

# UNIT 3 – BRIEF 1 / WEEK 6

## PROJECTIONS,

*Haris Mahmood*

# Line of Enquiry

Developments

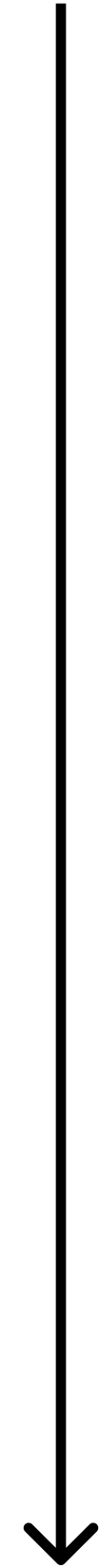
**HOW CAN A CONFLICT-RIDDEN BORDER  
BE VISUALLY REIMAGINED?**

HOW CAN MY PUKHTUN IDENTITY  
TRANSCEND BORDERS?

HOW CAN STORYTELLING BE USED TO REIMAGINE THE  
RELATIONSHIP OF A COMMUNITY THAT IS SPLIT BY  
BORDERS?

HOW CAN WE USE STORYTELLING TO REPRESENT  
DIVIDED ETHNIC COMMUNITIES SEPARATED BY  
INTERNATIONAL BORDERS?

**HOW CAN CONFLICT RIDDEN BORDERS BE  
REIMAGINED THROUGH VISUAL STORYTELLING?**



# **Line of Enquiry**

Updated

**HOW CAN CONFLICT RIDDEN BORDERS BE  
REIMAGINED THROUGH VISUAL STORYTELLING?**

# Project Proposal

## Context

Across the world, ethnic communities have been territorially fragmented by modern nation-state borders. Examples include:

- **Pashtuns** divided by the Durand Line between **Afghanistan and Pakistan**
- **Punjabis** divided by the Radcliffe Line between **India and Pakistan**
- **Kurds** dispersed across **Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria**
- Somalis across Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya

While state borders produce legal separation, kinship systems, trade routes, language, folklore and material culture continue to circulate.

# Project Proposal

Methodology

**Storytelling will function as the primary methodological tool.** The project will gather **lived narratives** from ethnically unified communities divided by international boundaries. Rather than focusing on macro political discourse, the emphasis will be on **everyday experiences such as family histories, objects that have crossed borders, shared proverbs, disrupted routines and informal continuities.**

# Project Proposal

## Audiences

- **Ethnic communities divided by international borders but united by language, kinship and cultural practice** e.g., Pukhtuns, Kurds, Punjabis etc.
- **Diaspora ethnic communities who's family history is connected to division by international borders**
- **Masses at large who are interested in borderland studies** i.e., academics, journalists, creative practitioners etc.

# Annotated Bibliographies

14 Text and Practice References

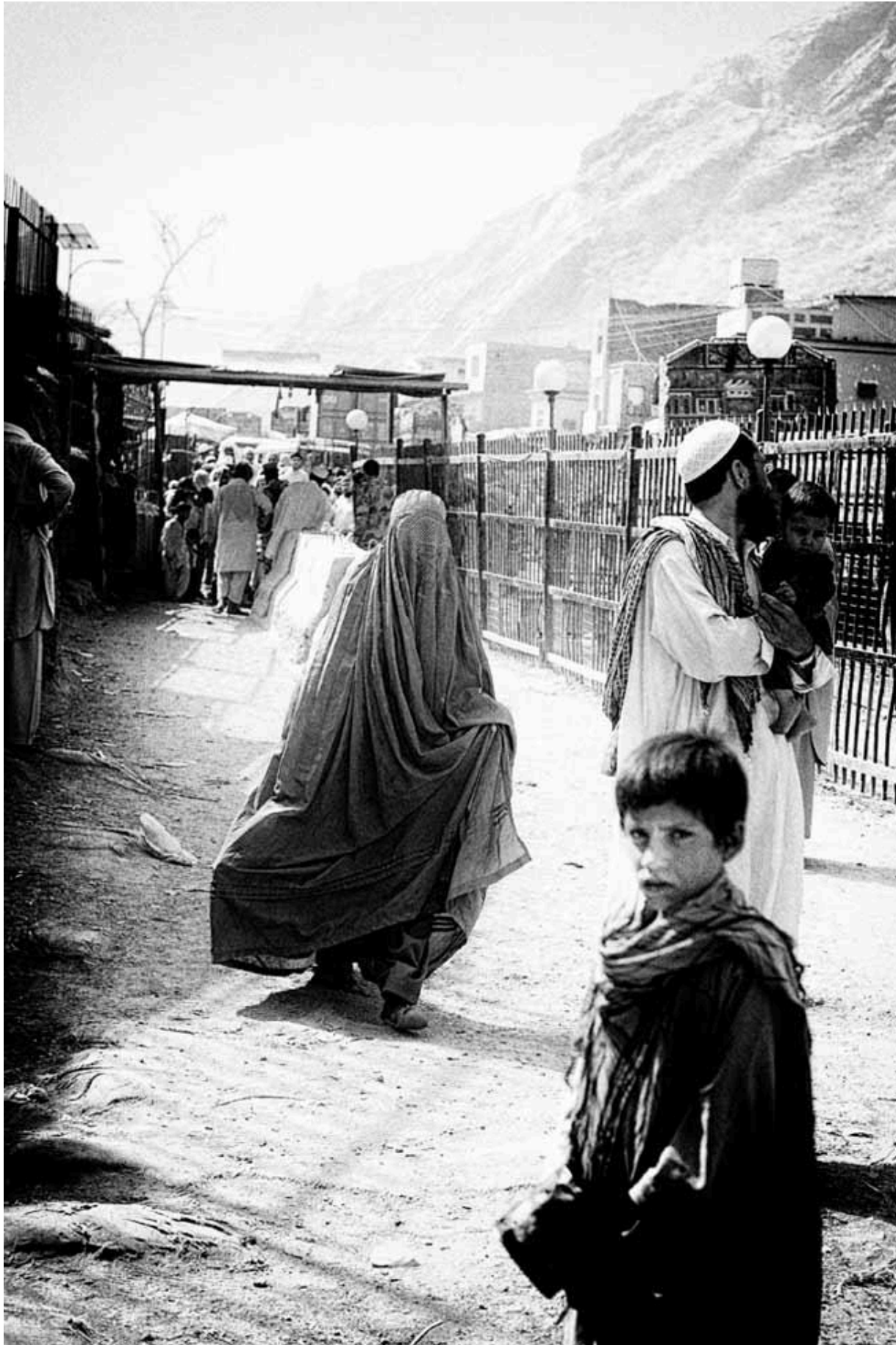
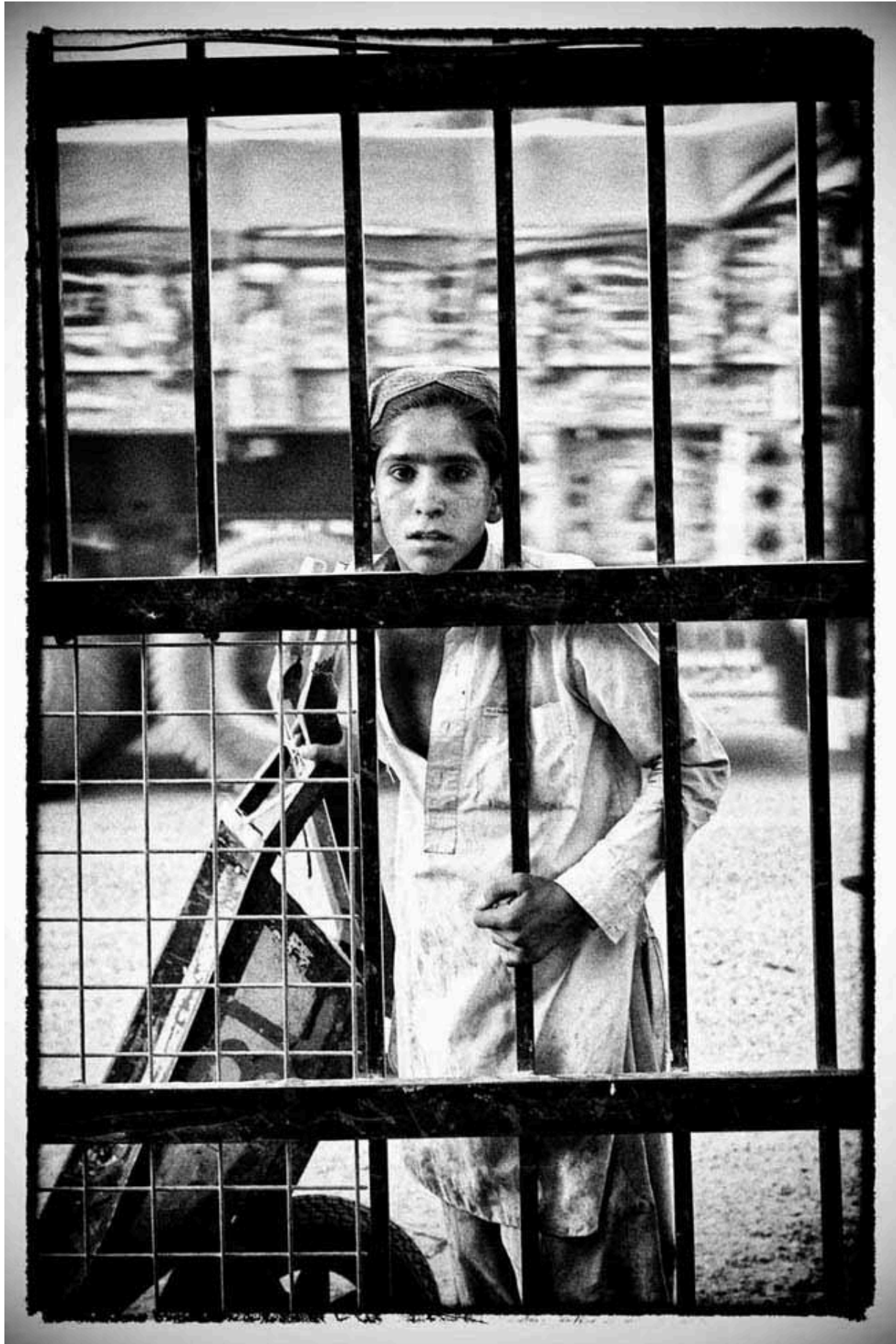
AB

