

# Tell your story

A new role for photography  
in a changing market



Marc Prüst



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### About the researcher

Marc Prüst (b. 1975) is a specialist in the fields of non-fiction and narrative photography. He worked for World Press Photo in Amsterdam and subsequently for the Agence VU' photography agency in Paris.

Currently, Prüst is a visual story editor and curator. He has produced and curated a range of visual stories in the form of books, exhibitions, presentations and festivals, and has been the festival artistic director at LagosPhoto in Nigeria, Photoreporter in St. Brieuc, France and NUKU Photofestival Ghana. He has worked as a curator at festivals including Noorderlicht in Groningen and the Fotografia Festival in Rome, and has curated exhibitions at the Tropenmuseum Amsterdam, Drents Museum in Assen and the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago.

Prüst teaches workshops and offers training sessions to photographers and visual professionals worldwide, working with various institutions including the ICP in New York, the Tokyo Institute of Photography and Spéos in Paris. Prüst is currently jury chair of the Zilveren Camera award and the presenter of *De Donkere Kamer*, a live photography magazine hosted by Pakhuis de Zwijger in Amsterdam.

**Cover front:** BOREALIS  
Canada Waswanipi Cree, January 2018  
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**Cover back:** EverydayAfrica  
Abuja, Nigeria  
© Tom Saater

## About Forhanna

Forhanna is a non-profit production house that supports in-depth documentary photography projects. By financing and co-producing projects on relevant themes that demonstrate strongly engaged authorship and in-depth research, Forhanna seeks to help preserve the full spectrum of documentary visual culture.

Documentary photographer Willem Poelstra (1956-2018) established the foundation in 2017 with a dual mission: to manage Poelstra's legacy after his death and to support new projects. Forhanna productions have been presented at venues such as the photography festival BredaPhoto 2018. In 2019, Forhanna inaugurated the annual The Willem Poelstra Lecture on documentary photography.

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# A changing market, a new role for photography

**Marc Prüst**  
Visual story editor

What is the state of documentary photography today? Judging from reported media earnings and rates, the answer seems to be: not great. In early 2019, some 500 Dutch photojournalists even put down their cameras in protest.

At the same time, the audience for documentary photography seems to be larger than ever. The World Press Photo exhibition must be one of the most popular on the globe, annually attracting four million visitors across 100 cities in 45 countries. The Netherlands has no fewer than four museums wholly devoted to photography, and photography festivals worldwide draw tens of thousands of visitors. It's a paradox: photography is as popular as ever, but photographers are earning less and less for their work.

With media paying poorly and everything online expected to be free, can we come up with alternative revenue models for documentary photography? This question was the focus of research preceding this magazine. And the answer is: Yes. For proof, we need only look at the photographers profiled in this publication.

My analysis starts with the observation that two aspects of the market for documentary photography have undergone a fundamental change. One is the product. The other is the distribution model. While it may seem strange to apply terms like 'product', 'distribution model' and 'revenue model' to a creative profession like photography, that's mainly because this link was always so self-evident that there was no need to think about it.

Traditionally, the photographer's product was the photo essay. The prime vehicle, or

distribution model, for transmitting this work to the public was publication in a newspaper or magazine. As media fees were adequate, this was also an effective revenue model for creators.

But this no longer holds true. As a product, photo essays effectively no longer have market value. With print media no longer being the main distribution model for visual stories, photographers have gone in search of new products and distribution methods. This publication takes a look both at successful projects and at instructive examples from other sectors (p.6).

**It's a paradox: photography  
is as popular as ever, but  
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and less for their work.**

The definitions of documentary photography and photojournalism I apply here are somewhat broader than customary. Because what are they really? Is an eyewitness picture of a disaster a documentary photo? What about the popular photo series of New York dogs on the Instagram account of The Dogist (p.81)?

In this publication, I therefore refer to projects as examples of non-fictional narrative photography. By this I mean narrative projects based on reality without necessarily being socially relevant or journalistic in nature, while leaving scope for a maker's personal interpretation.

I emphasise these projects' narrative aspect because I believe photography should aspire to be a storytelling medium. Thanks to technological advances, such as the iPhone XI's powerful camera, everyone can take beautiful pictures these days.

All the same, demand for strong visual stories seems as great as ever, and no one makes them as well as professional photographers. Compare it to writing: everyone can write, but few people command language in a way that creates valuable literature.

This calls for a very different approach to photography projects. Instead of supplying a picture editor with the building blocks of

a photo essay, the photographer is now the creator of the story. The photographer has to determine: Who is the audience? How do I reach this audience? And, as in a screenplay, to define a premise: What is the real story and what makes it relevant?

He or she also has to consider the best form in which to tell and distribute the visual story, such as a typology, which does well on Instagram, or a road trip (p.82) to which people can subscribe, or some combination of the two. We added a guide that maps out steps to help identify the best narrative form and distribution model for your own project.

In closing, a word of thanks. I conducted my research into new revenue models for documentary photography in close cooperation with the team at Forhanna, a non-profit production house for documentary photography. The Dutch Journalism Fund expressed its support in the form of a grant, Pictoright contributed to the creation of this publication and World Press Photo helped with the English translation.

# Distribution models, or: why media used to pay photographers well

**In January 2019, some 500 photo-journalists took an unprecedented step: they went on strike. Their protest targeted the diminishing fees the media are paying for their work. To illustrate their plight, the Dutch Association of Journalists published a calculation (in *Fotojournalistiek heeft een prijs!*) demonstrating that, under collective labour agreements, freelance photographers should earn at least €209 per photo published in a national newspaper. In reality, papers on average pay €115. Consequently, the number of documentary photographers able to make a living from their work is decreasing rapidly.**

Why are the media paying so little for photographs? Is it because of declining circulation? Or is there a deeper problem? In this publication, we consider print media as a photographic distribution model – that is, as a vehicle for supplying photos to the public. In light of declining fees, the question now is whether this is still the right distribution model. Are there conceivable alternatives centred not on the medium but on the maker? More on that later. First, we'll look at the photographer's role in the existing distribution model and why media were willing to pay well for photography in the past.

## **Photography as a medium**

Up until just a few decades ago, newspapers and magazines were still prime clients for photographers. Probably the best-known example is *Life Magazine* in the US, which ran special photo essays by the leading photographers of the day like Henri Cartier-Bresson and W. Eugene Smith.

In its heyday, *Life* had an astounding weekly print run of 13.5 million copies. Photography played a pivotal role in the magazine's strategy, which employed high-quality photographs and wide public interest to secure an audience for the magazine. *Life* then leveraged this loyal audience to attract advertisers.

Naturally, photographers also had side jobs, like supplying photographs for annual reports. Even so, the situation was very different to what it is now. Back then, media regarded photographers' work as instrumental to their own revenue models and were therefore prepared to pay.

## **Declining importance of advertising**

The advent of first television and later the internet, and especially social media, upended this model. These days, there are more effective ways to reach a large public (such as sponsored posts on social media) than through high-quality photography. Facebook and Google now claim the lion's share of advertising budgets. In 2018, Dutch dailies drew 78% of their earnings from subscriptions, meaning they are steadily becoming less dependent on advertising income.

