

To Ugarchin and Back: A Bulgarian Photo Project

До Угърчин и обратно: фотографии
на младежи, отгледани в дом

A collaborative project created by
Kate Jellinghaus and Alexandra Ivanova

Documented here is a scan of the exhibit catalogue.

These photographs were exhibited at
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The Bulgarian Ministry of Culture, Sredets Gallery, March 2008



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Фотографии на младежи, отгледани в дом

Created by Kate Jellinghaus and Alexandra Ivanova
Supported by CEC Artslink, The US Embassy in Bulgaria
The Bulgarian Ministry of Culture and Montserrat College of Art

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Montserrat College of Art

To Ugarchin and Back

A Bulgarian Photo Project

This collaborative photo project provides unusual views of life in Bulgaria today, as seen through the eyes of eight young people who have grown up in state-run orphanages.

Nine volunteers from the US and Bulgaria worked together for two months with eight youth in Bulgaria, of varying ethnicities and ages (16-23). The project began with a weekend retreat, involving art therapy, technical training and team building.

Each volunteer then paired off with one youth to help give him/her a voice and a medium for expression through photography. Each volunteer asked his/her younger partner: Where do you want to go and why? What is most interesting to you? What do you care about? And then they set off...

This collaborative journeying and artmaking was empowering. It built friendships, enhanced a sense of memory, identity and place, and helped these young people transition to adulthood.

До Угърчин и обратно :

Фотографии на младежи, отгледани в дом

Този съвместен фотопроект представя необичаен поглед върху живота в България днес, видян през очите на осем младежи, израстнали в институция за отглеждане. Въпреки липсата на семейна среда и подкрепа, тези млади хора показват чрез творчеството си забележителна енергия, талант и вдъхновение.

Изказваме сърдечна благодарност на всички доброволци, които участваха в проекта: Миглена Стоянова, Искра Ефтимова, Десислава Димитрова, Цвета Георгиева, Елена Стоянова, Албена Копринарова, Андрей Белчев и Евгения Сърбева.

Special thanks to the volunteers who participated in the project: Miglena Stoyanova, Iskra Evtimova, Desi Dimitrova, Tsveti Georgieva, Elena Stoyanova, Albena Koprinarova, Andrei Belchev, and Evgenia Sarbeva.

age 17

Sasho Hristov

Sasho chose the theater and people as his subject. Because many of the theaters are closed in the summer, Sasho asked people to pose for him under the lights and explored empty theater stages and back passages.

Sasho was born on April 5, 1991. He knows who his parents and siblings are, yet there is no contact between them. He spent his school years living in an orphanage in Ugarchin. He now lives in an orphanage in Vratsa, where he studies at a humanities highschool. He recently joined a drama group at the local youth center and started to perform in front of a public for the first time. His dream is to enter the National Academy for Theatrical Arts in Sofia and to become an actor.

IMG1189

Сашо Христов

Сашо избира театъра за обект на своето фотографско изследване.



