

## UNORDINARY LIVES: A POIGNANT PHOTO EXHIBIT DOCUMENTS THE HARSH EFFECTS OF WAR ON AFGHAN PEOPLE

*The free exhibit will run daily, from February 18 until March 31 at the Maury Young Arts Centre.*

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**WHISTLER, BC** – *Unordinary Lives* photo exhibit, showcasing dramatic images of civil life in war-torn Afghanistan, will be featured in The Gallery at Maury Young Arts Centre, from February 18 until March 31, 2016, in partnership with the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia.

The promise of democracy and the rebuilding of the war-torn nation of Afghanistan have proven elusive. This photo display is a window into the effect that the conflict has had on the Afghan people. The on-going war and instability continues to diminish hope for peace, development and prosperity. This is the story of ordinary Afghans and the real images of war and poverty – of lives far from ordinary – Unordinary Lives.

Born 1981 in Slovenia, Manca Juvan worked as a freelance photographer and made several trips to Afghanistan between 2003 and 2009, documenting the difficult lives of the local people after the fall of the Taliban.

Juvan was selected as Photographer of the Year in Slovenia for her reportage work in 2006, 2007 and 2008 and has been twice commended for her work on Afghanistan by the Slovenian Association of Journalists. Her book *Afghanistan: Unordinary Lives*, published by Sanje publishers in 2010, aims to encourage continued discussion of Afghanistan, particularly of the daily lives of ordinary citizens. In 2011 she was chosen as one of three recipients of a scholarship for the NYU/Magnum Foundation Photography and Human Rights Program. Juvan has published photographs and stories on Venezuela, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Thailand, India, the United States, Serbia and the EU Countries in publications including The Times, The Sunday Times, The Guardian, National Geographic (Slovenia), Time.com and The European Voice.

Juvan's first trip to Afghanistan was as a young, 22-year old photojournalist. "I went to see for myself to learn about the country but mostly about the war. Afghanistan shaped me as a person and as a photographer. I don't pretend the book is about the whole country and its people - it's way too big and complex to fit it all in one book," she said.

Manca recognizes that continuous discussion on Afghanistan is important, and her goal with this project is to focus on the human aspect of war rather than the military operation and strategy.

"War is terrible. It shouldn't happen. And the ordinary people are those who suffer the most. We should never forget", Manca added.

Juvan strives to tell the stories of ordinary Afghans that deserve to be both told and seen in order to remind us what the real images of war and poverty – of lives far from ordinary – look like. She said the exhibit is about the contemporary struggles of life for Afghan people, covering different areas of social

focus, including mental illness suffered by the people as a result of ongoing conflicts, the rise of the opium growth in the face of much-needed employment and the inevitable accompanying addictions, orphans, refugees and women's issues.

According to GupMagazine "The photography of Unordinary Lives is beautiful, sensitive, personal, yet even that wouldn't be significant without such a strong and profound narrative. By choosing to cover a wide swath of social issues, Juvan manages to give an overall impression of the enormity of the problems that the Afghan people are facing."

The free exhibit will be open daily, from February 18 until March 31. There will also be an opening reception for the Unordinary Lives exhibit on Friday, March 4, in The Gallery at Maury Young Arts Centre (formerly Millennium Place). Find out more online at [artswhistler.com](http://artswhistler.com).

## **EVENT SCHEDULE**

**March 18, 2016 – March 31, 2016** – Unordinary Lives by Manca Juvan exhibits in The Gallery at Maury Young Arts Centre (formerly Millennium Place)

**March 4, 2016, 6.30pm-8pm** – Opening reception in The Gallery at Maury Young Arts Centre (formerly Millennium Place)

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## **ABOUT THE WHISTLER ARTS COUNCIL**

The Whistler Arts Council has been the premier arts advocacy organization in Whistler since 1982, supporting local artists and organizations to develop arts programs, and promoting Whistler as a unique destination for cultural tourism. A respected community stakeholder and non-profit organization, the Whistler Arts Council leverages strategic government and business partnerships to increase community engagement and opportunities through year-round festivals, events, and arts programs. Annual signature events include ArtWalk, Whistler Children's Festival, Bizarre Bazaar, Whistler Art Workshops, Whistler Street Entertainment, and the Performance Series.

The Whistler Arts Council operates Maury Young Arts Centre, which is open daily with free admission. The Arts Centre features The Gallery, which hosts rotating exhibitions by local artists, and The Gift Shop, which showcases a wide selection of handmade creations from local artisans. The building also features a 238-seat theatre, a soundproof boardroom and other meeting spaces, and the Youth Centre. Maury Young Arts Centre truly is Whistler's hub for arts and culture, right in the heart of Whistler Village.

## **MEDIA NOTES**

The Whistler Arts Council is pleased to provide high-resolution images for use by media publications. Please credit Manca Juvan when using the attached image.