Subscription fees have not managed to offset the loss of ad revenue, however, as circulation numbers are also decreasing. Since the beginning of this century, the combined turnover of Dutch daily newspapers has halved from approximately two to one billion euros, according to figures published by the Dutch Journalism Fund.

As these media continue to strengthen their online presence, their criteria for photographs are also changing. Quality has become less important and quantity much more so. Media clients want material that will furnish all their social media channels with moving and still images. But without the interdependency of good photography and high ad revenue, fees for that material have dropped.

## **Loyal listeners**

The challenge facing documentary photography therefore lies in finding a new, financially sustainable distribution model, which supplies photography to the public while generating income. Distributing your picture on Instagram is easy, but does it put food on the table?

The examples presented in this publication testify that the demand for ideas and stories is undiminished. The question is, can photographers craft stories that are powerful and urgent enough to secure a sizeable fee-paying audience long term? Put differently: can photographers accomplish what a podcast like *HardCoreHistory* has managed to do, enlisting loyal followers so eager for access to new work that they're willing to open their wallets?

Thus far, photography has been unable to completely divorce itself from the traditional media landscape. Let's look at how other

industries have done it. Podcasters and journalists, for instance, have taken matters into their own hands, building their own distribution models with themselves at the centre. Their content (podcasts, articles) functions much like pictures in *Life Magazine* used to, as a means to secure listeners, viewers or readers via stories for which they're willing to pay.

# Learning from Podcasts and Crowdfunded journalism

Podcast producers secure audiences by offering high-quality, substantive content for free.

This medium's popularity is expanding as the range of podcasts increases and more and more people discover the growing number of podcasts.

All these loyal listeners make podcasts interesting for advertisers, too. Last year, American podcasters earned an estimated half billion dollars in ad revenue.

*De Correspondent*, *Follow the Money* and *Mediapart* were all established by people who had earned a name and credibility with their target audience.

Their members pay not only for content as such, but for an 'idea'.

Members are actively engaged in their journalism and are in constant dialogue with authors.

## Podcasts: free content — with a revenue model

Early 2019 brought the surprising news that music service Spotify had acquired podcasting company Gimlet Media for 230 million dollars. Podcasting is 'the next phase in audio', Spotify CEO Daniel Ek said of the purchase. 'There are endless ways to tell stories that serve to entertain, to educate, to challenge, to inspire, or to bring us together and break down cultural barriers.' But what is it about free podcasts that appealed to the tech giant? And what can makers of narrative non-fiction photography learn from this?

### 27 million dollars

For many professional radio producers, the rise of the internet heralded the end of their revenue model. Radio production had always required specialised equipment and know-how, and broadcasting licences were exclusive and expensive. But with the internet, suddenly anyone could be a radio producer for a potentially limitless audience.

So how did the people behind Gimlet turn this into a business for which Spotify was willing to shell out millions? It started in 2015, with a how-to podcast about... launching a podcast company. The producer, Alex Blumberg, spoke from his own years-long experience of making the acclaimed programme *This American Life*.

More podcasts followed. The first revenue streams came from crowdfunding and investments by businesses including the British ad agency WPP and Stripes Group venture capital firm, raising 27 million dollars over four years. These investments helped the start-up grow into a company with some 100 employees and 28 podcasts. These days, it also generates earnings through branded podcasts produced on commission.

### Radiotopia

Slightly different is the model underpinning Radiotopia, a collective of independent podcasters comparable to, for instance, photo agency NOOR (see p.13). Radiotopia is a badge of quality for podcast listeners and an umbrella under which podcast makers can

jointly organise crowdfunding and sponsorship campaigns.

Radiotopia was established in 2014 by Roman Mars, maker of the design podcast 99% *Invisible*. He started with a crowdfunding campaign on the Kickstarter website, where he found 21,800 listeners willing to donate a sum total of 620,412 dollars. The Knight Foundation provided a further one million dollars for the initiative. This money was invested partly in 'audience engagement' technologies and expanding future earning capacity through crowdfunding and other means. These days, the network boasts some 20 shows and 13 million monthly downloads.

### 'Online social circle'

It's fair to say that the demand for podcasts is expanding with the growth of the range of podcasts. According to early 2019 figures from an annual consumer poll by The Infinite Dial, more than half of all Americans occasionally listen to podcasts. One third do so monthly, compared to a quarter the year before.

On average, weekly listeners listen to seven podcasts a week. The audience for podcasts has also expanded. Among respondents aged 55 and older, 17% had listened to a podcast that month, compared to 13% a year earlier.

This growth in listener numbers is paying off. Wondery podcast network founder Hernan Lopez estimated in a *New York Times* piece that American podcast makers earned more than 500 million dollars in ad revenue in 2018. Though the scale of the Dutch and American markets are obviously worlds apart, a Groningen University survey among podcasters in the Netherlands revealed that two thirds have developed a revenue model around their podcast ranging from subsidies to branded content, crowdfunding and coffee mugs.

Substantive, non-fiction audio is not only an effective medium for telling stories, but also a means to forge personal and lasting ties with listeners. In the Dutch survey, the majority of podcast listeners described their relationship with the podcaster as 'a friendship' or 'an online social circle'.

These distinct and devoted target audiences make podcasts attractive to

advertisers. Radiotopia, for instance, attracts advertisers with an audience it characterises as 'young, balanced, highly educated' and 'with disposable income'. Ninety per cent of listeners describe themselves as regular listeners. Top-notch, substantive content thus serves as a means to build a loyal audience that's attractive to advertisers. What photography was for *Life*, podcasts are for Radiotopia. What *Life Magazine* (see p.8) did with strong photography and text, these podcasts are doing with documentary radio, securing a loyal following of listeners by supplying high-quality content.

### Crowdfunded journalism

Nothing could be easier than disseminating articles on the internet, but making a living this way is a whole different story. Journalism is experimenting with all kinds of new ways to link revenue and distribution models, and these experiments are paying off. The Dutch media platforms *De Correspondent* and *Follow the Money (FTM)* and France's *Mediapart* are all financed by their own members. All three have been able to secure the lasting commitment of a specific target audience by conveying a clear message.

#### Paying for an idea

*De Correspondent* is a well-known example of a successful online journalism revenue model. Its 60,000 members, each paying €70 a year, contribute 78% of its €3.8 million in turnover, with book sales making up another 14%.

These are impressive figures, but they don't tell the whole story. That's because *De Correspondent* in effect supplies content for free. According to the website, 'Non-members who know where to look can essentially read almost all our articles for free'. In other words, members pay not just for access to articles but for the idea behind *De Correspondent*.

The pre-launch crowdfunding campaign in 2013 affirmed that belief. Without even a single publication to its name, the platform managed to raise one million euros. It promised articles that would be an 'antidote to the daily news

grind' and the involvement of well-known authors like founder and former *NRC Next* editor-in-chief Rob Wijnberg.