by Sasho Hristov
backstage theater in Sofia

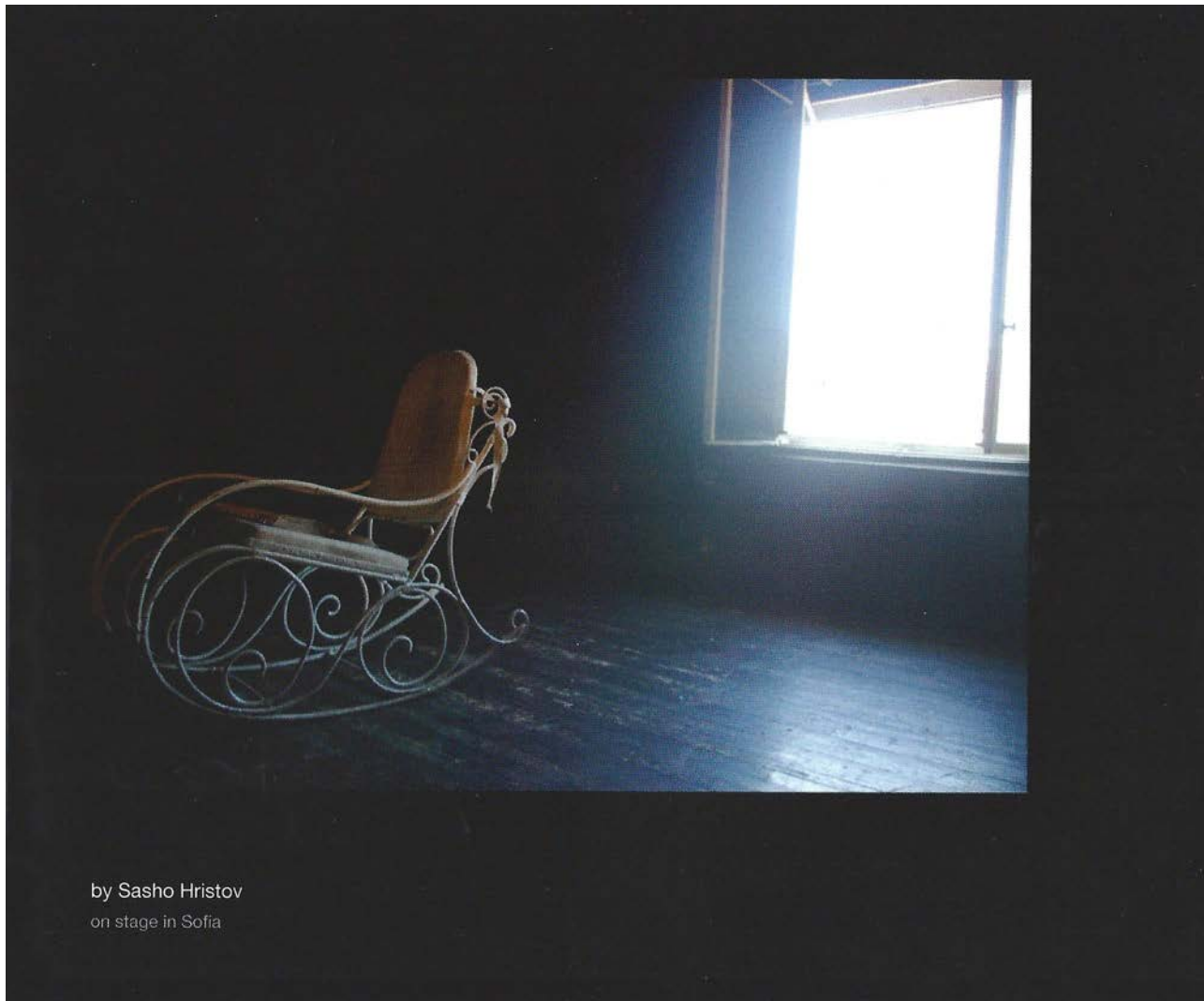




by Sasho Hristov
on stage in Sofia



by Sasho Hristov
child's portrait from Ugarchin



by Sasho Hristov
on stage in Sofia

age 19

Totka Georgieva

Totka's photography focused on interiors and landscapes.

Totka was born on September 29, 1989. She has parents, two sisters and one brother. She was placed in an orphanage as a little girl. From a young age, she was a difficult child and resisted going regularly to school. Once older, her family came to retrieve her, and she went to live with them for two years. At age 14, her parents tried to force her into an arranged marriage. She then fled her family in dismay and returned to the orphanage. She later got pregnant and lived in a home for single mothers outside of Sofia. As part of her payment to stay at this group home, she had to work daily at a construction site. Her baby boy, Mihael, was born in January and recently baptized.



на 19 г.

Тотка Георгиева

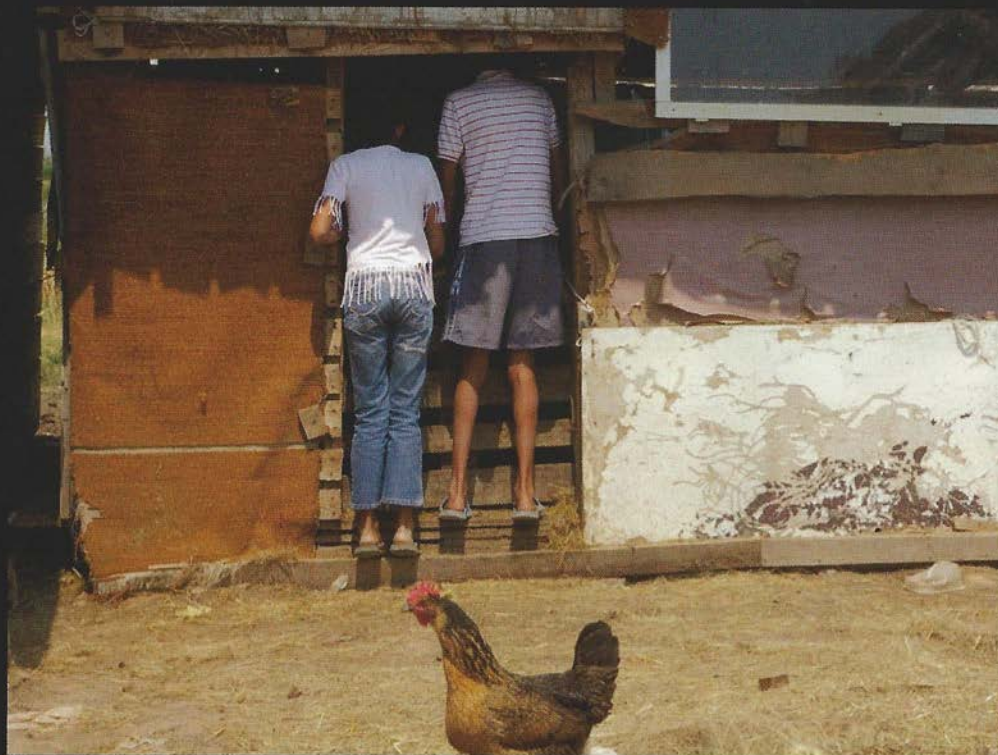
Фотографиите на Тотка разкриват отношението ѝ към околната среда -- интериори и пейзажи.