💡 14 text and practice references.

- 🌐 Should only working-class photographers take pictures of wor...
- 📺 Afghan Box Camera Project
- 📺 RFE/RL Disasters Of War: Afghan Box-Camera Portraits By Khalid Hadi
- 📺 Ron Synovitz The Amazing Rise And Fall Of Century-Old Afghan Box Cameras
- 📺 Liz Nowell Khadim Ali's Invisible Border Expands Tradition
- 📺 ME & EU
- 📺 furhhdI A Season Outside | India's Quest Series | Amar Kanwar
- 📺 Urvi Chheda Pritika Chowdhry: Evoking the History of the Indian Partitio...
- 📺 Asia Society Photos: Bustling Human Traffic Along a 'Mythical' Afghanista...
- 🔗 [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com) Alex Strick Van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn
- The Pilgrim of A Beauty by [Imtiaz Ahmad](#) [Sahibzada](#)
- 📺 NPR These Unclaimed Afghan Studio Portraits Bear Witness To Deca...
- 📺 Edward Girardet Steve McCurry: Photojournalism Meets Art in Afghanistan
- 📺 olga Steve McCurry: Crossing National Borders to Transcend Cultur...

# Photos: Bustling Human Traffic Along a 'Mythical' Afghanistan-Pakistan Border

April 17th, 2013



**palpable** | 'pʌlpəbl | adjective

1 (of a feeling or atmosphere) so intense as to seem almost tangible: *a palpable sense of loss.* [more](#)

Borders still remain the most palpable geo-political phenomena.

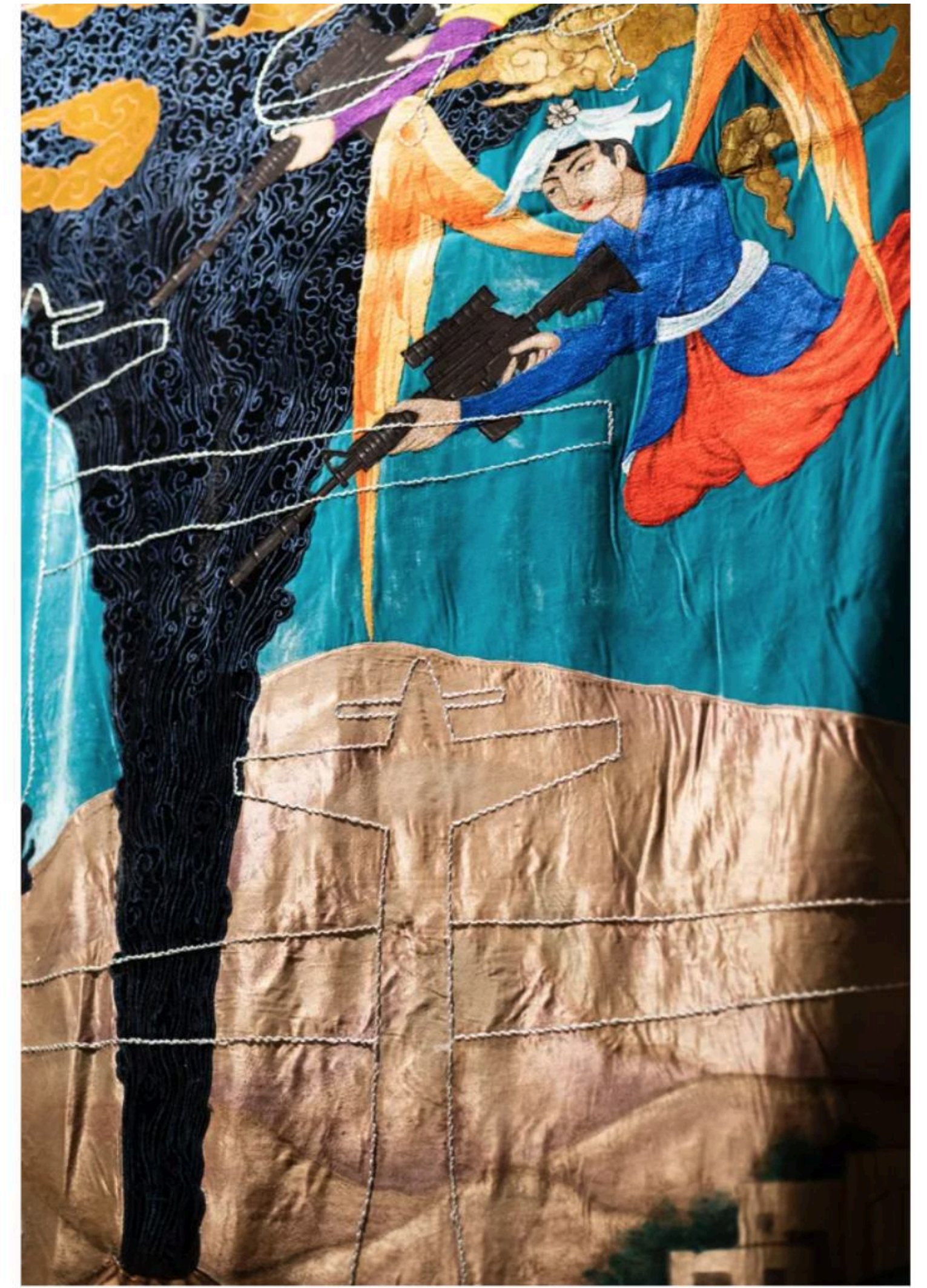
<https://asiasociety.org/blog/asia/photos-bustling-human-traffic-along-mythical-afghanistan-pakistan-border>

# Invisible Border

Khadim Ali

- Explores **war, trauma, displacement and refugee experience**, especially reflecting personal and Hazara community histories.
- Draws on **Persian literature (The Shahnameh)** and other cultural narratives, layering historical, mythological and contemporary references.





<https://ocula.com/magazine/conversations/khadim-ali-expanding-tradition/>



Khadim Ali, *Invisible Border I* (2020) (detail). Hand and machine embroidered, stitched and dye ink on fabric. 291 x 265 cm. Collection: Kiran Nadar Museum of Art. Exhibition view: *Invisible Border*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane (10 April–5 June 2021). Courtesy Institute of Modern Art. Photo: Marc Pricop.



Khadim Ali, *Invisible Border I* (2020) (detail). Hand and machine embroidered, stitched and dye ink on fabric. 291 x 265 cm. Collection: Kiran Nadar Museum of Art. Exhibition view: *Invisible Border*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane (10 April–5 June 2021). Courtesy Institute of Modern Art. Photo: Marc Pricop.