The whole website is structured around member participation. Members engage with authors and fellow members and are actively consulted in research that goes into articles. You might say that *De Correspondent's* revenue model is precisely this personal connection with the authors.

#### 'Radically independent'

French online newspaper *Mediapart* pledges 'a special relationship with its readers' and independence from advertisers, subsidies and shareholders. Like the other media discussed here, the platform is ad-free. Founded in 2008 by Edwy Plenel, previously a controversial political investigative journalist at *Le Monde*, its team of 87 employees is payrolled from the €110 contributed annually by each of its 150,000 subscribers.

*FTM* was founded by another news business celebrity: Eric Smit, who made his name as an uncompromising investigative journalist at Dutch business magazine *Quote*. *FTM* is funded mainly by its 14,000 members, who pay €80 annually for 'radical, independent investigative journalism' with 'follow the money as the main editorial theme'. Authors connect with readers through personal newsletters. The platform's launch was made possible in part by a €180,000 subsidy from the Dutch Journalism Fund.

# Learning from Voordekunst

**Many photographers use crowd-funding as their means to secure financial backing. We interviewed Jelle Agema and Ella Kuipers of Voordekunst, the Netherlands' largest crowdfunding platform for the cultural sector. What is their crowdfunding advice for photographers?**

- Successful projects are concrete, urgent and set a realistic target amount.
- A project is successful if it achieves at least 80% of the targeted amount. A total of 84% of photography projects on Voordekunst achieves this minimum.
- Books (design and printing costs) and exhibitions account for the largest share of successfully financed projects. Voordekunst is less suited to ongoing campaigns and project subscription structures – like Jeroen Toirkens' model (p.65) and the Sochi Project (p.41) – due to the platform's strict rules. Campaigns have to be completed by a set date and present concrete deliverables.
- The key to successful crowdfunding is the size and commitment of your network. In 2018, photography projects on Voordekunst were supported by an average of 94 donors. The average donation was €77.50.
- Donations from creators' immediate circles, meaning 'friends and family', typically account for 40% of the target amount. The other 40% to 60% comes from the 'third circle' of people who can be reached only through an intermediate step. They donate after a social media appeal, a tip from someone they know, reading a newspaper article or during an event. The urgency, relevancy and quality of the project are decisive factors for this group. Reaching them requires partnering with media or individuals and organisations with large networks that they're willing to leverage.
- Choose a funding mix. Don't bet all your chips on a crowdfunding campaign.
- It is rare for photographers to organise more than one crowdfunding campaign on Voordekunst, though there are exceptions. Martijn van der Griendt, for example, organised five successful campaigns for book projects. Support in such instances comes from a fixed group of followers, and success is predicated largely on a personal link between the photographer and those followers.

# Visual stories: a new role for photography in a changing market

We have seen how podcasters have built sustainable distribution models based on a personal relationship with listeners. Now the question is: What unique quality can a photographer offer? This section looks at several projects by photographers who have designed new distribution models.

One thing all these projects have in common is a clear alignment between the maker, story, narrative form and audience. This cohesion also reshapes the photographic 'products' they supply and methods through which they finance their projects, such as investor funding, crowdfunding, subscriptions or exposure-based ad space.

These are the lessons from...

NOOR

Jimmy Nelson

Jeroen Swolfs

Nicole Segers

Rob Hornstra

Carla Kogelman

EverydayAfrica

Jeroen Toirkens

Bruno van den Elshout

Peter Lik

Sebastião Salgado

The Dogist

**NOOR's sophisticated strategy makes even large projects profitable.**

**NOOR cultivates a reliable image as an ethically responsible agency.**

**Print media remain a key source of NOOR's income.**

NOOR is a photo agency established in 2007 by several photographers of international renown, including Kadir van Lohuizen, Yuri Kozyrev and Stanley Greene. Their mission was essentially the same as that under which acclaimed cooperative Magnum Photos was established in 1946: to unite photographers to strengthen their position in the market. With its exclusive selection policy, NOOR stands for high-quality, in-depth photographic projects on relevant topics that speak to an international audience.

Yet NOOR goes a step farther than many other photo agencies, applying a fine-tuned strategy to ensure that every project is profitable. By connecting multiple actors who all bear a share of the costs, it makes even expensive projects profitable. This approach fits well with today's media landscape, in which the budgets are smaller, yet the desire to create striking visual stories is undiminished. NOOR negotiates on behalf of its photographers – or 'authors' – with large media firms in various countries, which purchase portions of the work for their own markets. Director Clément Saccomani affirms that print media remain a key income source for NOOR.

NOOR furthermore works to cultivate a reliable image. The agency promotes itself as ethically responsible in terms of both the themes and partnerships it chooses. This means not working with companies that have ties to the arms trade, for example, and producing a large number of stories concerning conflicts and climate change.

Overall, half the agency's production constitutes initiatives it introduces to media partners and the other half are commissions initiated by clients. An example of the former is a project initiated by Van Lohuizen and Kozyrev about the South Pole region, for which they received a grant from the French Fondation Carmignac Fund. This funding covered production costs, after which the work was sold to various global media.





Nakhimov Naval School, Murmansk,  
Russia, September 2018.  
©Yuri Kozyrev / NOOR for Carmignac  
Foundation

**Next page:** Russia, Yamal Peninsula,  
Cape Kemenny, May 2018. Gazprom  
Neft's "Arctic Gate" terminal in Gulf of Ob.  
© Yuri Kozyrev / NOOR for Carmignac  
Foundation





Russia, Yamal Peninsula, Cape Kemenny,  
May 2018. Gazprom Neft's "Arctic Gate"  
terminal in Gulf of Ob.  
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Foundation

Before They Pass Away

**Jimmy Nelson caters to a wide audience, with products ranging from a set of cards for €10 to limited collector's editions costing thousands.**

**For this project, communication centred on the creator's vision, credibility and experience.**

**The project received seed capital from an investor who believed in the project.**

Production of Jimmy Nelson's *Before They Pass Away* could be likened to a film or television programme, or even a start-up. The project received seed capital from an investor and has a detailed production plan and communication strategy. This is notable, as the creator – whose existing clients included *National Geographic* and advertisers – was largely unknown among the general public.

*Before They Pass Away* was large and ambitious in substance and scope. Nelson went around the world to photograph 35 non-Western tribes and peoples in their traditional dress and native habitats.

The project's premise was nostalgic, yet urgent: 'The creator visits isolated peoples while they still exist'. The photographs are of high aesthetic value. Nelson had people pose in perfect lighting, which lends the pictures a lavish and extravagant quality. The project also ties in with prevailing notions about traditional, non-Western societies.

Mounting a project on this scale requires major investment even before there is anything to show: the costs precede the benefits. Nelson facilitated this by taking out external financing of €400,000 from entrepreneur Marcel Boekhoorn.

The project is marked by its rich narrativity, telling a story that can be presented in multiple ways. This allows for a multi-pronged distribution model with corresponding income streams. It also factored in audience diversity in terms of preferences and how much people can or wish to spend on photography. Exhibitions and lectures were organised.