by Totka Georgieva
interior



by Totka Georgieva
landscape in Novi Han



by Totka Georgieva
in Novi Han



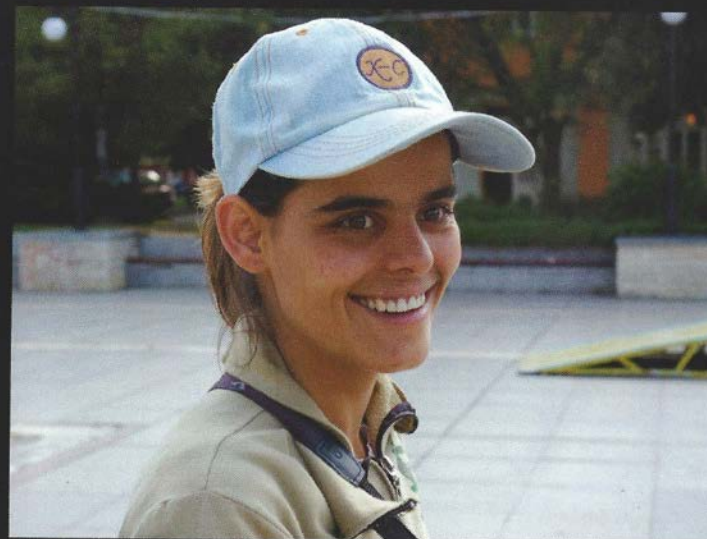
by Totka Georgieva
interior

age 22

Vassilka Ivanova

Vassilka chose to take pictures of people and places where she grew up. Because her great love is music, she had people sing for her, or talk about music, while she took pictures of them in their homes.

Vassilka was born on July 23, 1986. She was put into an orphanage as a baby, and has moved from orphanage to orphanage until recently. In Ugarchin, at a young age, she started going to the local community center to participate in music festivals. Here, she learned to sing, and she sings actively to this day, knowing both folk songs and Bulgarian rap. She now lives in Sofia and has worked in a croissant factory, a bakery and as a waitress. She recently has a boyfriend and the two of them are expecting a child.



на 22 г.

Василка Иванова

Василка фотографира хората и местата, сред които е израстнала.



by Vassilka Ivanova
portrait from Ugarchin



by Vassilka Ivanova
backyard in Ugarchin



by Vassilka Ivanova
interior from Ugarchin



by Vassilka Ivanova
portrait from Ugarchin

age 17

Ivaila Angelova

Ivaila's photography focused on sport, movement, play and friendship.

Ivaila was born on January 19, 1990, and was placed in an orphanage as a baby. She was moved several times, and ended up at an orphanage in the town of Ugarchin, where she lived from first to eighth grade. She now lives in an orphanage in the city of Vratsa and attends a sports highschool where she plays soccer, swims and wrestles. She is an extremely active young woman, and has become something of a leader among the other kids, teaching them some English words and helping take care of them. She wants to be a teacher someday.



на 17 г.

Ивайла Ангелова (с момче от Угърчин)

Фотографиите на Ивайла са фокусирани върху спорта, игрите, движението и приятелството.



by Ivaila Angelova
from orphanage in Vratsa



by Ivaila Angelova
from an orphanage in Vratsa



by Ivaila Angelova
from an orphanage in Vratsa

by Ivaila Angelova
portrait from Ugarchin



age 23

Ngyuen Thi Chung

Ngyuen chose to take pictures of animals at the National Zoo and elsewhere in Sofia. She also took pictures of friends and of her workplace.

