.



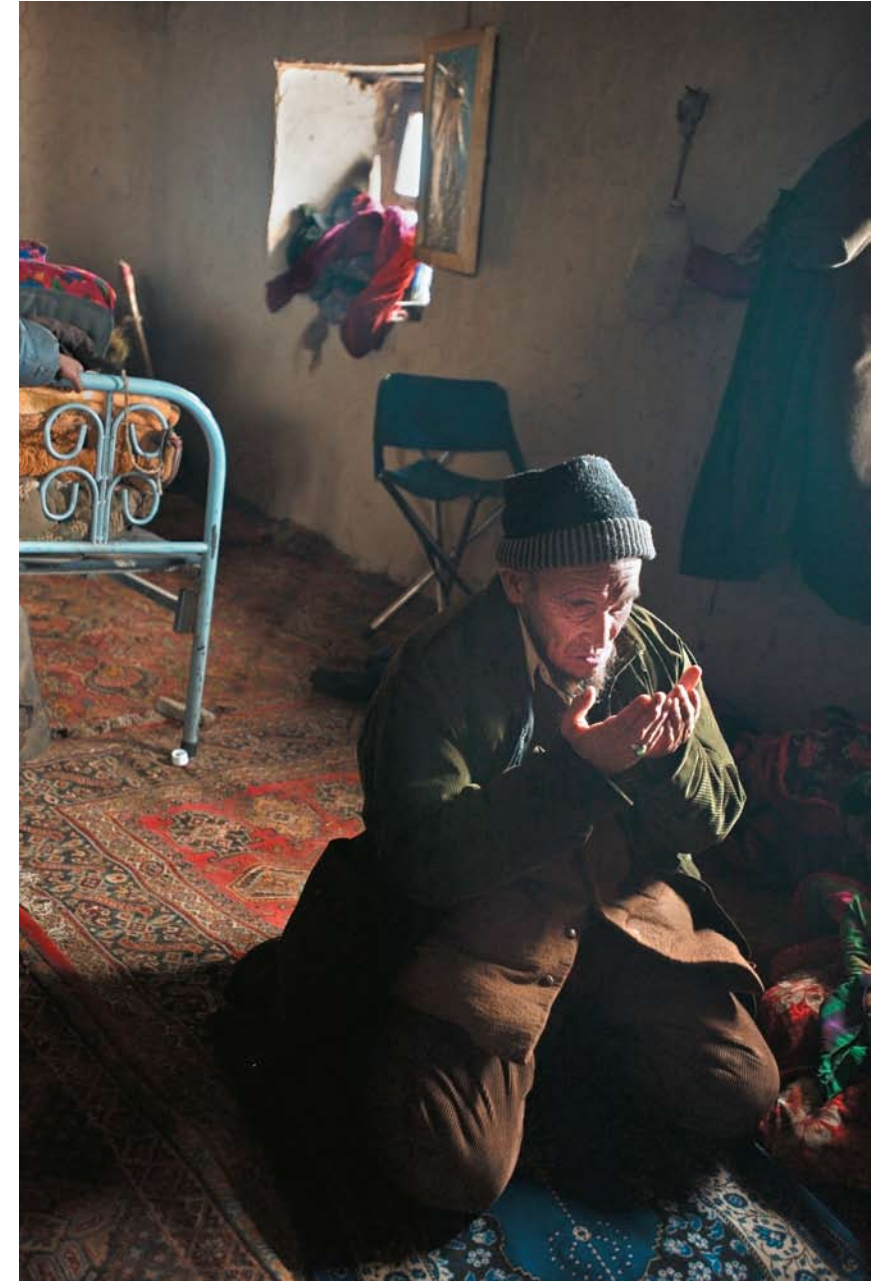
Dr. George Schaller and his wildlife survey team ride yaks and walk through a snow-covered mountain landscape as they cross into the Shikargah Valley, Big Pamir, Wakhan Corridor, Afghanistan. The 2004 Schaller Expedition spent two months traveling through the remote region of the Wakhan and Pamir, making a survey of wildlife, particularly Marco Polo sheep, the world's largest wild sheep.