### **The project has a detailed production plan and communication strategy.**

Limited prints were produced for sale alongside sets of ten postcards for €9.95. Notable is the broad range of editions, from a regular edition for €49.50, to a coffee table book for €115.00 to a collector's edition (2,000 copies) for €2,000. There was also an XXL edition complete with its own storage case, book stand and three signed prints (500 copies) selling for €6,500. The project further produced lesson materials and a film about the work.

The creator's vision and experience played a major role in project communication. Over the many years Nelson spent on this project, he made the subject his own and built credibility. He established a foundation through which to initiate projects that give back to the people he photographed. Furthermore, Nelson actively placed himself within the project, producing many photos and videos picturing him at work and not hesitating to tell his personal life story in lectures and on social media.



Karo, Akree, Garo, Locharia & Gobo. Korcho Village, Omo Valley, Ethiopia, 2011. © Jimmy Nelson



Likeaipia, Keke Kombea, Tande Mala,  
Lebosi Kupu, Mumburi Mupi, John  
Kundi & Menaja Koke. Ponowi Village,  
Jalibu Mountains, Western highlands,  
Papua New Guinea  
© Jimmy Nelson



Maori. Gisborne Festival,  
North island, New Zealand, 2011  
© Jimmy Nelson

Jeroen Swolfs convinced an investor of his project's value. Name recognition was not a decisive factor.

Streets of the World has high storytelling potential, resulting in books, a touring exhibition, postcards and a making-of documentary.

The project is inextricable from its creator.

Like Jimmy Nelson, Jeroen Swolfs found an investor to provide seed capital for *Streets of the World* in Alex Mulder, founder of Unique job agency, who backed the project through his Amerborgh investment company. This was vital because, while Swolfs' work ran in newspapers like *de Volkskrant*, he could not rely on significant name recognition to launch his project.

Also like Nelson, Swolfs' project was underpinned by a clear premise: to photograph the streets of all the world's 195 capital cities. The images are spontaneous snapshots of dynamic street scenes taken at opportune moments. What we see, in the words of the creator, is 'what unites us as humans, on whatever street we live'.

**Streets of the World features a rich narrativity that translates to a multifaceted distribution and revenue model.**

This, too, is a project with rich narrativity, which translates to a multifaceted distribution and revenue model. It has resulted in a touring exhibition, books, an education pack and limited prints of the project's 195 photographs. Publications included a regular edition book for €39.99, a deluxe edition for €149.99, an e-book telling his story for €14.99 and a box containing 198 postcards for €24.50. The creator played an instrumental role in communication here, too. Working with *National Geographic*, Swolfs also produced a documentary about the years he spent travelling the globe. This made the photographer an inextricable part of his project.



Tadjikistan, Dushanbe  
© Jeroen Swolfs

Tuvalu, Funafuti  
© Jeroen Swolfs





**Text and image are wholly equal in this project.**

**A literary publisher published the books, with a larger print run than normal for photography.**

**Financing consisted of a mix of grants, private investments and publications.**

This project started with a road trip along the new eastern border of the European Union in the run-up to its 2004 expansion. Some 15 years later, photographer Nicole Segers and journalist Irene van der Linde were ready to embark on a third book capping their trilogy on European identity.

For the second instalment, the pair lived in Istanbul for a year at the time when negotiations for Turkey's entry to the EU seemed imminent. For this final volume, forthcoming in 2020, their focus is on the new states and borders of former Yugoslavia.

Segers and Van der Linde financed their project with a mix of grants, private investments and magazine publications. Both also have other income outside their projects: Van der Linde is employed by Dutch weekly *De Groene Amsterdammer* and Segers teaches and works on assignment.

**Written non-fiction and visual journalism combine to make a seemingly abstract topic accessible.**

Their two earlier books, *Het einde van Europa* ('The end of Europe'; 2004) and *Het veer van Istanbul* ('The ferry of Istanbul'; 2010), were published by literary publishing house Lemniscaat with print runs of 5,000 per title. Both were also translated and published in French by a French publisher. They were exhibited at venues including the Kunsthal in Rotterdam and the BredaPhoto photography festival, and their accumulated expertise secured their entrée to conferences, forums and talk shows. Segers was also asked to develop an exhibition titled *The Image of Europe* with architect Rem Koolhaas in Brussels.

Stories in this trilogy are told through a combination of written non-fiction and visual journalism, presenting a nuanced yet accessible narrative about a seemingly abstract topic ('the European identity'). Uniquely, the text and images are on wholly equal footing, which has also enabled the creators to reach a wider target audience than just photography enthusiasts.



Kosovo, Decani. Roadblocks at the entrance of the Serbian Orthodox monastery Visoki Decani which is supervised by KFOR in the Albanian part of Kosovo. Border Kosovo with Montenegro © Nicole Segers



Montenegro, Gusinje. Young people in the predominantly Albanian region of Montenegro. Three-country point Montenegro-Albania-Kosovo  
© Nicole Segers



Macedonia, Tetovo. Bridal shops in the unofficial capital of the Albanian part of Macedonia. Three-country point Montenegro-Albania-Kosovo © Nicole Segers



Kosovo, Kamenica. Girl in Albanian costume at the Children's Day celebration in Kosovo.  
Kosovo border with Serbia  
© Nicole Segers

Though the Sochi Project marked one of the first successful documentary photography crowdfunding campaigns, these funds only covered production costs.

Rob Hornstra says the project's main payoff was name recognition.

His name recognition and credibility laid the basis for what would become his revenue model.

One of the first photography projects to successfully harness ongoing crowdfunding was the Sochi Project initiated by Dutch photographer Rob Hornstra and writer Arnold van Bruggen. The project's substantive aim, defined in early 2007, was to gain insight into Russian president Vladimir Putin's aristocratic administrative style and bizarre choice of Sochi as the location for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games. The products were also determined at the outset, comprising a book, an exhibition and a website.

For their crowdfunding campaign, the creators fixed three support and reward levels: bronze (donations starting from €10), silver (starting from €100) and gold (starting from €1,000), thus tying in with the Olympic medals. In the end, more than 650 people supported the project, including about ten at the 'gold' level, raising a total of €100,000.

Crowdfunding is not 'free money', Hornstra emphasises. Rather, it is, in his words, 'a relationship between creator and investor'. For some sponsors, that personal connection is the actual incentive for supporting a project, but as Hornstra notes, this can entail a significant time investment. Subscribing photographers occasionally asked him to critique their pictures, so in that respect donations could actually create more work.

**'Crowdfunding forges a relationship between creator and investor.'**

The project resulted in yearly book publications, several exhibitions and a large survey book titled *The Sochi Project. An Atlas of War and Tourism in the Caucasus*. Print and book sales generated approximately €85,000, while public funding and award money brought in another €95,000. In other words, roughly two-thirds of the project's income was funded by 'the public'.

Thus, crowdfunding was not a revenue model as such for the Sochi Project, as it only covered the production costs and not the hours the two creators worked on the project. According to Hornstra, the project's main form of value creation was name recognition. It established his credibility as a successful creator of long-term projects, which in turn paid off when submitting grant applications for his new venture, *The Europeans*. It also helped him sell more prints and fill workshops.





