

BONGEREH

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION 2025

Cultural Heritage &
Environmental Change

London, UK



Credits

Presented by:

BONGEREH | Art Heritage Connection

Curated & Directed by:

Tannaz Mirjalili

Jury Panel

Ashley Cooper - Professional Environmental & Wildlife Photographer

Raquel Villar-Pérez - Independent Researcher & Curator

Ali Zanjani - Multidisciplinary Artist & Visual Archivist

Editorial & Production Team

Curator & Project Lead: Tannaz Mirjalili

Advisory & Pre-selection Support: Mohammad Ghaffari

Visual Design: Naimeh Afshari

Editorial Writing: Mina Damghanian

Project Coordination: Pegah Zakizadeh

Communications Support: Ali Ghajar

Special Thanks

To our Jury Panel and all participating photographers whose works illuminate the shared threads between nature, memory, and identity.

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Founder's Note

"Cultural heritage carries stories that connect us to who we've been and who we are becoming."

When we began this journey, the idea was simple: to create a space where art could document what is quietly disappearing. Over the past months, we've witnessed emerging photographers from around the world capturing fragile traditions, vanishing landscapes, and communities whose stories are being reshaped by environmental change.

This competition became more than a call for entries; it became a collective reflection on how deeply nature and culture intertwine. From crafts that fade with climate shifts to rituals that lose meaning when the land changes, each work reminds us that preservation is about empathy and awareness. At BONGEREH, our mission has always been to bridge art, heritage, and storytelling.

Through this first photography competition, we're proud to have taken another step toward connecting voices that reimagine cultural continuity in a changing world.

Tannaz Mirjalili
Founder & Creative Director

About **BONGEREH**

BONGEREH is a UK-based creative platform reimagining cultural heritage through design, storytelling, and immersive experiences. Founded in London, BONGEREH curates projects that connect communities, revive endangered traditions, and highlight the contemporary relevance of heritage in a global context.

Our work spans from curating cultural events and exhibitions to developing educational and sensory experiences that invite audiences to rediscover their shared roots. We see heritage as a living language that connects people, places, and generations.

Through international collaborations, BONGEREH aims to create a dialogue between the past and the present; one that inspires empathy, pride, and connection.

About **The Competition**

Cultural Heritage & Environmental Change Through the Lens of Emerging Artists

This year's competition invited photographers to reflect on how environmental and climate change are transforming our shared cultural memory from disappearing landscapes and crafts to rituals shaped by new realities. The call reached artists from five continents and twelve countries, each offering a unique perspective on how nature, heritage, and identity intersect.

Throughout this process, BONGEREH received advisory support in theme alignment and pre-selection curation from Mohammad Ghaffari. The final selection was independently reviewed and collectively evaluated by our Jury Panel, who identified five outstanding contributions, including 3 Winners and 2 Selected Honored Works featured in this publication.

Jury & Selection Committee



Professional Environmental & Wildlife Photographer

Ashley Cooper has spent 14 years documenting climate change on every continent, building one of the world's most comprehensive collections of climate-change imagery. Currently photographing every species of British bird, his work explores the intersection of climate and wildlife.



Independent Researcher & Curator

Raquel Villar-Pérez is an independent researcher and curator whose work explores expanded photography, migration, decoloniality, and the practices of women artists. She focuses on women-identified image-makers addressing migration, transnational feminisms, and environmental justice through innovative approaches.



Multidisciplinary Artist & Visual Archivist

Ali Zanjani is a multidisciplinary artist working across landscape photography and audiovisual archives. His practice re-examines images as traces of culture, identity, and time, echoing his belief that "we do not remain, yet only our photograph endures."

Winners Work

Title: Sembrando Flores
Fernando Izaguirre | Mexico



"In Mexico, the cempasúchil marigold is more than a flower; it is a sacred symbol of life, death, and cultural identity. Every Day of the Dead, its bright petals guide souls back home. Yet local cultivation now faces challenges from cheaper, mass produced flowers imported from China, which threaten native varieties and the livelihood of small farmers.

For many rural families, marigold harvesting provides essential seasonal work, and communities depend on this income each autumn. Protecting the Mexican *Tagetes erecta* therefore means preserving both tradition and employment.

