



A SYMPHONY OF SILENT STORIES

MADINA RAI · LAXMI NEUPANE · SIVASHA KC · PRIYANKA TULACHAN · PUSHPA JOSHI · NITI WANEM · MONICA JHA
SUSHILA GURUNG · ADITI SHRESTHA · BEEJU MAHARJAN · SUSHMITA BOGATI · LAXMI CHAUDHARY · KRITI GHIMIRE





A Symphony of Silent Stories

A collection of photo stories prepared during
VOW Media's advance photo storytelling workshop

She is the Photographer



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FOREWORD

It is an honor to have been invited to write the foreword for *A Symphony of Silent Stories*, an intimate and expressive visual space for women photographers in Nepal. This publication is the result of a photo storytelling workshop hosted by Voices of Women Media in order to demystify media technology and to encourage women to take up the camera. This is the heart and soul of such a workshop, creating a community through media literacy with each participant creatively sharing her vision. As co-founder of Voices of Women (VOW) Media alongside Pooja Pant, it has been a wonder to witness the growth of our media organization from where it started in 2007 at a shared desk in a tiny atelier of the Volkskrantgebouw of Amsterdam to the multi-storied complex of where it currently resides in the Basantapur neighborhood of Kathmandu, Nepal. The juxtaposition of calm and chaos of Kathmandu holds a cherished place in my heart, knowing that my family at VOW Media are living, working, and making change for different generations of women.

This is the 2024 edition of *She is the Story*, a Voices of Women Media initiative that aims to recognize and highlight the gamut of Nepalese women through diverse forms of participatory media making such as text, voice, photo, photovoice, digital storytelling, and video. In this iteration, she is the photographer, and it is through her perspectives that we the viewers are fortunate to catch a glimpse into how she inhabits and walks through her world. Through each of these photographic stories, there is a stillness and a solitude as we are privy to the viewpoint of she who has pressed the camera's shutter. In this click, she captures a fleeting moment and creates a silent image that is able to portray movement and suggests vitality and action. These 13 dynamic viewpoints represent her reality, or a reality of an unsung hero – from a reproductive health care provider, a yuma healer, mechanic, to a master chef of wohs. We see how she moves through these private and public spaces through the mundane sight of hanging laundry on a line to a detailed shot of greased parts of a motorbike. We see her as she navigates what it is like to be a woman in Nepal and those who are on the brink of leaving Nepal.





These photographs tell stories of women who make change even through the smallest of acts. Feminist thinkers Audre Lorde and Sara Ahmed talk about how even any small steps towards change should not be taken for granted. Any opportunity is an opportunity and we must be vigilant and seek them out. In the words of Ahmed, “Do what you can, when you can, where you can.” In these photographs, the hands holding the camera capture the hands that cook, that comfort, that fix and repair. There are also hands holding a microphone, playing the piano, packing a suitcase, or in prayer. These wizened hands and their repetitive acts suggest knowledge and expertise that may not always be recognized.

When we first started VOW Media, Pooja and I were on the outside looking in, using the camera to connect to communities of migrant women like us. We knew that their stories held value and truly that the “personal is political.” In this publication, what we see are women from the inside looking outwards and towards, towards change, opportunity, and towards finding potential and strength in the everyday woman. You may not see her as you pass, but she is there, demanding to be seen.

Dr. Vivian Wenli Lin

Co-Founder, Voices of Women Media
Assistant Professor of Media for Social Change,
Media Arts & Culture, Occidental College





PREFACE

Contemporary photography and photojournalism have long been male-dominated fields, often showcasing male photographers and female models. This disparity stems from a deeply ingrained patriarchal system, where female photographers and photojournalists frequently encounter restrictive gender stereotypes and even sexual harassment. These challenges result in a lack of encouragement and support for women aspiring to enter the visual arts. Recognizing this inequality, Voices of Women (VOW) Media was inspired to take a stand and create a safe space for emerging female photographers.

To address these issues, we developed an advanced photo-storytelling mentorship program designed to nurture, encourage, and build essential skills for female photojournalists. As part of this workshop, 13 participants researched and documented 13 powerful stories of women, using the medium of photo storytelling. This medium was chosen because it uniquely captures memories and evokes deep emotions, making it a powerful tool for storytelling.

A Symphony of Silent Stories is a compilation of photo stories from the participants of 'She is the Story,' documenting the rich and varied lives of Nepali women. From doctors and playwrights to mothers, wives, and government workers, the photo book offers a comprehensive look at both home and work life. Our goal is to illuminate the experiences of Nepali women for a global audience, showcasing how art, photography, and literature can bring these stories to life.

The photo book is part of the 'She is the Story' campaign, which aims to amplify the often-overlooked voices of marginalized women in Nepali history and work towards integrating women's narratives into the future. Photo storytelling plays a crucial role in this mission, as it transcends language barriers and connects people through shared human experiences. By capturing and sharing these stories, we hope to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the diverse lives of Nepali women.





Unique and powerful stories

Once, my mentor told me that photography is just a microphone; what is important is what you want to say and how passionately you tell it. Great stories bring communities together, where stories bring together empathy, respect, and cultural understanding.

When I started photography a decade ago, the field was dominated by men, and there were very few female photographers. After working within a highly male profession, I was incredibly excited when VOW Media asked me to facilitate a photography workshop for female photographers. Thirteen women from diverse backgrounds and interests came together for a month and produced narratives that told stories of significance. Everyone was eager to share their inner voice through visual storytelling. They allowed themselves to be vulnerable, cried together, laughed together, and listened to each other. The bonding they shared with the females captured within the photographs drew them together, and each story is unique and powerful because of this strong connection.

We started by reflecting on our roles and goals at the 'She is the Photographer' workshop. We started thinking and questioning ourselves: What is my role? As a female photographer? As a human being? Why am I telling this story? What matters the most? Am I the right person to tell this narrative? These reflections, along with doubts, confusion, and clarity, fueled our creativity and gave us purpose.