A Wakhi woman milks a yak in an early fall snowstorm, while baby yaks huddle in a corral, at a shepherd's camp of yurts and stone huts high in the mountains of the Big Pamir, in the remote Wakhan Corridor, Badakshan Province, Afghanistan. The Wakhi are indigenous to the region. They are agropastoralists, combining farming at lower elevations with herding yaks, goats, and sheep in mountain pastures from spring through fall.



A Wakhi family cooks over a fire in the middle of their traditional house, in the village of Sarhad-e Broghil, Wakhan Corridor, Badakshan Province, Afghanistan. Little changed in hundreds of years, the mud homes of the Wakhi house extended families, and have the kitchen and hearth at the center of the compound.



Abdul Rashid Khan, leader of the Little Pamir Kyrgyz, prays in his mud hut at the winter encampment of Kyzyl Korum, in the Little Pamir, Wakhan Corridor, Badakshan Province. The Kyrgyz of Afghanistan are a tribe of Sunni nomadic herders who live at high altitude in the Pamir mountains, in the remote northeast corner of the country.

Teru Kuwayama and Balazs Gardi

Inside the Wire: Superbase Afghanistan

We met in Kabul in 2004 and joined the first wave of US Marines as they landed in the remote Korengall Valley in Kunar Province. Over the years that followed, we embedded with different NATO forces along the eastern and southern border with Pakistan, in search of an illusory territory called Afghanistan. Between remote outposts in the deserts and mountains, we navigated our way through a maze of sprawling military townships known as Forward Operating Bases (FOBs). Within this network of armored bubbles, tens of thousands of soldiers passed their days and months behind layers of blastwalls, living on food and water that was flown in from the Persian Gulf on Air Force cargo planes. In "FOBistan," as Afghanistan was sometimes jokingly called, it was entirely possible to serve a 16-month deployment without ever actually laying eyes on the country or tasting a single drop of its water. In an occupation marked by isolation and disconnection, the landscape was a void, with empty horizons disrupted only by sandbags and concrete barriers.



Bagram, Afghanistan 2007.



Bagram, Afghanistan 2007.



Bagram, Afghanistan 2007. Freshly fabricated sections of concrete blast walls outside Bagram airbase.

Farzana Wahidy

Afghan Women

In recent human history, the roles of women have changed greatly. Today, in most developed countries, women enjoy the same rights as men. Unfortunately, there are places in the world where women are still considered to be only half human.

