

A WORKING LENS

NEWSLETTER



Spring 2023

*Newsletter of
Class Conscious Photographers*

FEATURE

WHEN WE SPOKE OUT AGAINST WAR AND OCCUPATION

March 19, 2023, is the 20th anniversary of the start of the U.S. war in Iraq in 2003. The war in Afghanistan was already underway, having begun a year and a half earlier. Both wars marked a generation, and the war in Iraq is still going on, at least in terms of the ongoing presence of U.S. soldiers.

The anniversary of the Iraq war gives us a moment when we can look back at the way our community responded when these conflicts started. People did not accept the reality of endless war or its normalization. They sought to change it.

Protests against the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq also brought thousands of people into the streets of San Francisco and Oakland. But unlike the protests of the Vietnam era, these marches and demonstrations have been virtually erased from the historical record. People didn't just show up once and go home; they came out again and again from 2001 to 2007.



A young demonstrator during the January 18 march against the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan shows the opposition of African Americans to the war, galvanized by the sole vote in Congress against it by Rep. Barbara Lee.
David Bacon



Then, in April, Cobie "Kwasi" Harris raises his fist at the end of his anti-war speech in San Francisco's UN Plaza, in front of a huge crowd gathered at the end of a march of tens of thousands of people up Market Street. Demonstrators protested the invasion of Afghanistan, and the sweeps and detentions of people in Muslim communities across the U.S.
David Bacon



And on March 21, 2003, two days after the U.S. attack on Iraq begins, young protesters sit down in the street in an act of civil disobedience, and the police arrested them. and the sweeps and detentions of people in Muslim communities across the U.S.

David Bacon



During a Free Palestine demonstration on March April 4, 2002 in San Francisco's Financial District, a Palestinian woman leads chants against the Israeli occupation outside that country's Montgomery Street consulate. They faced off with a Zionist counter demonstration – separated by a thin line of stressed police officers.

Najib Joe Hakim

Demonstrations for a Free Palestine became intertwined with the broader anti-war protests during the Bush II years as people learned of the connections between the US war machine and the Israeli occupation. Palestinian flags could be seen waving in the breeze amid the throngs gathering in San Francisco during that period. But there continued to be separate demonstrations focusing specifically on Israeli bombardments, sieges, naval piracy and brutal occupation practices.



And in May of 2018, Hundreds of protestors, comprised of many community groups including dozens of American Jews, African Americans, Filipinos, South Asians and Latinos joined the protest against the visit of former Israel PM, Ehud Barack who was scheduled to speak at the Jewish Community Center in San Francisco.