In this photo story collection, you can dive deep into 13 visual stories that capture a narrative of Nepali women in the twenty-first century. Each story reflects the individuality and life experiences of these visual storytellers and offers a special insight into the personal lives of the women within each story. Moni, Beeju, Sushila, Sushmita, Kriti, Laxmi, Sivasha, Aditi, Laxmi, Niti, Priyanka, Pushpa, and Madina are telling stories that are often unnoticed. These visual narratives are not just stories; they are the reality of our present time. These narratives are deeply significant to the 13 visual storytellers who put their hearts and souls into making them. They are also important to me, to you, and to the larger world.

In Nepal, we still have limited resources in photography. I am very grateful for what VOW Media is doing to enrich our photographic community. I believe this kind of opportunity is very important to grow together and build a strong bridge between the individual and the world.

I am hopeful that VOW Media will continue such a program in the future.

Uma Bista
Photographer, Co-Facilitator





Versatile and talented women photographers

As one of the co-facilitators, I thoroughly enjoyed being a part of this important workshop and observing how the participants developed their unique and distinctive approaches to storytelling via photography. Although each participant came from different professional backgrounds, this group of diverse young women managed to come together so they could create this wonderful photo storybook that captures female struggles in Nepal.

I immediately noticed how all the participants had a sharp eye towards visual storytelling and were so eagerly expressing themselves with the help of photographs. Even though I was appointed as a mentor and my role was to teach them, I ended up learning so much from the women around me as well.

My key roles included designing an eleven day long in-person workshop helping thirteen women learn advanced skills related to photography and storytelling, ensuring that the participants could create thirteen inspiring photo stories at the end of the workshop. After the first five days of the residential workshop, the participants developed a story based on the topics they had chosen. Throughout them going to the field and developing their stories, my role was to mentor them online, assisting in the amalgamation of topic, photo, and story. And finally, in the last days of editing workshop I supported them through their process of creating photo stories.

I would like to thank VOW Media for this amazing opportunity and for organizing the “She is the Photographer” workshop. The incredible work that VOW does to promote equality through employment, social, and political decisions has resulted in a group of versatile and talented women who have been able to sharpen their photography and storytelling skills and share them with the world.

I hope this platform creates more opportunities for female photographers in this male dominated industry so we can have active working woman photojournalists and photographers showcasing their work to a mass media audience. We must continue to advocate for women to access opportunities that initially appear to be ‘for men’ as women deserve equal access to the profession.

Sanjog Manandhar
Photographer, Co-Facilitator





Defeating Despairs

MADINA RAI

This is the story of Bhawani Khatri. Of her journey through devastating losses, following grief and a hollowing despair.

Bhawani lost her father when she was just 10 years old. At 46, she tragically lost her mother-in-law, her twenty-one-year-old son and her husband within four years of each other. Her son was killed in a bike accident and after 3 months her mother-in-law passed away. While still recovering from the trauma Bhawani was suddenly struck by the brutal blow of her life, her husband, her only source of strength, passed away.

Suddenly, her whole world collapsed in front of her. She could not make sense of what was going around her. She lost her purpose in life, nothing seemed to make sense anymore. Bhawani went into a deep state of loneliness and despair. She lost track of her life. It was when she joined the single women's group, a group that was formed to help single women who had lost their husbands, so that she could deal with the loss and suffering she, and other women, had been through. Now, she is a member secretary of this single women's group.

Bhawani finds solace working in her job at a local-level government office. In her free time, she tends to her farm where she and her now-gone family members used to work together. Bhawani now lives with her younger son and her father-in-law, along with the warm memories of her beloved ones.







I experienced grief at a very young age, and to this day it doesn't seem to go away.

Now it feels as though grief has decided to permanently settle in me.

















Life has stolen everything from me.
But it hasn't been able to rob me of the visceral desire to live.





Woh Pasah

LAXMI NEUPANE



As 1 PM rolls around, the doors open swinging, welcoming dozens of customers.

Woh* - Generally referred as bara is the special Newari dish made of spiced lentil patties along with minced buffalo meat also known as kacheela and an egg cracked on top.

Pasah** - Shop





The aroma of freshly cooked woh into a golden perfection, Locals and tourists, drawing in like a magnet.









As the evening wears on, the eatery buzzes with conversation and laughter, whose heart is Bikumaya Bajracharya.





She sits in her designated place in the kitchen, a place she's occupied for as long as anyone can remember.





For nearly two decades, her devoted daughter-in-law has been by her side learning the art of cooking and hospitality.





With each woh served, Bikumaya's legacy grows stronger, her perseverance and dedication persisted on taking charge of not only the shop but also the responsibility of her family. She's not only serving woh but also an inspiration to women everywhere.





Despite lacking, utensils and stoves, she persevered, borrowing what she needed and cracking woh for five decades. Despite the strain on her knees, Aama remains resolute in her dedication. To her, the shop isn't just a business—it's a haven where she connects with others through her cooking, preferring its warmth to the solitude of home.



“I wouldn’t get this love and connection staying home,”
“I’d rather be here, cooking, then anywhere else.”







Please Come Inside

SIVASHA KC





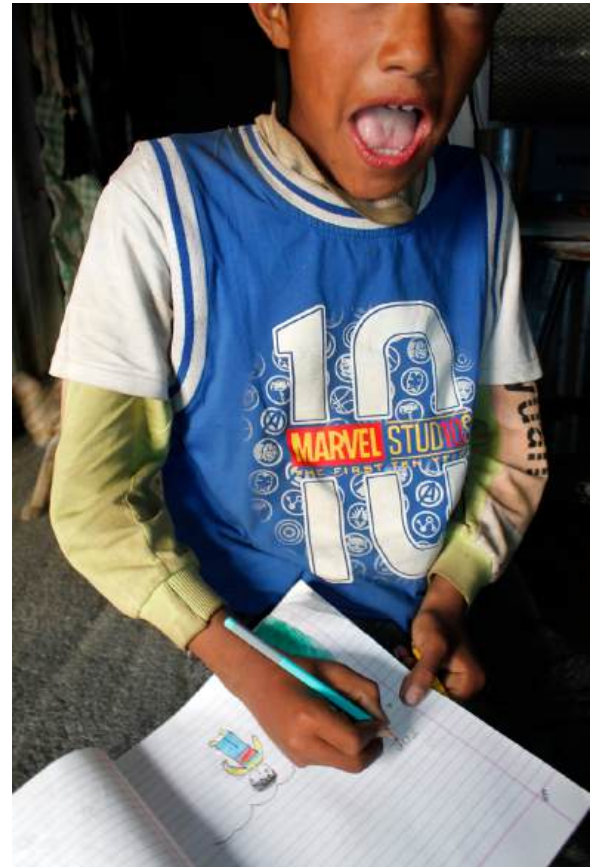
In a secluded oasis among towering trees, Kamala, Bimala, Joel, and their parents inhabit a modest home, their sanctuary of love and resilience.