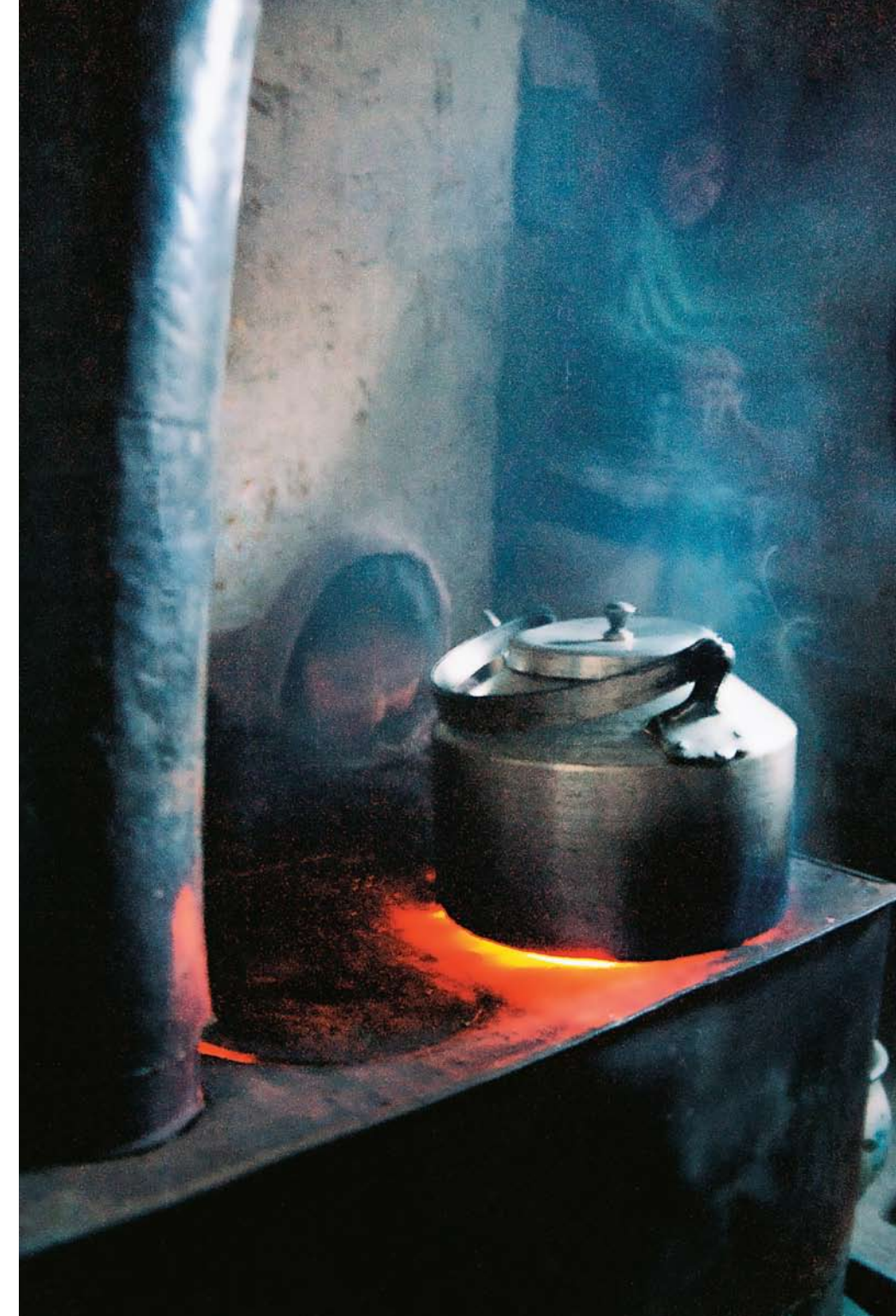
Afghanistan is one of those countries where women still face religious restrictions and traditional customs that put enormous pressures on them as they go about their daily lives. Forced child marriages, physical and sexual abuse, risk of murder and public execution, and the futility of self-immolation are just some of the struggles Afghan women face every day.

Thirty years ago Afghan women enjoyed many more rights. They were involved in social, economic, cultural, and political life and were safer than they are today. In 1978, when the civil war started, women experienced increasing restrictions, and later, under the Taliban regime, women's rights were completely stripped away. Women were not allowed to pursue an education and girls' schools were shut down. Women were not allowed to work and were ordered to remain in their houses. They could not go out unless accompanied by a male relative and covered head-to-toe in a burqa. These traditions and the related female roles that emerged during the war and under the Taliban caused most Afghan

families to adopt a more fundamentalist ideology. Today, these roles are still practiced by most people in Afghanistan.