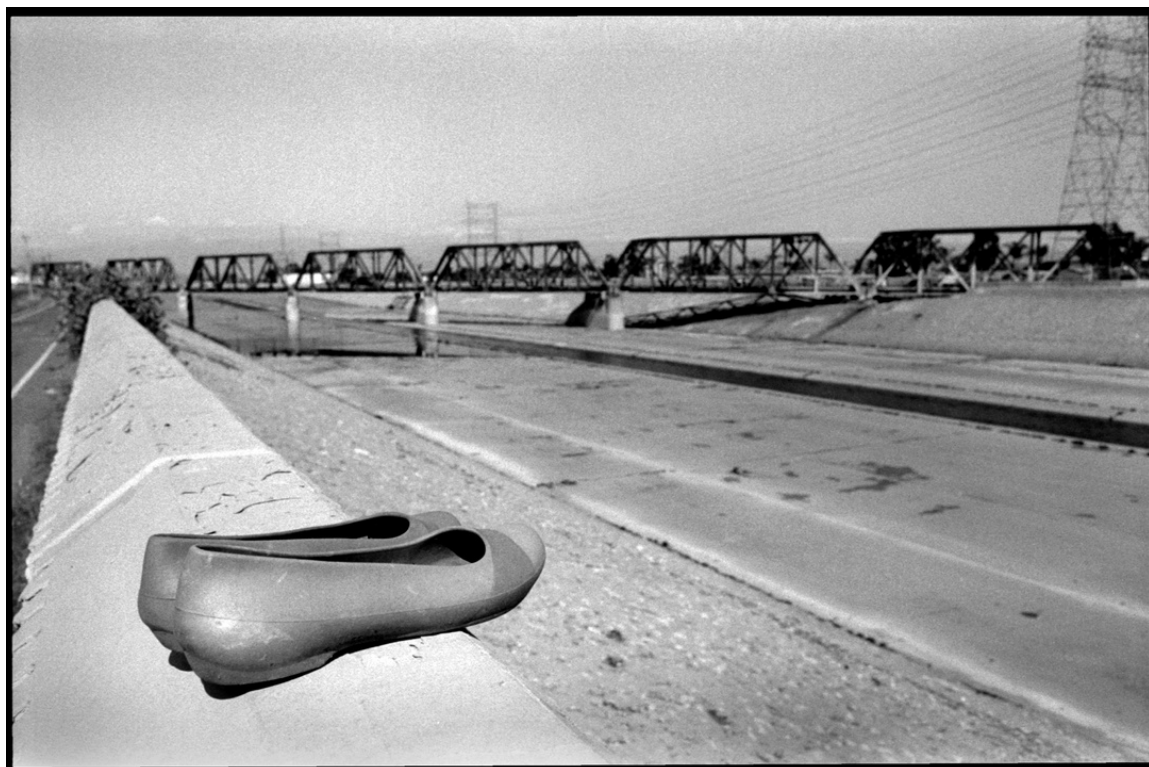
Najib Joe Hakim

VIEWPOINTS

Images from our members



A tent beside the Union Pacific railway in Merced, California.
Ian Whitaker



Abandoned shoes and Los Angeles River in South Gate, CA.
Leopoldo Peña



Paris Alexander gives his neighbor boxing lessons. Alexander and his fellow residents have allied with the Bay Area Community Land Trust, a nonprofit that holds title to property but gives its tenants some agency to manage it. Oakland, CA, 2022. Eric Nomburg



Paris Alexander watches a game with his cat. The land trust covered the cost of remodeling the house and the temporary relocation of all the tenants. Alexander was the first to leave. Oakland, CA Eric Nomburg



Grandma Sosa is a renowned Santeria medium in Havana. Here she calmly begins a gathering for her "possessed" grandson.
Najib Joe Hakim



Low-income tenants form Panama Springs United renters union.
Chico, CA, 2022
glenda drew & Jesse Drew



Mindy Nguyen is seen fishing Dungeness crab at Pacifica Pier.
Susana Canales Barrón

teenVOGUE NEWSLETTER

STYLE POLITICS CULTURE IDENTITY VIDEO SUMMIT SHOPPING

BROOKE ANDERSON

Politics

Youth vs. Apocalypse Puts Working-Class Young People of Color at the Heart of the Climate Fight

*"Adults are f***ing up my future, and I'm done with it."*

BY BROOKE ANDERSON
APRIL 11, 2023

This piece was written as part of a reporting fellowship from *Movement Generation Justice & Ecology Project.*

Brooke Anderson recently had a photo story on youth climate justice activism published in Teen Vogue.

Read the story online at <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/youth-vs-apocalypse>.

HISTORY & POLITICS

Roz Payne Presente!



Black Panther Rally, Oakland, CA Courthouse, 1968, Roz Payne

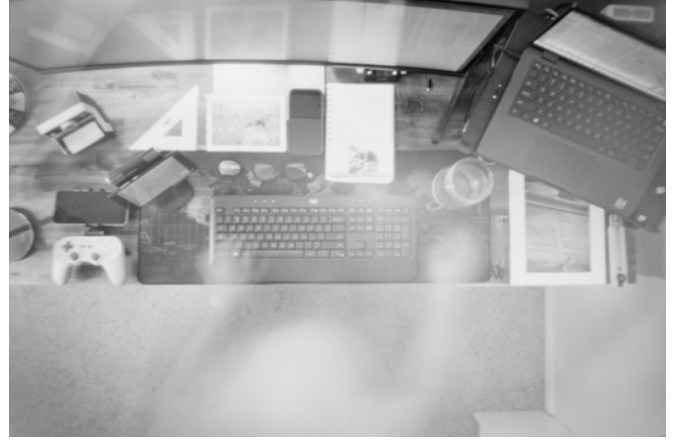
By Jesse Drew

See more on Roz:
<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/obituary-roslyn-christiano-payne-1940-2019/Content?oid=27614670>

Roz Payne was a photographer and filmmaker who contributed an enormous amount of work to the politics of photography and the image. Born in Patterson, New Jersey to radical parents (her mother was an organizer for the textile workers union in Lawrence, Massachusetts) Roz picked up photography at an early age. As a school teacher in New Jersey, she often went into NYC and connected with the growing movements for revolutionary change. She became close with the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, the Yippies and other vibrant political formations and documented much of their activities.

