

Transcript: Fast Forward, Women in Photography, putting ourselves in the picture – Prof Anna Fox

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00:00:15,080 --> 00:00:16,559

Hi, I'm Anna Fox.

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00:00:16,559 --> 00:00:19,160

I'm professor of photography at University for the Creative Arts

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00:00:19,199 --> 00:00:21,000

and I'm also a photographer.

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00:00:21,000 --> 00:00:23,920

I'm a white woman in my early 60s

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00:00:23,920 --> 00:00:25,719

With bright red glasses,

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00:00:25,719 --> 00:00:27,719

brownie, grey hair,

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00:00:27,719 --> 00:00:29,280

bluish kind of eyes

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00:00:29,280 --> 00:00:32,640

And my pronouns are she/her.

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00:00:32,640 --> 00:00:34,840

I'm essentially a storyteller using photography,

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00:00:34,840 --> 00:00:37,520

Sometimes moving image and text.

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00:00:38,840 --> 00:00:43,799

I've led the Fast Forward,
Women in Photography project since 2014,

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00:00:43,799 --> 00:00:48,079

and it was started by myself and a
couple of colleagues here at the university

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00:00:48,079 --> 00:00:52,799

And the reason we started it is
because of the lack of visibility

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00:00:52,799 --> 00:00:55,439

of the stories of women photographers.

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00:00:57,439 --> 00:01:00,079

(Seagulls squawking)

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00:01:04,560 --> 00:01:07,519

The refugee crisis is enormous across Europe

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00:01:07,519 --> 00:01:11,000

and has been for many years
and seems to get worse and worse.

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00:01:11,000 --> 00:01:14,120

And clearly, a lot of these people have no voice.

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00:01:14,120 --> 00:01:16,000

My name is Wendy McMurdo.

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00:01:16,000 --> 00:01:19,079

I'm a photographer and an artist an academic.

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00:01:19,079 --> 00:01:23,040

I'm in my late 50s and I have fair hair and glasses.

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00:01:23,040 --> 00:01:26,200

Putting Ourselves in The Picture is a national project.

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00:01:26,200 --> 00:01:29,680

And I think it was a three centred project.

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00:01:29,680 --> 00:01:31,680

With lots and lots of partners

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00:01:31,680 --> 00:01:33,359

and lots of collaborators.

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00:01:33,359 --> 00:01:35,439

Who are all working in very different ways

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00:01:35,439 --> 00:01:38,480

with different types of groups,
with different challenges.

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00:01:38,480 --> 00:01:42,760

So the mentorship and workshop activity happened
at Impressions Gallery Gallery in Bradford.

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00:01:42,760 --> 00:01:46,719

At National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh

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00:01:46,719 --> 00:01:48,760
and Autograph in London.

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00:01:48,760 --> 00:01:50,159
Hello, my name is Bindi.

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00:01:50,159 --> 00:01:51,799
I'm a photographic artist and

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00:01:51,799 --> 00:01:53,959
curator, Autograph in London.

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00:01:53,959 --> 00:01:57,120
I'm a British Indian female in my early 30s.

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00:01:57,120 --> 00:02:00,159
I have dark brown hair
and my pronouns are she and her.

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00:02:00,159 --> 00:02:03,200
(Computer mouse clicking)

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00:02:06,599 --> 00:02:10,000
Autograph is an arts charity
based in Shoreditch in London,

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00:02:10,000 --> 00:02:14,520
Who's mission is to enable the
public to explore themes of identity,

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00:02:14,520 --> 00:02:18,800
race, representation,

social justice and politics

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00:02:18,800 --> 00:02:20,560

through photography and film.

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00:02:20,560 --> 00:02:23,960

So we didn't prescribe what
the workshops should be to our partners,

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00:02:23,960 --> 00:02:27,680

but what we asked them to do is
to propose a series of workshops

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00:02:27,680 --> 00:02:32,719

and mentorship activity
that could go on over a three to six month period

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00:02:32,719 --> 00:02:34,879

And so all of these workshops were different,

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00:02:34,879 --> 00:02:37,800

according to who were the
photographers running the workshops

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00:02:37,800 --> 00:02:39,680

and who were the mentors doing the mentoring.

