

Shutterbug Shravya does V'wada proud

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Vijayawada: For some, photography means capturing a moment forever and for some others it means creating an illusion of being in an interesting world. But for Lakshmi Shravya Kagolanu – shortly Shravya Kag – photography means breaking the barriers and building trust with another person. True to her belief, the city-bred shutterbug has broken the barriers to become the first photographer from the country (under student focus) to be shortlisted for the prestigious Sony World Photography Awards 2017. Shravya, who now lives in Brooklyn, USA, shares her views on a wide ranging issues in a chat with TOI. The excerpts:



Shravya Kag

Tell us how you took to photography.

After graduating in engineering from KLCE (now KL University), I moved over to Chennai to do a masters in broadcast communication while simultaneously pursuing my interest in photography. I began working as a freelance photographer and cinematographer there. I co-founded a photography firm before moving to New York in 2015 to pursue my second masters (in photography) from the School of Visual Arts. Now, I shoot photo stories and documentaries.

You covered the protests in the US after Donald Trump was elected the President.

Yes. I had covered the Inauguration Day of President Donald Trump. All that was ever spoken about or reported was the size of the crowd but not the skirmishes between protesters and the police. I wanted to document the other side of the story and hence shot the protests.

How hard or easy is it for you as a photographer?

Three years ago, when I was a wedding photographer in India, my work was well-received. At times, people ridiculed

for choosing an offbeat profession to make a career. There was also a lot of pressure to 'settle down'. The society sees certain professions as gender-specific and has a very rigid perspective on what a woman needs to do in her late 20s. But such a mindset is changing. I was also lucky to have a supportive family.

Your advice to aspiring women photographers.

Independence is heavily underrated. So, stay fierce and never let someone else decide for you. And always stay loyal to what you say and what you do.

Tell us a bit about your shoot 'Pages of memories' that has been shortlisted for Sony World Photography Awards.

'Pages of memories' is a composite image created for a school assignment. It illustrates my love for reading and how books help me escape from reality to explore new worlds without any boundaries.

What are your future plans?

I shall work towards developing an online platform for photo journalists across the world and pursue two documentaries in India.