In spite of the restrictions and traditional customs imposed on women, many Afghan women attempt to bring change to their lives and maintain hope for a better future. As an Afghan woman, I grew up during the civil war and the Taliban regime. I witnessed and heard thousands of shocking stories about the repression of Afghan women. Unfortunately, only a few of these stories have been told to people around the world, and mostly by foreign journalists and writers. I think it is vitally important to show the lives of Afghans from their own perspective and that is why I became a photographer. I did not know how to share what I witnessed during the Taliban regime until I discovered photojournalism. For me, photography is an international language. I chose photojournalism because through it I found freedom. The photographic process allowed me to share the stories of my community with the world. I started documenting the lives of Afghan women when I first picked up a camera as a photojournalist in 2002. Currently, I am working on several photographic projects – Burqa, Fashion, Daily Life, and Self-Immolation – that explore both positive and negative aspects of the lives of Afghan women.

Afghan women prepare supper in Kabul, Afghanistan, October 20, 2004.





A woman's burqa hangs on a hook in her family's apartment in a rundown building in Kabul, Afghanistan, April 28, 2007.



A refugee girl in Kabul, Afghanistan, October 20, 2006.



Burqa-clad Afghan women walk down stairs in Kabul after collecting gifts from the US military in advance of International Women's Day, March 4, 2005.



Ruqea Rahimi teaches a class at Bibi Sara primary school in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 2004. Rahimi is one of the few Afghan women to teach at a mixed school. Three months after the fall of the Taliban in December 2001, she started teaching without her burqa.

Kabul Photographers

During Taliban times, Afghanistan was governed by an Islamic regime that severely enforced its strict interpretation of the Islamic ban on human images and idols, which are viewed as an insult to God. The Taliban also prohibited anything having to do with photography, television, film, or video recording, because Taliban scholars believed the Koran forbids any recreation of the human image. The Taliban shocked the world by demolishing two famous 1,500-year-old stone statues of Buddha that they proclaimed to be idolatrous. In the bazaars, there were posters and calendars for sale depicting Mecca in a hundred different styles, but none showing people. In the newspapers, stories were accompanied by photos of fruit stands and Islamic artifacts.

The ban on faces started at the top of the Taliban's religious hierarchy. Mohammad Omar, its supreme leader, was a reclusive Muslim cleric who had rarely been seen by his own subjects and was never photographed. Foreign visitors were under orders not to photograph any living thing in the country, and Taliban police frequently detained those they caught in the act of photographing and confiscated their cameras. The faces of Afghan women were especially invisible. If a woman needed to procure a passport or identity photo, it had to be taken with only her eyes showing and the rest of her body covered by a burqa. Men, too, were partly hidden from view when photographed, with covered heads and the long beards required of any male past puberty.

The Taliban's prohibition on human photography had a high sentimental cost. Couples married without wedding portraits – unless they could afford to cross the border into Pakistan for the ceremony. Parents died without leaving their children any likeness to remember them by. Family snapshots ran the risk of being confiscated by customs officials at the Kabul airport, especially if they depicted men and women together.

Since the end of Taliban rule in 2001, photography has flourished in Afghanistan. Kabul is now full of

photographs and, day by day, more pictures are surfacing. Treasured family portraits once hidden in metal trunks are now displayed on walls. Postcards of Afghan women in traditional costumes, once hidden by shopkeepers behind shelves of books, are now displayed for sale. Merchants offer special prices for formerly prohibited photos of the destroyed Buddhas.

There are a few camera shops in Kabul, but most identification pictures are taken by sidewalk vendors with 50-year-old wooden box cameras who put their hands under a dark cape, swish tiny pieces of paper in film developer, and dry the blurry results in strips of newspaper. These commercial photographers have reappeared in the streets of the capital and are doing a brisk business, six years after they were banned by the Taliban. With cloth screen backgrounds, they photograph children for required school IDs, government militiamen, women who remove their burqas momentarily for the occasion, and many ordinary people who simply wish to have a photograph of themselves for personal reasons.