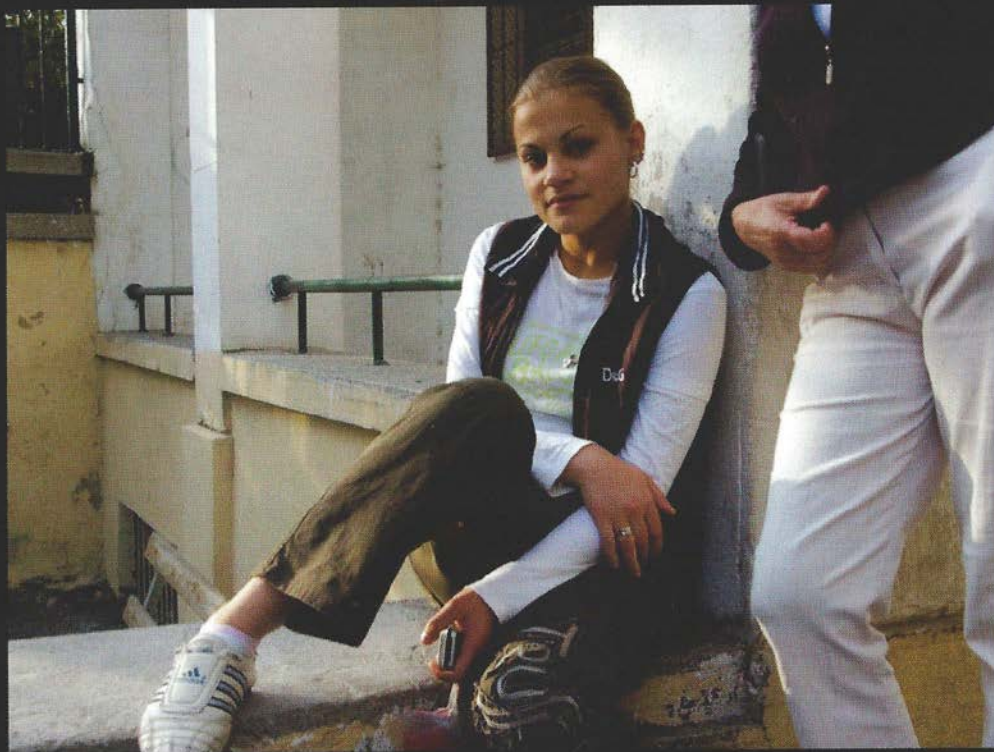
Ngyuen was born on May 5, 1985. She was left in an orphanage as a baby. Her parents were Vietnamese workers who came to Bulgaria during the time of communism. As a child she had problems with the joints of her legs and spent two years undergoing treatment in hospitals. She now lives in Sofia and has recently been hired as a social worker to care for younger children, mostly orphans. She has moved out of her orphanage and is living in an apartment subsidized by her new job. Amazingly, she recently befriended several Vietnamese people living in Sofia who managed to track down two living relatives of hers in Vietnam: her grandmother (in picture on opposite page) and her aunt. Ngyuen hopes to learn Vietnamese and visit Vietnam someday to meet them.



на 23 г.

Нгуен Тхи Чунг (със снимка на баба си)

Нгуен фотографира животните в зоопарка и в града, така и приятелите си и работното си място.



by Ngyuen Thi Chung
portrait of friend from Ugarchin



by Ngyuen Thi Chung
National Zoo, Sofia



by Ngyuen Thi Chung
National Zoo, Sofia



by Ngyuen Thi Chung
yard in Sofia

age 18

Alexander Atanasov

Alex's work in photography focused on his family and on friendship -- and particularly on children at play in the rural Bulgarian landscape.

Alex was born on March 30, 1989. He has a mother and 12 brothers and sisters. Since his mother didn't have a regular income, she sent some of her children to live in orphanages. Alex lived in the orphanage in Ugarchin from age 11 to 18, together with three other siblings. He now lives in a different orphanage outside of Sofia, with most of his brothers and sisters. He helps take care of them, as well as his mother. He works for a catering service and is in his second year of study at Seminary school. His hope is to study theology at the University of Sofia.



на 18 г.