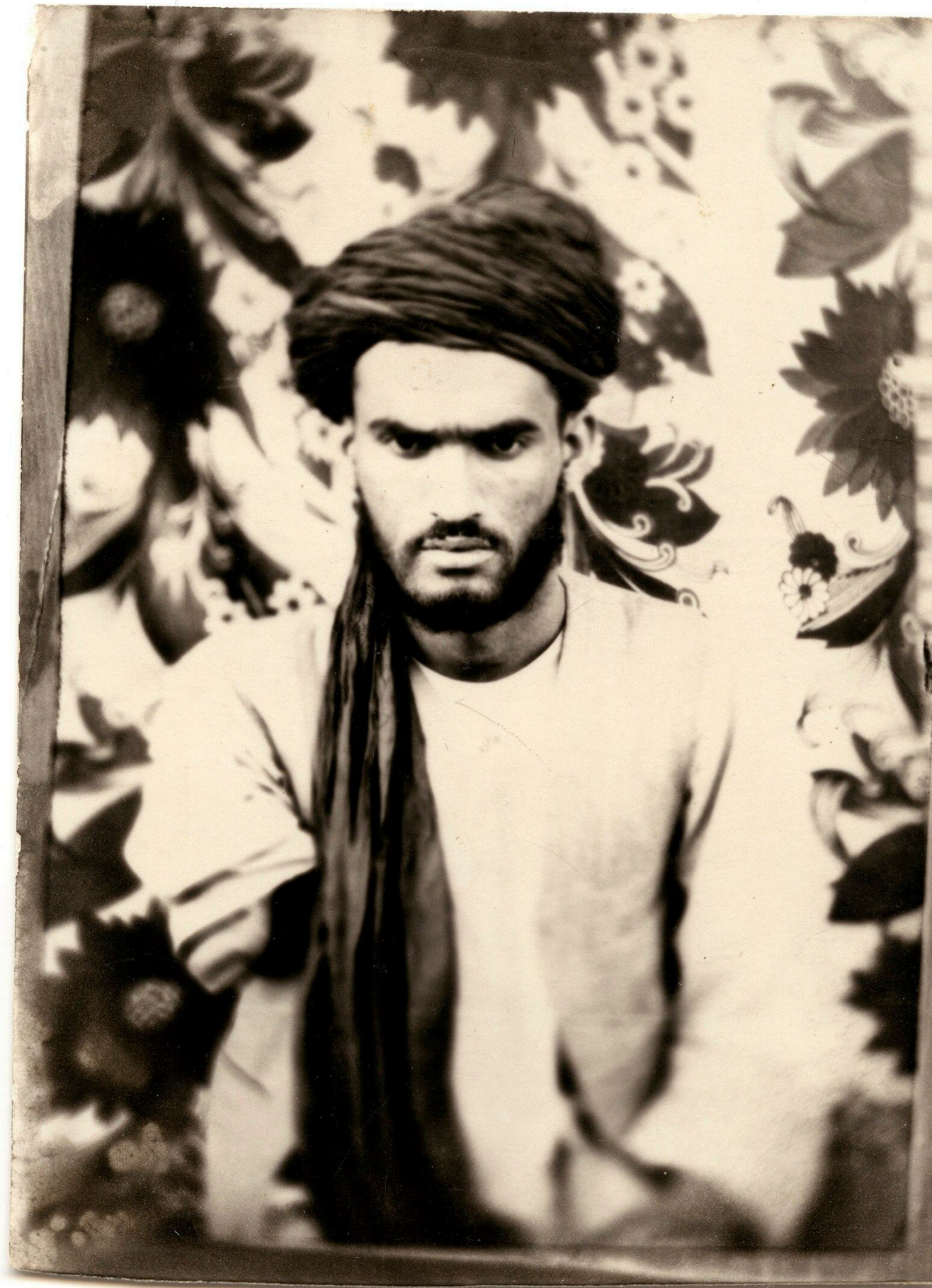
# Disasters Of War: Afghan Box-Camera Portraits

Khalid Hadi



Hadi used a primitive wooden box called a "kamra-e-faoree" that served as both his camera and a self-contained darkroom. Using sunlight and 19th-century photography skills largely forgotten in the West, he could produce a black-and-white portrait within minutes -- first making a paper negative, then photographing the negative to make a positive print.

From 1992 to 1994, Hadi documented the injuries of 10,000 of the foundation's aid recipients. One photograph he took in early 1993 became the world's most famous Afghan box-camera portrait: the only known photo of future Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar.



# Afghan Box Camera Project

Lukas Birk and Sean Foley



Afghan Box Camera Project

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[home](#) [about](#) [camera](#) [photographers](#) [misc](#) [gallery](#) [books](#) [resources](#) [thanks](#) [contact](#)

## ABOUT THE AFGHAN BOX CAMERA PROJECT

This project was initiated early in 2011 by Austrian artist Lukas Birk and Irish ethnographer Sean Foley. The aim of the project from the outset was to create an urgent record of the disappearing art of Afghan box camera photography and make that information freely available online for all. Funding for the project in 2011 as in 2012 came primarily via crowdfunding on the KICKSTARTER website. The Visual Anthropology Dept. at Goldsmiths University, London has also contributed funding.

