

## Final Report: The Last Season in Boston

My fellowship activities have been primarily photographic. To paraphrase another photographer: photography was an excuse to go places I had not been, or had no business going. It was a way to connect with lots of people from diverse backgrounds. Working with my host organization, The Food Project (TFP), I undertook a number of special projects to help with their organizational outreach, such as creating materials for their newsletters, blogs, and annual reports. One such project included dropping in on the day-to-day activities of the organization. At TFP farmers markets, harvest days on their various farms, and community lunches (among other events) I would observe, photograph, and connect with the people in attendance. The images from these kinds of everyday events will be useful to the organization in a number of ways going forward to illustrate the work that they do and the communities to which TFP is connected.



Preparing the hoop house at LL31

Another special project that I began during my fellowship was a portrait series documenting community members that were connected with the Dudley Greenhouse, a dynamic food producing space utilized by TFP and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) in the heart of the Dudley Street Neighborhood. This neighborhood is

typically described with terms like *underserved* and *impoverished*, and access to fresh, healthy food could prove difficult. Folks like Danielle Andrews, Greenhouse Manager for TFP, introduced me to a vibrant community of gardeners and volunteers that were involved with the greenhouse, and in so doing provided me with a very different perspective on the neighborhood than what I was originally led to believe. What I found, and what I think the photographs express, is a vibrant community of people who are doing seemingly small, but extraordinary things, like organically gardening to sustain themselves and nurture their community, in a space that the EPA had previously deemed a brownfield site. The series of photographs documenting the community members involved in the greenhouse are only one piece of this project. It is an ongoing enterprise. I am currently collaborating with Danielle Andrews and Alison Daminger of TFP and Travis Watson of DSNi in order to complete interviews of participants. This material will connect with the photographs to become a multimedia exhibit in 2013. TFP is currently seeking funding for this project and investigating the best outlets for the finished product. We are all excited to see where this project leads.



Hakim S.  
Community Gardener

I also began formally cataloging the people and things associated with TFP. Alumni, staff, and produce all passed through my lens. Some of these images have already been used in grant applications, newsletters, and in outside publications. TFP is fortunate to have a talented outreach team and I am sure that they will find numerous other applications for those images in the future, as I provided the organization with a large archive of those images as part of our partnership.





Working closely with TFP's Director of Outreach, Ki Kim, was an especially valuable part of my time as a Fellow. His knowledge as a professional in the communications world and advice in navigating the bureaucratic ends of a nationally renowned non-profit organization was always helpful. Equally important was his kind disposition, friendship, and good counsel. Ki made me feel welcome very early on, and I felt at home both as a member of TFP and as a temporary New Englander.

Outside of my activities with TFP, I connected with other parts of my community through photography. In the spring I taught a documentary photography class at The Eliot School in Jamaica Plain, one of the oldest, continuously running, arts education institutions in the country. Over the course of a month we looked at the work of historical and contemporary documentarians, began documentary photo projects, and reviewed and critiqued the participants' work. The class' culmination was a group exhibition at uForge Gallery in Jamaica Plain featuring the students' work. I also took advantage of my time in Boston to expand my own photo education by participating in a class at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts entitled *Evidence*, with Bill Burke. *Evidence* introduced me to the work of many photographers that I had previously not encountered, and Burke provided invaluable support to my work as a mentor and friend. As a result of my experience in the class I began working with black and white film more than ever before, and started to experiment with alternative film processes, such as instant large format photography known as "gloop." Some of this film work was featured

in a group exhibition entitled *All Visual Boston Slideshow*. The relationships that resulted from connecting with these other parts of the community in Boston are especially important to me.