Public institutions and farmers' collectives are promoting native seeds, sustainable agriculture, and local consumption to defend this heritage. Preserving the Mexican marigold is an act of cultural, ecological, and labor sovereignty, ensuring that its golden light continues to bloom across the fields and altars of Mexico each November."



Jury Comment

A visually coherent series brought to life through confident use of light and vibrant colour. While the imagery appears intentionally modest, the artist's statement adds emotional and conceptual depth revealing the cultural and ecological fragility of Mexico's traditional flower production. Together, the text and photographs articulate a fading heritage threatened by globalised, profit driven systems. The work resonates strongly with the aims of this competition, highlighting the intersection of cultural identity, environmental vulnerability, and community tradition.

Fernando Izaguirre is a documentary photographer and audiovisual producer from Veracruz, Mexico, exploring identity, tradition, and collective memory through everyday life and cultural expression. Izaguirre works with the Health Secretariat of Veracruz on institutional audiovisual projects and has collaborated with TV Azteca Veracruz, Eureka TV, INFONAVIT, and the Trickle Up Foundation. His work received an Honorable Mention at the Cuartoscuro Contest and was selected for the 9th FFIEL.

<https://fizaguirre.myportfolio.com>

Winners Work

Title: Si-O-Se-Pol: Altered Context, Altered Meaning

Negin Jannatisefat | Iran



"Si o se pol is a Safavid era structure that once connected water and stone, people and places. Today, the river beneath it has dried up, the sky above it has faded into smog, and cranes and concrete pierce its skyline.

Now, absence is everywhere: no water, no clarity, no balance. What remains is the question: can heritage find new meaning in altered landscapes, or must we fight to restore the balance it once knew?"

Jury Comment

A stark and expressive image documenting the environmental devastation caused by the drying of the Zayandeh Rood River. Once the lifeline of Isfahan, its disappearance has reshaped the city's identity affecting agriculture, daily life, and centuries of cultural and architectural heritage. The photograph captures the symbolic and physical erosion of a landscape that once defined the rhythm of the city, offering a powerful reflection on the broader environmental crisis.

Negin Jannatisefat is an architect with a strong interest in cultural heritage and identity, exploring how built environments embody history and evolve over time.

Negin also photographs heritage sites to capture the dialogue between past and present. Through her work, she highlights the importance of cultural heritage and its conservation.

<https://instagram.com/liloutlander>

Winners Work

Title: To walk Is Not To Arrive But To Remember

Mario Dib | Mexico



"In the Peruvian highlands, glaciers that once guarded the sky are vanishing, taking with them the rhythm of ancestral life. The Q'ero people, guardians of Andean wisdom, face a silent erosion not only of land but of spirit. As the ice melts, their sacred lakes recede, and their rituals lose the backdrop that sustained their meaning. Migration becomes survival, and traditions once rooted in reciprocity with Pachamama now echo through empty valleys.

These portraits capture a fragile equilibrium, where ancient fabrics and resilient faces coexist with an unforgiving climate. Amid displacement and cultural drift, what remains is the luminous dignity of those who still walk the sacred paths, keeping alive the dialogue between humankind and the living energy of the mountains. In their gaze, one can still see the reflection of the majestic Ausangate mountain, melting, eternal."



Jury Comment

A human centred narrative portraying communities who continue to adapt to their natural environment amid accelerating ecological change. The joyful colours and gestures stand in poignant contrast to the harsh reality of melting glaciers, creating a layered visual dialogue between celebration and loss. The series reads as both a poetic documentation of everyday life and a quiet record of a landscape on the verge of irreversible transformation.

Mario Dib is a photographer, explorer, and spiritual seeker dedicated to documenting remote indigenous communities and the untouched beauty of nature. As the founder of Bushman Photo, Dib leads transformative expeditions that blend art, consciousness, and connection to the Earth. Guided by presence and simplicity, he shares his vision through portraiture and storytelling. Dib also practices and teaches permaculture, aligning his life with nature's cycles and a search for inner harmony.

<https://bushmanphoto.com>

Honored Work

Title: Silent Resilience

Adil Sher | Pakistan



"Each winter, Lahore is covered in dense, toxic smog that blurs its skyline, endangers health, and slowly wears down its architectural heritage. This series of photographs captures moments where the city's historic buildings emerge from the haze, weathered but still standing. These images reflect not just the environmental challenges facing Lahore but also the quiet strength of its people and structures.