# Photographer Collections / Pakistan and Afghanistan

Afghan Box Camera Project

## GALLERY



HEKMATULLAH  
COLLECTION



MUHAMMAD ISHAQ  
COLLECTION



ALI AHMAD COLLECTION



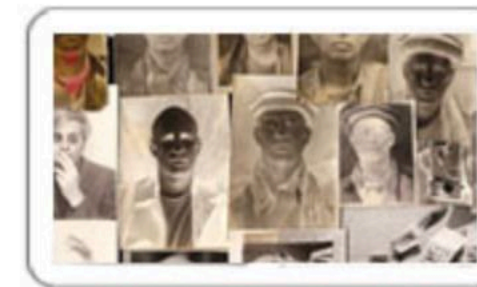
FADING AFGHANISTAN



JEAN-MARIE JUD  
PHOTOGRAPHS



BOX CAMERA  
PHOTOGRAPHERS



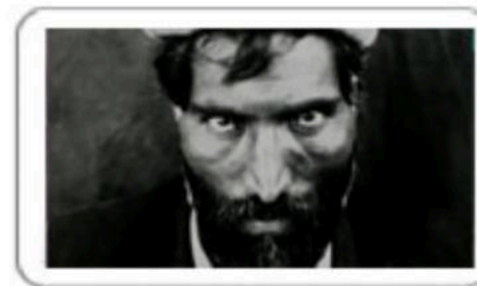
PHOTOGRAPHERS,  
PHOTOJOURNALISTS &  
MORE



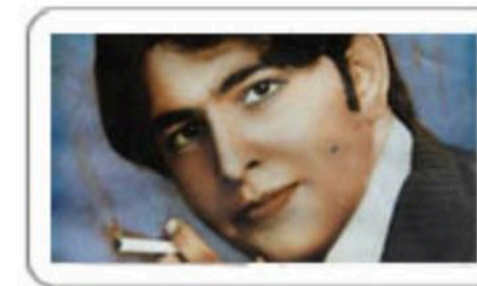
LAURA LEAN FEAT.  
QALAM NABI



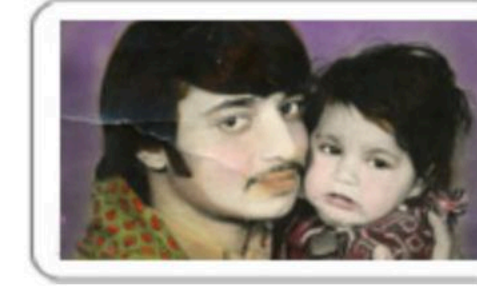
EDWARD GRAZDA  
COLLECTION



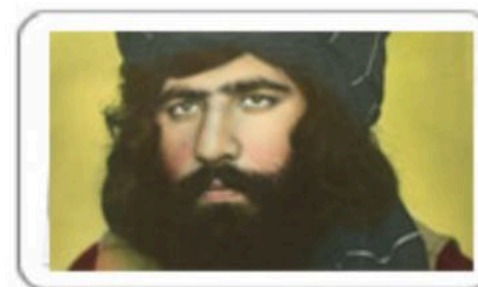
RODRIGO ABD



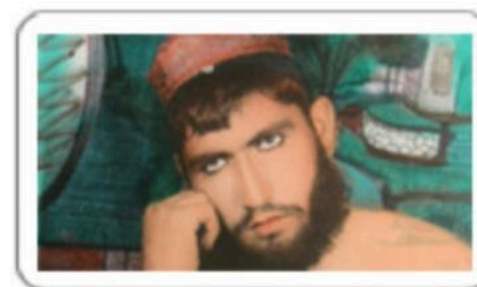
HAND-COLOURED  
PORTRAITS FROM  
AFGHANISTAN



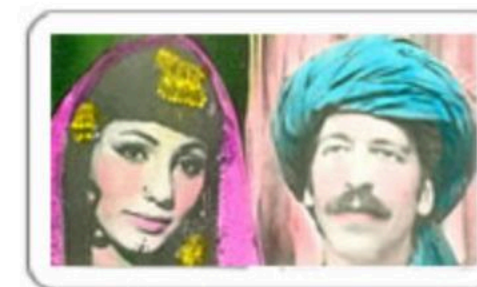
HAND-COLOURED  
PORTRAITS FROM  
PESHAWAR



BENJAMIN GILMOUR'S  
HAND-COLOURED  
COLLECTION



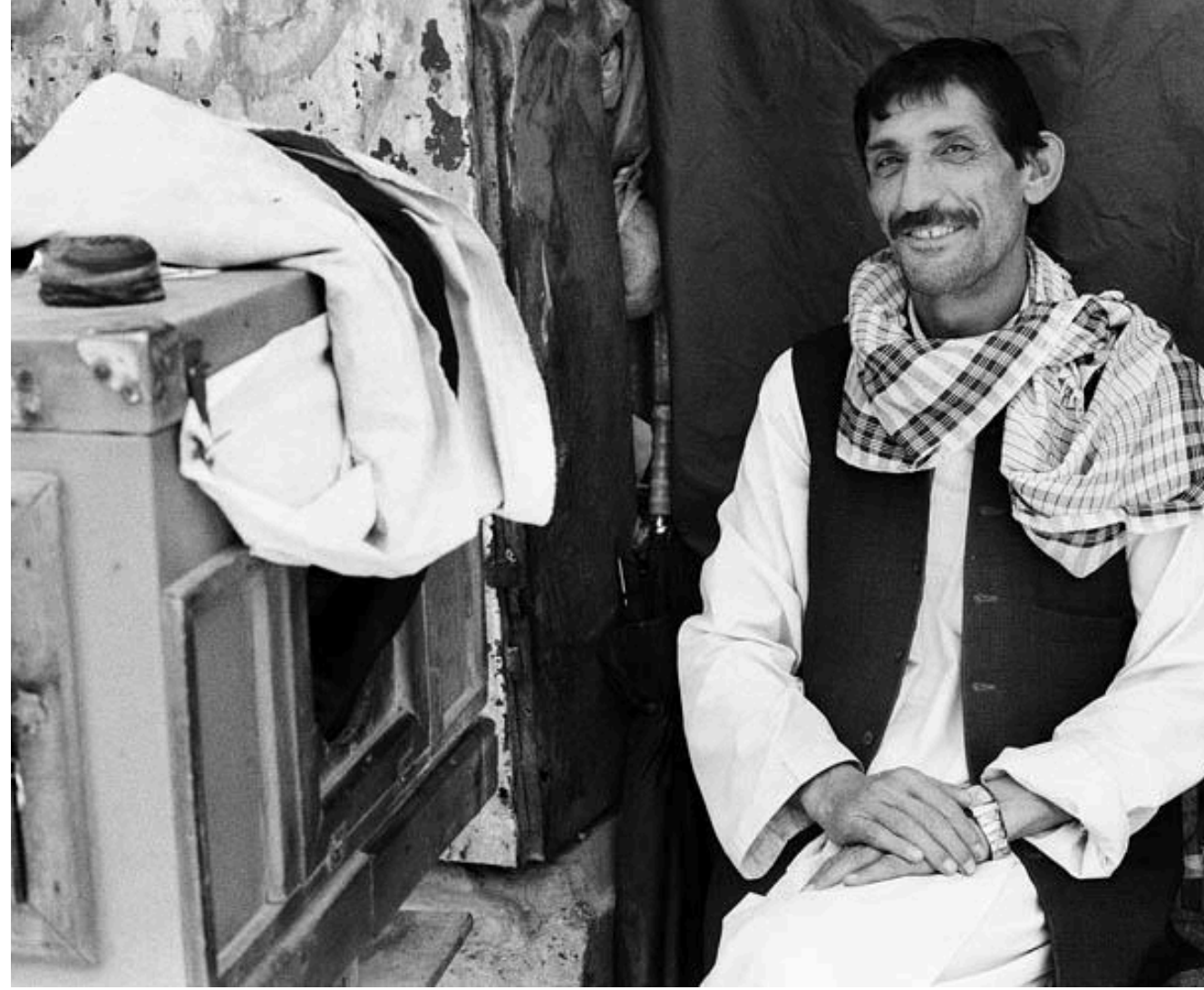
RODOLPHE BAUDEAU  
COLLECTION



NOOR KHAN COLLECTION



8500 KM OF PORTRAITS



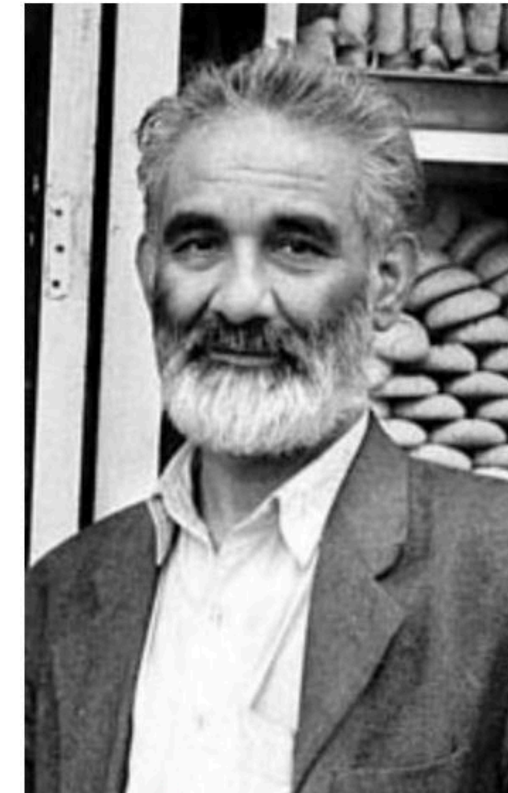
# Migration of Photographers

History of Photography in Afghanistan and KPK

Many of the Afghan photographers we met, including those shown below, had at some stage of the Russian-Afghan war, or the proceeding civil war, relocated with their families to Peshawar as well as the surrounding region.

After 1979 a number of Afghan box camera photographers set up pitches on Cinema Road, renting space on the street outside photo stores from local studio owners (see [Muhammad Iqbal's portfolio](#)).

Occasionally, these Afghans passed on their skills in box camera photography to locals. Tahir, below, worked on the box camera for eight years after being taught by an Afghan; he's also a skilled hand-colourist. The hand-coloured photo on the right (his work) is of his daughter.