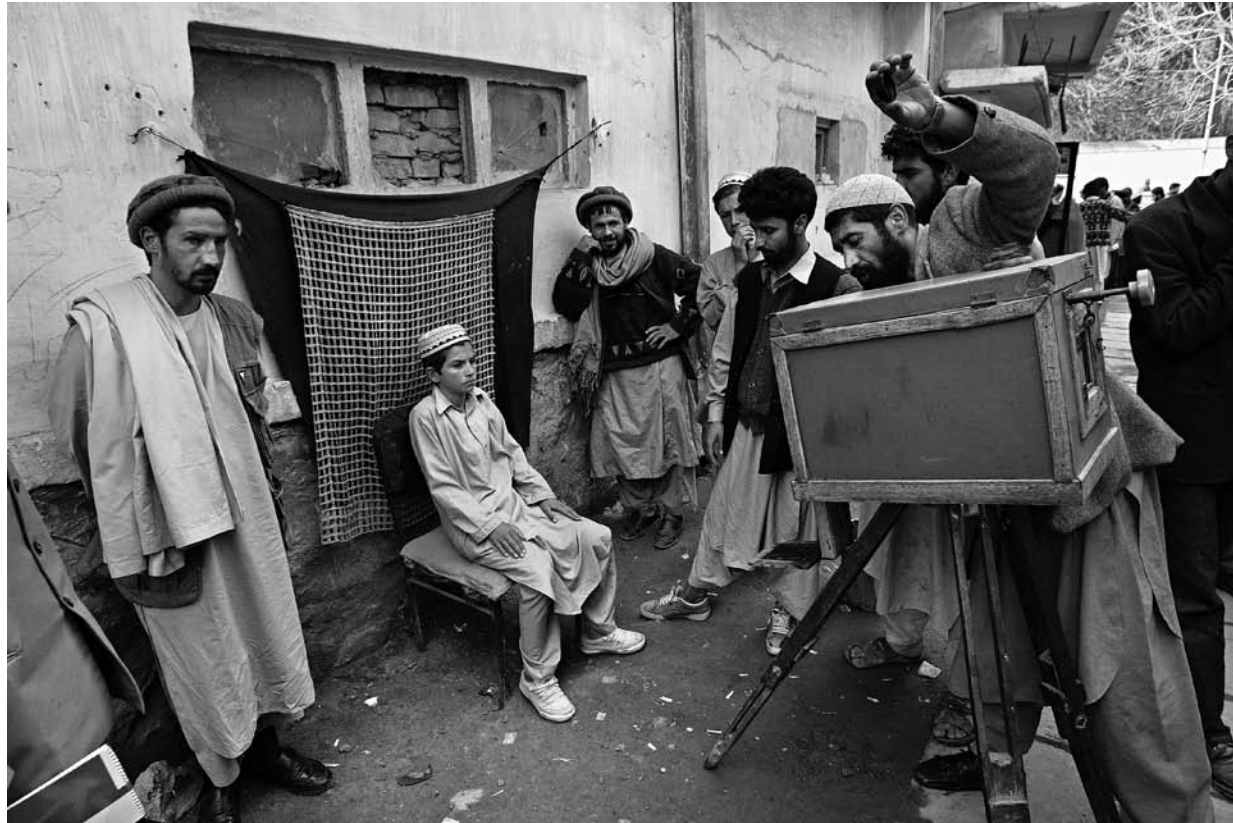
Using old darkroom procedures, photographs are ready in five minutes. For 30,000 Afghans (approximately US\$1.00), a customer receives ten wallet-sized black-and-white prints. The photographers practice their dark art inside the huge wooden box, which functions as an entire photo studio. First they expose the picture onto a small paper negative and then, inside their camera, proceed to process the negative in chemicals housed within. Next, the photographers reach in through the side of the camera and process the paper negatives by touch, without letting any light into the camera. After processing, they remove the image from the camera and place the still-wet paper negative on a bracket in front of the lens. Then, still using the box camera, photographers make exposures of the negative onto a new paper negative. By this process, a final positive image is produced for the customer.

Photographs courtesy of Yannis Kontos and Polaris Photos



Kabul, Afghanistan, April 2002.