Despite financial struggles and Muna Aunt's recent heart surgery, they are united. Joel's artistic passion serves as a creative outlet, helping to manage his disabilities.

Through the running of the home and time with family, they forge their safe space, proving that their home is not merely built of tin and bamboo, but of familial love and understanding. They share a rhythm, a balance; their own ecosystem that binds them together with love and care for one another.



























Satal Devi Gauchan

PRIYANKA TULACHAN



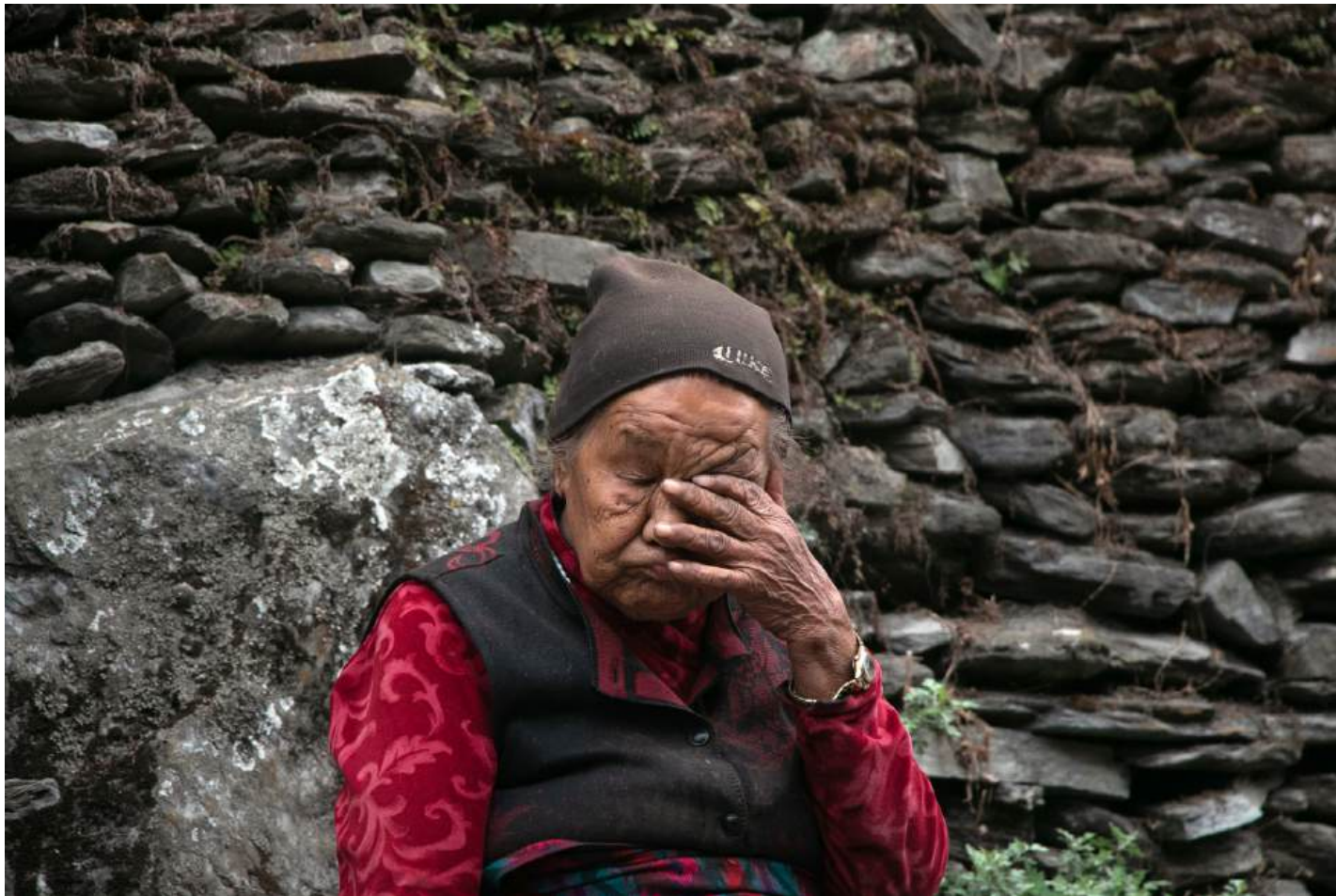


In the quiet village of Tatopani in Myagdi I came across the fascinating story of Satal Devi Gauchan, affectionately known as Mata Moom. My photostory delves into her strong journey, shaped by the challenging Chhopne Pratha – a system that uproots young girls without their consent.

Satal Devi's story started in hardship; she lost her parents at just one and a half years old. From Nepal's Thakali indigenous community, she faced the outdated Chhopne system three times, the first at the age of 13. My narrative aims to shine a light on her unique life, portraying the details of a life lived in solitude. A significant part of her life is Hira, a loyal dog who has been her companion for the past year. I aim to capture her essence metaphorically, going beyond the usual narrative to convey the depth of her struggles and triumphs.

