In the face of pollution and uncertainty, there is endurance. There is resilience. Through this work, I hope to draw attention to the urgent need to protect both cultural heritage and public health in a changing climate. The photographs stand as a reminder that preservation is not only about memory but also about survival."



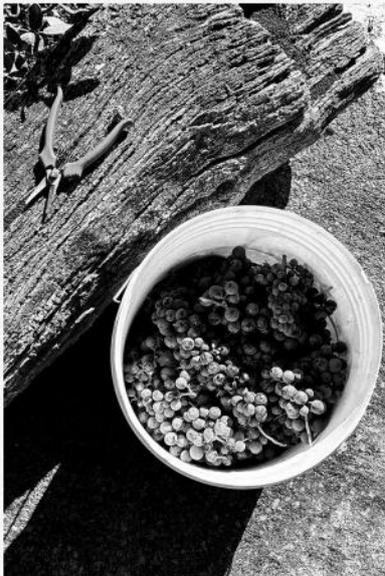
Adil Sher is a Pakistani filmmaker whose two-decade career spans award-winning films, television, commercials, and digital content. Combining creative vision with professional expertise, Sher captures the lived experiences of everyday Pakistanis. Through compelling storytelling and precise composition, he creates cinematic images shaped by a refined play of light and shadow.

<https://adilsher.com>

Honored Work

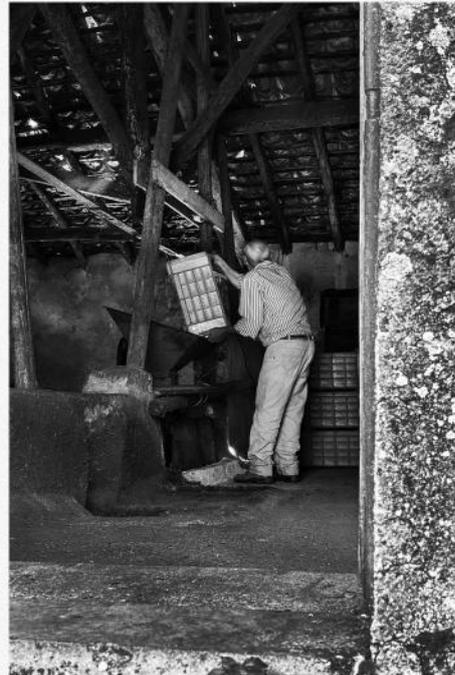
Title: The Last Harvest

Asia Noah Aliotta | Italy



"In Sicily, where the rhythm of the seasons once guided both work and faith, The Last Harvest tells the delicate story of a land and its guardians. On sun baked hills and vineyards clinging to volcanic soil, winegrowers now face drought, sudden storms, and cycles that no longer follow ancient rhythms. Their hands repeat the gestures of their ancestors, yet the earth beneath them has changed.

Through intimate portraits, textures, and landscapes caught between resilience and decline, the project reflects on the transformation of a cultural and natural heritage under the pressures of climate change. The Last Harvest is a visual elegy to Sicily's vineyards, a meditation on memory, adaptation, and the quiet strength of those who continue to listen to the land."



Asia Noah Aliotta approaches photography as a deep personal need, a language through which she seeks an authentic connection with her subjects.

Drawn to fleeting moments and human presence, she explores the tension between the sacred and the everyday, creating images shaped by light, shadow, and introspection. Aliotta has participated in several group and solo exhibitions.

https://instagram.com/noah_photo_art

Looking Ahead

BONGEREH continues its mission to connect Art, Heritage, and Connection. Our future projects will explore how preservation can coexist with innovation, inviting artists and audiences to reimagine traditions in a changing world. Themes like migration, identity, and environmental change will remain at the heart of our curations, guiding us toward a more connected, compassionate understanding of cultural continuity.

Follow our upcoming projects and open calls at:

 www.bongereh.com

 [@bongereh](https://www.instagram.com/bongereh)

Acknowledgements

With heartfelt thanks to our Jury Panel for their dedication, and to all artists who trusted us with their stories.

And

Special appreciation to Mohammad Ghaffari for advisory and pre-selection support, our production and editorial team for their commitment, and all participating artists for their contribution to this collective reflection.

Colophon

BONGEREH Photography Competition 2025
Artbook Publication

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Special thanks to our Jury Panel:

Ashley Cooper, Raquel Villar-Pérez, Ali Zanjani

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