Adler, RUSSIA, 2011. A view on the beach near Adlersky Kurortny Gorodok in Adler.  
© Rob Hornstra



Mikhail Pavelivich Karabelnikov (77)  
© Rob Hornstra



Pitsunda resort town in Gagra  
district of Abkhazia, Abkhazia, 2009  
© Rob Hornstra



Kuabchara, ABKHAZIA, 2009.  
Brothers Zashrikwa (17) and  
Edrese (14) pose proudly with  
a Kalashnikov on the sofa in  
their aunt and uncle's house.  
© Rob Hornstra

Consistent and recognisable

Application of a consistent visual approach across various projects fosters recognition.

Kogelman combines smaller, local projects with extended international projects at home and abroad.

Many people know Carla Kogelman from *Ich bin Waltviertel*, a project for which she spent several successive summers with a family in a village in Austria. Kogelman's photographs capture the essence of an unhurried life. We see kids growing up amid untamed nature, giving the impression they may never have seen a TV or computer screen. The project was published in book form and won numerous awards, including the World Press Photo Award, Zilveren Camera and Alfred Fried Photography Award.

Kogelman has done a great deal more, however. Usually, she's juggling around 10 projects at once. One project will still be calling for sponsors while another is ready to kick off. At the time of writing, she was working on a project in the Belgian town of Hasselt as well as following a Dutch family from Amsterdam that lived in Benin for a time. She is also engaged in projects surrounding local issues in Amersfoort, where she lives.

**One project is still calling for sponsors while another is ready to kick off.**

With all these projects in various stages of completion, Kogelman doesn't work with tight budgets and discrete revenue streams for each one. She earns her income through assignments, subsidies and project sponsorships (including by a local optician in Waltviertel), and distributes her work in the form of books, exhibitions and publications in newspapers and magazines. She also teaches photography classes and workshops, including on child photography. She keeps overheads low.

Kogelman's work focuses on children and their perceptual world, showing it from up close. Her signature style and the acclaim it has garnered have helped attract clients and project partners. At home in Amersfoort, she's even known as 'the photographer who won World Press Photo', which comes in useful when applying for local and regional subsidies.





Lua and Nandini dance after the wedding ceremony. Amsterdam, July 2016  
© Carla Kogelman



Thijs van den Ende taking a shower,  
from the series The Pool – para,  
Amersfoort, June 2017  
© Carla Kogelman



Benthe, from the series The Pool,  
Amersfoort, May 2017  
© Carla Kogelman

Intention as revenue model

**EverydayAfrica came into its own after the creator let go of his concept and gave a large group of photographers free rein.**

**The Everyday Projects show how the power of photography can be harnessed as an instrument to overturn biases.**

**An Instagram account provided the launching pad for an array of projects.**

While working in Ghana and Ivory Coast for NGOs and press agencies, American photographer Peter DiCampo noticed that he was mostly assigned to record disasters, famine, and conflicts – events that confirmed existing biases about Africa. What he saw in the media didn't match what he knew of the continent from personal experience, so he began photographing scenes of everyday life, along with cofounder Austin Merrill, a freelance writer working in Africa. Initially, they shared these images online on Tumblr, and later on Instagram, where the account now has more than 400,000 followers.

But the project only genuinely came into its own after he decided to stop taking pictures himself and rely instead on a large group of photographers throughout Africa. He began with a group of 20 photographers, which has now grown to 40. There were only two rules to follow: take pictures of 'everyday life' as you see it, and if a colleague has just shared a photo, wait a couple of hours before uploading your own.

EverydayAfrica photographers are professional photographers, but are not paid for their contributions to this project. Their work did result in a book, however, which was crowdfunded by 618 supporters who together pledged more than \$42,000.

The Instagram account wound up being a launching pad for an array of projects, including a touring exhibition – shown in the Netherlands at the BredaPhoto festival and other venues. Financial support from the Open Society Institute in the US enabled DiCampo to develop a secondary school lesson programme, which used work from EverydayAfrica to show students a different Africa than the one they are familiar with from the media.

### **Harnessing photography's power as an instrument for non-profits and other organisations to overturn biases.**

Since EverydayAfrica's inception, several new accounts have been created focusing on EverydayClimateChange, EverydayIran and EverydayDPRK. All of them are united under the banner of The Everyday Projects, which describes its mission as follows: 'The Everyday Projects uses photography to challenge stereotypes that distort our understanding of the world.' The power of this project therefore lies not so much in the visual consistency of its ongoing storyline but in the efficacy with which the photography manages to communicate its underlying message that Africa is more than conflict and famine. This shows photography's power as an instrument for non-profits and other organisations to overturn biases.



Ginika is on her way to join thousands of Nigerian law graduates called to bar in Abuja, Nigeria. @tomsaater © Tom Saater



Face-off in buns and florals. Two models backstage during Africa Fashion Week in Lagos, Nigeria. @Yagazieemezi © Yagazie Emezi



An accountant gets his shoes shined on his way to work in Conakry, Guinea. @ricci\_s © Ricci Shryock



**Previous page:** Nouadhibou, Mauritania, October 21, 2018. Congregants leave Sunday mass at the Catholic church in Nouadhibou, which runs many programs for migrants passing through the city. @ricci\_s  
© Ricci Shryock



Afro on purple. Silhouette of my daughter. Accra, Ghana. @africashowboy  
© Nana Kofi Acquah

Nomad and Borealis

Jeroen Toirkens developed a subscription system through which his most loyal followers co-funded his latest project.

With both *Nomad* and *Borealis*, the story was the revenue model.

The name recognition and credibility Toirkens gained from *Nomad* paid off later on.

Back in 1999, when Jeroen Toirkens began work on *Nomad* – a long-term project about nomadic peoples – there was no such thing as social media. Toirkens often gave lectures for audiences who shared his passion for hiking in rugged landscapes. Afterwards, he would ask them to leave their email addresses. He sent them updates in newsletters containing photographs, brief trip reports and other news. Within a few years, his mailing list numbered some 1,000 loyal supporters. In 2010, he announced by newsletter that he would be publishing a book with publishing company

Lannoo. Within just 24 hours, he managed to sell 100 copies to his subscribers. Of the total 3,000 copies published, he sold 800 himself. He also secured publications in *Trouw* newspaper and an exhibition at Fotomuseum Den Haag.

Toirkens paid for his first four trips out of pocket, only recouping the costs later through public subsidies and newspaper and magazine assignments. As was the case for Rob Hornstra (see p.41), *Nomad* generated substantial name recognition and credibility for Toirkens, and this paid off in his subsequent project. That was *Borealis*, for which he partnered with writer and presenter Jelle Brandt Corstius. In 2016, they went on their first trip to one of the world's eight remaining intact boreal forest regions. These most northern forests are just as important in storing CO<sub>2</sub> as the Amazon in Latin America. Though the project was not motivated by activism, climate change did make it urgent.