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00:02:39,680 --> 00:02:41,879

Hi, I'm Sam Rutherford.

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00:02:41,879 --> 00:02:43,919

I'm a teaching artist,

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00:02:43,919 --> 00:02:47,199

specialising in community engagement projects.

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00:02:47,199 --> 00:02:49,520

I'm a woman in my late forties

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00:02:49,520 --> 00:02:52,439

with long, straight, dark hair.

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00:02:52,439 --> 00:02:55,719

I'm wearing a yellow cardigan and a blue dress.

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00:02:55,719 --> 00:02:58,560

There's been a lot of planning behind the scenes

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00:02:58,560 --> 00:03:01,719

And a lot of conversations behind the scenes

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00:03:01,719 --> 00:03:03,879

as the project has progressed.

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00:03:03,879 --> 00:03:07,639

So each week, the three of us would meet up

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00:03:07,639 --> 00:03:12,879

and have a kind of debrief,
and part of that was to talk was about ethics.

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00:03:12,879 --> 00:03:16,199

It's extremely difficult to work
with groups of people who are vulnerable.

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00:03:17,479 --> 00:03:19,840

And we were made particularly aware of this

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00:03:19,840 --> 00:03:22,240

through working with Women for Refugee Women.

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00:03:29,439 --> 00:03:33,000

They gave us information and short workshops

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00:03:33,000 --> 00:03:35,439

On all the the ethical issues.

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00:03:35,439 --> 00:03:38,000

The group that we were working with specifically

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00:03:38,000 --> 00:03:40,960

are either in the process of seeking asylum

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00:03:40,960 --> 00:03:44,240

or have been through the process

and are now settled in the UK.

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00:03:44,240 --> 00:03:49,319

We were delighted to find

a group that really had already gelled

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00:03:49,319 --> 00:03:51,960

were really close friends. And ...

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00:03:52,879 --> 00:03:57,319

yeah, were just a really

fantastic bunch of strong women.

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00:03:57,319 --> 00:04:00,199

(Sound of shop bell)

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00:04:01,960 --> 00:04:03,719

They came from very different walks of life.

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00:04:05,560 --> 00:04:08,919

They had this social core,

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00:04:08,919 --> 00:04:11,439

which really made them
work very well as a group.

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00:04:11,439 --> 00:04:14,840

Our group specifically
focussed on a constituency of women

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00:04:14,840 --> 00:04:18,279

who identify as LGBTQIA+

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00:04:19,000 --> 00:04:22,959

who are also based in London,
near where Autograph is situated.

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00:04:22,959 --> 00:04:26,639

We had to also realise and recognise

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00:04:26,639 --> 00:04:32,040

what a privilege it was to be able
to enable these women to tell their stories.

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00:04:32,040 --> 00:04:38,079

So with that in mind,
we put everything in place that we could think of

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00:04:38,079 --> 00:04:40,600

to make this as easy for the women to get to,

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00:04:40,600 --> 00:04:43,120

to make it a pleasurable experience

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00:04:43,120 --> 00:04:46,279

and to make it a social experience too.

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00:04:46,279 --> 00:04:50,639

So things like making sure
we always eat lunch together.

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00:04:50,639 --> 00:04:53,560

That we gave the women travel expenses,

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00:04:53,560 --> 00:04:56,680

made it work for them in terms of child care.

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00:04:56,680 --> 00:05:00,120

All these things were crucial
to make the project work.

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00:05:00,120 --> 00:05:04,639

So the first part, I think, is just very simply

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00:05:04,639 --> 00:05:07,360

articulating what it is you want to say.

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00:05:07,360 --> 00:05:08,959

I mean, it's something as simple as that

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00:05:08,959 --> 00:05:11,279

You may never have done that before.

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00:05:16,639 --> 00:05:20,720

Everybody was asked to bring in an object of particular significance to them.

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00:05:20,720 --> 00:05:25,120

And they started by talking about the object and how that might relate to the story.

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00:05:25,120 --> 00:05:27,160

And then on from that.

