

Narrative photo essay

What is it?

Collection of photographs that tell a story, convey an emotion, explore a theme or a location.

They can range from purely visual to photographs with captions, to photographs accompanied with some text, to fully narrative essays where photographs are used only to illustrate the story.

There is no right or wrong – choose the style and the balance between the visual and the narrative according to your preferences. What is essential, is that you convey a story or explore a specific theme through your photo essay.

Choose whether you want to focus more on a *story* or on a *theme* or location.

Selecting a topic

The purpose of the photo essay is to reflect on your experience during your time in Slovakia, to explore the art, culture, public space, people, etc., compare and contrast what you observe with what you know from home or places you have lived at.

You have a complete liberty to choose a theme of your essay. To help you in this process, ask yourself:

- In the short time that you were here, what surprised you? Buildings, colors, public art or statues, what people say or do – does anything stand out as surprising, different?
- What ideas do you find relevant, important? History, politics, religion, art in everyday life.... all can be explored in a narrated photo essay.
- What kind of photography do you like and enjoy? Is it nature, portraits of people, urban space, details, or abstract photography?

Structure

The theme or a topic, when well selected and specific enough, will help your photo essay to stick together, form one coherent whole. The logical sequence of your photographs and their arrangement with the text will further help to convey your message.

- Consider how many photos do you want to use, select them well to fit your theme

- Select your **cover photo**, add an interesting title to it – both should succeed in communicating your topic, attract the viewer – spike their curiosity and entice them to follow along
- Balance photos that convey information with photos that convey emotion, a feeling, capture atmosphere
- Don't be afraid to also **combine media** – include a short video, insert music, combine drawing/paintint with photography,...
- Combine single shots with **diptychs or triptychs**, action and still shots, distant and close-up shots to create a dynamic and captivating presentation
- The final photo should further emphasize the main message of your essay, the emotion you wish to leave the viewer with (inspiration, hope, sadness, nostalgia, paradox?)



Platform

There are many online and offline platforms and media that you can use for your photo essay. You may choose a blog format – i.e. the Blogger, Wordpress, Google pages, or one that is more conducive to visual presentation as Tumblr.

However, if you feel more comfortable with a regular goog old word procesor, feel free to arrange your essay in Microsoft Word or Powerpoint (or Prezi for added visual „oomph“).

Examples

THEME ESSAYS :

Hungry Planet: What the World Eats

Peter Menzel



Society for Community Organization/
Publicis Hong Kong

The micro-apartments of Hong Kong

<http://time.com/8515/hungry-planet-what-the-world-eats/>



<http://petapixel.com/2013/02/19/cramped-apartments-in-hong-kong-shot-from-directly-above/>

Michael Zhang

[ufo-bridge-bratislava/](http://www.ufo-bridge-bratislava.com/)

[Welcome to Tchotchkes Town](#)



Photos by Eric Michael Johnson/NYT

Soviet Bus Stops



<http://herwigphoto.com/project/soviet-bus-stops/>

Christopher Herwig

Bratislava's UFO bridge



<http://www.whereisyourtoothbrush.com/>