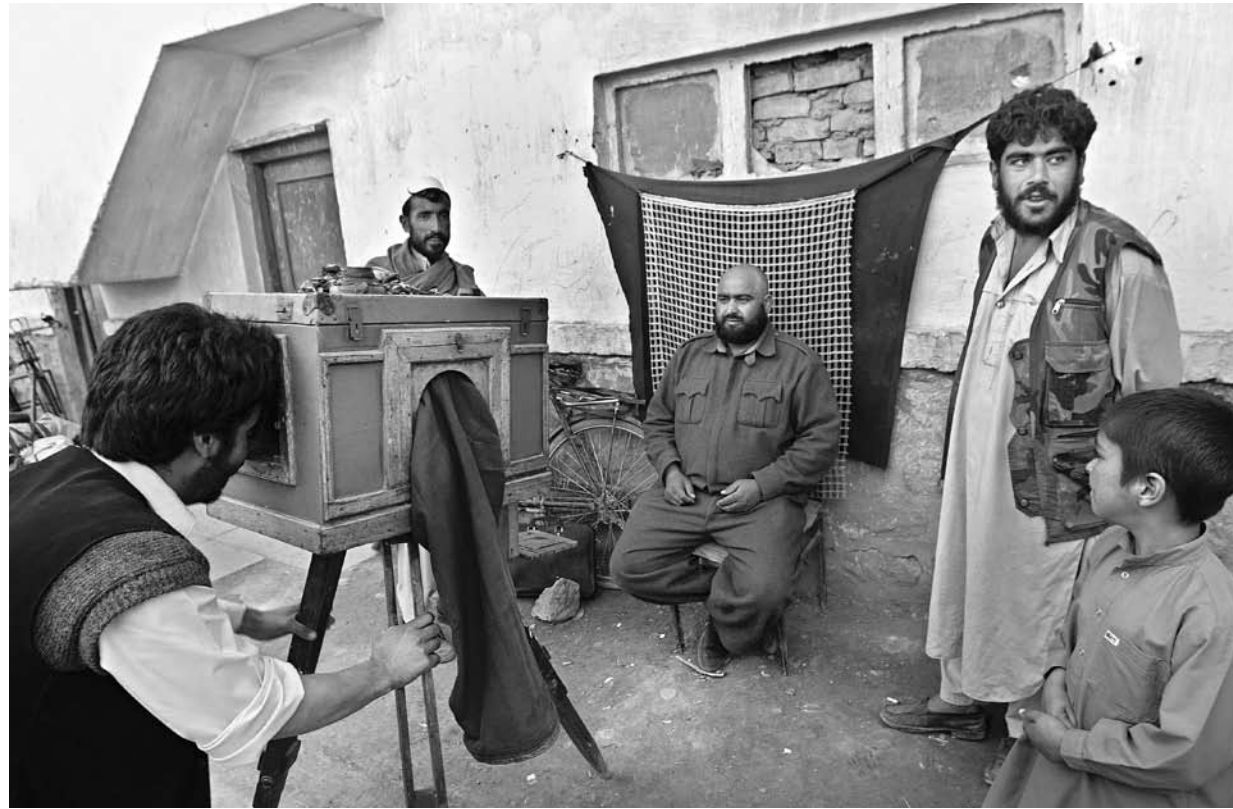
Photographs of Afghan people. IDs required for registration are seen on a wooden tray of an old-fashioned box camera along a Kabul street. Photos can be ready in five minutes, using the very old dark chemical procedure, for 30,000 Afghans (about US\$1) for ten wallet-sized black-and-whites. Street photographers have reappeared in Kabul and are doing a brisk business, six years after they were banned by the Taliban.