Asad Ullah



Abdul Satar



Zia Uddin Taufiq



Faiz Muhammad



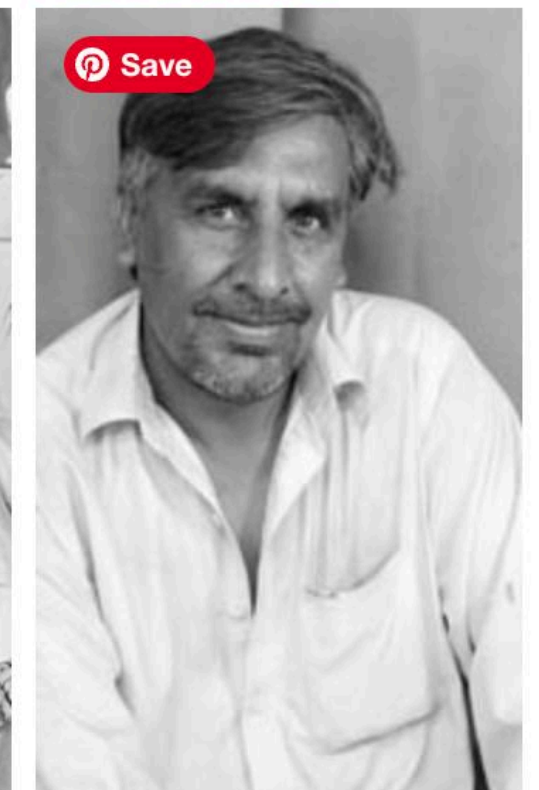
Muhammad Ishaq



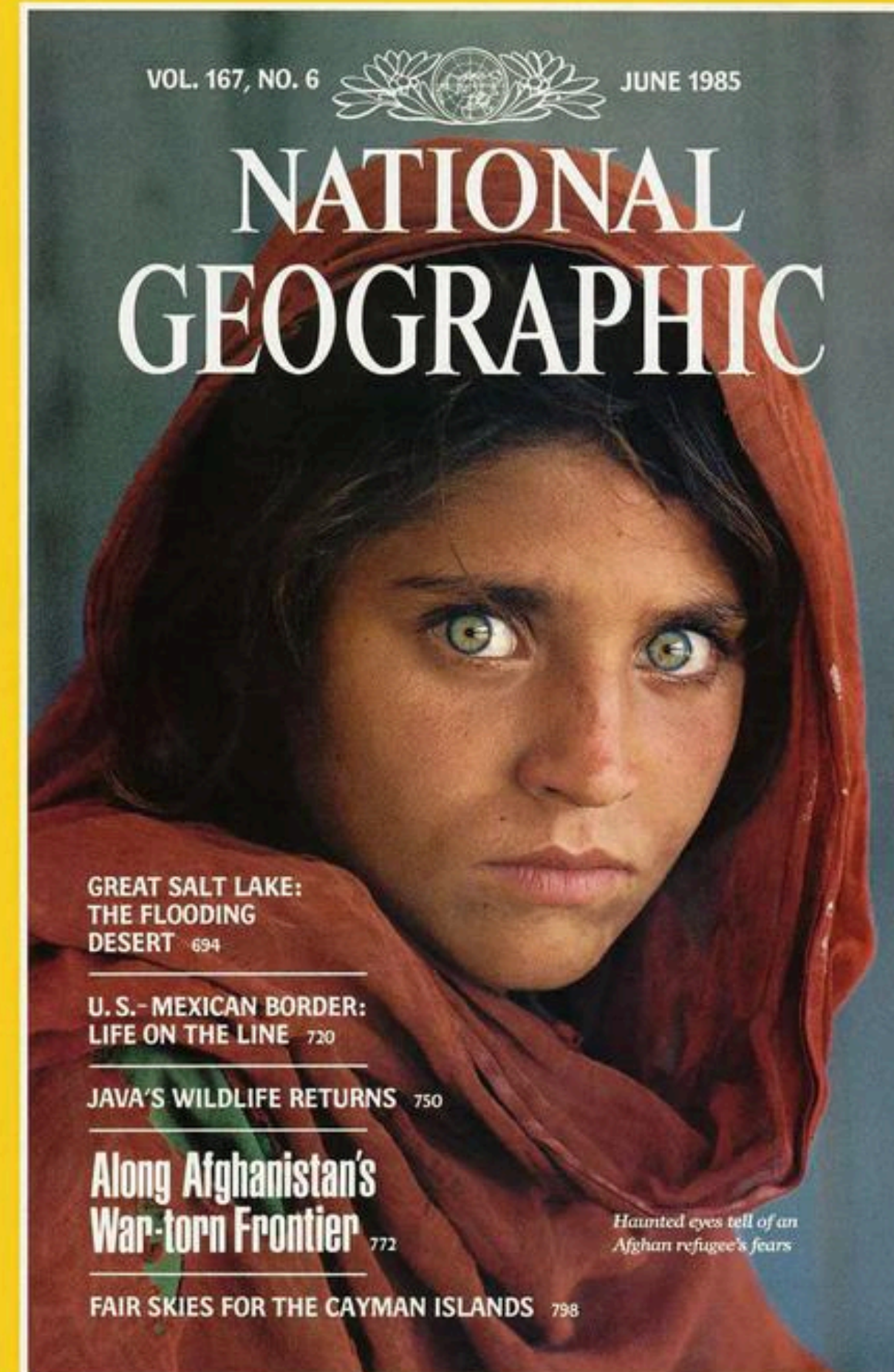
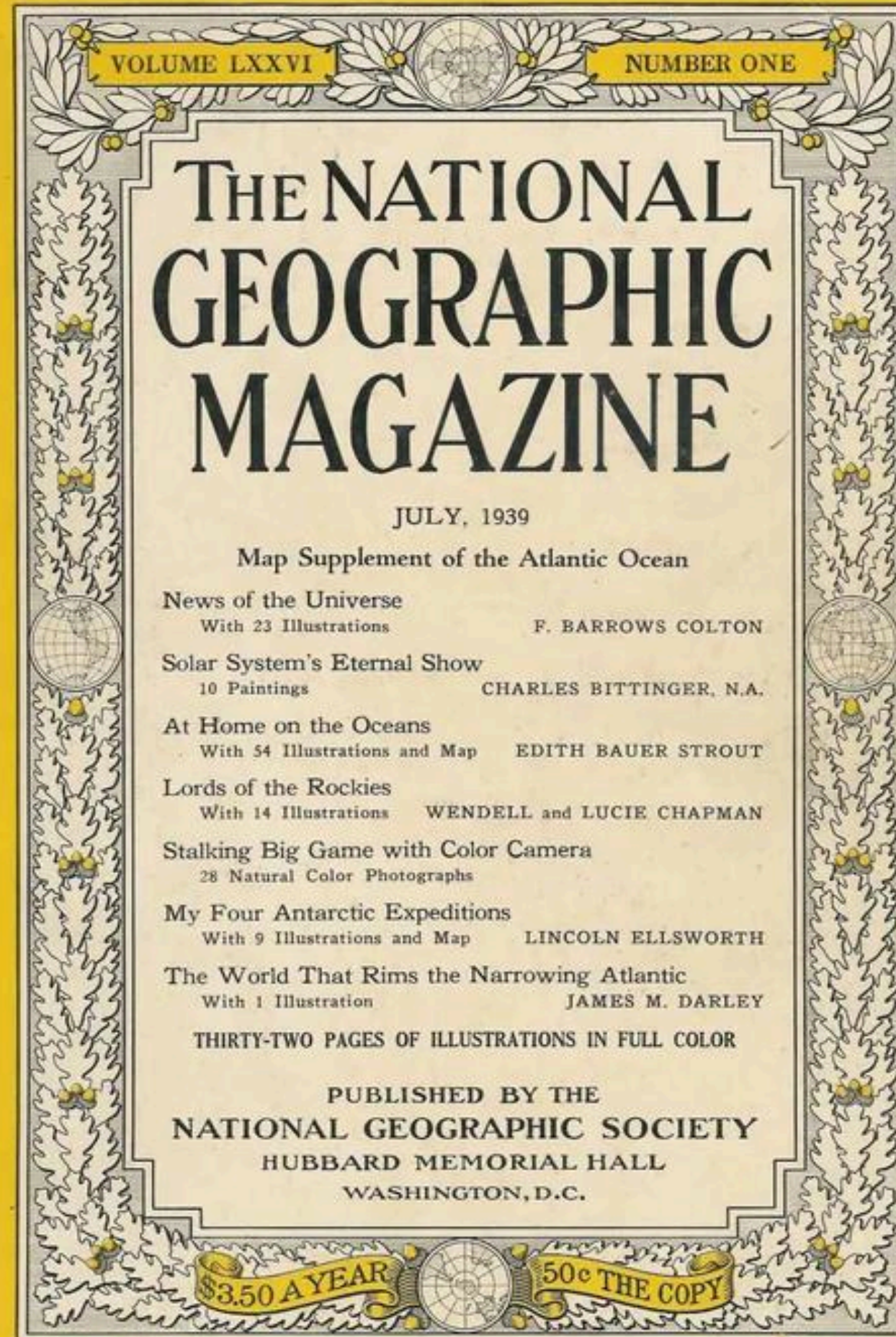
Kamal



Abdul Rehman



Daoud



## Sharbat Gula

The world's most famous photograph of an Afghan was taken in the Nasir Bagh refugee camp in Pakistan in 1984, highlighting the deep shared history of photography between the two nations.

# Steve McCurry

## Smuggling of Photographs

McCurry remained for several weeks and then – as he had to cross back into Pakistan illegally – he hid his film in the seams of his clothes before returning to Chitral and then Delhi in order to send his shots to his agent back in the United States. In those pre-digital days, photographers had to rely on 'hand carries' – usually passengers or crew members flying back by plane – or the more expensive courier dispatches to get their film back. In this case, a friend took his film.

In 1979, disguised in local attire and without a passport, photographer Steve McCurry was smuggled into Afghanistan just before the Soviet invasion closed the country to all western journalists. He later returned to Pakistan with rolls of film sewn into his clothes and delivered the first photographic evidence of the conflict. Since then he has continued to venture into "government unadvisable" regions, crossing national borders in order to transcend cultural ones.

# Taliban Rule in the 2000's

History of Photography in Afghanistan and KPK

Under the taliban rule, Photography was banned,  
except for documentation purposes.  
**So how did people take pictures then?**

