

Three photographers awarded the 2025 CatchLight Global Fellowship to receive \$30,000 grants and project support

The fellowship cohort includes photographers Rehab Eldalil (Egypt), Federico Estol (Uruguay), and Adam Perez (USA).

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, UNITED STATES, May 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- CatchLight, a San Francisco-based visual media organization, introduced the 2025 [CatchLight Global](#) Fellowship recipients during a special announcement at the [CatchLight Visual Storytelling Summit](#) on May 3, 2025, coinciding with World Press Freedom Day. Each fellow will receive a \$30,000 grant to support in-depth visual storytelling projects that will engage communities and audiences through innovative media strategies.



La Paz, Bolivia. From the fictional-narrative photo book, "Héroes del Brillo." (Federico Estol/CatchLight Global)

The 2025 cohort challenges traditional documentary visual storytelling by working in close collaboration with the people they photograph, centering community voices in both process and impact. This year's Fellows are Rehab Eldalil, a Cairo-based photographer who involves war survivors in the SWANA region in the making of images and mixed media to honor their strength and foster global solidarity; Uruguayan photographer Federico Estol, who collaborates with working-class communities in La Paz, Bolivia, to break stigmas through creative storytelling and entrepreneurship; and Adam Perez, a central California-based visual storyteller who partners with farmworker communities to share their experiences of labor, land, and resilience through photography, video, and public art.

The CatchLight Global Fellowship responds to a growing need in the visual storytelling field to support creative leaders who use visual media to drive social change, engage communities, and explore new ways of reaching audiences. In addition to the grants, CatchLight Global Fellows can

access a network of partners, mentors and collaborators for customized support to help them achieve their goals during and beyond their fellowship year.

“This year’s Global Fellowship recipients are exceptional visual storytellers who are centering community participation and empowerment in their creative practices,” says Elodie Mailliet Storm, CEO of CatchLight. “We so look forward to supporting them in the next stages of their creative journeys through amplification and innovative engagement strategies.”

For the past two years, CatchLight has launched the Global Fellowship application during the Night of Photojournalism in Paris, France. This immersive public event, which features projected photo essays accompanied by a live DJ set, is now set for a [U.S. tour](#) and will appear at major photo and media events in New York, New Orleans, and Austin later this year.

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*Elodie Mailliet Storm, CEO,
CatchLight*

About the 2025 CatchLight Global Fellows:

REHAB ELDALIL

In “From the Ashes, I Rose,” Rehab Eldalil confronts the impact of warfare on civilians in the SWANA region, including Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, by reinterpreting patient experiences at the Doctors Without Borders hospital in Amman as acts of resistance and transformation. Through collaborative photography and

mixed media, the project highlights trauma as a source of strength, celebrating resilience and agency. It challenges victimhood narratives, fosters dialogue between the Global South and Western audiences, and calls for solidarity against civilian violence. Through interactive exhibitions and expanded public outreach, including installations, talks, publications, and street art campaigns, the project encourages allyship and catalyzes collective action for more just and humanized portrayals of Arab and African communities.



Shams, 12, Iraq. When Shams was 2 years old, she was injured by an explosion along with her mother Noura. Noura’s injuries were limited to her hands while Shams was injured in her face, neck, and hands. Shams is an artist and Tiktoker. (Rehab Eldalil/CatchLight Global)

"My work explores identity through creative participatory practices, involving subjects as participants in the creative process. I develop visual narratives that amplify the autonomy of protagonists through collaboration and challenge colonial representations of communities, including my own as an Arab and African. I hope my practice advocates a nuanced and humanized understanding of the Global-South, while initiating a dialogue that promotes an empathetic world."
—Rehab Eldalil

FEDERICO ESTOL

Uruguayan photographer Federico Estol has been working on a long-term project with shoeshiners and the Hormigón Armado street newspaper in La Paz, Bolivia, using graphic novel and collage workshops to challenge stereotypes surrounding these often-stigmatized workers. Embracing the ski mask, originally worn to conceal their identities, as a symbol of resistance and transformation, the project has empowered participants to reshape public perception through storytelling, art, and entrepreneurship. From rap albums to toys and even a shoeshiner-run restaurant, these initiatives have improved incomes and visibility for the working-class community. Now, with the support of the CatchLight Global Fellowship, the project seeks to expand its impact by training shoeshiners as visual storytellers to lead new collaborations with shoeshiner organizations across the city, advancing toward a future where the mask is no longer needed.

"The end of visual extractivism begins with fair trade of image rights with communities. We can do participatory processes in our narrative building, but we need to start talking about the distribution of the profits of visual projects coming from the photo industry. [...] The community must be recognized and receive 50% of the proceeds from any distribution of the images. The profits that usually come from the photography industry in the Global North, such as gallery sales, awards, exhibition fees and publications, ensure the sustainability of actions in the Global South." —Federico Estol

ADAM PEREZ

"Of the Fields" is a yearlong storytelling project by Adam Perez that centers California Central Valley farmworkers as authors of their own narratives through photography and video. Set



"God knows I'm not lazy," said 63-year-old farm worker Guillermina Gonzalez, tears pooling in her eyes, her fingers bent from years of working in the fields with arthritis. "I am willing to work, but my body aches. I'm not young anymore." (Adam Perez/CatchLight Global)

against the backdrop of a region marked by climate change, economic inequity, and cultural richness, the project follows the harvest season while documenting the everyday realities of its participants. To engage communities and distribute the work, Adam Perez will lead a region-wide outreach initiative rooted in deep local connection. The project will host Pláticas—intimate storytelling gatherings in homes, schools, and universities—while farmworker participants will serve as Promotoras, or community ambassadors. Participant stories will appear on billboards along Highway 99, in public installations, and within a zine to be distributed in fields, flea markets, and schools. This strategy builds on the success of Tierra Mía, Perez’s previous community-driven art festival in rural Poplar, California.

“Although my work has been published internationally, my process is rooted in community and education. My work is founded on deep relationships with a network of trusted messengers, including community leaders, organizers, cultural bearers, and educators. This network is essential in understanding the needs of the community and amplifying the work.” —Adam Perez

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CatchLight is a visual-first media organization that leverages the power of visual storytelling to inform, connect, and transform communities. The organization invests in the future of visual storytelling through fellowship programs, events, and partnerships to establish the long-term sustainability of visual journalism. www.catchlight.io

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