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Anthropology Student's Winning Photograph

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The award-winning photograph. Courtesy: Russell Manzano.

University of Central Florida's [Department of Anthropology](#) graduate student Russell Manzano's photo was just selected by the [American Anthropological Association](#) (AAA) to be featured in the organization's upcoming 2017 wall calendar. Manzano's photograph of young Italian refugee boys was also featured in the AAA's monthly newsletter and was shown at the annual AAA national conference.

Manzano was in the town of Siracusa in Sicily this summer when she took the photograph. The research she was conducting there focused on the experiences of refugees after they arrive in Italy. Many of the refugees in this study were from sub-Saharan Africa and had traveled to Tripoli, Libya, where they were then sent across the Mediterranean Sea by smugglers. The Italian Coast Guard rescued them and brought them to Italy. Manzano took the photo in one of the towns that these smugglers' ships get relegated to.

"When the Italian Coast Guards rescues refugees from these defunct boats, they often leave them in port cities in what are often referred to as 'boat graveyards,'" Manzano said. "I took this photograph on a trip to a boat graveyard with a local migration activist, a psychologist at a refugee center, and two refugees."

The caption of the photo reads: "Unaccompanied minor refugees visit a 'boat graveyard' in Sicily, where the Italian Coast Guard brings large defunct boats from which many migrants fleeing Africa from Tripoli were rescued. The boys sit on the same type of boat that brought them to Italy, where they spent days at sea, and witnessed the death of their friends and other migrants. The psychologist at the center in which they live watches them as they stare out over the Mediterranean."

The photo was chosen by the 10,000 members of the AAA. The association held the competition beginning in August in which 12 photos were selected to be featured in its 2017 calendar and winners announced in November. The calendar was distributed to over 8,000 scholars at the AAA national conference.

This is not Manzano's first experience working with refugees and migrants. She volunteered at a center for refugees in Siracusa in 2010 and then worked with the migrant community in Apopka, FL as an AmeriCorps volunteer. She has been researching migration struggles in Siracusa since 2015 for her MA thesis. Her adviser, Associate Professor [Joanna Mishtal](#), Ph.D., oversaw her work on the project.



Manzano with some of the refugees involved in her research. Courtesy: Russell Manzano

"It has been a pleasure to advise Russell in our graduate program. Russell is a 'quiet storm' – she is humble and unassuming as a student and colleague, but highly motivated and accomplished as a researcher," Mishtal said. "To choose fieldwork in a foreign country and language, and select such challenging and sensitive research with refugees, especially minors, is quite a remarkable achievement during an MA program."

Manzano is honored that her photo was chosen and is glad it will be seen.

"My goal in taking this photograph was to raise awareness about refugees in Italy, and their struggles before and after their arrival," Manzano said. "Many people believe that once refugees are rescued, their problems end. However, little is known about the challenges that refugees face after they arrive to Italy."

Manzano is currently in the advanced stages of writing an article manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal based on these data, and her plan is to continue this research with refugees in a doctoral anthropology program.

"My work is relevant to the current debates about migration policies in Europe and globally," she said.

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