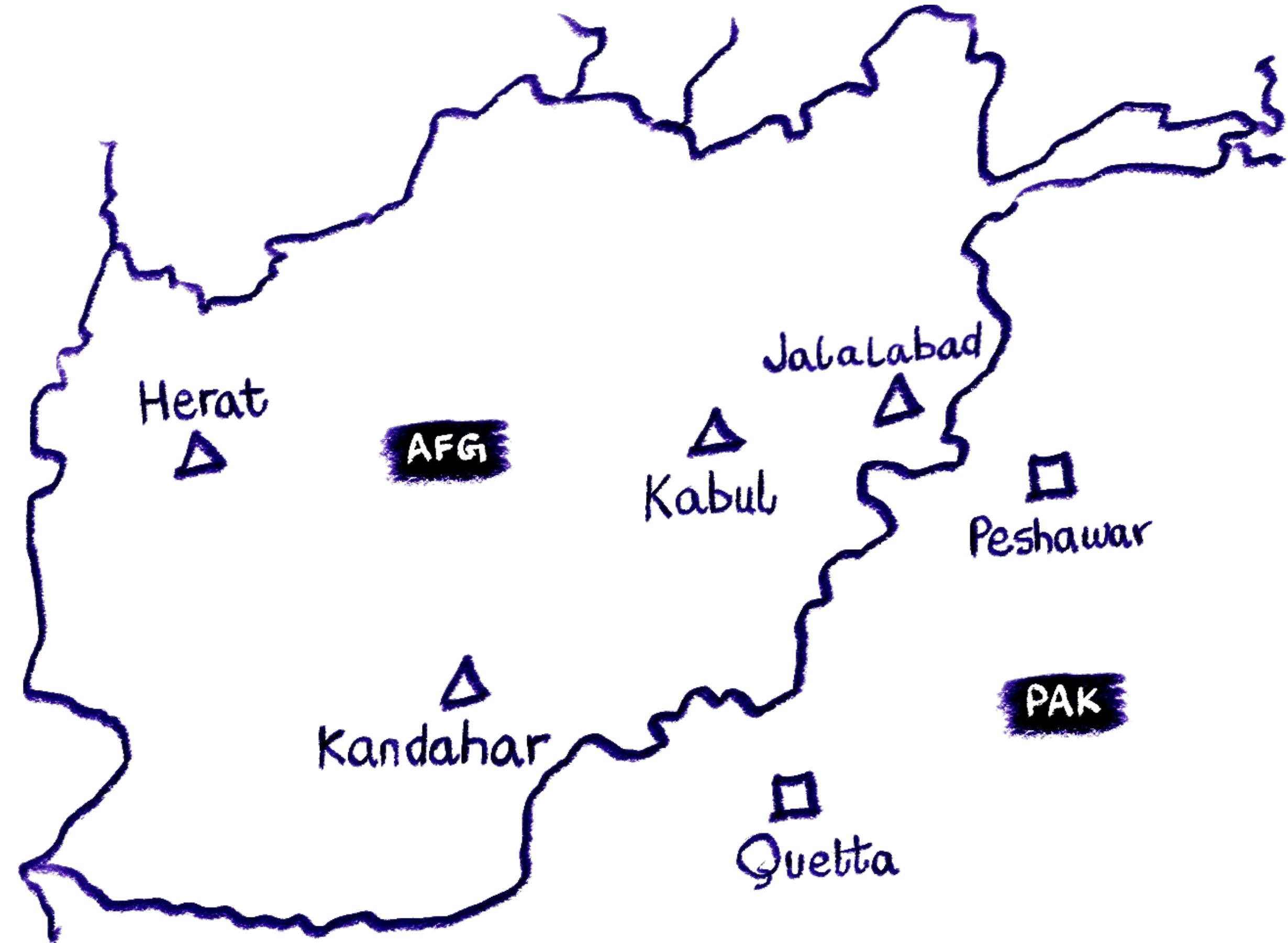


# Smuggling

History of Photography in Afghanistan and KPK

**Some photographers turned to a trade in 'clandestine' photographs during the Taliban-era.**

This meant taking full-body or coloured portraits of clients secretly with a film camera and smuggling the film across the border to photo studios in Peshawar in the north-west of Pakistan for development. After the film was developed in Pakistan the illegal prints were returned to Kabul and handed over to the customer. This activity risked imprisonment for all involved on the Afghan side of the border. Such smuggling also occurred between Kandahar in southern Afghanistan and Quetta in Pakistan.

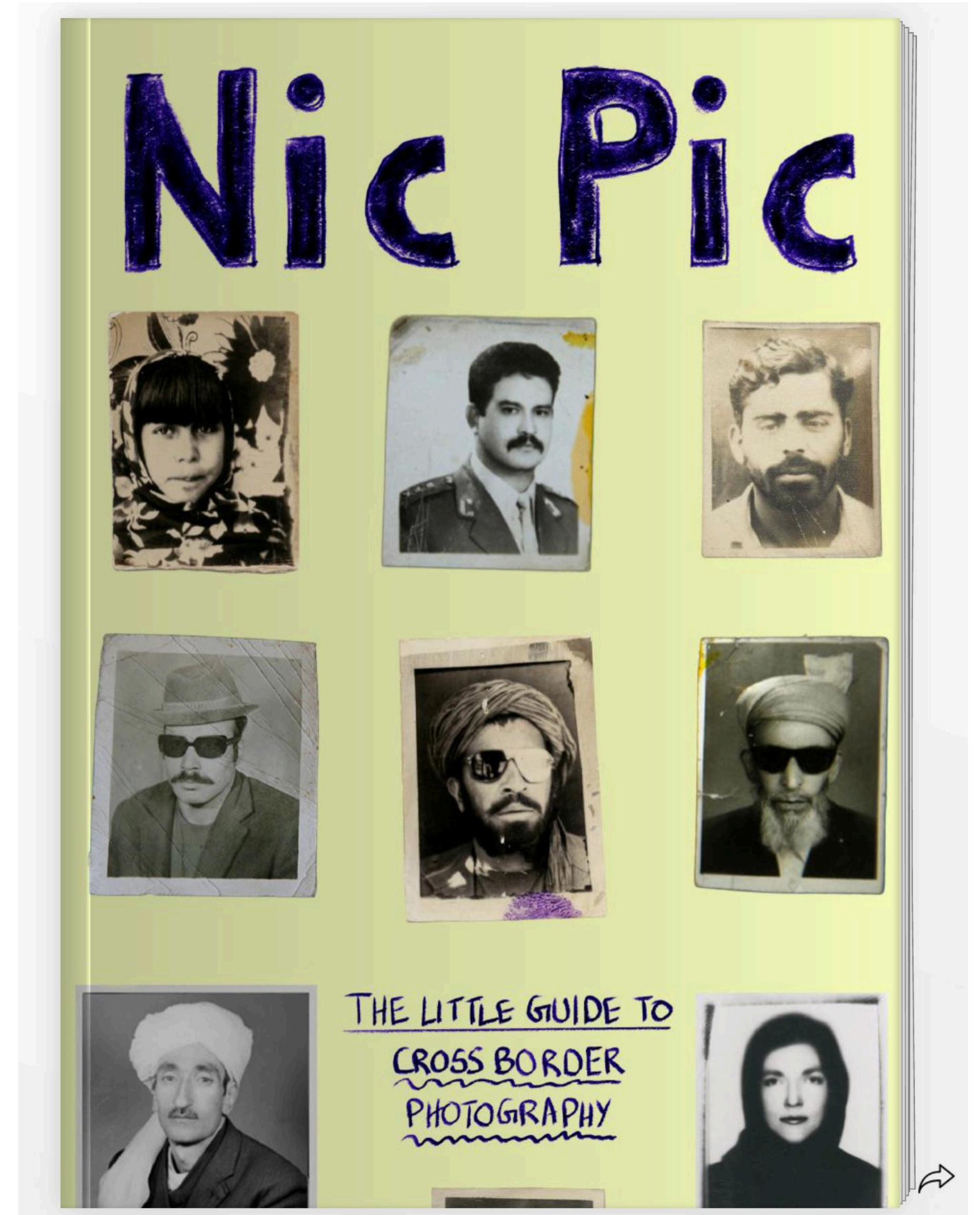


# Nic Pic

Publication

The publication functions as a prototype. It narrates how images travelled between Kabul and Peshawar under political regimes where photography was restricted. Through the Afghan Box Camera and the smuggling of film across the border, the work foregrounds informal infrastructures of connection:

**migration, trade routes, kinship networks and covert circulation.**



# Nic Pic

Publication

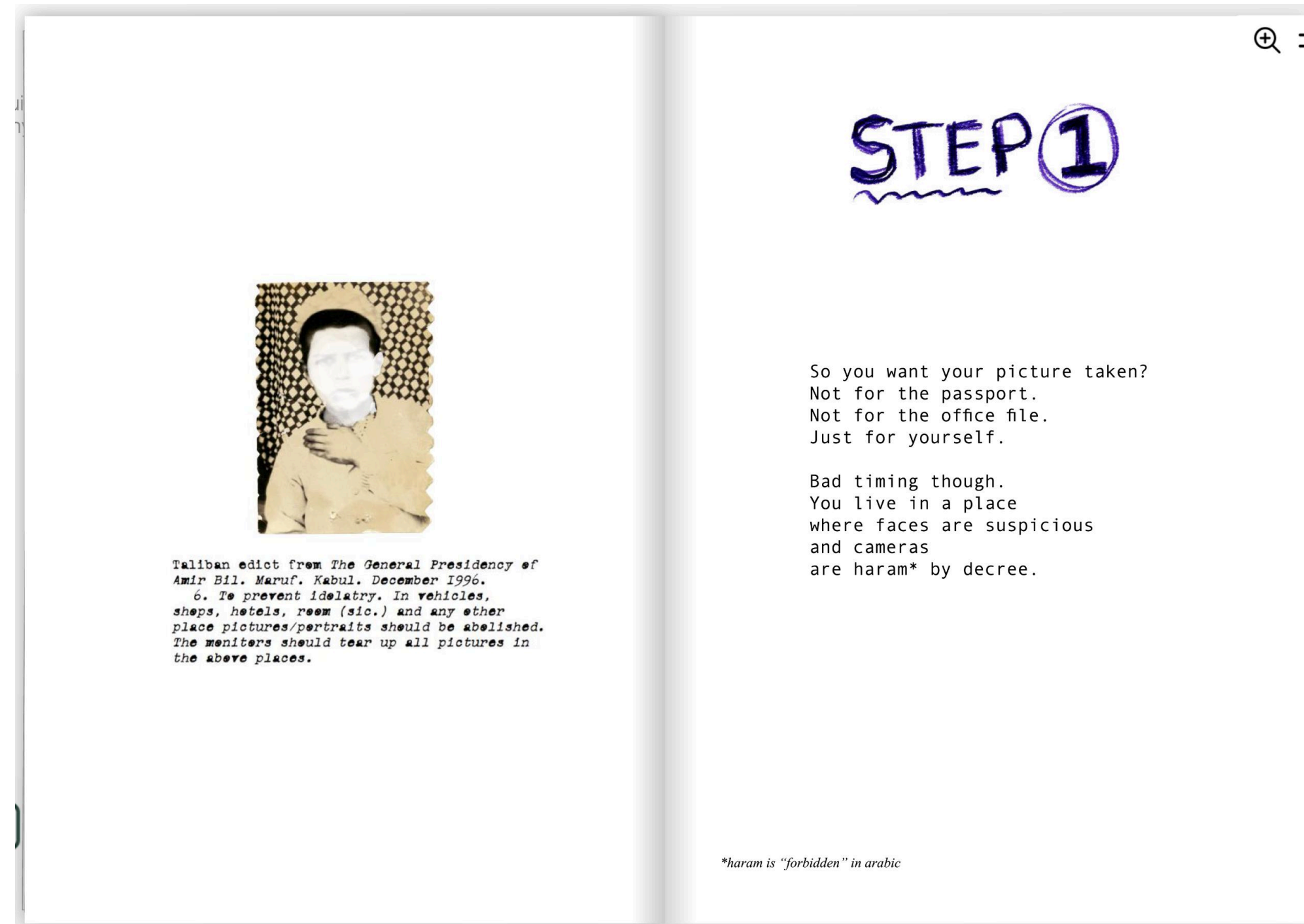
The initial publication demonstrates how a photographic film crossed a politically charged border despite surveillance and restriction were present.