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00:05:33,000 --> 00:05:37,040

A lot of them were carrying photographs and small pieces of ephemera

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00:05:37,040 --> 00:05:38,800

with them in their daily lives.

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00:05:38,800 --> 00:05:42,000

And these were objects that were incredibly important to them

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00:05:42,000 --> 00:05:44,720

that kind of gave them that connection to home.

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00:05:44,720 --> 00:05:48,160

And I think as a tool,
photography is one of those very powerful mediums

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00:05:48,160 --> 00:05:53,240

that can instantly connect you with people
and is a very graspable idea

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00:05:53,240 --> 00:05:57,800

or medium to use in order to kind of
express what's happening around you in your daily life.

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00:05:57,800 --> 00:06:00,680

I mean, these are incredibly brave
and courageous women

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00:06:00,680 --> 00:06:05,120

who wanted to talk about their sexuality,
their culture, their identity.

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00:06:05,120 --> 00:06:07,480

And these are often taboo subjects
where they come from.

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00:06:07,480 --> 00:06:11,600

All too often through the media,
we hear about people's stories.

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00:06:11,600 --> 00:06:14,959

And there has to be a shift,
a shift to individual stories

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00:06:14,959 --> 00:06:17,439

To people who are living through that experience

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00:06:17,439 --> 00:06:21,920

so that we really understand
how people experience the world.

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00:06:27,439 --> 00:06:31,480

And the sessions that we were running,
quite a lot of them were done on Zoom

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00:06:31,480 --> 00:06:37,519

so you can imagine eight women,
plus three of us trying to facilitate these dialogues

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00:06:37,519 --> 00:06:42,800

and these skill sharing ...
moments over Zoom during a pandemic,

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00:06:42,800 --> 00:06:45,759

which was incredibly tough and very challenging.

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00:06:45,759 --> 00:06:49,639

But that also made the moments
where we were able to then meet in person

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00:06:49,639 --> 00:06:53,600

towards the latter end of our project.
A lot more special.

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00:06:53,600 --> 00:06:57,360

Every member of the group came
along to the first meeting and they had a story

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00:06:57,360 --> 00:06:59,639

and actually they didn't deviate from that.

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00:06:59,639 --> 00:07:03,920

It developed and was refined and shifted,

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00:07:03,920 --> 00:07:07,920

but they stayed true to their original stories over the months.

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00:07:13,399 --> 00:07:16,079

We actually started with 10 participants

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00:07:16,079 --> 00:07:20,040

And what eventually happened
over that period of time was that

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00:07:20,040 --> 00:07:26,319

because of different things happening
in their personal lives and working life,

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00:07:26,319 --> 00:07:30,160

we lost actually four women in that process.

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00:07:30,160 --> 00:07:34,600

All the participants from all of the workshops
and mentorship activities

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00:07:34,600 --> 00:07:38,639

moved on to take part in the online school
at Work Show Grow

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00:07:38,639 --> 00:07:42,600

after they completed most of
their workshops and mentorship activity.

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00:07:42,600 --> 00:07:48,079

We decided to stage a kind of one
afternoon show for them in our gallery at Autograph.

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00:07:48,079 --> 00:07:52,759

And they felt incredibly empowered to see
how these different ways of working

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00:07:52,759 --> 00:07:57,839

had kind of come together, and how their
work had really had an impact on different people.

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00:08:00,480 --> 00:08:05,560

(Electrical and mechanical sounds of an elevator)

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00:08:08,240 --> 00:08:12,160

And everybody who's taken part
will have at least two copies of the book.

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00:08:12,160 --> 00:08:15,160

And that will record their journey for them,

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00:08:15,160 --> 00:08:20,079

but it will also record the whole project for society
and for people to know about.

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00:08:20,079 --> 00:08:23,360

It'll be like a case study,
but made and designed beautifully.

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00:08:23,360 --> 00:08:26,759

I really hope that going forward from this project

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00:08:26,759 --> 00:08:31,120

we're going to have a small
exhibition in the portrait gallery.

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00:08:31,120 --> 00:08:35,360

I really hope that the women
can talk about their work and feel really ...

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00:08:35,360 --> 00:08:41,720

enriched from the project, but also
sharing their knowledge, their experience with others.