

# PORTRAYING PROTEST *and* PANDEMIC





## Powerful, disturbing, and yet beautiful,

the images in this article and on the cover are the work of photojournalist Katherine Taylor. Taylor, whose work often appears in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, Reuters, and many other news outlets, captured New Englanders as they struggled to cope with and respond to the extraordinary social and political upheaval that recently has impacted all of our daily lives. She did this through two series: *Masks of Boston*, which records the COVID-19 pandemic, and another documenting the protests against systemic racism and racial inequality.

For the *Masks of Boston* series, Taylor “created a uniform style” for each portrait, using an outdoor studio with a black background and emphasizing the emotional state of each subject. She also developed a set of questions for her subjects, which included asking about the impact of the pandemic on them, what challenges they faced, any unexpected positive experiences and outcomes, and for whom did they wear masks. For Taylor, the consistent stylistic approach, the capturing of emotional content, and the questions provide a sense of unity and community among the subjects while at the same time recognizing each one’s individuality.

Taylor chose not to add commentary to her images documenting protests against systemic racism because she feels that “the emotions of the subjects are theirs to voice.”

Historic New England recently acquired several of Taylor’s photographs for the collection. They help us to better tell the stories of all New Englanders during this unprecedented time.

—Lorna Condon  
Senior Curator of Library and Archives





#### ON THE COVER **Nerlande (Nellie)**

**Sanon Tavares** is a dispatcher for Transdev, a transportation provider. She and her husband are essential workers and were on the frontline during the pandemic as well as the heightened racial tensions and protests. They decided to get married during this "crazy time" and "stayed strong for one another." Nerlande wore a mask for "my husband, who's asthmatic, and everyone else I come in close contact with."

**PAGE 4** Taken on June 2, 2020, following a peaceful rally at Franklin Park.

**PAGE 5 AND PAGE 6 TOP** Taken May 31, 2020, during march in Boston from Nubian Square to the State House.

**PAGE 6, BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT** Skater **Kunga Choyang** wore his mask for those most vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus. He was challenged by the widespread closures but was pleased that stores were not checking IDs.

For student **Daniela Minidis**, the most challenging part of the pandemic was "not being able to hug my dear friends." Also, her cousins, friends, and family in Italy were in isolation for months and it was hard not being able to see them. An unexpected positive result of the pandemic for Daniela was that she was able to spend more time on her art and writing. She wore a mask to "protect myself and all of the world."

**ABOVE** Taken June 2, 2020, following a peaceful rally at Franklin Park in Boston. **LEFT** A member of Laborers, Local 223, **Jose M. Duran** is an asbestos/lead removal supervisor at Select Demo. He said that what has been most challenging about the pandemic is arriving home and his fiancée "has me feeling like I'm a child again: take shoes off and clothes, put them in a bag, jump in the shower, and nothing changes till I comply with all. Once the mission's accomplished and I'm out the shower I get a hug and kiss." Jose said he wears a mask "for everyone not just for me, for family members, my stepson has asthma, I want to be clear of catching it. I believe everyone should wear it so that we can avoid the spread."





**Sarah Mitchell** is director of supporter engagement at AllOut.org and a person in recovery. It was difficult for her “to see so many people in our community struggling. A lot of our usual resources revolve around coming together in community. For many of us, our addictions thrive in isolation.” Sarah is a Buddhist and a meditator. The pandemic helped “to wack our priorities into place.” She compares it to going on retreat, “where you’re cut off from all communication and everyone you know, you start to see a little more clearly what really matters and what really doesn’t.” Also, having her dog Frankie by her side was an absolute lifesaver. Sarah wore a mask for her very dear friend Lia, who has a chronic lung disease.

Entrepreneur/credit consultant **Steeve Cantave** was challenged most by not being able to see friends and family. For him, the unexpected positive outcomes of the pandemic included “exploring more, appreciation for the little things, falling in love with nature,” and having “more time to focus on [his] business and create.” Steeve wore his mask for the world.