It frames photography as a tool of quiet resistance and continuity.



# Nic Pic

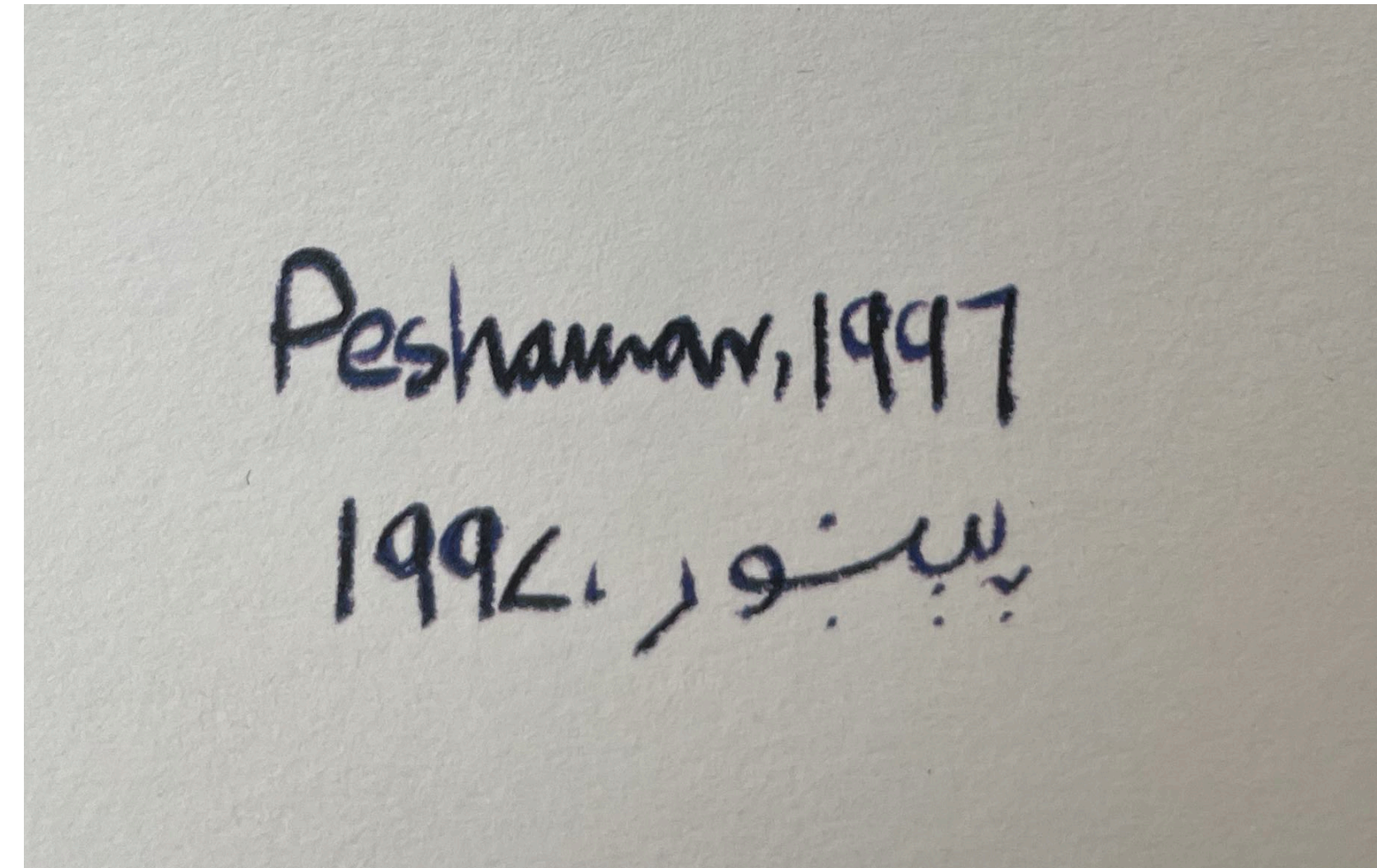
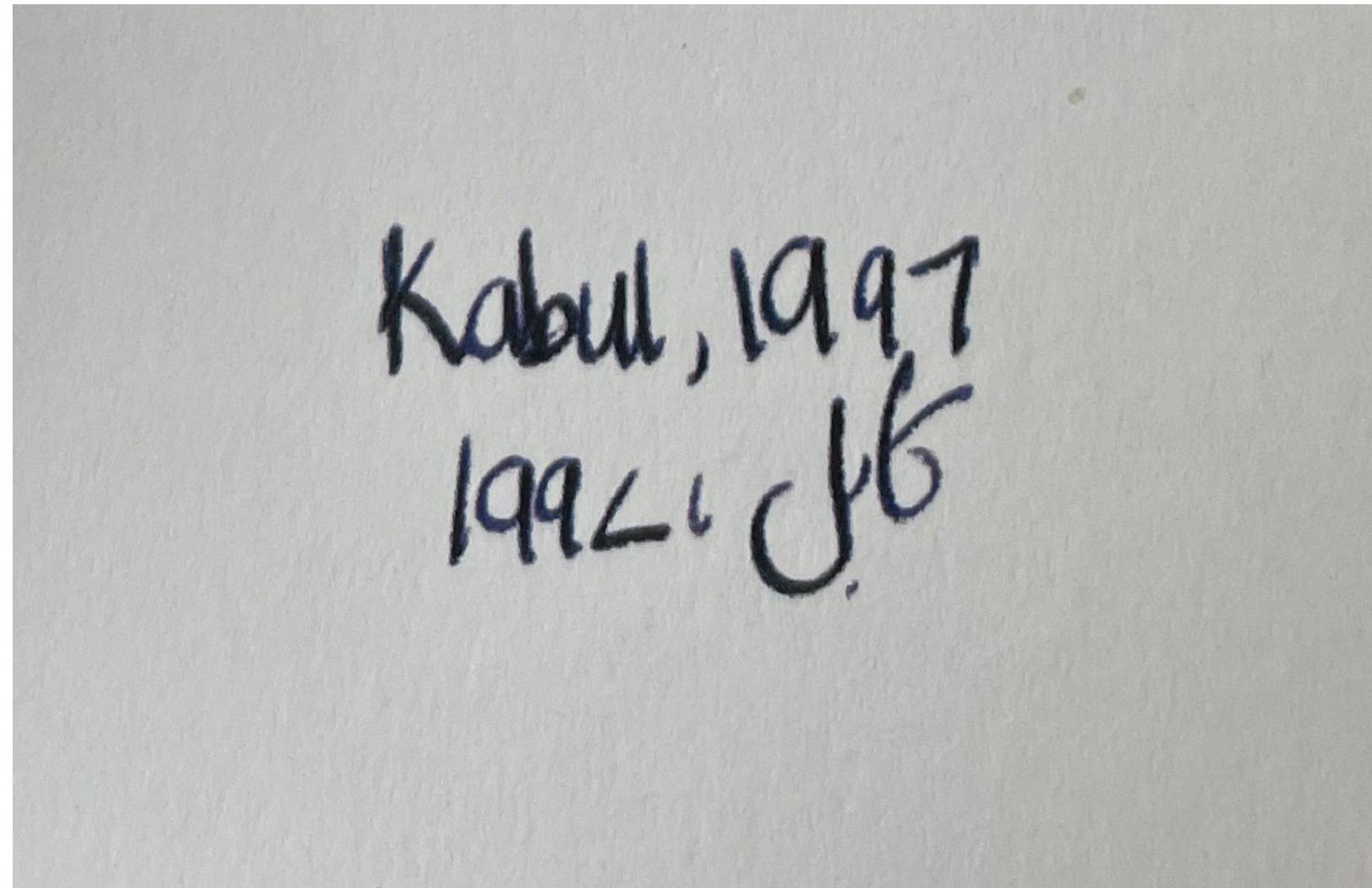
## Publication Features



- **Storytelling** - how stories that resonate across both sides of the border can allow us to reimagine the relationship between communities  
**Just as film moved “illegally” yet meaningfully, narratives can traverse imposed divisions and reconstruct a sense of collective identity.** This extended project applies the same logic to storytelling.

