

Jonas Bendiksen: *Curiosity* in Practice

15. Writing Proposals

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最贫穷的 “百万富翁”

The Places We Live

据统计，截止2008年底，全地球城市人口数量首次超过了农村人口，然而三分之一的城市居民（即10亿多人）住在城市边缘的贫民窟。

用《中国日报》糊墙的肯尼亚记者；

喜欢粉红色Hello Kitty床单的南美黑帮头子；

从垃圾堆找到人生第一张床的印度保险经纪人；

以及只有一段楼梯可以挡风的印尼单身妈妈……

挪威摄影师Jonas Bendiksen在过去三年探访了全球四大贫民窟，

“对人们在极端恶劣的情况下还能过正常生活，保持尊严，

并且追求乐趣，我深为敬佩。不得不承认，

和最新获得八项大奖的奥斯卡最佳电影一样，每一个贫民窟都有自己的百万富翁！”

编辑 杨晶 部分翻译 同文世纪 摄影 Jonas Bendiksen/MAGNUM/IC

印度孟买的达拉维 (Dharavi) 贫民窟，一个小女孩在为即将举行婚礼的邻居挂彩灯。居住人口估计为六十万到一百万的达拉维区，是孟买最大也是历史最悠久的贫民窟，是由废旧回收和工业垃圾堆建而成。由于紧挨孟买的金融街 (Bandra-Kurla)，在不久的将来，达拉维面临全面整顿和开发。

Introduction

“One of the most important things I can communicate to you guys, is the importance of not sitting around twiddling your thumbs, waiting for an assignment to drop on your head, because that’s most likely not going to happen enough to live off and I’ve always taken it as a sort of modus operandi that I’m never gonna sit around waiting for brilliant stories to land on my head... you have a good idea? Start writing proposals. Start writing pitches.”

Being able to articulate your ideas is extremely important to becoming a successful artist or journalist. It is also key when trying to generate funding for the work you wish to make. In this lesson, Bendiksen outlines his approach to proposal writing and why it is a necessary part of the creative process, not only for attracting commissions but also for establishing the goals of your own personal projects.

A proposal is a piece of writing that explains a photographer’s idea, why it might be relevant to the recipient and how the artist would propose to achieve it. There are a few instances where you may need to write a proposal:

- When pitching an idea to a magazine or newspaper
- When applying for grant funding
- When applying for residencies
- When pitching a project to a book publisher
- When responding to a brief for a commission or commercial job



INSIDE NEPAL'S REVOLUTION

WHO ARE THE MAOISTS, AND WHY HAVE THEY TURNED
THIS HIMALAYAN KINGDOM INTO A KILLING ZONE?

*The Maoist star crowns a teenage girl swept up in the violent movement to oust Nepal's monarchy.
To converts the rebels promise land and equality. To enemies they vow death.*

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Jonas Bendiksen's 3-Step Approach to Writing Proposals

When writing a proposal it is sometimes difficult to present complex ideas in a concise format that is digestible for your audience. Here Bendiksen offers a 3-step approach which has helped him throughout his career:

Step 1: Opening

It is important that your opening paragraph gets straight to the point and explains the following: What are you proposing? Why is this idea interesting? Why is it relevant right now? Why is it specifically relevant to the recipient?

Your recipient's schedule is likely to be extremely busy and so capturing the key information in just a few sentences is important. If you can gain their attention from the start then they will be much more likely to read the full proposal.

Step 2: Middle

This section helps the reader to know you can be trusted if they were to commission your idea. Here is where you should flesh out your proposal to show that you have done your research, you understand the context and you have thought through the logistics of the project. You could also think about adding some interesting facts about your subject matter here.

Step 3: End

Bendiksen likes to close his proposals by posing a few key questions. The closing paragraph offers an opportunity to highlight to your reader that this is an idea where one can explore the subject in a nuanced way. If your idea can raise questions then it will have a more interesting editorial hook, as it is not a black and white story and has room for reader opinion. It's beneficial here to think about the kind of questions the editor might want to pose to their readers in the text that would accompany your photographs.

If relevant, add a final paragraph that covers the logistics of achieving your idea, such as budget and access.



In the hunt for new fuel sources, a vast swath of western Canada is being mined for its precious 'oil sands'. Jack Fairweather visits the centre of the new gold rush. Photographs by Jonas Bendiksen

SHIFTING SANDS

Steam rising from the Syncrude upgrading site, where oil sand is converted into synthetic crude oil

