

Summer-Zaire Bell
Artist Statement

My work is grounded in an interest in how people carry history—through gesture, environment, labor, and presence. Working across photography and mixed media, I document everyday moments that reveal connection, resilience, and joy as they unfold within families and communities. I am drawn to lived experience rather than spectacle, focusing on the spaces where meaning accumulates quietly: shared routines, fleeting expressions, and the relationships that shape daily life.

Travel and sustained engagement in Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have significantly informed my practice. Working within local communities, I prioritize observation, trust, and time as essential elements of image-making. Rather than arriving with a predetermined narrative, I allow relationships and environments to guide the work. This approach enables moments of play, curiosity, and warmth—particularly in my interactions with children—to emerge naturally within the frame. These moments of joy are not incidental; they are central to how communities sustain themselves and pass cultural knowledge forward.

My images often explore the relationship between people and place, examining how memory is embedded in landscapes, homes, and communal spaces. I am interested in how tradition and change coexist, and how cultural continuity is maintained through everyday practices rather than formal documentation. By situating individuals within their environments, I aim to honor both personal identity and collective context, emphasizing agency and dignity over abstraction.

Across my work, I resist linear narratives of progress that frame communities solely through hardship or transformation. Instead, I focus on continuity—how the past remains visible in the present, and how history is carried forward through care, movement, and shared experience. My use of mixed media allows me to layer these ideas visually, reflecting the complexity of memory and the non-linear nature of lived experience.

Ultimately, my practice is about presence: being attentive to people, listening through observation, and creating images that invite viewers to slow down. I seek to make work that fosters recognition and connection across borders, encouraging viewers to engage with the humanity, joy, and resilience that persist in everyday life.

SUMMER-ZAIRE BELL
Multidisciplinary Artist (Photography & Mixed Media)
Brooklyn, New York

Selected Exhibitions, Publications & Screen Credits

2025

Amplifying Voices: Global Feminism — Photo Exhibition
Frederick Gunn School, Connecticut

2024

Columbia Scholastic Press Association Conference
Columbia University, New York

Reflecting — Photo Licensed, Season 2
Survival of the Thickest, Netflix

Passing By — Cover Art
***Haggis Baggis Magazine*, Miss Porter's School, Connecticut**

2023

When Two Generations Meet — Photo Exhibition
Sky Blue Gallery, Brooklyn, New York

ASAP!'s 13th Annual CYP Event — Young Photographers' Exhibition
New Preston, Connecticut

D.A.I.S. Conference — Visual Arts Presentation

Sister 2 Sister Art Exhibition
Miss Porter's School, Connecticut