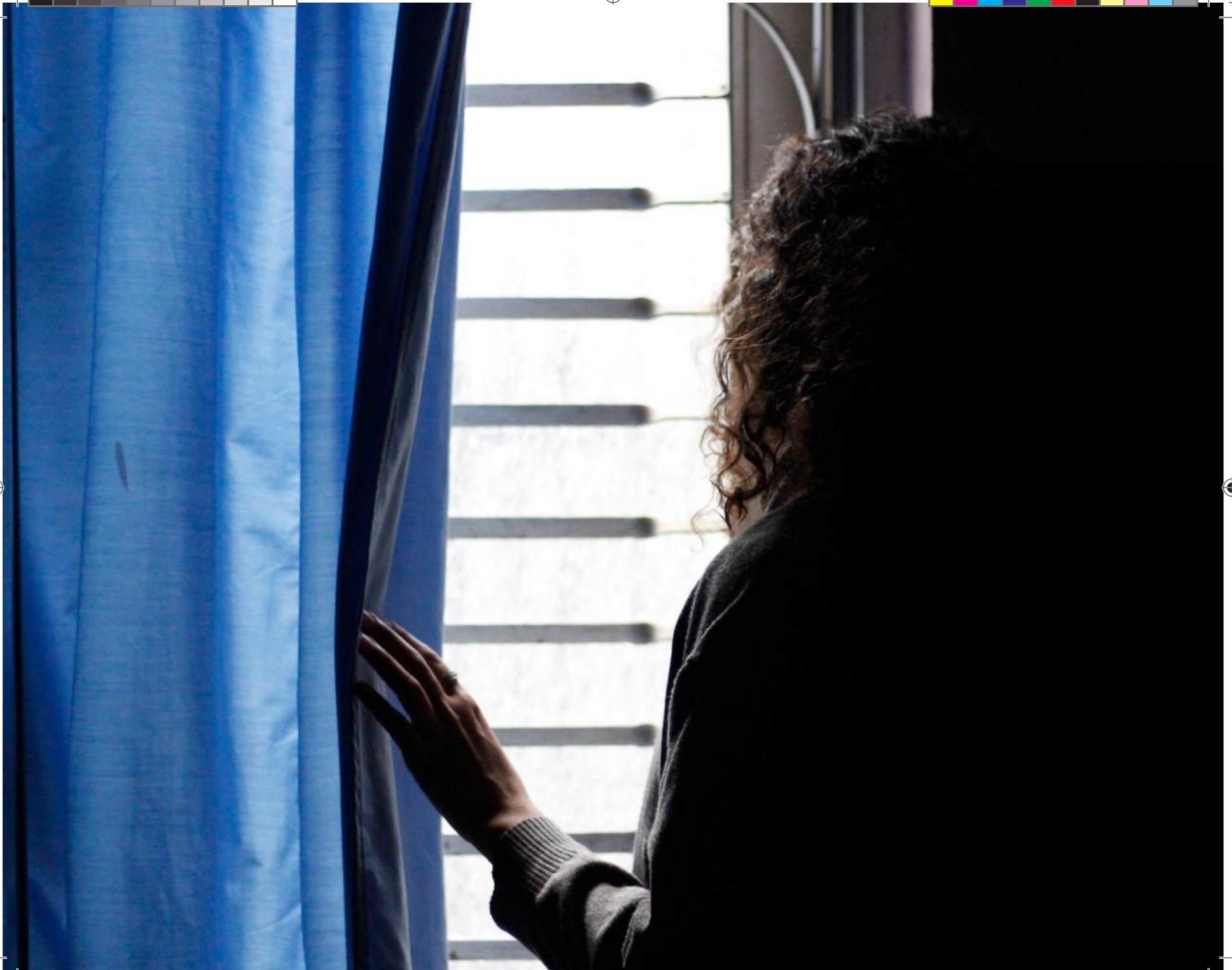






Chhopne Pratha: This refers to a practice where, if a young woman leaves her home for work (for example to fetch water or to cut woods) for their living, her Solti (Maternal uncle's son) will forcefully take her to his home with the help of his friends without her consent. Also, it is said that before taking a woman, they seek approval from the woman's Fupu (Paternal aunt). If the fupu agrees, the man can take his young cousin and marry her. No consent from the young woman is needed.





Beyond the Clinic Walls

PUSHPA JOSHI









Within the walls of this small clinic located near Manohara River, Sashi Kala, a 57-year-old healthcare provider, embodies the essence of dedication and empathy as she tirelessly serves as a safe abortion service provider. Sashi Kala provides health care services along with safe abortion services in this clinic. She has over 31 years of experience as a reproductive healthcare provider.





With her gentle demeanor, Sashi welcomes each woman who enters the clinic with a reassuring smile. Behind Sashi's calm exterior lies a profound understanding of the challenges and complexities faced by her patients; women from all walks of life, each carrying their own hopes, fears, and uncertainties. In her hands, Sashi holds not just pills and medical instruments but also the hopes and dreams of the women she serves.















Yuma

NITI WANEM



Yuma is the divinity, or Maharani, of the Limbu community. It means grandmother. Yuma is primarily regarded as a mother figure among the Yakthungs (Limbus). According to Limbu folklore, she created humankind. First, she made a person out of gold, but he remained silent, then another out of silver who also failed to speak. Finally, she combined Malingo (a type of bamboo tree) ash with chicken excrement, and the man started talking. Hence, traditionally, the Yakthungs see her as the Goddess of Creation, as the mother Goddess.







“The passage of becoming a Yuma hasn’t been an easy one.
Nor has it been any simpler to balance the many roles I embody.”























Sabitri Lawati lives with her husband and four children in Sano Thimi. Like any ordinary woman, she has her daily chores and responsibilities to take care of. However, her identity of a Yuma is what separates her from others. The role of a Yuma is inherited and decided by the family.

With such great responsibility of holding her own family together, guiding the Kirati people in times of adversity and joy and the quest to still have an identity of her own probably remains like an open-ended question.







A Story of Transition

MONICA JHA





Over four million people in Nepal are stateless.
Bina Tamang is one of the many stateless women in Nepal.





Bina was born 25 years ago in Thulodhurlung. She is the second of five children. She considers two different dates as her birthday. Even though her village is in metropolitan Lalitpur district, it lacks infrastructure and is difficult to reach. She chooses and prefers the memory of her village rather than living there. Bina left her family behind at the young age of 13 to live and work in Kathmandu. To pursue opportunities which would help her support her family, she left behind her childhood and innocence.





When she was only seventeen, she had an inter-caste marriage which upset her family. A few months later, her mother forgave her. She summoned the newlyweds and performed the necessary rituals in the whole family's presence. Bina was now officially a married woman.

Bina's mom lost her battle with cancer last year.







