

**SHEIKH SAOUD AL THANI
AWARDS:
HERIADI JOEWONO IN
CONVERSATION
WITH SHAIMA AYOUB**

Shaima Ayoub: Congratulations on being selected for the 2021 Shiekh Saoud Al Thani Single Image award! Please talk us through the winning image.

Heriadi Joewono: I would like to thank you, the Jurors and Tasweer Team for giving me the chance to be part of the awards, this conversation, and to express my idea. This picture captures a kid playing football in a family gathering. It is in the morning, as we can see from the long shadows. I see an interesting moment where I could freeze movement - a moment when the ball is bouncing from the floor, moving out of its shadow. The ball moves towards the goalkeeper who was getting ready to catch it, as though overtaken by his own shadow.

When I think about it further, for me, this photograph depicts a play between reality and imagination. Objective reality and subjective perception (represented by the shadow) mix, constructing the world as something we understand and experience. It is a game that could be fun but could also be ominous. When my thoughts are in a more negative mood, the image represents how reality can be perceived. The truth itself stays out there. It happens unavoidably that the truth becomes less important for us to seek. We tend to be satisfied prematurely with our conclusion and forget that, by nature, we have perception bias.

Shaima Ayoub: How would you describe your photography?

Heriadi Joewono: I am still experimenting. I'm trying to find ways forward - for myself and the viewer. The trial and error happens in how I try to visually communicate, how to create dialogue. Perhaps it will always be this way, and I keep changing. I try to keep open-ended, and to maintain the passion for there being a lot more for me to learn and to try. In general, I find photography gives me a way to communicate, to have a conversation with myself and with an audience, which is more freeing than a written or verbal communication. It gives me a sense of freedom - to tell the story without being too explicit, without insisting. The pace of the conversation with images allows for a more affable process. My photography is perhaps too selfish, more about what I want to express than anything else! It's also not a profession for me (for the moment), it is not an assignment, it is not a book (yet).

Shaima Ayoub: You previously mentioned that you don't have any formal training in photography and so I'm even more curious about what got you into it.

Heriadi Joewono: It started when I was an architecture student and was making photographs as architecture documentation. From architecture photography, it expanded to documenting life around me, and since then went on and developed in different directions. What provoked me and changed my idea in photography is when I met photographer Nikos Economopoulos, in his Magnum Photo masterclass. The encounter gave me a kind of confidence in exploring photography differently.

Shaima Ayoub: How does your job now, as an architect, influence your photography practice?

Heriadi Joewono: I think it effects it a lot. The way I see space, the way I see the relation between people and space. The way I perceive composition or how to compose, playing colors, exercising shadow, etc. And, for me, they are intertwining and interfering with each other: My architecture background impacts my photography, and photography has made me re-approach architecture differently. Photography has influenced my considerations in the design process: how visual/ image affects perception, how architecture will be perceived as a 2-dimension

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visual language, or in the presentation and communication of architecture, for example.

Shaima Ayoub: I noticed later on that you had submitted a few images, one of which, besides the winning image, is one of my personal favourites. What is the story behind this image?

Heriadi Joewono: Thank you. Yes, I submitted 8 images to the Sheikh Saoud Al Thani Awards, if I am not mistaken. This picture was taken in Mumbai, on a beachfront. People are doing exercises in the morning. Some are practicing yoga, breathing exercises, meditation, running. The lady seemed deep inside her contemplation. The two ladies' gestures and expressions show peaceful minds, isolated yet connected to the universe. Opposite to them, a man doing physical exercise. They blend in this open public space. The activities there are between chaotic (a lot of people doing a variety of things) and somehow in order at the same time. It was taken during my travel workshop, street photography workshop with Maciej Dakowicz and several photographer friends. This sight was interesting for me to capture. It represents a place (could be anywhere) where faith naturally becomes part of daily life. Coexisting, a man doing physical exercise, for a different reason other than faith, depicts an objective activity, mundane, side by side taking place. The moment, interestingly, happened in an open public place, distancing each other, as if they give a space of tolerance, respecting and trying not to disturb each other. A little interesting fact and twist is that the lady wearing sneakers and a sari, is a part of a visual "wave breaker" (it looks conical, pyramidal, which actually is a tetrapod) - a humanmade structure, and a blue sky.

Shaima Ayoub: With the images you submitted, do they belong to projects or larger bodies of work?

Heriadi Joewono: Yes, it is part of an ongoing series, a personal project. In which I would like to explore the paradox of life celebration and the purpose of life. About the interplay of living the moment, faith, and the objective facts. Not about one against each other, perhaps rather about the play and irony within it.

Shaima Ayoub: How do you work as a photographer?

Heriadi Joewono: Since I can rarely create dedicated time just for a photographic project, I take photos as I find them - I react to something on the street, I probably see something interesting to be added to an ongoing series or projects. Or sometimes I just head onto the street without any plan at all, observing anything interesting and just to have fun.

Shaima Ayoub: What is next for you? Any future photography projects that you can share with us?

Heriadi Joewono: I plan (I wish) to have a dedicated time for photography. Where I can focus on projects or thoughts on certain periods. Work on a well-planned programme. I have several personal and ongoing projects and I am planning future projects that feel more weighted in my ideas, more pre-conception, probably more abstract. I am still thinking and learning about the journey that photography will take me.

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