The project secured funding through sponsorships from ASN Bank and Staatsbosbeheer (Dutch forestry service), publications in *Trouw* and support from the Anchorage Museum in Alaska, which co-produces the exhibition. The publisher, Lannoo, paid the full first edition royalties in advance. The project budget for *Borealis* also included fixed fees for the creators.

Toirkens also uses ongoing crowdfunding. Having seen with *Nomad* that followers were willing to pay for his work, Toirkens took a more professional approach to *Borealis*. For a monthly subscription fee of approximately €10, people could subscribe to the project via the [www.borealisproject.nl](http://www.borealisproject.nl) website. In return, they received a wooden box (500 numbered boxes issued in all) with compartments for souvenirs the creators sent after each trip. They also received a digital newsletter about six times a year, an invitation to an annual lecture by the creators, and a copy of the book, once published, together with a print to complete the box. A subscription for the entire duration of the project amounted to €480. The fundraising target was €30,000, but the project had already collected €50,000 in donations from 160 subscribers well before it had finished.





BOREALIS  
Berdyshika, Russia, March 2018  
© Jeroen Toirkens



BOREALIS, Boreal Tree,  
Berdyshika, Russia, March 2018  
© Jeroen Toirkens



BOREALIS, Gennady Tugushin,  
Berdyshika, Russia, March 2018  
© Jeroen Toirkens

**Extensive preparation went into NEW HORIZONS. The creator had already engaged people in the project before a single photo was published.**

**Van den Elshout valued his project at €200,000. This was an arbitrary amount, but it made his project concrete.**

**The project's message is its revenue model.**

Autumn 2011. Bruno van den Elshout, an artist based in The Hague, was sitting with his partner and son on Scheveningen beach, wondering what his next project should be. As he pondered this question, he thought about tranquillity and space, and their value. Sitting on the beach, gazing at the horizon where the boundaries of sky and water met, it occurred to him: Isn't this the ultimate freedom? He decided this was what he wanted to capture.

He installed a camera on the roof of a hotel in Kijkduin and began taking hourly photographs of the horizon from his computer, starting at midnight on 1 January 2012 and continuing through 31 December, amounting to 8,785 in all. That day on the beach, he fixed the project's value at €200,000. To be honest, Van den Elshout says, he almost literally plucked this amount out of thin air.

His next step was to begin spreading the message – which he did consistently and passionately – that his project would visualise a new definition of freedom, tranquillity and space. He also told people the value he felt this book represented (€100,000), thus making the project concrete. He found that people were willing to commit to it.

### **Van den Elshout sold his book before it had even been published.**

In this project, message and messenger therefore became inextricable. Van den Elshout wrote posts on his blog and on social media for his followers and sent out a monthly newsletter to 1,450 subscribers. He also got additional people on board, including a designer for his book and someone to organise lectures.

Thanks to this strategy, Van den Elshout managed to sell his book before it was even published, financing the full €100,000 in production costs from advance sales. He was able to raise just over €27,000 through crowdfunding on the Voordekunst.nl website, and the rest through activities he organised himself to showcase the project. This included an exhibition in 2013, mounted in partnership with Panorama Mesdag museum. Purchasers of his book could collect their copy at the opening.

Van den Elshout caters to a wide public. He sells postcard sets for around €10 and prints for several thousand euros. The book, with a print run of 2,012, was priced at €220. With this range of products, he was able to reach his €200,000 target in the space of a few years. His average monthly income from the project, starting from the publication of his book in summer 2013 up to early 2019, was €5,000.









**Peter Lik developed a sophisticated marketing and pricing strategy perfectly aligned to his target market.**

**Lik claims to have sold the most expensive photograph ever this way.**

**Lik has also received criticism for how he sets his prices.**

The most expensive photograph ever sold was made by Australian-born, US-based photographer Peter Lik. In a private sale in 2014, an anonymous collector paid 6.5 million dollars for his *Phantom*. Yet Lik was relatively unknown in the art photography world, and certainly not as famous as the most expensive photographers of the moment, like Andreas Gursky or Cindy Sherman.

Lik's work is colourful, illustrative, technically refined and hyperrealistic, with as his main subject the American landscape pictured in all its grandeur and beauty. However, Lik's work has garnered little serious notice or recognition in art and photography circles.

Nevertheless, his approach is perfectly aligned to his target market. With his effective marketing and personal branding as well as a sophisticated pricing strategy, Lik has managed to build a photography empire without equal. Lik sells his works himself through his website and a chain of 18 galleries across the US, which gives buyers a sense of investing in art that will retain its value. This selling strategy has been widely criticised, given that Lik's own galleries are driving up prices for his work. Secondary sales of his works are virtually unknown, nor have any ever been among the top 20 most expensive photographs sold at public auction.

**A self-styled Australian from humble roots, Lik made his American dream come true in what he calls the most beautiful country on earth.**

Despite all this, Lik knows how to win over the public. He styles himself as an Australian from humble roots who made his American dream come true in what he calls the most beautiful country on earth. He has effectively leveraged awards and milestones to advance his credibility, including his claim to the most expensive photo ever taken and the collection of his work by celebrities like Keith Richards and Queen Elizabeth of England. His company's communication focuses on a clear-cut target group of people with disposable income who believe in the American dream and are interested in art but don't understand the 'art-speak' surrounding much contemporary work. For them, Peter Lik offers attractive and accessible pieces to fit any interior.

**Peter Lik**

**World-renowned photographer Sebastião Salgado's credibility was a cornerstone in communication about this project.**

**The project used a variety of distribution methods, including exhibitions, lectures and a range of products.**

When *Genesis* was launched in 2013, acclaimed Brazilian photographer Sebastião Salgado boldly stated his ambition for the project: To create a love letter to the earth. He spent eight years on its realisation, capturing the unspoilt beauty of planet Earth in over 200 exceptional black-and-white photographs. When someone of Salgado's stature devotes this much time to a project, that in itself makes the result worthwhile.

*Genesis* was made possible with financing from the Christensen Fund, a US funding body that supports projects that spotlight nature diversity. Another sponsor was Vale, a Brazilian mining company criticised for its environmental policies. For Vale, the project contributed to their communication strategy designed to demonstrate its concern for the environment.

The project launched with a show at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris in 2013 and has since been touring the world. In the Netherlands, the Nederlands Fotomuseum in Rotterdam hosted the show. A broad range of associated products were developed, from books and postcards to fine art prints and from a poster set priced at under €20 to a collector's edition for €3,000. Salgado has also given many lectures about the project. A great deal of preparation went into the launch, including publications in *Paris Match* and *The New York Times*. At the book launch during Paris Photo, buyers queued up at the Grand Palais for hours to get their copy signed.

**Project communication focused less on the quality of the images and more on the production process and imperative for nature preservation.**

As Salgado was already a world-famous photographer with a long career, attracting an audience was no problem and his credibility was well established. Communication surrounding the project was fairly straightforward, focusing less on the quality of the images and more on the production process (and effort invested by the photographer) on the one hand and the imperative of nature preservation on the other. The project's message is disseminated not only through Salgado's images, but also through a film made about him by Wim Wenders, titled *Salt of the Earth*. Salgado's own Instituto Terra foundation also conserves a tract of Brazilian rainforest.

