

Photo-Ethnography workshop

By Esteban Tapella

“If you take a picture of a human that does not make him noble, there is no reason to take this picture. That is my way of seeing things.”
(Sebastiao Salgado)

What's Ethnography?

Ethnography is the systematic study of people and cultures. It is designed to explore cultural phenomena where the researcher (photographer) observes society from the point of view of the subject of the study.

Ethnography is a means to represent graphically and in writing the culture of a group.

Photography is a tool for both exploring the world and expressing something meaningful about that exploration.

When approached from an **ethnographic perspective**, photography is a powerful resource for collaborative engagement with individuals and communities interested in presenting, documenting, and understanding their cultural practices.



Pictures from the essay “Belonging to the Forest. The Baka Pygmies from the Central African Rainforest” © Esteban Tapella, 2014.

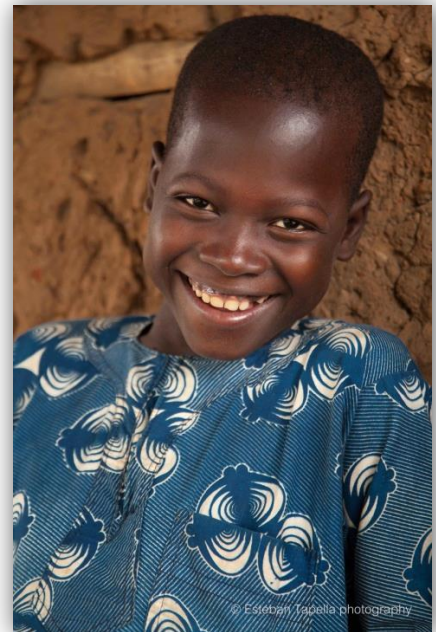
The workshop

This workshop is oriented to professional and amateur photographers and social science researchers interested in learning more about digital photography technique and its use in ethnography. This workshop will provide instruction in the technical aspects of photography and examine the role of the camera as a window through which the researcher views the world.

Instruction in basic to advanced photographic techniques will be merged with ethnographic field research concepts. Workshop attendees will learn how to engage their surroundings consciously, thoughtfully, and photographically—in that order. Hands-on experience will be provided as attendees conduct their own “photo-ethnographic” documentary projects. There will also be time for reflection and critique of student work.

The photo essay is arguably the most challenging (and yet rewarding) undertaking for a serious photographer. After learning how to make good single images, the accomplished photographer takes on the challenge of making a series of images, unified around a theme, telling a story from the point of view of the authoring photographer.

Durations vary and content can be adapted to fit demand (level, availability, age of the participants, etc.). The workshops can be included in activities organized by cultural centers, libraries, corporations or schools.



Ethnographic essays from Esteban Tapella can be accessed in www.estebantapella.com