Do's and Don'ts

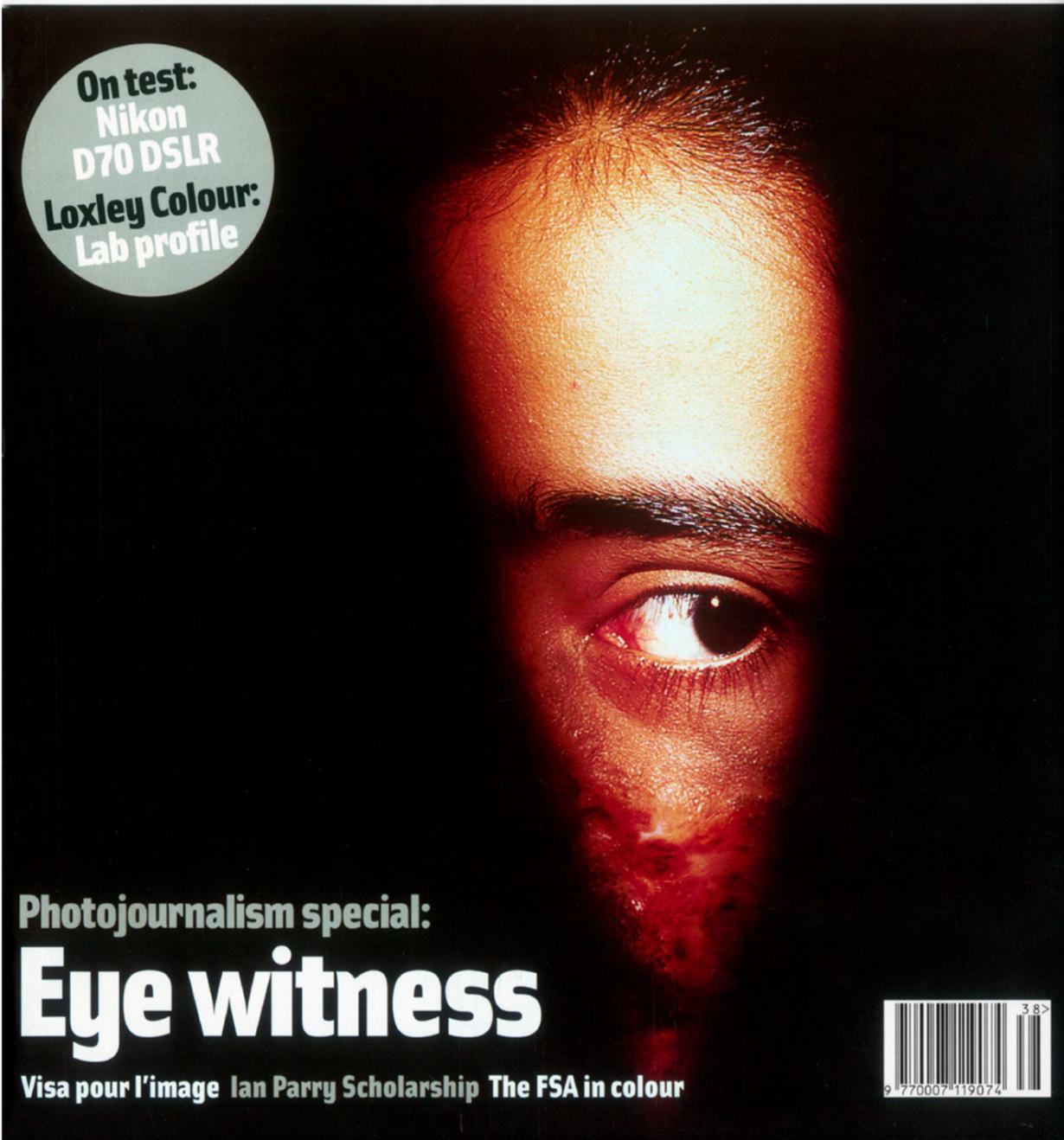
When writing a proposal it is important to keep things simple and concise. Here are some top tips to help you on your way:

- Try to fit your proposal on to one side of an A4 page
- Stay clear of using any complicated, flourishing language.
A proposal's tone should be engaging but also direct and quick to understand. Try to think of it as an advertisement for the idea you have.
- Research the organisation you are reaching out to and ensure that you tailor your proposal specifically to the recipient and what their audiences may be interested in. Remember that your idea won't be relevant for every client.
- Don't sell something that you cannot deliver. Be mindful of the budget and access required to achieve your idea. For example, will a translator be required? Do you need someone to help with gaining access to a certain community or event?

Assignment

Adopt Bendiksen's 3-step approach and write a proposal for a project you are working on, tailoring it for a specific publication. Think about who the recipient is, why your idea is relevant for their audience and how you can use language to convey your thoughts in a clear yet engaging manner.

EXCLUSIVE: EPSON'S REVOLUTIONARY DIGITAL RANGEFINDER CAMERA 15.09.2004
BRITISH JOURNAL OF
PHOTOGRAPHY
THE PROFESSIONAL'S WEEKLY £1.95



“There are many other reasons why you should write these things, beyond that you have a client you want to get [it] to or a grant [you want to secure]. Because my experience is that whenever I’m working on a new project, inevitably it will get to the point where I lose steam, I lose faith ... I get stung by insecurity... It’s a good idea to do for your own sake, because it gives you some ballast when you face that insecurity, when you arrive in that place and things seem less spectacular than you thought. Then you can sort of lean back on the fact that you have kind of articulated and sort of you’ve explained to yourself why this is worthwhile to pursue. And in my experience, that really has helped me to keep my motivation and my sort of forward momentum up on projects that have been difficult.”

British Journal of Photography
cover, September 15, 2004.

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