"If mom were alive, it might have been easier to get my citizenship made.
I feel like right now I do not know what mine is really or what my identity is."





She calls the room that she has lived in for the last seven years in Bagdole, Lalitpur her 'home'. Now, her husband is her friend and her family. Her citizenship and her physical body are two important fragments of her identity.













Even though Bina is her own storyteller, instead of her own words, her story is inscribed and derived from history's complex patriarchal networks and re-shaped to celebrate Bina's body and story.







Revving Resilience

SUSHILA GURUNG

“A woman’s hand is meant to be in the kitchen, not fixing motorbikes in a workshop!”

Purnima never let those words stop her from becoming the mechanic that she is.





A doting mother of a 13-year-old girl, Purnima's zest for life is infectious. Much to the questioning and curious eyes of her neighbors, she started working in her own motorbike workshop two years ago.





Her husband owned and operated the workshop but when he started frequently falling sick, she took charge of the workshop and learned all the skills from him. Purnima keeps herself active and is the workforce of her workshop, handling problems with any kind of motorbike that comes her way.





Her strength and happiness shine through as she navigates both the challenges of running a business and caring for her family.





Her story is one of resilience and determination, and inspiration to those around her.







Knitting the Past

ADITI SHRESTHA





My nature is like my mother's. I am my mother's shadow. I only had the chance to study up to fourth grade, but time taught me a lot of life lessons.

I am Ganga Lakshmi Awale, age 55. I am an only child of my parents. Both my parents were farmers. In those times, we had financial hardships and as an only child, I had to take over financial responsibility. Due to that, I started earning money at a very young age. Initially, I learned to weave carpets in Jawalakhel, Lalitpur and I found my life partner while weaving carpets.

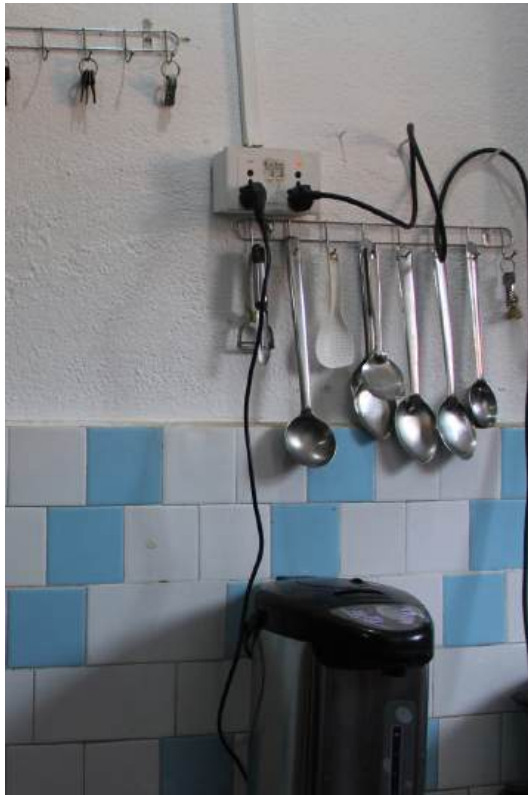
Our caste didn't match, but our hearts did.

I did not listen to the family and society which is rooted in casteism. I am following the path of my mother who taught me to listen to my heart.

As I have gone through many hardships in life, I considered helping the poor as my duty. I was unable to see the suffering of the dog on the road, so I brought them home. I used to knit clothes for my children and poor children in the neighborhood. I have not stopped knitting ever since, today I am knitting a warm sweater for my grandson. Now, I have built a small house filled with love.















Soaring On Stage

BEEJU MAHARJAN

“Life is a theatre, and the theatre has become my life”







Sangita's family calls her Sugiya. Sugiya means parrot. She dreams of flying like a parrot. Theatre has given her wings, allowing her to soar with her dreams.

Sangita was born in Inaruwa, in the Sunsari district of eastern Nepal's Terai region. The Kuduk community she belongs to is economically exploited, educationally disadvantaged, and politically marginalized. Growing up in this community she realized that despite the constitution promising equal rights and dignity for all, her community was deprived of these rights. Women are especially suppressed. But Sangita, or Sugiya, refused to live in suppression. She wanted to embrace the horizon and fly.

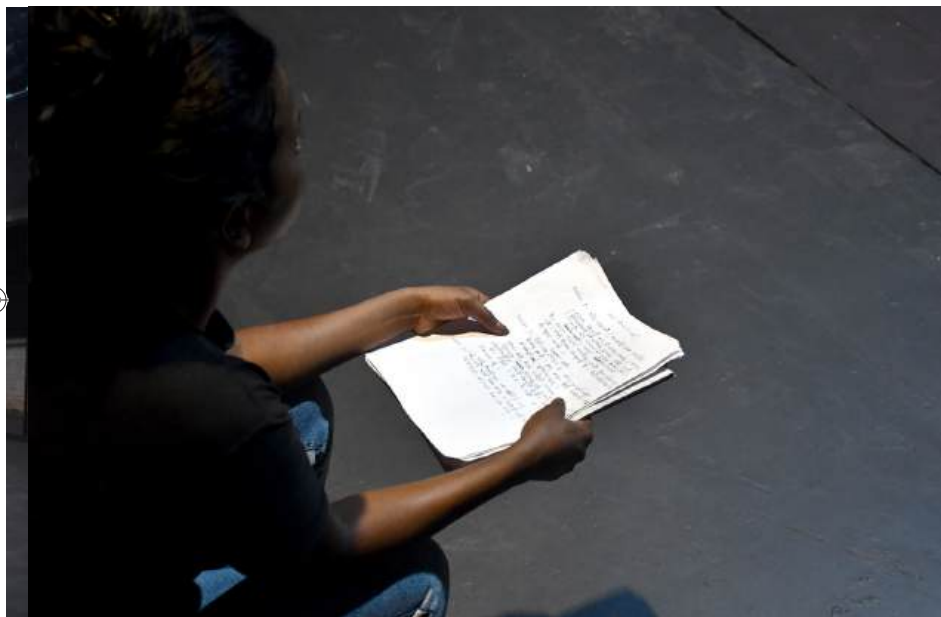
Acting became her horizon, a place where she could be free. She started participating in dance and plays through a children's club, supported by her mother and received positive feedback for her talent. After a 10-day acting workshop, she performed in street dramas and was introduced to the director of Shilpee Theatre in Kathmandu. He invited her to begin a three-month drama course, where she trained to be an actress. After 3 months long-acting training, she performed a solo drama called 'Khet ko Gangataa Bane', telling the story of her village. Her passion for acting grew, but her family began preparing for her marriage. Unwilling to give up her dreams, she chose theatre over marriage and Shilpee Theatre offered her a scholarship to continue.