**The Dogist's popular Instagram account shares photos free of charge.**

**The creator cashes in on his popularity by selling access to his target audience.**

An Instagram account with close-up portraits of dogs in New York City, mostly outdoors, pictured with or without their owners, accompanied by a brief owner quote describing the dog – this is the simple yet extremely effective concept behind The Dogist. For photographer Elias Weiss Friedman, it has translated into 3.5 million followers.

The Dogist's work is visually consistent, optimistic and cheerful. It has a specific target audience and a clear premise, which is that the creator would love to have a dog, but his urban New York City lifestyle won't allow it. This makes him relatable and makes his photographs appealing to his target audience of city-dwelling dog lovers. By following The Dogist, urbanites get to feel a connection with their favourite furry friends.

**Elias Weiss offers his work free of charge on Instagram but earns money from the large number of followers it draws.**

Weiss distributes his photographs free of charge on Instagram, where his millions of devoted and engaged followers form the revenue model. Essentially, he sells his popularity to those seeking access to this target group, from publishers to dog food manufacturers. For his first book deal, *The Dogist*, in 2015, he received \$200,000, and though no figures are available for his second book, *Puppies* (2017), it is already in its second paperback edition. Corporate partners are also keen to connect to his followers, as attested by a story on his website about a dog shelter that's clearly sponsored by the Tesla car company.

Weiss uses Instagram as a means to keep his audience interested in this project and point them to the resulting products. At the time of writing, The Dogist was a company with five employees. The Dogist reflects a lifestyle that's shared by a community of dog lovers. The webshop also sells t-shirts, hoodies and The Dogist #cookiecam dog biscuits.

# Beyond the photographic essay: visual stories for a new distribution model

Visual journals, road trips, portfolios, typologies and continuous stories — all of these narrative forms have proved effective as new distribution models for documentary photography.

This publication looks at new methods photographers are using to distribute their work now that print media are no longer the sole available distribution channel and revenue model. Books, exhibitions and social media like Instagram are key vehicles for presenting visual stories to the public.

But what forms are photographers employing to tell those stories? In this section, we take a look at the forms of visual storytelling being used in these new distribution models. But first, we look at the classical form in which much documentary photography continues to be published.

## The photographic essay

The photographic essay qualifies as the classic visual reporting format in print media. Thanks to legendary spreads in magazines like *Life* in photography's heyday, it remains a popular way to tell visual stories. Photographic essays can be distilled into eight elements:

**Introduction or overview:** one wide-angle photograph giving a good comprehensive impression of the scene.

**Medium shot:** the focus is usually on an activity or group.

**Close-up:** spotlight on one element within the whole, such as a person's hands at work or key detail of a building.

**Interaction:** people talking or somehow interacting with each other.

**Portrait:** usually a strong, close-up head shot of one of the story's protagonists in his or her natural surroundings.

**Signature image:** the ultimate synthesis of those elements that tell the whole story in one photo. The decisive moment. Often this becomes the main photograph, underpinning the series.

**Series:** a short series of photographs within the larger spread showing how something is done. Images from before, during and after the action. A shorter series within the overall photo essay injects the narrative with speed and action.

**The clincher:** usually a close-up photo that effectively closes the series.

## Other narrative forms

Divergences and variations abound, of course, but all these elements are still commonly used in newspapers and magazines. Much of NOOR's (see p.13) work, for example, is published as essays in these media. The same is true of *Trouw* newspaper's coverage of all Toirkens and Brandt Corstius's trips (see p.65). Obviously, this doesn't mean these publications and photographers are old-fashioned, only that they are part of a long and respected tradition of narrative photography in print media.

That said, most photographers discussed here employ other narrative forms. We have seen projects that can be characterised as visual journals, road trips, portfolios, typologies and ongoing stories. These five narrative forms seem well suited to the new distribution models developed by these photographers.

Of course, this overview is by no means exhaustive. Not mentioned, for instance, are the narrative essay and the catalogue. Neither does this mean that other visual narrative forms are not relevant. However, it is clear that visual storytelling goes beyond the photographic essay alone. While perfectly suited to print media, it is less effective online, where images tend to exist on their own.

## 1. The typology

Francis Hodgson, photography professor at the University of Brighton, describes typology as 'the visual identification through photographs of some recurring pattern not deliberately imposed by any author, but that crops up as the shared solution of a given set of variables'.

This is a rather technical definition for a very familiar approach. Take the German couple Bernd and Hilla Becher, who produced 'incidental' visual groups of water towers and other industrial structures, presenting comparable structures together in grids of 6, 9 or 15 photographs. As the light and texture of each image is deliberately uniform, the viewer can concentrate on the similarities and differences between them.

The Dogist applies this form (see p.81) for his pictures of dogs on Instagram. Jeroen Toirkens (see p.65) uses it in his *Boreal Trees* subseries, for which he makes one portrait a day of a tree in a boreal forest. The skies over Scheveningen beach in Bruno van den Elshout's work (see p.71) also constitute a typology. Their visual consistency makes these images recognisable to the viewer, enabling them to concentrate on the photographed object and on similarities and differences within the group. Typologies have proved an effective means, particularly on social media like Instagram, of presenting a recognisable and appealing series.

## 2. The portfolio

The portfolio is a narrative form consisting of a series of pictures about a topic, in which each photo highlights a different facet of that topic. The style and quality are consistent across all the individual images.

Sebastião Salgado's *Genesis* (see p.80) is an example of a portfolio, and as such a stylistic departure within his oeuvre. Whereas earlier projects like *Migrations* and *Workers* were conceived as photographic essays, and a large 2003 retrospective of his work in Tokyo was even titled *Essays*, the over 200 pictures in *Genesis* do not tell a sequential story.

Nevertheless, the deliberate style (black-and-white, overwhelming) and quality unites them into a cohesive whole. Each image offers

a different view of the earth. But here, unlike with a typology, there is room to spotlight a single image without disrupting the story or undercutting the power of that individual image. An added advantage of the portfolio as opposed to a form like the photo essay is that it is better suited to individual print sales.

Jimmy Nelson's *Before They Pass Away* (see p.21) is likewise highly consistent without following an essayistic storyline. Each tribe is portrayed so as to accentuate its distinctive features. Together, the photographs form an index of non-Western tribes, in which each image complements the whole.

The work of Jeroen Swolfs in *Streets of the World* (see p.27) is less visually consistent than that of Salgado or Nelson. Swolfs is interested in what connects people. To visualise this, he has adopted a free, impromptu style of street photography, combining the resulting images to present a visual index of the world's capital cities. There is no continuous storyline, but there is a definite theme.

It's worth noting that none of these projects have a major presence on Instagram. Salgado is hardly active, with only 21 posts. The Streetsoftheworld account is also relatively small, numbering some 3,000 followers. Jimmy Nelson has almost 150,000 followers and over 1,000 posts, containing a mix of making-of videos and photos. The portfolio form clearly works well for books, exhibitions and magazine publications, but is less effective on a medium like Instagram, which is structured around autonomous images.