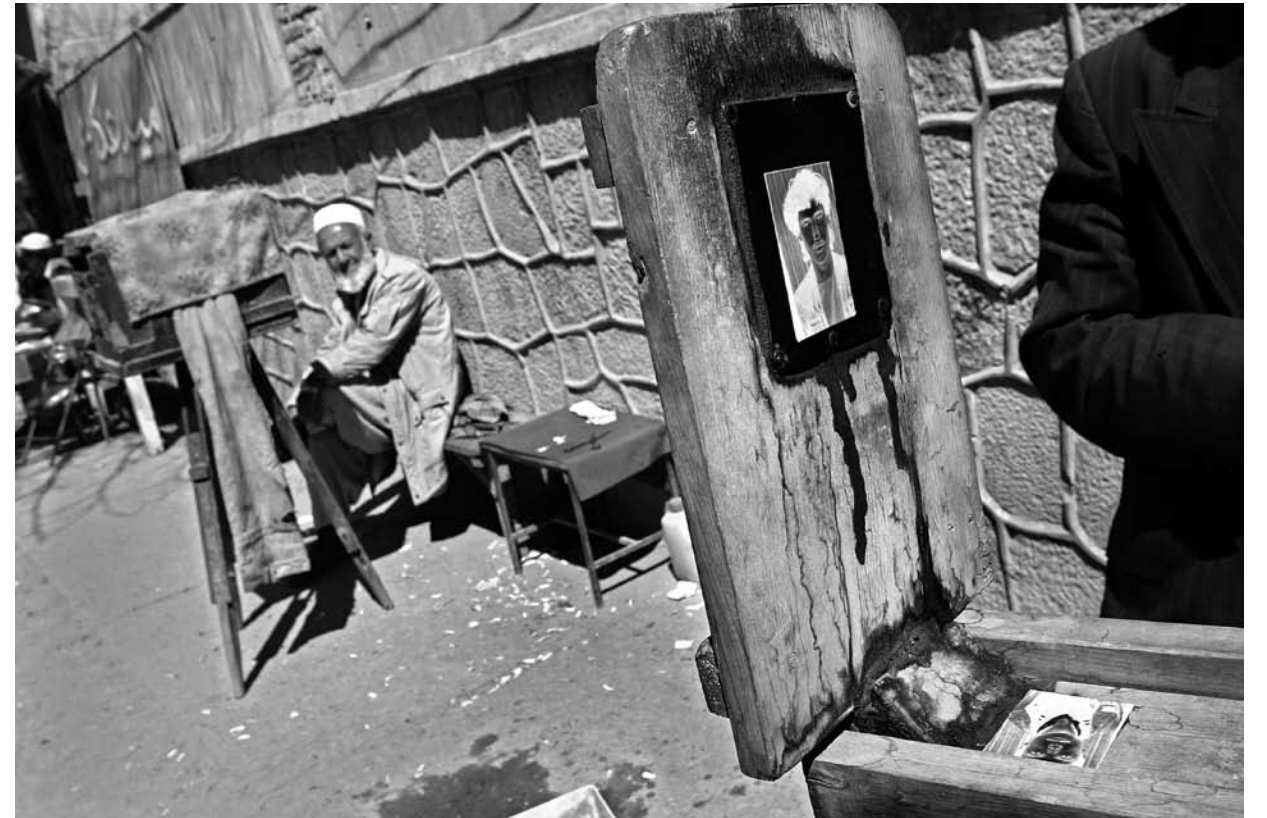
Kabul, Afghanistan, April 2002.
An Afghan child, left, poses for a photograph taken with an old box camera in downtown Kabul.



Kabul, Afghanistan, April 2002.
Afghan street photographer looks into his old-fashioned wooden box camera while working along a Kabul street.