Sangita excelled in theatre and completed her master's degree. She became the first in her family to study and succeed in Kathmandu. Recently, she made her debut as a theatre director with great success. Sangita, who dreams of becoming a great actor, now feels that her life is like a play, and the play has become her life.







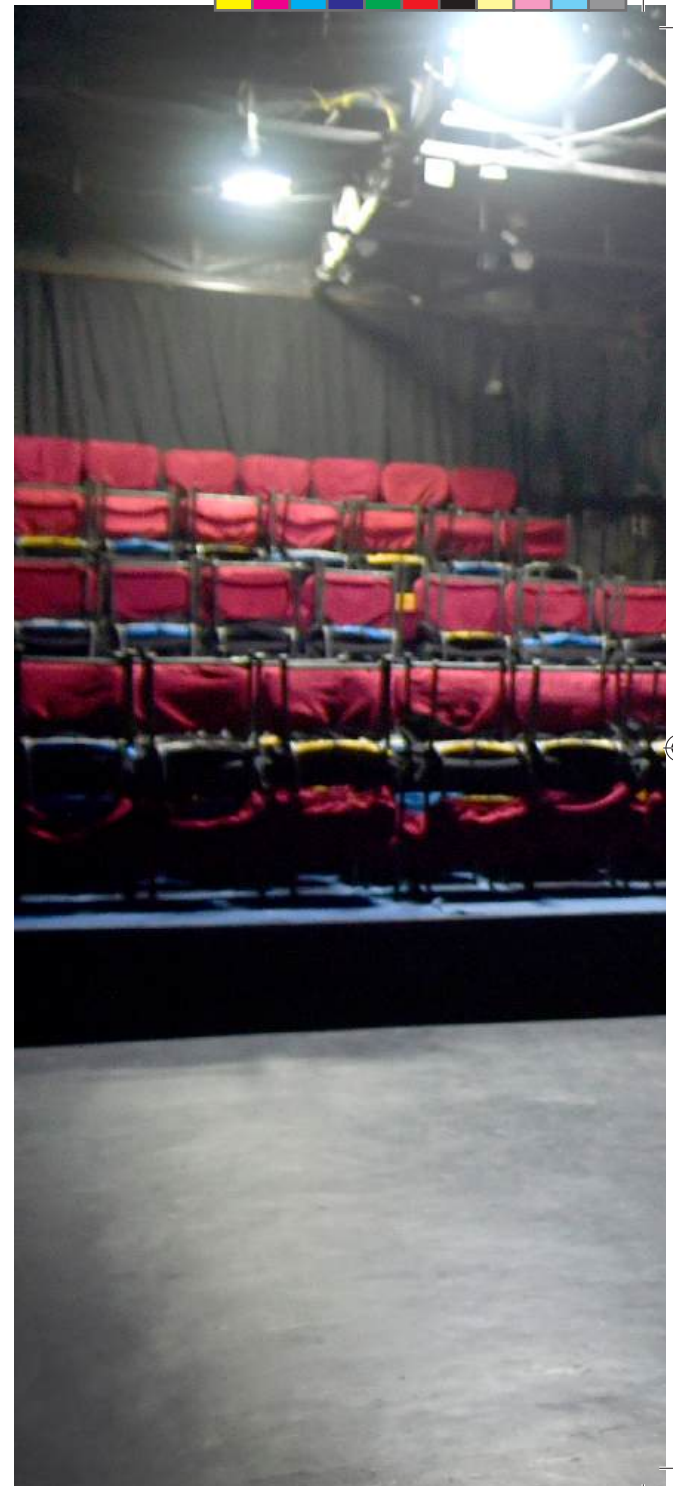
















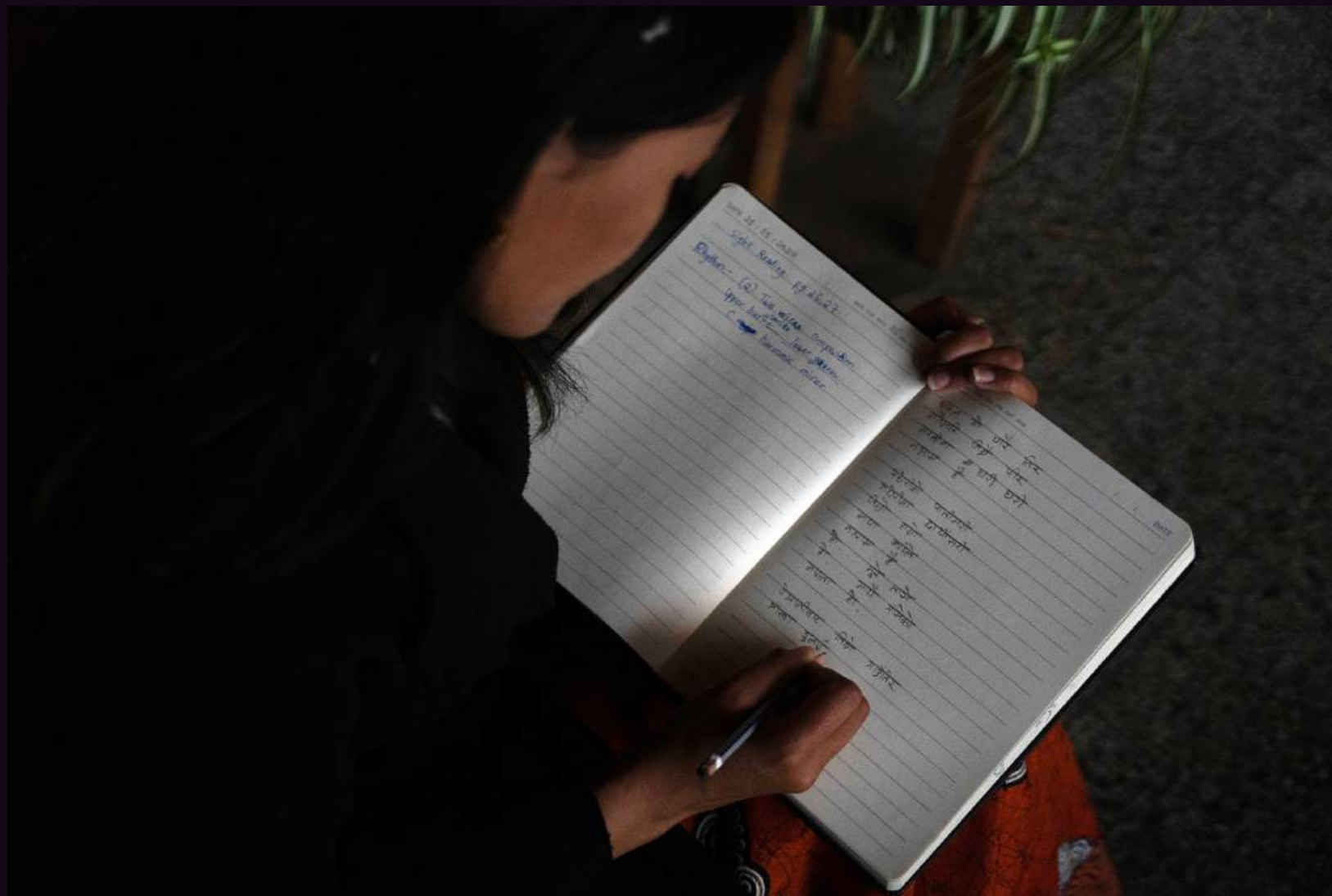


The Melodic Muses

SUSHMITA BOGATI

From an early age, we could never quite fit into the molds our family had crafted for us; seeing us as an engineer, a doctor, maybe even a food technician. But those molds felt like chains, binding us to a future that wasn't ours. The pressure to conform weighed heavily on our shoulders. Despite their doubts, we knew we had to follow our heart's whisper, even if it meant disappointing them. We spend every spare moment dedicated to sharpening and exploring the depths of our musical soul from an early age. Music has been an escape, our safe space. As our music began to gain success, our family slowly started to come around. They saw the passion and determination in our eyes, the joy that music brought into our lives. And while they may never fully understand our decision to pursue music over the molds they had crafted, they've come to accept it and support it in their own way. No amount of pressure or expectation could ever change that because music for us is a tool, space, connection, a medium to communicate with oneself and to others. Every time we hear a melody, we find comfort knowing that's where our heart belongs. It is the one thing that makes us feel truly alive; being true to ourselves. Music isn't just what we do, it's who we are. We are finding something far more precious- ourselves.

















Aarati

LAXMI CHAUDHARY





“Beginning my new life.
The old me only exists in memory.

Hey there! I’m the new Aarati, living happily despite
the scars from an acid attack.

And I’m navigating paths with my daughter, Riya.”





You might have seen Aarati Sah's burnt face in a newspaper when her husband attacked her with acid. Imagine a burning sensation rippling across your skin, the panic and realization that the liquid covering your face was acid.

She ran out of her house and asked for help, but nobody helped her. Eventually, a shopkeeper gave her a cloth to cover her face. She used it and went to the hospital in a rickshaw.

