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## Interview with Nick Danziger (Picture People - UK)



The Press Office of the Global Campus of Human Rights had the opportunity to ask artist Nick Danziger from our partner organisation [Picture People \(UK\)](#), about his experiences in Venice coordinating our Summer School on Cinema, Human Rights and Advocacy and his views about how the city could contribute to artistic projects.

**What means the city of Venice for an artist like you? Could you tell us more about your future artistic projects in Venice like the CHRA School and others?**

Venice holds a special place in my heart and head, as well as in my artistic and intellectual development. My first ambition was to be a painter, and my admiration for Titian, Tintoretto and the Venetian school is undiminished from my early career as a painter and subsequently in my work as a photographer. Many books such as Jan Morris's 'Venice', Mark Hudson's 'Titian: The Last Days' and Andrea di Robillant's 'A Venetian Story: A true story of an impossible love in the eighteenth century' have enriched my knowledge of one if not arguably the world's most inimitable city and its people.

I hope that the Cinema, Human Rights and Advocacy Summer School that I have co-run for the last 15 years with Claudia Modonesi will continue to evolve and build on attracting talented filmmakers, activists and others from across the world to go forth and be agents for positive change in the world through the art they produce as a result of attending the summer school at the Global Campus for Human Rights.

I have had the opportunity to produce portraits of several cities through my photography and having now had a 15-year relationship with Venice, I would love to produce a similar body of work on Venice.

**How could Venice become more efficient, attractive and prepared to host artists like you and international cultural foundations and non-profits like yours (Picture People)?**

Venice would be a lot more attractive if it was affordable to artists, the offer of artists-in-residence schemes and for organisations such as Picture People, the charity I co-run, as well as cultural foundations to offer assistance by subsidising rentals in dedicated spaces that would become hubs for non-profits from a variety of fields.

**With Venice 1600-year anniversary, how do you view the relations between artists with the academic networks and authorities in Venice, the EU and the world? Could they be strengthened with new ideas and contributions regarding possible sustainable future scenarios for the city? Do you have any specific proposals?**

I believe relations between artists, academic networks and authorities in Venice, the EU and the world could be much strengthened through schemes similar to artists-in-residence whereby there is a quid pro quo, an exchange of services and goods that would benefit everyone. Particularly, as Venice reaches this landmark date, I could have imagined a photographer like myself being given a fellowship or residence to provide a portrait of Venice as a sustainable city in exchange for providing a certain number of hours per week/month teaching at academic institutions and offering a series of images to Venice as part of its heritage.

Equally, to give you another concrete example, and in answer to your question, you would have thought that existing entities such as the Global Campus and Picture People who have worked tirelessly for 15 years to build on the success and reach of our Cinema, Human Rights and Advocacy Summer School, should be able to have a relationship with the Biennale Cinema. We have had nearly 300 participants attend our Summer School from 69 countries including Afghanistan, Syria, Afghanistan, Jordan, Myanmar, China, Lebanon, Phillippines, Rwanda, Nigeria, South Africa, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Brazil, Mexico, ... There can be no better ambassadors for Venice and its cultural activities than our participants who are passionate, engaged, and committed to the idea of using film to contribute to social change and build a better and more inclusive society. Nonetheless, we haven't been able to find a way to engage with the Biennale Cinema in any significant way.

**How is human rights education relevant to the art world and the achievement of the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?**

Human Rights Education is increasingly relevant to the art world and the art world is an important pillar for human rights as we are missing out on growing these connections that could provide for a more equitable, just, diverse and inclusive world. Art can be inspiring, educational, emotional, so can human rights! The SDGs will only be achievable through our collective will, in the words of James Baldwin, *“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced”*.

### **Could you share a message with the Global Campus of Human Rights community?**

I think that if I was to provide a message it would be patronising, I continue to learn every day, and long may this last, but I can only say that time and experience have taught me to not be focused on problems, but seek solutions, if I meet victims it also means they are survivors and heroes, encourage people to be part of something, cultivate change, reach out beyond your comfort zone, and engage with people, we are increasingly losing touch with our common humanity... it's them and us, but we all share the same house, it's our planet, and there's only one!

For more information contact our [Press Office](#)

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