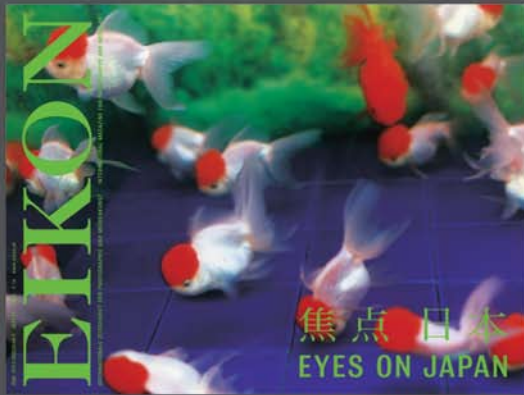


Kabul, Afghanistan, April 2002.
A street photographer looks through his box camera while taking a picture of an Afghan militiaman along a Kabul street.



Kabul, Afghanistan, April 2002.
An inverted image is placed on the front bracket of a wooden box camera by an Afghan commercial street photographer.

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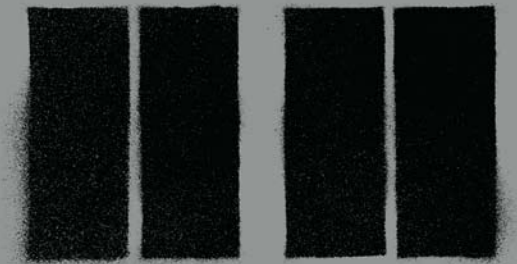
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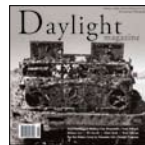
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About Daylight

Daylight Community Arts Foundation (DCAF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to publishing in-depth photographic essays on important issues of the day via *Daylight Magazine* (print) and Daylight Multimedia (online). By re-imagining the documentary mode through collaboration with established and emerging artists, scholars and journalists, Daylight has become one of the premier showcases for contemporary photography.

The Daylight Daily Blog lists opportunities for photographers as well as exhibition/book reviews and compelling art criticism from around the globe. Fundacion Imaginer (www.fundacionimaginer.org), a branch of Daylight based in Panama City, Panama is dedicated to publishing, promoting and exhibiting contemporary art and photography from Latin America.

In addition, DCAF seeks to help underrepresented communities share their stories by distributing cameras, establishing darkroom and digital imaging facilities, administering photographic workshops, and curating local and traveling exhibitions. Ultimately, DCAF's goal is to provide these communities with access to the resources and equipment necessary to participate in the global visual dialogue.

We invite interested individuals to initiate and manage self-representative photography projects using Daylight Community Arts Foundation as an umbrella to apply for funding. By working with photographers all over the world we have built a network of successful satellite projects.

If you would like to get involved, we are currently seeking Daylight Daily contributors from around the world to write about local photography scenes. Additionally, we welcome the involvement of multimedia producers, street team members and lovers of photography that would like to participate in Daylight's work.

Daylight receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts.



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Daylight Community Arts Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that relies on the kindness of private donors, foundations, corporations, and other non-profit organizations for financial support. Please help us continue to publish *Daylight Magazine* and offer community photography projects by making a tax-deductible contribution or by donating much-needed photographic equipment. Daylight accepts tax-deductible donations online using any major credit card, or by check made out to The Solo Foundation and sent to our New York post office box.

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Submit

Non-subscribers: \$10 (or purchase of any issue of *Daylight Magazine*)

Subscribers: Free. In order to help share the burden of running a non-profit organization we request that submitting photographers purchase any edition of the magazine. Purchases can be made online before submission. Please include the "Transaction ID" along with the submission.

Due to the large volume of submissions, we are

no longer accepting printed material or emailed attachments for consideration. All submissions must be received as web links to online portfolios and supplementary material. Emails with attachments will be deleted.

Please write "SUBMISSION: (subject matter), (name)" in the subject line of the submission email. Within the body of the email, please include a letter of introduction, a project summary, a link to an online portfolio, an abbreviated resume, and the Transaction ID from your issue purchase. We will make every effort to respond to each submission. Photographers who do not have a website are encouraged to use a free photo-hosting service (e.g., Flickr) to share their work. Please email all submissions to: info@daylightmagazine.org.

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