

# Want to make photos like Bess Adler?

Enjoy this short recap of her Create With Me video



## 1 Do your research

Before you begin photographing a community, Bess advises taking time to gather essential information. Read articles, interview members, or spend time in the scene without your camera.

You won't have a lot of time on every project, but it's important to learn all you can before making the images. Bess notes, it's a sign of respect to those you're photographing, but also the only way you can truthfully document any subject. Most of all, you'll have a more informed answer when asking yourself, 'what story do I want to tell?'



## 2 Become a familiar face

Spending time with your subjects does more than provide a clearer idea of their lives – it builds trust. That's important in documentary photography: it's likely you'll be sharing an intimate look at people's lives with the rest of the world.

Using this example from her study of New York City bridge clubs, Bess recalls how many times she went to clubs without her camera, striking up conversation with club members purely so people would feel comfortable having her around. Explaining your photographic interest in that community also works wonders.



## 3 Document intimate moments

As we established, documentary photography gives you intimate access to subjects' lives, and Bess believes these moments are the most impactful. The better you know the subject, the more easily you'll be able to predict interesting photos.

Through exposure, Bess knew that most of the deeply personal interactions between bridge club members happened during breaks in the game. At these times, she kept the camera ready, and was able to document the moment. She chose a tighter frame to emphasize the players' hands – an emotive recurring motif within the project.

**Closing date for entries to Bess's Challenge:  
11:59PM EST February 28, 2023**

**View Bess's  
Challenge**