## 3. Road trip

The road trip is a photographic journey. We experience a landscape and interactions through the photographer's eyes, as though following in his or her footsteps. Often, personal elements trickle into the scenes. *Nomad* and *Borealis* are road trips Jeroen Toirkens made through the Northern Hemisphere, and Rob Hornstra's Sochi Project (see p.41) and Nicole Segers' European trilogy (see p.33) also qualify as road trips.

It is interesting to note that both Toirkens' and Hornstra's projects were funded through subscriptions. Nevertheless, both

photographers have combined a variety of visual forms. The Sochi Project published a book every year, for example, several of which were devoted to portraits, thus constituting typologies. In the concluding book *An Atlas of War and Tourism in the Caucasus*, these visual stories come together to form a cohesive whole. Both projects also published photographic essays in print media along the way.

## 4. The continuous story; an infinite series of strong images

Where the Dogist's typology is a means to stand out from the flood of images on Instagram, EverydayAfrica opts for a different approach, in which each image has to stand out on its own. Peter Lik's (see p.79) colourful photographs are also indisputable eye-catchers on Instagram. Carla Kogelman (see p.49) treats her 7,500 Instagram followers to her strongest images, without imposing any real logical sequence or selection.

This approach is not uncommon on Instagram, where a posted photo's individual power is more important than the visual consistency of the whole. We see this with Lik and EverydayAfrica, where there is no logical storyline with a clear conclusion. Instead, each picture tells its own story. The EverydayAfrica book was a clear spinoff of its online presentation.

## 5. The visual journal

Most photographic journals combine pictures with text that adds personal context. Both Nelson and Swolfs published books telling the stories behind their projects. Salgado's work was the subject of a film, Peter Lik publishes background videos on YouTube and Vimeo, and The Dogist was profiled in an online documentary. The exhibition concluding the Sochi Project also featured a popular making-of presentation about the creators' experiences while travelling through the Caucasus.

Of course, these products are of a very different order than a work like Nan Goldin's extremely intimate *A Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (1986), which documented the photographer's life while struggling for intimacy and connectedness with her friends

and partner. In the projects discussed here, these materials are supplementary, intended to provide insight into the creators' process and engage viewers in the project.

# Finally, the many roles of the photographer

**Photography encompasses much more than just technical knowledge. Today's photographers are storytellers, marketers, producers and distributors. This is about the way in which the *what*, *who* and *how* of photography are changing.**

We have long left behind us the times when a photographer could distinguish himself by knowing his way around a dark room. These days, sharpness, color palettes and other technical skills are within reach for everyone. With each new smartphone, it becomes a little easier to take a technically perfect photo.

Yet those changes within the field do not mean the end of photography. On the contrary: the demand for quality photography is and remains huge.

The nature of photography does change however: from image catcher to a narrative medium. This changes the *what* of photography: as a photographer, you no longer distinguish yourself by producing technically perfect photos, but by producing a relevant story. Technical skills are important of course, but these serve as a means to take the audience to another world. Ranging from a trip to ancient arctic forests, to a series of photos of dogs in the streets of New York.

In addition to the *what* of photography, the *who* behind photography also changes. This means the role of the photographer is changing. The photographer has become a storyteller, rather than just a professional who has technical knowledge that others lack. He or she comes up with the storyline and the elements required. This is a different way of working than in traditional documentary photography, for which the photographer only supplied the building blocks (his or her images) from which a picture editor distilled a story for a newspaper or magazine.

First of all, it means that the photographer must know his or her audience. Who is that audience? What interests, desires or concerns do the people for whom you make your project have?

Second of all, the role of the photographer within his or her project is also changing. In addition to the role of image maker, the photographer is now also a producer. The photographer instructs project partners who help create the project and bring it to the audience. Photo projects can thus be a collaboration between all kinds of parties: a designer, a curator, an editor, a communications expert. The photographer plays the central, coordinating role and monitors the storyline.

This renders visible the way the focus of photo projects changes, as well as the role of the photographer. Finally, we also see shifts in the coming together of these projects. In other words: the *how* of a photo project also changes.

The successful projects in this publication have in common that the photographer plays a central role; not only as an image maker, but also as a distributor. The photographers are not dependent on a handful of image editors in print media, but know how to find their audience themselves.

This is also called a 'business to consumer' model: directly from maker to user. We've seen how this development has taken off within the podcast sector. Podcast makers now know their audience so well that they have managed to attract advertisers. This requires planning however, for example in the form of a well-thought-out marketing plan: what do I have to offer, who is my target group, and how do I reach them?

Photography has been hit hard in recent years. The print media in which photography blossomed, hardly pay for good photography anymore. No adequate online business model has presented itself up till now. Unlike radio and written journalism, documentary photography has not yet been able to make the transition to the digital economy.

But photography does not stand still. In this publication, we've seen that there are plenty of experiments taking place. Is it possible to make money from 'free' newsletters and social media? From the loyalty of your audience? Or from the expertise built up by immersing yourself in your subject for years?

I want to emphasise the fact that the future is open. For the time being, there is not one revenue model that has definitely and permanently proved itself. We've seen books, exhibitions and postcards as sources of income. But print media also remain important for many photographers. They use these to bring their work to the attention of their audience, or see it as part of a broader financing mix.

The photographers discussed here have in common that they themselves have taken the initiative in distributing their work. *They* are at the heart of their distribution and revenue models.

This research is an initiative of Forhanna, supported by the Stimuleringsfonds voor de Journalistiek and was conducted from May to December 2019 by Marc Prüst.

**Composition and editing**

Marc Prüst  
Guido van Eijck

**Final editing**

Saskia Naafs

**Production**

Jan Paul Reij

**Advice**

David Campbell  
Suzanne Henning

**Design and image editing**

Koen Slothouber

**Illustrations workbook**

Michael van Kekem

**Translation**

Metamorfose

**Lithography**

Excellent Crossmedia Concepts,  
Hardinxveld-Giessendam

**Printing and binding**

Tuijtel, Hardinxveld-Giessendam

**Publisher**

Forhanna

**With special thanks to**

Bruno van den Elshout, Peter DiCampo, Rob Hornstra,  
Yuri Kozyrev, Peter Lik, Irene van der Linde,  
Kadir van Lohuizen, Jimmy Nelson, De Monsterkamer,  
Imke Ruigrok, Ewa Schiefes, Sebastião Salgado,  
Nicole Segers, Jeroen Swolfs, Jeroen Toirkens,  
Elias Weiss.

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This research has been realised thanks to the support of the following organisations.

Stimuleringsfonds voor de Journalistiek

Dupho

Forhanna

Pictoright Fonds

World Press Photo



**DuPho.**

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FONDS**

**WORLD PRESS PHOTO**

The world of documentary photography finds itself in a paradox. Visual exhibitions continue to attract the masses and institutions such as World Press Photo grow internationally, yet it becomes increasingly difficult for the average photographer to make ends meet. This book contains twelve inspiring real-life examples that demonstrate how narrative photography can be made future-proof. The various earning and distribution models outlined offer documentary photographers tools to tap into the right market for their work.