Her husband was arrested and sentenced to 20 years in prison. Because of this, her in-laws aren't helping her get citizenship and her daughter's birth certificate. Now she is dealing with the emotional and physical turmoil of the attack.







Life has changed now. She is now known as a vegetable seller in her community. Every morning and evening, she sells vegetables in a nearby Pethiya market and raises her daughter, Riya. Since she doesn't have Nepali citizenship, and no proof of being Nepali, Aarati can't register her daughter's birth certificate. She doesn't want her daughter to experience the same hardship she went through. That's why Aarati is fighting to get her citizenship and her daughter's birth certificate for a brighter future.











. “This is my new life. I’m rising again like a phoenix, rising again from my own ashes”





Echoes of Departure

KRITI GHIMIRE





अँ, यसरी सुरु भयो life को कहानी side मा
Landed in एरपोर्ट(Airport) त्यसपछि दाईंभाउजुको vibe मा
दाईंभाउजु पछि, म अघि driver दाईं right मा
दाहिने खुट्टा अघि राखी घर छिरेँ WAVEL को height मा
घमाईलो दिन, काउली त्यो बादल, chicken थियो dinner Night मा

त्यसपछि हामी लागियो Chermside को ride मा
पहिलो दिन, नयाँ ठाउँ, खुसी थिएँ colorful light मा
ससाना घर, हँसिला मुहार, रमाउँदै aussies को vibe मा

एक्कासी एक्कासी सुरु भयो कामको पिडा
बेरोजगार आफू, आफैँलाई हेरी लाग्न थाल्यो घृणा
बाचा गरौँ आफैँसँग; लड्दिन कहिले ठोसिएर हिँड्दा
पल्टिन्थे पटकपटक, भस्किदो रहेछ कर्तव्यले बाधेँदा

झ्यालबाट हेर्ने पर, अन्धकार देखेँ हृदय भाँसिदा
सपना अनगिन्ति, बग्दो रहेछ निश्चल आसु हौसला मासिँदा
रुन्थ्यो यो मन, सम्झी भन् भन्
“उन्नति गर्छु भन्थी, ऋण तिर्छु भन्थी , हो तिरिछ”, भन्दै शत्रु हास्दिँदा
हहाहाहा























Acknowledgements

Creating this photo storybook has been a collaborative and enriching journey, and VOW Media would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to its completion. First and foremost, we would like to express our gratitude to the following storytellers: Satal Devi Gauchan, Aarati Sah, Ganga Laxmi Awale, Bina Tamang, Sashi Kala Pandit, Sabitri Lawati, Bhawani Khatri, Sangita Uranw, Bikumaya Bajracharya, Anjana Upreti, Prasansa Rijal, Nikita Shrestha, Aayushma Joshi, Samita Limbu, Qulex Bantawa Rai, Purnima Napit, Kamala, Bimala, and Joel for sharing their stories to be documented in this book. Without their support, we could not have imagined producing this photo-story book.

