



FORUM

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**GENERAL MEMBER PROFILE:
J. KATARZYNA WORONOWICZ**

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J. Katarzyna Woronowicz

What brought you to photography?

When I was 13, I spent all my allowance on Richard Avedon's book "An Autobiography." It's a very beautiful, powerful book and as I looked through his portraits of the famous and obscure, from his dying father to images of high fashion, I was in awe of my instant connection to those images. That book inspired me to put up a sheet in my basement and photograph portraits of my girlfriends. Through photography I felt powerful and in control. I instantly fell in love with the medium and knew I wanted to be a photographer.

After graduating from Northern Arizona University with a B.S. in Photography, I landed a job as the photojournalist at the Sedona Red Rock News. It was there that I learned and refined the basics of photojournalism. But in 2004, I got restless and decided to take a risk and move to San Diego. Despite warnings



by my mentor and friends that I would never make it in California, I chose to follow my dream. With tears streaming down my eyes, I drove that U-haul westward on I-40. I already missed the photography community in Flagstaff that was so close and supportive. What was I doing? I knew two people in San Diego and had no other contacts and no clients.

But within one week of moving to San Diego I had my first assignment with the San Diego Union-Tribune. My photo ran on the cover of the business page. The Union-Tribune was my dream client at the time and I was so excited to get the exposure. Gradually, over the next six years, I went from shooting for the North County Times and the U-T, to having my photos appear in Forbes, National Geographic and MSNBC. It's been a roller coaster and I love the ride! I am forever grateful for all the supportive people that were helpful to me when I was starting out: Kristen Dacey Iwai, Craig Fuller, and especially Cyndy Sullivan.

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What are your favorite types of photography?

My niche is the finely crafted environmental CEO Portrait, which I shoot for The San Diego Daily Transcript and other corporate clients. I love to photograph powerful people while telling them what to do! I embrace this challenge and am comfortable thinking quickly on my feet to capture a strong portrait. My subjects are very busy people and usually don't have all afternoon to spend doing a shoot. So I have to go in, set up, have them relax, and connect with me to get really strong images we'll both love.

I also love the diversity of my work. In a week, I can go from shooting a yoga class for the local studio, a corporate event, and theatre production stills. I get to meet and work with so many amazing people, and create images that tell a story or reflect my point of view. It's challenging yet very rewarding work. I know it's a good shoot if I'm sweating, with a huge grin on my face. It's a high that cannot be compared to anything else.

What do you do for inspiration in your craft/art?

Life inspires me! I practice yoga and that helps me stay present, focused, and happy. I also love to look at other photographer's work - my heroes



are Margaret Bourke-White, Richard Avedon, Diane Arbus, Irving Penn, and my friends Autumn Cruz, Michael Paul Franklin, John Running and Bil Zelman. I love sitting down with Michael after an amazing shoot and showing him my work. I'm inspired by looking through my collection of photography books and relaxing with fellow photographers over coffee.

What interests or hobbies would you like our readers to know about?

I love yoga and it has been a huge part of my life as it keeps me healthy and happy. I recently became interested in skydiving - I'm still a novice, but there's nothing like facing my fear of jumping and letting go.

I was born in Warsaw, Poland. I think there are still many opportunities to live the American dream. I used to think that the dream was to have an Audi in the garage and a house overlooking the ocean. Maybe I will have that someday. But for now, I am already living the dream and making a comfortable living doing what I love. That is true bliss!

To view more of J. Katarzyna Woronowicz's work, visit www.jkatphoto.com.

