

AJMER, INDIA

SAMUEL JAMES
ERIKA O'CONNOR
ELENA CHIEN
RADHIKA SARAF
SALONI BHOJWANI
SHANNON CAROL
BRITTANY SLOAN
JESSICA BIDGOOD
DWIJO GOSWAMI
ELIZABETH HERMAN

In August of 2009, ten [EXPOSURE] students traveled to Ajmer, India, in the province of Rajasthan, to explore the ongoing aftermath of the bitter conflicts that arose when the country was partitioned in 1947.

The subcontinent, which had previously been whole under the imperial rule of the British, was split into India and Pakistan in 1947, with Bangladesh splitting off from Pakistan in 1971. These divisions sparked forced migration, rioting and religious violence between the region's Muslims and Hindus.

Ajmer is the home of the Shine of Hazrat Kwaja Moinuddin Chisty, India's holiest Sufi Shrine. Thus, this small city is a hub for South Asia's Muslims and Hindus alike, a home of both the religious pluralism and the intermittent tensions that make up modern-day India in the aftermath of partition.

The workshop was an [EXPOSURE] and The Aftermath Project collaboration. The students headed into the field every day, working under the mentorship of Aftermath founder, photographer, and journalist Sara Terry and photographer Asim Rafiqui. Each developed and followed a separate story.

Terry founded the Aftermath Project in an effort to help photographers tell the stories that arise after the violence and destruction of war – stories rarely covered by the mainstream media. Rafiqui is the recipient of the 2009 Aftermath Project grant for his project exploring religious and cultural pluralism in modern India.



1 . *Memory, Partition*

Mrs. Malhotra, born to a Hindu family in Lahore in 1937 but forced to flee sectarian violence and relocate to Delhi during partition, receives her weekly acupuncture treatment for her arthritis.

SAMUEL JAMES



*2 . A Clash with Tradition: Stories of Rural
Rajasthani Women*

In anguish, a woman in the rural Rajasthani village of Sedria collapses at the news of her father-in-law's death and the prospect of financial uncertainty. Many women in India's rural villages are still constrained by the cultural bonds that have defined their subordinate roles in society for generations.



3 . *Community of the Spirit*

A Sufi worshipper purifies his breathe with incense before entering the tomb of Miran Saheb in Ajmer, India.

ELENA CHIEN

4 . *Rajasthan's Cheeta-Merat and the Battle for their Souls*

Children in a Cheeta-Mewati household play with masks of Hindu gods. The Hindu and Muslim orthodox have targeted this community to 'cleanse' them of their Hindu/Islam syncretic practices and bring them into the 'orthodox' fold.

RADHIKA SARAF



5 . *Deepening the Divide: Youth in Ajmer*

In a madrassa, a strict religious Muslim school, a group of students are taught the ways of a devout Muslim life in their struggle to remain a prominent minority.





6 . *Christianity in India*
Sister Marla visiting a Catholic family in Amjer.

SHANNON CAROL



6. Lal Gulab: The Rose of Ajmer
The janitors of the Dargah Sharif scoop armfuls of old flowers into canvas bags, preparing to transfer them from the shrine to their final resting place in the Ana Sagar Lake.

7. Outsiders

Mohamad Jamil gets ready for work in his home in the hills overlooking Ajmer, India. He supports four children, parenting alone after his wife was jailed for living illegally in the country, despite having an Indian passport.





8 . *Sufi Qawwals of Ajmer*

Asrar Hassan Hussain, the main qawwal of the city of Ajmer, raises his hand in song and devotion. Qawwali is a form of Sufi devotional music found throughout South Asia, particularly in Muslim areas.



9. *The Last Village*

An elderly man walks to his job in the village, where he guards the railway construction site through the night. He is the only resident to be employed by the project, which has otherwise brought in construction workers from other parts of the state.

ELIZABETH HERMAN