# Nic Pic

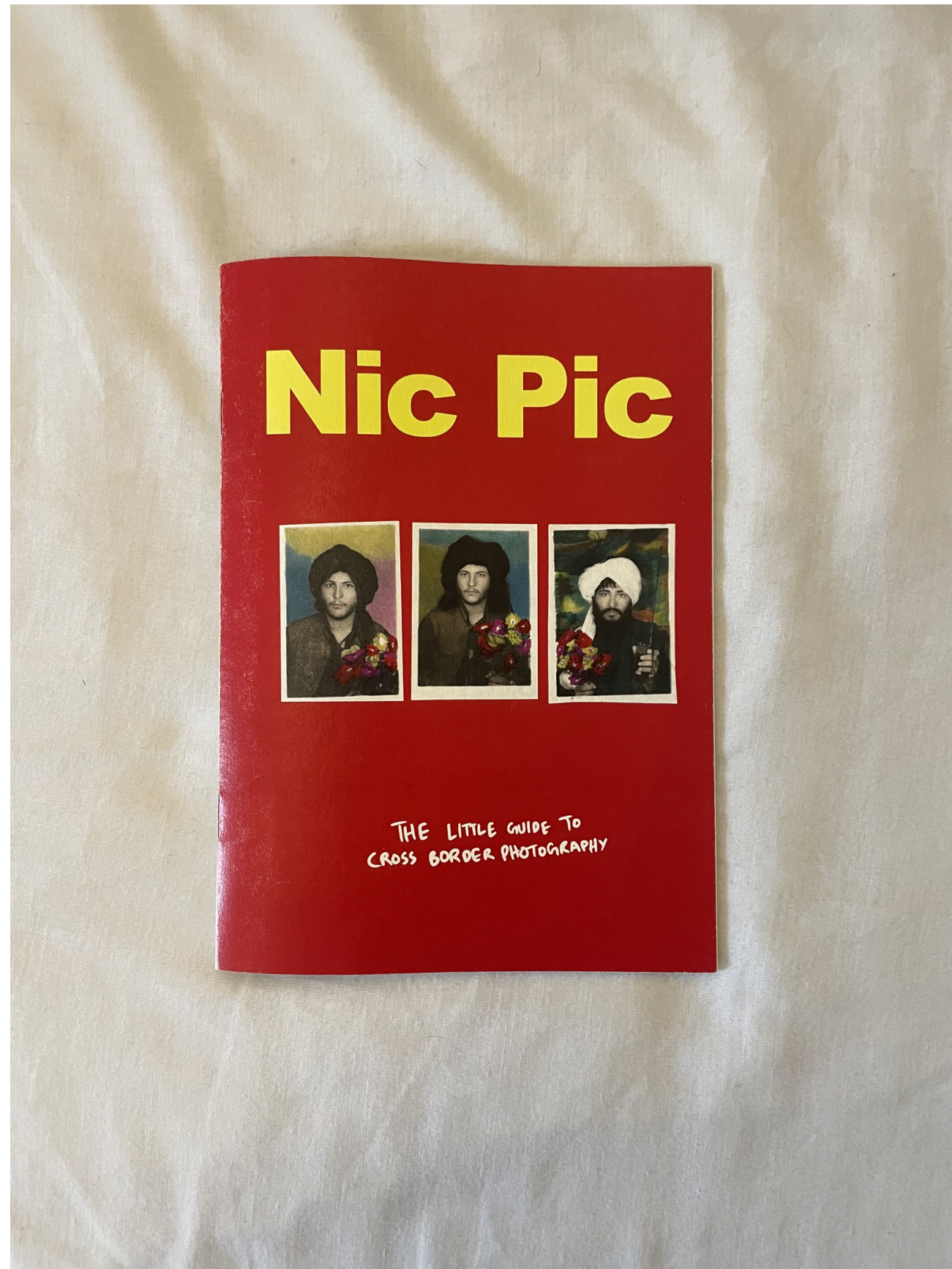
Publication Features



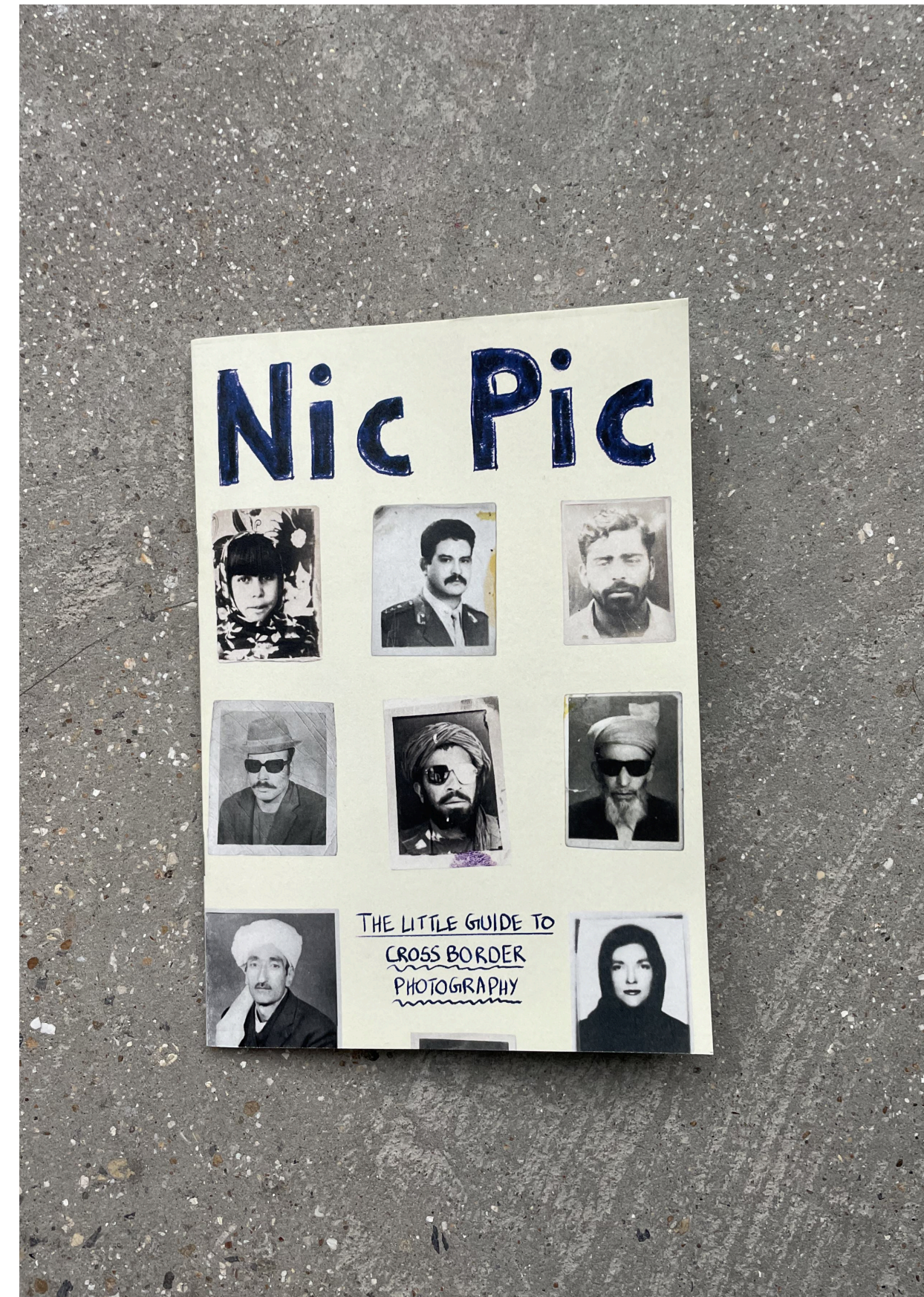
- **Materiality** - the images have travelled through landscapes and hands so using a ballpoint under the photo album aesthetic
- **Photo-album and collage** as medium/container to demonstrate the depth of these stories

# Nic Pic

Moving Forward / Making



V1



V2

# Nic Pic

Moving Forward / Making

I want to dwell **deeper into the medium** and see how I can utilise photo paper and photobooks to tell these narratives.

- Using the vintage photo album as a container for these stories that I want to share and adapting to its aesthetic fully
- using printing mediums that can highlight that idea of materiality e.g., riso



# Nic Pic

Moving Forward / Content

This next phase expands the enquiry from a single narrative artefact to a participatory storytelling framework.

By shifting from a single narrative to participatory storytelling through questionnaires, interviews and workshops, the project will move towards a collective authorship to symbolise cultural connection.



**SHUKRIA**

thank you :)