Александър Атанасов

Фотографиите на Алекс разкриват любовта към семейството му, както и интерес към пейзажите.



by Alexander Atanasov
children at play



by Alexander Atanasov
child at play



by Alexander Atanasov
landscape, Samokov



by Alexander Atanasov
children at play

age 24

Emilia Kosseva

Emilia took portraits of friends and colleagues at the local theater in Sofia where she works.

Emilia was born on May 6, 1983. She has memories of her earliest childhood, spent with her grandmother. After that she spent more than 10 years at the orphanage in Ugarchin, where she graduated from highschool. She does not know her parents. After turning 18, she came to Sofia, where she got a job working at a theater. She also works as a sanitary worker at the Military Academy hospital. Emilia has been living on her own for a few years now. She has a boyfriend and hopes for a family someday.



на 24 г.

Емилия Косева

Емилия фотографира най-близките си приятели и театър София, в който работи.



by Emilia Kosseva
portrait



by Emilia Kosseva
portrait



by Emilia Kosseva
portrait/interior from Sofia



by Emilia Kosseva
portrait in Sofia

age 20

Naiden Iliev

Naiden's photography focused on the life of the Orthodox parish Pokrov Bogorodichen in Sofia. He chose to photograph not only things, but also people worshipping in the parish -- and in particular the ritual use of food in worship.

Naiden was born on March 8, 1987. He was left in an orphanage as a baby... There he was given his name: "NAIDEN" means "FOUND." He knows that he has one sister and that his father has passed away. Naiden has always loved to cook. At the orphanage in Ugarchin, where he grew up, he spent a lot of time helping out in the kitchen. He now lives in a temporary shelter for older orphans in Sofia. Most recently, he started helping out at a local Orthodox church, becoming a central part of that community. He wants someday to be a television reporter.



на 29 г.

Найден Илиев

Найден фотографира църковни богослужения, натюрморти с утвар и ритуални храни.



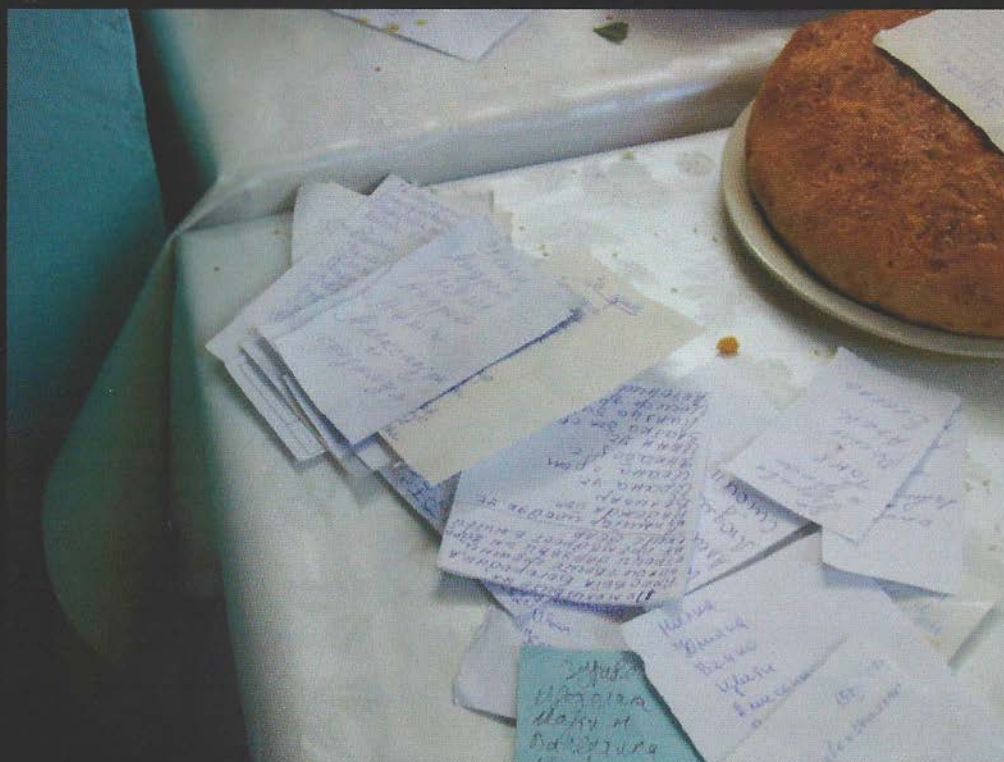
by Naiden Iliev
ritual bread



by Naiden Iliev
reading prayers



by Naiden Iliev
church interior, Sofia



by Naiden Iliev
prayer lists

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