As a photographer, Roz was invited to attend an initial meeting of filmmakers and photographers who would go on to create the Newsreel Collective, one of the most important revolutionary media organizations to come out of the 1960s. Several people in this initial meeting had come out of the 1930s-based Film and Photo League, establishing an important connection to the revolutionary past of photography. She later moved to Vermont, helping establish a system of collectives and communes called "Free Vermont!" where she established her photo archive and continued to contribute to revolutionary imagery until her death several years ago.

THE DARKROOM



Untitled, 2023
Part of the Series "A day of work"
Miguel Angel Mejia

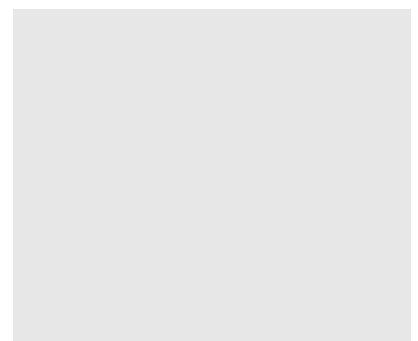
By Miguel Angel Mejia

During the pandemic, the monotony of staring at Excel spreadsheets on a work computer left me feeling depressed and disconnected from my creative side. In an effort to revitalize my creativity, I decided to take a hands-on approach and build a pinhole camera. The beauty of a pinhole camera lies in its simplicity, requiring only a light-tight container with a small hole on one end and photo film or paper. Constructing a pinhole camera is a relatively simple process and can be made at home with inexpensive materials, making it accessible and eco-friendly.

Working with the pinhole camera offered an opportunity to revisit and appreciate the fundamental principles of photography, including aperture, shutter speed, and depth of field. As there is no lens to adjust, the size of the pinhole becomes the primary factor in regulating the amount of light entering the camera, while the exposure time dictates the quantity of light that reaches the film. This process encouraged me to be more mindful and deliberate in my approach to photography, as every shot required careful consideration and calculation.

A pinhole camera can yield unique and creative results, distinct from what one would obtain with a conventional camera. The extended exposure times and absence of a lens produce a dreamy and soft effect, which was ideal for capturing my work routine and the sense of detachment from the external world.

Overall, using a pinhole camera is a truly rewarding and enjoyable experience that can help photographers improve their skills, explore their creativity, and appreciate the beauty of photography in a new way. I recommend exploring pinhole photography to anyone looking to expand their photography skills.



VIEWFINDER



Class Conscious Photographers public photo show on Housing sponsored by Eastside Arts Cultural Center, Oakland CA. Photo by Jesse Drew



Class Conscious Photographers public photo show on Housing sponsored by Asian Cultural Center, Oakland CA. Photo by Jesse Drew

WHO WE ARE

Class Conscious Photographers is a project for helping the work of socially-conscious photographers. Images have the power to help working people understand their world and its power relationships, and to appreciate their own power and movements for change. Our perspective is that photography is an important tool for radical social change, if it is produced by photographers who are part of the social movements they're documenting, and if their perspective is to expose the abuse of the system, to show how it can be changed, and by who.

SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER:
classconsciousphotographers.org

WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING

This is our second newsletter we have published, to share the work and aims of class-conscious photography. Our newsletter will come out several times a year so make sure you sign up to be on our newsletter list! Let us know if you would like to join us in our meetings, to discuss photography and share your work!

Our group meets monthly on Zoom, and we share images, give presentations on events and artists from photographic history, share technical knowledge, and discuss practical, historical and theoretical concerns related to the politics of class-conscious photography. We have had numerous photo shows in public spaces in the last few years, centered on the working conditions of "essential" workers during the pandemic, as well as the current housing crisis we currently face. Recently we had presentations from muralist Refa1 and muralist Juana Alicia.

We currently have around 60 members in our group, ranging from Northern and Southern California, to Ohio, NY, Mexico, and beyond. Come join us if class-conscious photography is what you do!