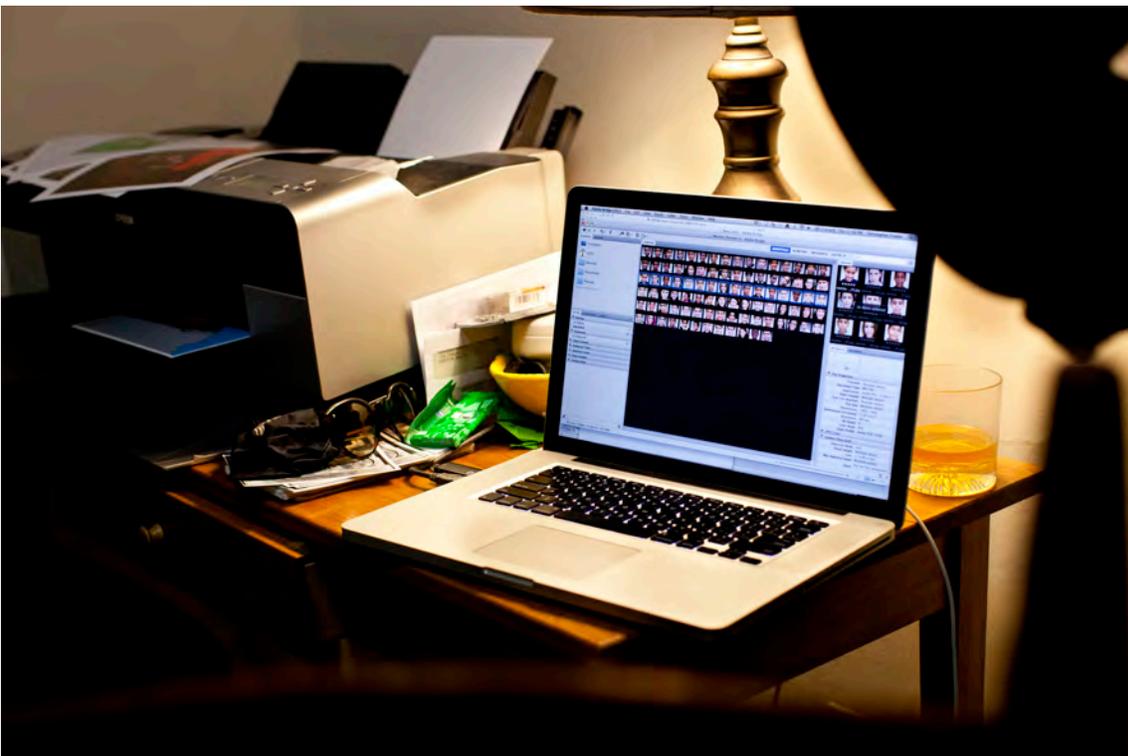


Rozzie

One in the series featured in *All Visual Boston Slideshow*

Reporting on my progress during the course of my fellowship has been a useful way for me to organize my work and plan projects during my time in Boston. Taking time to step back and formally organize my thoughts was helpful in assessing where I stood and where I needed to go. The feedback that I received was always useful in making my next move, and having the chance to put words on paper relating to my pictures made me think about my collecting methods and deliverable products in different ways. It was also an important reminder early on that I was not alone in Boston. My colleague, Indaia Whitcombe, was only a couple of neighborhoods away, but early in our fellowship year we were both so absorbed in our work with our respective host organizations that we did not connect as much as we perhaps should have. That was eventually corrected and we collaborated and shared resources quit a bit further into our time as Hine Fellows. Particularly memorable were the several all-night marathon printing sessions at my place in Jamaica Plain for Indaia to make digital prints of the hundreds of portraits she had made for the Boys and Girls Club of South Boston. That camaraderie was

valuable, and I would encourage future Hine Fellows to remember what a beneficial resource they have in their respective counterparts.



Print making

One of the major challenges of my fellowship experience, one that is not uncommon in this kind of work, was being an outsider. Although I did not exactly helicopter in for a week and then leave, I was still a stranger from far away place who was in Boston for a set term. I dealt with this the best that I could, using my camera as an icebreaker when I could, and putting it away when it had the potential to make things awkward. Perhaps one of the most challenging parts of my Fellowship experiences has been the cost of living in Boston. It is one of the more expensive cities in the US, and the Fellowship's goal of integrating fellows with host organizations meant living close by. In order to make things work financially I eventually began walking dogs for several hours a week--an enjoyable endeavor, albeit one that I did not expect going into the program.



Lollie the lab.

My experience as a Hine Fellow allowed me time to focus on the role photography *must* have in my life and the importance of the medium to the contemporary world to inform and persuade, to see and to show. My plans for the future seem to constantly evolve, but I am sure that pictures will play an important part. The most special part of this Fellowship is its flexibility, its encouragement of fellows to explore their worlds in whatever ways they are most interested, and to have the ability

to provide guidance in whatever form that needs to take when its needed. I am eternally grateful for the opportunity. Thank you.