We would also like to acknowledge our facilitators, Uma Bista and Sanjog Manandhar, who guided our photographers' team through this journey. A special thanks to Deepa Shrestha for her enlightening presentation of her work at the workshop.

Huge congratulations to the 13 photographers who have captured the essence of the stories through their lenses. And to our VOW Media team, who have continually worked silently and diligently behind the scenes.

We would also like to remember Tewa for providing an inspirational space for us to work from and, of course, our VOW Media friends and family who have continually played a significant role in our campaigns.

Special thanks to Megan Hardiman for her invaluable contributions during the post-production phase of this photo book.

We express our gratitude to Foundation for a Just Society, Katholische Frauenbewegung Österreichs, Women's Fund Asia, and Womankind Worldwide for their unwavering support that enables us to work as freely as we do.

We would like to dedicate this book to all those who advocate for gender equality.



About VOW Media

Voices of Women Media aims to build feminist leadership and effect changes in society's treatment of girls and women* to create a just world without discrimination. By providing access and opportunities to media, technology, art, and education, we work to enhance individual knowledge and skills so girls and women can voice their own experiences and raise awareness about hidden and silenced issues within our communities.

VOW Media is driven by the idea that when women are educated, given opportunities, their skills developed, their stories told, and are economically strong, they gain knowledge and confidence to fight back against all injustices.



She is the Story

VOW Media initiated She is the Story, a social campaign that aims to feature women who have switched their roles from silent to vocal. This program has been running since 2016 through which we tell stories of women using multiple forms of media.

She is the Story is our attempt to find heroes in all stories and bring back all that has been erased in the past, help reclaim her present and celebrate her existence for the future.

In this era of technological advancement, the areas of photography and photojournalism are still dominated by men, and women are less encouraged in this field.

To promote women behind the lens and to provide guidance to aspiring women photographers, we created this platform, She is the Photographer, where women photographers could learn techniques of photo storytelling from experienced photographers in Nepal.

A month long advanced storytelling photography workshop was conducted with selected 13 participants who documented photo stories of Nepali women's struggles, resilience and power.

This book brings together the faces and stories of women who have faced tremendous obstacles yet continue to shine. We would like you to take a moment to look at these powerful stories and be inspired by their strength and courage.



SHE IS THE PHOTOGRAPHER

advanced photo
storytelling
workshop
2024

Photographer Profiles

Aditi Shrestha is a media student and an aspiring photographer who captures the beauty of contemporary culture and life through her lens. Aditi takes photos, weaves them into stories, and masterfully develops poetry. Then, she shares her work with the world to spread and share the joy that rests in creative thinking.

Beeju Maharjan is a photojournalist born and raised in Kirtipur, Kathmandu. She has received recognition for her work through various media organizations, such as The Kantipur Post and WOW magazine. Beeju is committed to authentic storytelling and focuses particularly on the inner workings of communities, documenting their successes and challenges.

At twelve years old **Kriti Ghimire** began her journey into photography with a Samsung phone and limited photo editing filters. Over time, this hobby has blossomed into her deep passion. Today, Kriti focuses on capturing moments that offer glimpses into the private narratives of mental health and emotional responses.

Laxmi Chaudhary is an indigenous Tharu woman from Sudurpaschim Province in Nepal, has shown remarkable courage in overcoming gender discrimination to pursue her

career. Despite facing challenges, she left her hometown to seek further education, and earned a master's degree in mass communication and journalism. Laxmi is now a district correspondent for Gorkhapatra Dainik.

Laxmi Neupane is a dedicated photographer and law student who captures authentic moments in street photography, portraits, and natural scenery. Laxmi volunteers as an environmental activist and an advocate for human rights with Amnesty International, and she wants to use the power of photography to enact positive change.

Madina Rai is a skilled researcher and photographer who enjoys exploring the space that women occupy within both the domestic and wider political narrative. Her dedication to culture, daily life, politics, and female bodies is evident through her photography, as she captures scenes that cross the boundaries of public and private space.

Monica Jha is a Jhapa born visual artist and a self-taught photographer. She graduated with a degree in Sociology and Human Rights from India. Her personal quest for belonging in Nepal inspires her art. As a woman who come from the Madhesi community, exploring and documenting intersectionality is not just important but essential.



Niti Wanem is a multidisciplinary artist who has a degree in Art and Design from Kathmandu University. Niti's photography inspires emotion, sparks curiosity, and develops connections, as she captures the hidden stories that are waiting to be told. Through her lens, Niti enjoys capturing photography and videography showcasing her love for travel and adventure.

Priyanaka Tulachan is a visual artist who has received her BFA from Kathmandu University School of Arts. Currently, she is working with archival material that emphasizes family archives, family history, culture, heritage, and memory. For her, photography is a way to connect and communicate with the public. Her personal projects have been exhibited on several platforms in recent years.

Pushpa Joshi is a development professional who advocates on issues such as Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), gender, sexuality, and safe abortion rights. She is a co-founder of YoSHAN, which works for the SRHR in Nepal. Puspha uses photography and filmmaking as powerful tools for social change, integrating pressing social issues into her visual narratives.

When **Sivasha KC** came across her dad's camera that he used to document moments from her childhood, she fell in love with photography to negotiate an unspoken understanding between her subject and herself. Photography has given her a sense of purpose and she is planning on pursuing a degree in Arts and Media.

Sushila Gurung is a passionate photographer who specializes in capturing nature, portraits and culture photography. Her creative approach, combined with her technical expertise, allows her to create compelling visual narratives that resonate with viewers. Whether she's exploring remote landscapes or documenting everyday life, Sushila is dedicated to capturing the beauty of the world through her lens.

Sushmita Bogati is an aspiring artist from eastern Nepal, Dharan. Currently, Sushmita is pursuing a degree in Media Studies at Kathmandu University. Since 2020, she has been weaving compelling narratives in the world of film and photography, through her poems and stories, and captures the beauty of human emotions and the natural environment.



VOW Media team

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